# AWAKENING TO REALITY

## Soh's Journal and Notes on Spiritual Awakening

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*After an oceanic experience of the nature of mind that resembles a water droplet falling into water during sleep years ago, I woke up and wrote on a discussion group, "When a drop of water is placed in an ocean, what is it like? Ocean walking, what is it like?"*

Thusness wrote in October 2010 and January 2011:

"AEN's diary is a sincere documentation of his journey of how he progresses from "I AM" to non-dual to the arising insight of anatta."

"In fact AEN's experience is quite complete and his journal is a good guide at least up till the initial glimpse of anatta. Thereafter the 'right view' refines the non-dual experience and practitioners will understand deeper how 'wrong view' mislead and shape our moment to moment of experience."

Since then my insights have deepened even further. In this journal/e-book I attempt to document the process of my spiritual unfolding and personal insights. May it be of benefit to all spiritual aspirants.

**A guidebook is now available as an aid to realize and actualize the insights presented on this journal. See https://app.box.com/s/157eqgiosuw6xqvs00ibdkmc0r3mu8jg**

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*Formerly titled "Who am I? – The evolving journal and conversations of a self-inquirer"*

**Note: Please go to this link for the latest edition if you have downloaded this document from elsewhere: https://app.box.com/s/3verpiao63**

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*My unspeakable gratitude goes out to Thusness for his years of spiritual guidance and to Delma Thassa for her kind help in editing this book. This book is dedicated to all beings in the world. May all beings be free and liberated like birds flying in the sky, leaving no tracks. May you become traceless and incomprehensible in this life.*

# PREFACE & SYNOPSIS

*(Written in May 2010, slightly updated in 2011)*

I have compiled some of my writings on Self-Knowledge based on my insights and experiences into a .docx file for keeping but later also shared it with others.

This document contains journal entries of my insights and experiences. In short, I have progressed from the direct realization of I AMness, to the refinement of the I AM insight through the four aspects: 1) the aspect of impersonality, 2) the aspect of the degree of luminosity, 3) the aspect of dissolving the need to re-confirm and abide in I AMness and understanding why such a need is irrelevant, 4) the aspect of experiencing effortlessness, followed by the arising insights of non-duality, and then penetrating into the insight of Anatta and the insight of Shunyata, within a short year (the phases are addressed and explained more clearly in the next preface). Readers may be confused and surprised to see a sharp progression of my view and insights and great difference in content depending on the date the post/article is written, as they read through my writings in this document. In a way, my path is very similar to the path followed by Thusness – (see Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html) and everyone should read his article to have a better understanding of the progression of insight (however note that there is no fixed linear path of progression and each person may differ somewhat).By documenting my path, I hope there are useful pointers to all sincere practitioners at different "phases" of their practice out there.

That said – it is simply a guide based on my experience for reference, don't make it into a bible of sorts. Please don't just read blindly but investigate yourself to find out what is true in your own experience, for sufferings will never be resolved by an intellectual pursuit. The investigation into the nature of experience must be undertaken very seriously with a deep desire to find out what exactly is the truth of your Being (not just going through the motions of reading them without contemplation), in order for there to be true Self-Realization.

Even though I said earlier that this is ajournal, it is not just a 'journal' but also contains pointers/instructions (including the practice of self-inquiry and the method of contemplation that leads to insights of self-realization, non-duality, anatta and shunyata) , which are all based on what worked out for me and others - I only speak from my experience here. These pointers and instructions **are designed to quickly lead readers directly to the realisation of their true nature without delays or side-tracks –this is The Direct Path so to speak.**

Also, I don't wish to imply that there is something I have attained and you haven't. My writings are just pointers to what is already present and available right now in every being, like a diamond in your pocket waiting to be discovered. I have nothing to offer you in this document, except to point out the diamond in your pocket, the self-shining Presence-Awareness that has always been present yet overlooked. It is only because you were ignorant that the self-shining Awareness is your true identity that you go searching for it (peace, happiness, love) elsewhere where it can't be found. But even to say 'you' 'have' Awareness is not right– for IT is impersonal and universal, not something you 'personally' possess, yet shining in plain view waiting to be realized. When'your' true identity is realized, it feels completely natural because it is what you are and always have been – there is no feeling of having had a great attainment – maybe there may be some feelings of exhilaration initially, but later on it feels totally ordinary – it is what life has always been, just that we are so caught up previously in the dream and stories of being a separate self to even notice this. In short, this is not about attaining some new or altered state of experience (that would be transient), but realizing a fact of Being that was simply overlooked all these years. Without moving a step, you have arrived – it is Who You Are.

Another approach to the question of 'attainment' is this: In that moment of awakening, Consciousness awakens/withdraws its identification from the dream of being a separate person, to its true identity as ItSelf, but after this awakening if the person falls back into the dream/illusion of being a separate self who now claims/'owns'/'possesses' awakening ("I am now an enlightened person!"), then 'he' is just as deluded as before. You do not attain anything through awakening, because there is no 'you', there only ever is Consciousness dreaming the dream of being a separate individual and then awakening again to ItSelf. There is no such thing as an 'enlightened person', only awakened Consciousness. I can say 'I am Awake', but the 'I' that is Awake is simply Awareness Itself (it has awakened to ItSelf from the dream of separation), but it is not the case that "I became an enlightened person". In short, there is indeed a realization, an awakening, (as for teachers who say there is no 'realization' or 'awakening', I pose a question to them: why are you teaching then?) from the dream of being a separate self (e.g. a dream character named Peter) to the Being of Consciousness, yet you cannot say that the dream character Peter has woken up – dream character Peter never existed to begin with, being merely an imagined/dream character that is seen through in 'awakening', and your true identity as self-shining Presence-Awarenessis realized and shines with utter certainty. In the same way that there is seeing but no seer, hearing but no hearer, there is awakening but no awakener. Consciousness alone sees, hears, dreams, and awakens. Consciousness alone IS, One without a Second, appearing as the many.

Furthermore: these are just some insights I have stumbled upon but I do not wish to imply anything more than what they are. At this point I am not perpetually liberated from suffering. I still consider myself a beginner and learner in practice, far from Buddhahood (even though Buddha-nature is spontaneously perfected in this very moment as your very essence and nature, there are varying depths of insights into our nature). I would go on to say that there is an increased seeing through of a personal identity that leads to more peace and clarity in life, however it is not *always* the case that I feel peaceful, un-agitated, without feelings and emotions, and so on.

In fact, John (Thusness) would say with regards to the realization of I AMness:

*"Lastly this realization is not an end by itself, it is the beginning. If we are truthful and not over exaggerate and get carried away by this initial glimpse, we will realize that we do not gain liberation from this realization; contrary we suffer more after this realization. However it is a powerful condition that motivates a practitioner to embark on a spiritual journey in search of true freedom. :)"*

It may also be the case that you've already had such glimpses and insights along the way in your practice or there may be a spontaneous recognition as you read. It could also be that you may not have a good grasp of what I am talking about (in which case you should have a clearer picture as you read on).For me, my self-realisation (the realization of 'I AM') on 9th February 2010 came through almost 2 years of self-inquiry practice as instructed by Thusness. As I would explain in the latter pages, Self-Inquiry is the direct path towards self-realization (the topic on gradual vs direct path is dealt with later in this book). If you wish to practice self-inquiry, you can refer to the teachings of Ch'an/Zen Master Hsu Yun (by no means the only Buddhist master who teach self-inquiry). One (again, by no means the only) major Non-Buddhist major proponent of Self-Inquiry teacher would be Ramana Maharshi. Also, I have given self-inquiry instructions to an online friend in this document (as well as answering some Q&As related to Self-Inquiry). I and my friend Thusness (who I also consider to be my spiritual teacher) can attest to the effectiveness of Self-Inquiry to result in an initial glimpse and realization of our true nature. This is the direct path to self-realization. However, self-realization (realization of 'I AM') is not the end of the path and must be complemented with investigations and contemplations on the non-dual, anatta and shunyata nature of reality. This is being described in the later parts of the document. Nevertheless, for starters I would recommend doing self-inquiry first – it leads to the direct realization of luminosity and non-duality and will thus become easier to realize and progress will be quick. Apart from self-inquiry, I strongly advice a daily routine practice of sitting meditation (with the proper postures, mudras, and so on), as well as meditation in movement and activities.

Self-inquiry is for everybody. It is certainly not meant for the spiritually advanced. A friend once told me that he is not wise enough to practice self-inquiry. What nonsense! My reply to him was:

*Self-inquiry is not for advanced people.It is a very simple down to earth method for all kinds of persons...In fact if you are too clever, you will not see the simplicity of it! That is why this is suitable for you, and everyone who is not obscured by their cleverness. This method is not for 'wise people'. It is designed for simple minded person honest to find out his present reality.*

*You are aware and present right now, aren't you? Can you even deny that? Just ask yourself "Who am I?"*

Following passage taken from:
*http://www.advaita.org.uk/discourses/teachers/essence_wheeler.htm*

*In my first conversation with Bob Adamson, the very first thing he asked me was (as I recall it), "Well, do you know what it is? Do you know what Nisargadatta Maharaj understood and what he was pointing to? Is it absolutely clear yet?" I remained silent. All my former concepts and acquired knowledge were utterly useless. After a pause, he asked me, "Do you exist right now? Are you aware right now?" I said, "Yes." He said, "That's it! That is what is being pointed out. It is your own being and awareness. You know it already. It is just recognizing this. There is nothing more to know beyond this."*

It is my wish that this sharing may, in whatever way, be of help or perhaps inspiration to spiritual seekers out there.

*"When it comes to non-duality, the basic and final question is, 'Who and what am I?' All other questions get subsumed into that one. When that is resolved, everything is resolved. Fortunately, you are already here, so whatever you are must be fully present and available, even now. Just make sure that what you are, which is fully present now, is clear. Even if this is told or pointed out, you must still do the looking yourself. You have everything you need right within yourself." ~ John Wheeler*

*"Give up all questions except one: 'Who am I?' After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The 'I am' is certain. The 'I am this' is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality." ~ Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj*

*"Remember, your true nature (which is the doubtless and clear sense of being that is with you right now) is not to be found on any website or in any teaching, however clear." ~ John Wheeler*

*"Never mind what we read, the mystery is in THAT what is aware OF the reading." ~ Unknown*

*"Question to Master: Why do they suffer instead of inquiring and realizing the Self?*

*Master's Answer: They suffer because what they have known to be One, by studying, has not been experienced."~ 16th-c. Advaita text Sorupa Saram*

**NOTE:**

Update (6th November 2010): Important! The first synopsis described above is NOT a complete understanding and I have written most of the contents above in an earlier part of my journey of self-discovery (with slight editing more recently to include a short introduction on the various phases). At the point I wrote the first synopsis, there is only the understanding of Presence as an Eternal Watcher or Witness or I AM Presence. At this stage, I had not yet realised non-duality or anatta (which is described in the latter parts of this book).

These writings are part of a series of spiritual realisations. Each writing/article represents my understanding at that given stage and may not be fully reflective of the current state.

# SECOND PREFACE & SYNOPSIS

*(First written on 3rd February 2011, last updated on 5th June 2011)*

It's been almost a year since my first journal entry, or my initial/first glimpse into awareness, or the true nature of existence. Here's a quick summary of my journey of insight thus far.

Firstly, about one year ago, in February 2010, through contemplating the question 'Before birth, Who am I?' for almost two years with a deep desire to resolve the matter of the truth of my Being, there suddenly arose the insight into the essence of existence, being, presence. This is a direct insight into something undeniable and unavoidable. For the first time I realized what presence, luminosity, awareness actually is, directly and non-conceptually without intermediary. And I realize that to be my very essence, in which there is no division between 'me' and 'it' - I am That, the self-knowing presence. A clear and undoubtable certainty of Being arose, something more undeniable and intimate than the breath, and if anything it is the only 'thing' that cannot be denied.

At this phase, the construct of duality and the construct of inherency still remains strong. As such, I see 1) an inherent awareness 2) awareness is the ultimate observer of objects, and I am that all-pervading awareness, I am not the objects - the objects are objects happening to/in awareness, and awareness is like a vast container for them to arise and subside.

This phase continued for the next six months where the insight and experience of I AMness deepened in terms of the insight and experience of impersonality, where everything is seen to be the spontaneous manifestation and doings of an impersonal source. The feeling is one of being lived by a higher power, rather than my life being controlled or lived by an individual self. Due to the experience of impersonality, there is the impression that consciousness is universal and everyone comes from the same source. There was also the refining of that insight and experience in terms of the intensity of luminosity, seeing through and dissolving the need to abide, and there was effortlessness. The meaning of these terms are explained in more details in the book as you read on. So these four aspects are the 'refining factors of the realization of I AM' and is what eventually led to further non-dual insights. That said, in the I AM realization phase, due to the lack of insights, I was skewed into trying to abide more and more as the I AM/the Witness and trying to make this abidance constant.

In August 2010, while dancing and just immersing myself into the movement, the music, and sensuousness of everything, I experienced non-duality very intensely and effortlessly as the sense of self just dropped off. Although I have had non-dual glimpses (lasting only

a few moments usually), this was different as it became very effortless and uninterrupted for the next few days. Everything was very intense, blissful, and luminously present - and it was not because of alcohol or mind-altering drugs ... the subsidance of the sense of dualistic construct is very blissful, and this bliss and clarity did not just stop - it became a ongoing experience in daily life (this nondual clarity and bliss persisted for days, following which there was a switching back and forth between being the Witness and nondual awareness until the nondual becomes more stable through nondual contemplations). At this point, Awareness is seen to be seamless by nature. I no longer see and experience Presence and Awareness as a formless background to everything. In fact, it is seen that there is no division between the observer and the observed - I am the seeing, the hearing, the smelling, the tasting, the touching, everything arising moment to moment, there is no separate self or experiencer, there is only that - and that is non-dual presence. However, the construct of an inherent awareness is still strong, and as such, I see 1) an inherent awareness 2) awareness is not divided from all manifestations. In other words, I see everything as the manifestation of the same aliveness/awareness, that manifestation IS Awareness itself, and Awareness is seen as a seamless undivided field of being in which everything is equally an expression of, and not other than, this field of aliveness/awareness /consciousness. As such, the purpose of practice is no longer geared towards achieving a constant, 24/7 abidance in the purest state of Presence, the Self. Rather, seamless and effortlessness is discovered to be totally non-dual and seamless with/AS all manifestations, rather than abiding in a purest formless Presence. At this point, I keep questioning myself, "Where does awareness end and manifestation begin?" and the answer to this is a non-conceptual, borderless, centreless, seamless field of undivided presence in which everything is included AS non-dual presence. All sense of a subject and object, inside and outside, Witness and witnessed, collapsed into nondual Awareness.

In October 2010 by the contemplation of Bahiya Sutta while I was marching (was enlisted last year for a mandatory two year military service), I realized Anatta. The contemplation of 'in the seeing just the seen, in the hearing just the heard' as Buddha instructed Bahiya triggered that realization. As such, I no longer see an agent that perceives, i.e. an Awareness. I realized that there is no agent that perceives at all, no subject to be found. In seeing, there is only just the seen, the scenery - the seeing IS the seen, the seeing IS the scenery. There is just scenery - and that alone is the seeing. There is no seer, no agent, no perceiver behind perception. Only always just perception without perceiver. Everything is just happening, and there is ***only*** the happening without anything behind or hiding. There is no "seamless field of aliveness" because aliveness is simply these everchanging and ungraspable sensations arising and subsiding each moment. Just thoughts, sensations, sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, that's all. Phenomena manifesting. The entire process itself rolls and knows, there is no knower. There is no Awareness that is one with its perceptions. There is just perception, the perception itself is its knowing. Because there is always only arising phenomena, there is no such thing as 'unicity'. There is no awareness to be united with objects, no mirror that is one with its reflections. There is no subject to begin with that could be inseparable with its objects. There is always only phenomena. However when I said ‘No Awareness’ I don’t mean there is no awareness, or that there is just a blank, a nothingness. What I mean is that awareness, or the nature of mind, is empty of any entity – it is empty of a self, just like the word ‘river’ cannot be found to have an

entity apart from the activities of flowing, and the word ‘wind’ cannot be found to have an entity apart from the activities of blowing, the same as the case for ‘Knowing’ or ‘Awareness’, therefore it is like the 3rd Karmapa saying, “All phenomena are illusory displays of mind. Mind is no mind--the mind's nature is empty of any entity that is mind. Being empty, it is unceasing and unimpeded, manifesting as everything whatsoever.”

A few months later, even though it has been seen that ‘seeing is always the sights, sounds, colours and shapes, never a seer’, I began to notice this remaining tendency to return to a here/now ground. Although this is noticed, I could not find a natural solution to this. A few weeks later, deeper insight arose and I could see how there is no substantial ground but only disjoint perceptions and thoughts which are like bubbles. Everything is seen as discontinuous, insubstantial, momentary manifestations that self-releases upon arising.

So in reality, Presence is empty and non-local. It cannot be located, it cannot be found, it cannot be pinpointed even as 'here' or 'now'. It cannot be grasped in any way, because there is no core or essence to Awareness. There is always only dependently originated appearances, that alone is Presence which is unlocatable, ungraspable, unfindable in any way whatsoever. Therefore we must not only dissolve the construct of "Who", even the more subtle construct of a "Where" and "When" must be dissolved for true liberation. When this is seen, the subtle tendency to seek an inherent source/awareness/presence is then allowed to be dropped, and in place of that seeking tendency is the effortless and natural spontaneous manifestation of interdepedent origination.

The luminosity and the emptiness are inseparable. They are both essential aspects of our experiential reality and must be seen in its seamlessness and unity. Realizing this, there is just disjoint thoughts and phenomena arising without support and liberating of their own accord. There is nothing solid acting as the basis of these experiences and linking them... there is just spontaneous and unsupported manifestations and self liberating experiences.

Therefore, this ‘insubstantial, disjoint, unsupported, bubble-like, non-solid, spontaneous, self-releasing’ nature of activities was revealed as a further progression from the initial insight into Anatta which was still skewed towards non-dual luminosity and being grounded in the ‘Here/Now’.

In June 2011, while contemplating on the place of origin, place of abidance and destination of thoughts as per what Chodpa wrote in his blog post in Luminous Emptiness, I suddenly realized that all thoughts and all sensate experiences are like a magical appearance – without a place of origin, a place of abidance, and a destination! Nowhere to be found, coreless, empty, yet magically appearing, like a magician’s trick. How amazing is the functioning of magical empty-luminosity! The realization of Shunyata, the emptiness of all dharmas, arose, and it was blissful and wonderful on a new level. The Mahayana sutras (they all talk a lot about shunyata/emptiness) as well as Phena Sutta all start to make sense!

So... that's the story so far anyway. I claim no finality in the spiritual journey. And since I see reality as a process, I do not make neo-Advaitic claims like 'oh the time bound story is just relative stuff and actually all there is is Here/Now' - there is no inherently existing

'Here/Now' at all, there is just phenomena rolling of their own accord and telling its story but without a self at the center claiming ownership of the process (and yet using personal pronouns is unavoidable for convenient communication - I don't want to sound like a weirdo for using impersonal pronouns) And yet since reality/phenomena is as ungraspable as lightning strikes, no phenomena including enlightenment could be captured or clung to. (Yet this traceless clarity – empty luminosity – continue to manifest every single moment as the diverse, myriad experiences of life! All moments of life are an authentication of our Buddha-nature.) So I always refer back to what Zen Master Dogen wrote:

*To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things of the universe. To be enlightened by all things of the universe is to cast off the body and mind of the self as well as those of others. Even the traces of enlightenment are wiped out, and life with traceless enlightenment goes on forever and ever.*

Also, even though I presented my journal as if there is a kind of linear progression going on, in truth we should not see these stages/phases as strictly linear or having a hierarchy. For example, some are able to understand the profound wisdom of emptiness from the start but have no direct experience of luminosity, then luminosity becomes a later phase. So does that mean the most pristine experience of "I AM" is now the last stage? On the other hand, some have experienced luminosity but do not understand how he got himself 'lost', as there is no insight to the karmic tendencies/propensities at all, therefore dependent origination cannot be adequately understood. But does that mean that the one that experiences emptiness is higher than the one experiencing luminosity?

Some people experience non-dual but do not go through the I AM, and then after realizing non-duality the I AM becomes even more precious because it brings out the luminosity aspect more. Also, when in non-dual, one can still be full of thoughts, therefore the focus then is to experience the thoroughness of being no-thoughts, fully luminous and present... then it is not about non-dual, not about the no object-subject split, it is about the degree of luminosity for these non-dualist. But for some monks that is trapped in luminosity and rest in samadhi, then the focus should be on refining non-dual insight and experience. For non-dualists, depending on the level of understanding, one can move forward and backward, there is no hierarchy.

So just see the phases as different aspect of insights of our true nature, not necessarily as linear stages or a 'superiority' and 'inferiority' comparison. What one should understand is what is lacking in the form of realization. There is no hierarchy to it, only insights, all of which are important. Understanding this means that one will be able to see all stages as flat, no higher.

And as I told my friend: There is no order of precedence how the phases of insight can unfold for people. Some experience/realize I AM after non-dual, some before. Just like Joan Tollifson puts it: rather than a linear stage progression, sometimes it is more like a spiral going back and forth, even though that is also just a relative perspective of things.

The spiralling continues until one sees with utter conviction that all phenomena shares the same taste, that everything in its primordial purity is Dharmakaya itself.

That being said, although there is no strict order of precedence of insight (i.e. not everyone starts with the realization of I AM), of late, I and Thusness realized that it is important to have a first glimpse of our luminous essence (i.e. the I AM realization) directly before proceeding into understanding non-dual, anatta and dependent origination. Some times understanding something (e.g. emptiness/dependent origination) too early will deny oneself from actual realization as it becomes conceptual. Once the conceptual understanding is formed, even qualified masters will find it difficult to lead the practitioner to the actual 'realization' as a practitioner mistakes conceptual understanding for realization.

Therefore, if I were to make an advice to 'beginners' reading this, my advice would be to start with the practice of self-inquiry (though this is by no means the only method, it is one which is very direct and one which I am familiar with), realize the certainty of Being (the I AMness), then progress from there to investigate the non-dual, anatta, and empty nature of Presence. However it also depends on the person's interests and inclinations and he/she should discern for themselves.

One thing that is unique about this book is that it covers such a wide range or spectrum of insights - I AM, the aspects of I AM, Non-Dual, Anatta, Emptiness and Maha/Dependent Origination, etc. Thusness once told me that there are no books currently available that he knows of, that actually covers all his 7 stages of enlightenment. My journal perhaps is unique in covering many of those insights he mentioned, all in one single book. However, how relevant each section is to a person would highly depend. If you are reading this, I recommend getting some basic understanding of what is I AM, non-dual, anatta and emptiness, but if for example, you still do not realize what is I AM, I would suggest that you focus more on the I AM and self-inquiry section first, in terms of practice.

Lastly, I see enlightenment as nothing mystical. It is simply the lifting of veils by practice and insightto reveal subtler aspects of reality. Once we lift conceptual thoughts, we discover I AM. Once we lift the bond of duality, we experience and discover non-dual awareness. Once we lift the bond of inherency, we experience and discover the absence of agent and a wonderfully luminous yet empty universe occuring via dependent origination.

# WHO IS THUSNESS?

*"Thusness: translating Buddhism into understandable things since 2004."*
*Piotr Ludwiński*

'Thusness' is the nickname of my spiritual friend (who I also consider as my teacher), John Tan. I first knew him online through the Galaxynet IRC channel #Buddhism in 2004 where he was one of the channel operators (though he almost never participates in the discussions there, just a silent observer). We were discussing in private about computer programming initially instead of spirituality (he used to be the CEO of an IT company and is very knowledgeable in IT, however he has since retired from that line of work). It didn't take a long time for me to realize that he has deep experiential insight into the teachings of Buddhism, and over the years, I had numerous conversations with him and learnt a lot about spirituality and Buddhism. I have met him a number of times since he lives in Singapore too. I am very grateful for his great compassion and guidance without which I will not have the spiritual knowledge and insights I have today.

Thusness, who attained Self-Realization 25 years ago at the age of 17 through the practice of Self-Inquiry, was also the one who instructed me on the practice of Self-Inquiry (he does not teach this method to everyone and first observes the person's conditions and inclinations – for example for many people he would instruct on Vipassana practice instead) since 2008 for my case because I am inclined towards the 'Direct Path' teachings, Advaita Vedanta, Zen, and so on. The practice of Self-Inquiry has resulted in some of the insights and realizations that I will be talking about in this document. Apart from self-inquiry, he provided me with many pointers along the path that allowed me to deepen my realization, allowing me to progress quickly after my I AM realization and gain the insight into non dual, anatta and shunyata.

Thusness shuns public attention, using the nicknames 'PasserBy' or 'ByPasser' in forums and blog, and leaves the forum if he gets too much attention. He prefers the style of Taoist adepts whose footsteps leave no trace. He wishes to live in a place of solitude in the near future. He often tells me not to talk about him but talk about my experiences instead, so I will keep this section short.

A few quick facts about him from his short 'biography' in his profile (it was written by the request of dharma teacher Daniel M. Ingram who thought highly of his forum posts) in the Dharma Overground forum:

*"I am in the finance and investment industries serving as independent/non-executive directors (sort of watchdog) for some listed companies in Singapore.*

*As for practice, I was initially under the guidance of a Taoist teacher (Gao Shang Tze) in Taiwan but later took my refuge under the Holiness Sakya Trizin. However in actual case, I am a lay practitioner and a non-sectarian. I had my experience of no-dog aka "I AM" at the age of 17 and after the next 25 years is just its unfolding from non-dual to spontaneous perfection.*

*Was introduced to the forum by xsurf. It is a wonderful site. :)"*

Three 'must read articles' by Thusness on my AwakeningToReality (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com) blog are:

- Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment
- On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection
- Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives

# WHO AM I?

*(First written in May 2010)*

Most of us think we are just our personalities, our history, our mind and body. A few 'relative truths' about 'me' or rather this body-mind: I'm born in March 1990, am Chinese, male, lives in Singapore and I am a Buddhist who formally took refuge under Venerable Shen Kai of Ren Cheng Buddhism when I was 2 years old (but I do not confine my studies to Buddhism). I am also founder of the Dharma group on Facebook "Dharma Connection" and the co-contributor of the blog (with Thusness) http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com.

I was enlisted into army on 14th September 2010 for a (compulsory) two year national service. Of course, aren't these facts about 'me' (and other similar facts about 'you') pretty obvious? We are so used to living in the sphere of concepts, labels and mentally constructed images and symbols seems so obvious that we treat theassumption that we are a 'person', a separate individual that lives in a vast universe and personally IS or owns their mind and body, as a given fact. We identify ourselves with conceptual thoughts, images and stories. Most would not even bother to question this assumption that they are their minds or body only. It wouldn't even occur to them that these are just surface appearances in life that are conditioned and subject to changes, not their true identity and essence… hence they do not start asking "Who am I", or do any kind of spiritual inquiry unless they are into their 30s, 40s, 50s, greatly disillusioned by life (perhaps they

see the futility of investing their full identification into their unsatisfactory/suffering mental stories), or maybe it could be that they are young but just somehow have an unexplainable interest in spirituality like me.

I did not experience any intense suffering or crisis that made me seek solace in spirituality (like many do), and logically there are many things in life I could be interested in other than spirituality… so why am I bothering with these? What I can say is firstly, it is partly due to my glimpses of experience along the path since many years ago (if you had a glimpse of paradise, wouldn't you want it back?), it is partly due to my faith in Buddha, it is also partly due to what I've learnt from books that really gives me the impression that it has some life transforming (and afterlife transforming, or liberation) effect. It is also partly due to the genuine compassion and guidance of Thusness which I am eternally grateful, so many factors all coming together... that spurred my interest in this spiritual path.

But whatever the case, through meditative self-inquiry we discover we are actually much more than what we thought we were (a person born in this world, a seeker separate from the Whole). In fact we will realize that all notions of 'I', of egoity, are false assumptions of who we truly are. We think we already know who we are… but they are simply our notions, stories and ideas of what we are. They tell us nothing about the fact or actuality of our Being. Even when all thoughts and ideas subside, You Are! The actuality or fact of your being is undeniably Present even in the absence of thoughts, as well as in the presence of thoughts. This shows that all notions of who you are do not touch the actual Fact of your Being. In the process (that started since we were a baby) of defining who we are, we have lost sight of our 'original face before birth'. What is it? What are You truly? What is the fact of my existence and being? When all thoughts and perceptions of 'self' is traced to its Source by the inquiry of 'Who am I?', we will discover our true identity as that Pure Existence and Consciousness that shines as I-I. We discover that our thoughts, feelings, perceptions of who we are is really just a tiny aspect/manifestation of Consciousness, like a wave arising out of a vast, all-pervasive intelligence and life, and we are not just the wave but the totality of IT – pure existence-consciousness-bliss. We are timeless/eternal and all-pervasive Presence-Awareness. We are not a time-bound body-mind subject to birth and death. Afterall, before birth, who am I? I AM… Birthless, Deathless.

With this discovery, Consciousness wakes up from the dream/illusion of being a separate individual who is/owns their body-mind… to ItSelf, its true identity.

**NOTE**:

Update (6th November 2010): Important! The realisation that is being described above is NOT a complete understanding and I have written this in an earlier part of my journey of self-discovery. At this level, there is only the understanding of Presence as an Eternal Watcher or Witness or I AM Presence. At this stage, I had not yet realised non-duality or anatta (which is described in the latter parts of this book).

These writings are parts of a series of spiritual realisation. Each writing/article represents my understanding at that given stage and may not be fully reflective of the current state.

# EXPERIENCE, REALIZATION, VIEW, PRACTICE AND FRUITION

I was trained in these 3 aspects and Thusness asked me to write something clearer about 'experience, realization and view' and synchronistically I actually had the same thought on that day.

So the 3 aspects I'm talking about are:

**1. The Experience**
**2. The Realization**
**3. The Implications of View**

However, for the sake of this article and benefit for readers, I will add two more:

**4. The Practice**
**5. The Result/Fruition**

I put Practice after the first three instead of dealing with practice in the first part because I want people to know what they are doing their practice for, and the reason why they are doing those practices, how those practices result in realization and their effects on View. You will understand as you read further.

This article documents my insight and experience and journey. Even though whatever I said is authentic, spoken from experience, accurate, it is not meant to be an authoritative map for everyone - not everyone goes through these insights in the same linear fashion (the Buddha only taught people to realize Anatta and Shunyata in the traditional Pali texts and did not talk about Self-Inquiry or I AM/Self-Realization, even though the luminous mind is spoken of, for instance), however it is true that all traditions of Buddhism (provided that there is right guidance and training) will eventually result in these various kinds of insights and experience, despite going through a different path or practice.

It should also be understood that when people talk about "no-self", it could imply a number of things... from impersonality, to non-dual, to anatta. In worse case it is being misunderstood as dissociation (I, the observer, dissociates from phenomena as not myself). Therefore, we should always understand the context of 'no self' that is being said by the practitioner or person and not always assume that the 'no self' must be the same as the 'no self' you have in mind. Due to lack of clarity, very often 'anatta' is confused with 'impersonality', or 'anatta' with 'non-duality'. They are not the same even if there may be

overlaps or aspects of each in one's experience. One must be careful to distinguish them and not confuse one with another.

I would also like to quote from Thusness a forum post made in 2010 which I feel is quite important to understand, *"...there exist a predictable relationship between the 'mental object to be de-constructed' and 'the experiences and realizations'... As a general guideline,*

*1. If you de-construct the subjective pole, you will be led to the experience of No-Mind.*

*2. If you de-construct the objective pole, you will be led to the experience of One-Mind.*

*3. If you go through a process of de-constructing prepositional phrases like "in/out" "inside/outside" "into/onto," "within/without" "here/there", you will dissolve the illusionary nature of locality and time.*

*4. If you simply go through the process of self-enquiry by disassociation and elimination without clearly understanding the non-inherent and dependent originated nature of phenomena, you will be led to the experience of "I AMness".*

*Lastly, not to talk too much about self-liberation or the natural state, it can sound extremely misleading... …we have to understand that to even come to this realization of the "Simplicity of What Is", a practitioner will need to undergo a painstaking process of de-constructing the mental constructs. We must be deeply aware of the 'blinding spell' in order to understand consciousness…"*

## 1 - EXPERIENCE

I will now start explaining 'experience'.

There are a number of important experiences related to our true nature:

**1. Pure Presence/Witness**

This is the case when practitioners have experienced a pure radiance of presence, awareness, in the gap between two thoughts. Having recognised this pure presence-awareness, one tries to sustain this recognition in daily life. In daily life, one may sense this as a background witnessing presence, a space-like awareness in the background of things. It is felt to be something stable and unchanging though we often lose sight of it due to fixation on the contents of experience or thoughts (like focusing on the drawing and losing sight of the canvas). This is related to the 'I AM', but still, this is the experience, not the realization.

**2. Impersonality**

This is the case when practitioners experience that everything is an expression of a universal cosmic intelligence. There is therefore no sense of a personal doer... rather, it feels like I and everything is being lived by a higher power, being expressed by a higher cosmic intelligence. But this is still dualistic – there is still this sense of separation between a 'cosmic intelligence' and the 'world of experience', so it is still dualistic.

Soh experienced impersonality after the I AM realization, however some people experience it before I AM realization. Some of the Theistic Christians may not have I AM realization (it depends - although many Christian mystics including Jesus Christ (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/jesus-christ-cosmic-consciousness-alan.html) himself have pointed out the I AM realization), however through their surrendering to Christ, they can drop their sense of personal doership and experience the sense of 'being lived by Christ', as in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.". This is an experience of impersonality that may or may not come with the realization of I AM. And as Sailor Bob Adamson said, "That separate entity, the belief in that entity or person, has never done a damn thing! It never can and never will. You must realize that you have been lived. That body-mind that you call 'you' is being lived, and it is being lived quite effortlessly. As Christ said, 'Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?' That separate entity can't do a bloody thing."

It should be noted that impersonality is not just an experience of non-doership. It is the dissolving of the construct of 'personal self' that led to a purging of ego effect to a state of clean, pure, not-mine sort of "perception shift", accompanied with a sense that everything and everyone is being expressions of the same aliveness/intelligence/consciousness. This can then be easily extrapolated into a sense of a 'universal source' (but this is merely an extrapolation and at a later phase is deconstructed) and one will also experience 'being lived' by this greater Life and Intelligence.

Impersonality will help dissolve the sense of self but it has the danger of making one attached to a metaphysical essence or to personify, reify and extrapolate a universal consciousness. It makes a practitioner feel "God". At this phase it is good to focus on this impersonal and universal aspect of consciousness, but beware of the tendency to extrapolate.

"...Next — and remarkably there is a next — we become aware of the other side of I Am, of the source from which it arises, within a stillness of surpassing quality. We see our I as a knot that blocks off the depths, a knot that makes itself the source of our will, intentions, choices, and decisions, including the intention to meditate in this moment. Gradually we loosen the knot until it gives way, until I let go entirely of being myself, of being my own source.

Until this point, our ascent has been into the depths within us. But always we have remained at the core of the experience, with the experience outside of us, of our core.

Now we must empty that very core and open to what is deeper than our innermost center. We ourselves become the outside to the Sacred Will of the World, Who is our Source, and let that Will come through us, as us.

We inwardly prostrate ourselves, begging for reconnection, begging to become a part of that Greatness. Silently and wholeheartedly calling out to the Ultimate, completely and utterly opening the very kernel of who we are, we reach beyond the world of sacred light, into the unbounded emptiness, which is also an overflowing fullness, an intimacy with all, with the All.

- *This is the Sacred Will of the World,*
- *Of Whom I am now a particle,*
- *Who lends me the will to be myself,*
- *Who lends me my I,*
- *Who is my very Self,*
- *Whom I hope to become able to serve by emptying myself unconditionally,*
- *In Whom we are all united,*
- *And Who continuously creates and sustains this universe in love.*

This ultimate stage of the meditation comes only as an act of grace from Above. It lies well beyond our ability to make happen, although our emptiness, our surrender, and our love are necessary. Attempting to enter here, prayer may help. If you are so inclined, silently repeat one of God's names, one close to your heart, one that both expresses your yearning and brings you peace.

In closing the meditation, we climb back down Jacob's Ladder to return to our daily life, though somewhat changed inwardly. We come, in turn, back to the sacred light, back to the cognizant stillness of consciousness and the presence of I Am, back to sensation and relaxation, and thus back to the base of the ladder. We rest in awareness as the meditation settles in us." - Joseph Naft, A Meditation: Climbing Jacob's Ladder

"There is a vast impersonal natural intelligence which is living you, or rather, it IS this life, this breathing, this walking, this drinking... this life of the universe, of the earth spinning, .... all an interconnected play of Dharma, of total life, intelligence, and awareness. The only blockage is simply this sense of an 'I', someone who controls will and dictates actions in life.

If you think that I am sounding like an advocate of 'God', I have to reiterate that this so called 'God' or intelligent Mind is empty of its own existence apart from Dharma, is not something changeless and independent, and is not some sort of source acting behind the scenes or pulling the strings. Because this vast impersonal intelligence is so magnificent, powerful and impersonal, it can give the impression that we are all just the dream or expression of a Universal Mind of God, and if we follow this 'personification' and 'reification' we may start to think whether we are living in a matrix, a dream of Shiva for no other reason than his own enjoyment. But we are not the play or lila of a Brahman, there is no need to personify or reify this at all. This intelligence IS the miracle of manifestation. The divine has no face of its own, and yet every face is the face of divinity.

There is no I, no perceiver, or a controller of this spontaneous intelligent happening. Living this is living in complete ecstasy and joy born of this total intelligence, life and clarity." - Soh, 2015, Vast Impersonal Intelligence (Note that I wrote this post-anatta insight, therefore there is no more reification of this impersonal intelligence into universal consciousness)

**3. Non-dual into One Mind.**

Where subject and object division collapsed into a single seamless experience of one Naked Awareness. There is a difference between a temporary non-dual experience and non-dual insight. Explained later.

**4. No-Mind**

Where even the naked Awareness is totally forgotten and dissolved into simply scenery, sound, arising thoughts and passing scent. This is the experience of Anatta, but not the realization of Anatta. Explained later.

**5. Sunyata (Emptiness)**

It is when the 'self' is completely transcended into dependently originated activity. The play of dharma. There is a difference between this as a peak experience and the realization of emptiness/dependent origination. Explained later.

**2 - REALIZATION**

Next is the 'Realization':

**1. The Realization of I AM**

Having an experience of witnessing, or a state of pure presence, is not the same as having attained the doubtless self-realization - in that case the practitioner can be said to have an experience, but not insight/realization. I have had experiences of Presence and Witnessing consciousness since 2007, but not the realization until February 2010 after almost two years of self-inquiry practice. Also just to be clear: the 'I AM' that Nisargadatta mentions is not the same as the 'I AM' as defined by me and Thusness, for me and Thusness, 'I AM' refers to the doubtless apprehension of as Awareness, doubtless Self-Realization. Just so you know... many people use terms differently. Nisargadatta's 'I AM' is more related to Ramana Maharshi's I-thought, the root thought or the Aham Vritti. When you have seen that Aham Vritti, continue inquiring into the Source of that – Who is it that Witnesses the sense of self? And continuing to ask who am I, who is the source of that, eventually the 'I thought' will vanish and the Source will be realized. This Source that

I call “Realization of I AM” is not to be confused with Nisargadatta’s “I AM” or Ramana’s “Aham Vritti”.

Self-realization is attained when there is a complete certainty of Being - an unshakeable and doubtless realization of Pure Presence-Existence or Consciousness or Beingness or Existence as being one's true identity. There is nothing clearer or undoubtable or irrefutable than You! Eureka.Without this quality of 'unshakeable certainty', whatever experiences one has cannot be considered as a realization. You clearly see that you are not a machine, you are nothing inert, you are not just an inert or dead corpse but you are pure Existence, Consciousness Itself.One realizes the luminous essence of mind but is unable to see it as all manifestations under differing conditions (that would be non-dual realization and beyond). Yes, this luminous essence is experienced as a non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception (NDNCDIMOP) and is a Self-Knowing Consciousness (the Presence is itself its Knowing, there is no separate knower of its presence). Yes, in this moment of Beingness, there is no thought, and not even any sense of self. It is all-pervasive and limitless, and is often described as being like a raindrop (sense of individuality) dissolving into the ocean - one identifies oneself AS this infinite Presence, and in this infinite oceanic Presence there can be no sense of individuality (especially when this phase of experience and realization has matured in terms of intensity and impersonality).

However, as Thusness puts it: *"**The sense of 'Self' must dissolve in all entry and exit points. In the first stage of dissolving, the dissolving of 'Self' relates only to the thought realm. The entry is at the mind level. The experience is the 'AMness'. Having such experience, a practitioner might be overwhelmed by the transcendental experience, attached to it and mistaken it as the purest stage of consciousness, not realizing that it is only a state of 'no-self' relating to the thought realm."***The sense of 'Self' dissolves in all sense doors and experiences (in seeing just the seen without seer, in hearing just sound no hearer, in thinking just thought but no thinker, etc) when Anatta is realized as 'nature', as a dharma seal. This is discussed later.

In this phase of insight (I AMness) one sees all thoughts and experiences as coming from and subsiding within this Ground of Being, but the Beingness as a noumenon is unaffected by the comings and goings of phenomenon, like the movie images passing through the screen, or the waves coming and going within an unchanging ocean. Seeing a subtle distinction between the Noumenal and Phenomenal, one clings to the pure thoughtless beingness (which is non-conceptual thought) as one's purest identity, as if it is the true unchanging self or ground Behind all things - one clings to a formless background source or witness of phenomena.

Since view of duality and inherency is strong, Awareness is seen as an eternal witnessing presence, a pure formless perceiving subject. **Therefore even though the I AM experience is itself non-dual, one still clings to a dualistic view which therefore affects the way we perceive reality and the world. This dualistic framework distorts a non-dual experience by clinging or reifying that experience into an ultimate Background which is merely an image of a previous non-dual experience made into a Self, ultimate and unchanging.**So it is being perceived/conceived that I am here, as an eternal unchanging Witness/Watcher

of passing thoughts and feelings. The “I” simply witnesses but is not affected by, nor judges the thoughts/perceptions that are experienced - nonetheless there is a separation between the Observer and the Observed. A true experience is being distorted by the mind's tendency at projecting duality and inherency (to things, self, awareness, etc).

Also, in my experience the I AM experience after the initial realization is tainted with a slight sense of personality and locality. That is, even though the mind knows how to experience Presence beyond all concepts, the mind still cannot separate Presence from that slight and subtle sense of personality. It wasn’t until about two months after the realization, that sense of a localized witness completely dissolved into a non-localized, impersonal space of witnessing-awareness-presence (but still dualistic and 'background'). At this level, the I AM is separated from Personality, and it is seen as if everything and everyone in the world share the same source or same space, like if a vase breaks, the air inside the vase completely merges with the air of the entire environment such that there is no sense of a division between an 'inside space' or an 'outside space', such that everything shares the same space, as an analogy of all-pervading presence. Because of the dissolving of personal construct, it seems that myself and the chair and the dog equally 'shares' the same space, the same source, the same substance of consciousness.

Actually it is not that one "merges", but one Realizes that one IS the infinite self and not a small enclosed self. This all-pervading presence, though stripped of any sense of a locality or a sense of personality, still pertains to the thought level (non-conceptual thought). One does not experience the same 'taste' of luminous-presence in the other sense doors - like sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. Nevertheless, if this experience of 'all-pervading presence' is sustained, it can lead to an oceanic samadhi experience.As impersonality matures one feels like everything including oneself is expressed by a higher source, a higher power, an impersonal living force or intelligence.

p.s. (update) Just one day after writing this chapter, I found a book by the same name as mine, 'Who am I?' by Pandit Shriram Sharma Archaya. He distinguishes the Soul, the Inner Self/the Inner Witness/the 'Nucleus of your World', from the Universal Self or the Omnipresent Supreme Being which is the supreme source of even that Inner Self and everything else in the world. He says that one has to realise the Inner Self first before realizing the unity or oneness of that Inner Self with that Universal Self, Atman=Brahman.

This is precisely what I'm talking about - the difference between the initial experience and realization of I AM (as the inner Self), then the maturation into the Universal I AM, which is the aspect of impersonality. This is the difference between Thusness Stage 1 and 2. In the Universal I AM, it is just this "unified field" in which "everything belongs to everyone", and that in this phase "A Yogi is one whose individuality has been consciously united (merged) with the cosmic Self." Everything and everyone is impersonally expressed and lived by this pervasive source, as stated by him, "particles of universally pervasive intelligence and energy, cosmic consciousness [Chetna] and life, are activating infinite systems, forms and forces of this cosmos."

**2. The Realization of Non-Dual, into One Mind**

Having an experience of non-duality is not the same as having a realization... for example,

you may have a temporary experience where the sense of separation between experiencer and experience suddenly and temporarily dissolves or there is the sense that subject and object has merged... temporarily. I had such experiences since 2006 (I had a number of similar experiences in the years following, differing in intensity and length). The first time I had it was when looking at a tree - at that point the sense of an observer suddenly disappeared into oblivion and there is just the amazing greenery, the colours, shapes, and movement of the tree swaying with the wind with an amazingly intense clarity and aliveness as if every leaves on the tree is crystal-like. This had a lot of 'Wow' factor to it because of the huge contrast between the Self-mode of experience and the No-Self mode of experience (imagine dropping a one ton load off your shoulders, the huge contrast makes you go Wow!) This is not yet the realization of non-duality... the realization that separation has been false right from the beginning... there never was separation.

When non-dual realization (that there never was subject-object duality) arises, non-dual experience becomes effortless and has a more ordinary, mundane quality to it (even though not any less rich or intense or alive). Everywhere I go, it is just this sensate world presenting itself in an intimate, non-dual, clean, perfect, wonderful way, something that 'I' cannot 'get out of' even if I wanted to because there is simply no illusion and sense of self/Self that could get out of this mode of perceiving, and there is nothing I needed to do to experience that (i.e. effortless), something that has no entry and exit. In the absence of the 'huge contrast' effected in a short glimpse of non-dual experience prior to insight, there is less of the 'Wow' factor, more of being ordinary, mundane, and yet no less magnificent and wonderful.

At this stage you also become doubtless that the taste of luminosity experienced in I AM is exactly the same taste in all six entries - sights, sounds, smell, taste, touch, thought. So now you realize the "one taste of luminosity" and effortlessly experience pure luminosity and presence-awareness in and as the transience(a note however: the ‘one taste’ spoken in Mahamudra tradition is not just one taste of luminosity but the one taste of the union of luminosity and emptiness). You realize that the I AM (nonconceptual thought) that you realized and experienced is simply luminosity and NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception) in one particular state or manifestation or realm, by no means the totality, but by not realizing this you reified one state into the purest and most ultimate identity, and thus you no longer "choose" or have "preference" on a purer state of presence to abide, since you see that I AM is no more I AM than a transient sound or sight or thought, everything shares the same taste of luminosity/awareness, and of non-duality. Here the tendency to refer back to a background is reduced as a result of this seeing..

Hence merely having temporary non-dual samadhis are *not* enlightenment... why? The realization that there never was separation to begin with, hasn't arisen. Therefore you can only have temporary glimpses and experiences of non-dual... where the latent dualistic tendencies continue to surface... and not have seamless, effortless seeing.

And even after seeing through this separation, you may have the realization of non-dual but still fall into substantial non-duality, or One Mind. Why? This is because though we have overcome the bond of duality, our view of reality is still seeing it as 'inherent'. Our

view or framework has it that reality must have an inherent essence or substance to it, something permanent, independent, ultimate. So though everything is experienced without separation, the mind still can't overcome the idea of a source.
Certain contemplations like "Where does Awareness end and manifestation begin?" is helpful for challenging and breaking through the dualistic view of Awareness as a watcher of manifestation, until we see clearly there is no real demarcation of 'inside' and 'outside', 'subject' and 'object', 'perceiver' and 'perceived'. Without an artificial dualistic boundary yet with an inherent view of Awareness, Awareness and manifestation becomes seen as an indistinguishable and inseparable oneness like the surface of a bright mirror and its reflections – can't say the mirror is this and the reflection another. In One Mind, seer and seen are one inseparable seeing, one naked awareness – it is the inseparability of seer and seen instead of realizing no subject, no agent, no observer.

In other words, there is no overcoming the idea of an ultimate metaphysical essence, something unchanging and ultimate, even with insight into the non-duality of subject and object. With this view of inherency, Awareness is seen as inherent, even though previously it was as if things were happening 'In' Awareness but now all manifestations ARE Awareness, or rather, Awareness is manifesting 'AS' everything (rather than things happening 'IN' Awareness which will be dualistic). Awareness is not apart from manifestation.Here it is seen that All is Mind - everything is You! The trees, the mountains, the rivers, all You and yet not You - no duality or division of subject and object

At this phase, subject and object are seen to be indivisible by collapsing all manifestations into the One Subject/One Awareness/One Mind. Therefore the mind keeps coming back to a 'source', a 'One Naked Awareness', a 'One Mind' which manifests as the many, and is unable to breakthrough but find the constant need to rest in an ultimate reality in which everything is a part of... a Mind, an Awareness, a Self.... Or one tries to be non-dual by attempts to reconfirm the non-dual or one mind (thinking the sound and sights is You, trying to subsume everything into Mind, trying to be nondual with or intimate with sights and sounds) which is another form of effort arising due to ignorance – the ignorance of the fact of anatta that always already, seeing is just the seen, no seer, and therefore no effort or attempts to reconfirm are necessary. All effort is due to the illusion of 'self'

What this results in is a subtle tendency to cling, to sink back to a ground, a source, or attempt to reconfirm, and so transience cannot be fully and effortlessly appreciated for what it is. It is an important phase however, as for the first time phenomena are no longer seen as 'happening IN Awareness' but 'happening AS Awareness' – Awareness is its object of perception (or rather, all objects of perceptions are subsumed to be Awareness itself), Awareness is expressing itself as every moment of manifest perception.

It should be understood that even in this phase, at the peak of One Mind, one will have glimpses of No Mind as *temporary peak experiences* where the source/Awareness is temporarily forgotten into 'just the scenery, the taste, the sound, etc'. Very often, people try to master the state of No Mind without realizing anatta, thus no fundamental transformation of view can occur.

Since no fundamental change in view has taken place (the view is still of 'inherent

Source/Self'), one can still fall back from that peak experience and reference back to the One Awareness. That is, until you see that the idea itself is merely a thought, and everything is merely thoughts, sights, sounds, disjoint, disperse, insubstantial. There, a change of view takes place... the result of,

**3. The Realization of Anatta**

Here, experience remains non-dual but without the view of 'everything is inside me/everything is an expression of ME/everything is ME' but 'there is just thoughts, sight, sound, taste' – just manifestation.

More precisely (as it is realized for me in October 2010 when I was doing Basic Military Training): in that moment of seeing, you realize that the seeing is JUST the experience of scenery! There is no 'seer is seeing the scenery' - the view of 'seer seeing the seen' is completely eradicated by the realization that 'in seeing ALWAYS just the seen, Seeing is just the seen'. In seeing, always just the shapes, colours, forms, textures, details of manifestation. The illusion of agency is seen through forever. This is not merely the subject-object, seer-seen, awareness-content inseparability of One Mind but seeing the emptiness of an inherent Self/Awareness, it is seeing through the need to posit a subjective essence as there isn't any. It is no longer the 'seamlessness, indistinguishability and inseparability between the bright mirror and its reflections', it is seeing that there is no mirror, there is no observer, needless to speak about the inseparability of an observer and its display. Instead there is simply the flow of observing/observed as a verb, as action, as manifestation, nothing about a source or agent – nothing unchanging, no background reality that is inseparable from the foreground.

It is seen very clearly in anatta that all views and notions of consciousness/super-consciousness having some independent or unchanging true existence is not true, awareness is simply the quality of transient sensate world, it is intrinsically self-luminous or self-aware but does not exist as some independent unchanged substratum, background, source, etc. Of course, without awareness there is nothing made manifest. But it is not "awareness, therefore sensation". It is "awareness-sensation", "awareness-world". Prior and after (false construct of time) doesn't apply so the source-emanation analogy does not apply. The three kayas are a single co-arising. Source/awareness goes with transience like wetness goes with water. They are not even inseparable, they are synonymous. In seeing there is only/just the seen. To speak of water is to speak of wetness, to speak of sensations is to speak of luminosity, just as to speak of wind is to speak of blowing. Both are words but just points to the single flow of empty-luminosity, as just this action, just this activity (but not some One Mind/source and substratum of phenomena).

BUT... this is not the end of story for anatta and no-agency. The initial entry into Anatta for me was the aspect of Thusness's Second Stanza of Anatta, however the First Stanza was not as clear for me at the moment (for some people, they enter through the first stanza, but for me and those focusing on non-dual luminosity, insight comes through second stanza first). The two stanzas of Anatta can be found in:

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html

A few months later, even though it has already been seen that 'seeing is always the sights, sounds, colours and shapes, never a seer', I began to notice this subtle remaining tendency to cling to a Here and Now. Somehow, I still wanted to return to a Here, a Now, like 'The actual world right here and now', which I can 'ground myself in', like I needed to ground in something truly existing, like I needed to return to being actual, here, now, whatever you want to call it. At that point when I detected this subtle movement I instantly recognised it to be illusory and dropped it, however I still could not find a natural resolution to that.

Until, shortly maybe two weeks later, a deeper insight arose and I saw how Here/Now or something I can ground myself in doesn't apply when the "brilliant, self-luminous, vivid, alive, wonderful textures and forms and shapes and colours and details of the universe", all sense perceptions and thoughts, are in reality insubstantial, groundless, ephemeral, disjoint, unsupported and spontaneous, there was a deeper freedom and effortlessness. It is this insight into all as insubstantial, bubble-like, disjoint, self-releasing manifestations that allows this overcoming of a subtle view of something inherent. There is no observer observing something changing: simply that the "sensate world" is simply these disjoint manifestations without anything linking each sensation to another, without some inherent ground that could link manifestations, so manifestations are 'scattered'. Somewhere this time, Thusness wrote me a post in our blog:
http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2011/02/putting-aside-presence-penetrate-deeply.html

Prior to this insight, there isn't the insight into phenomena as being 'scattered' without a linking basis (well there already was but it needs refinement)... the moment you say there is an 'Actual World Here/Now', or a Mind, or an Awareness, or a Presence that is constant throughout all experiences, that pervades and arise as all appearances, you have failed to see the 'no-linking', 'disjointed', 'unsupported' nature of manifestation – an insight which breaks a subtle clinging to an inherent ground, resulting in greater freedom.

This opens the way to the experience of the self-release of everything – spontaneous, disjoint, self-releasing without any linkage. One also begins to understand Zen Master Dogen's doctrine – that firewood is a complete and whole dharma-position of firewood, ash is a complete and whole dharma-position of ash, it is not that firewood turns into ashes. Similarly awareness does not turn into world or awareness emanates world. Each manifestation is a whole and complete awareness-world with no before and after, disjoint and self-liberating upon its inception.

Only one who realizes anatta and thus becoming a stream winner (Sotappana) will start to understand the purpose of Buddhist practice.

Buddhist practice is not about being locked-in to a most special or ultimate state of consciousness. Due to the false view that there is some inherently existing ultimate Self or state, a spiritual aspirant may see the ultimate spiritual goal as permanent abidance in that purest unchanging state or reality or Source. This is actually a practice at grasping,

not letting go, and therefore will not reach the Buddhist goal of the cessation of all clinging and afflictions (Nirvana).

The Buddha's teachings on the other hand teaches us to realize no self, no me, no mine, in anything - including 'awareness', 'consciousness'. It does not mean consciousness is denied but the inherency of consciousness is seen through. One sees that the notion of agency, or an ultimate awareness observing or manifesting things is an illusion... in seeing there is just the seen without seer, no agent, no source behind things. So there is not 'awareness and manifestation' and not even 'awareness manifesting as everything' since 'awareness' is only 'manifestation'. There is no 'The Awareness', rather it is deconstructed into the six constituent streams of consciousnesses therefore vastly different from the monistic kind of non-duality (One Mind) - rather there are the visual, auditory, nasal, gustatory, tactile, and mental consciousness, all are processes of activities manifesting according to causes and conditions (such as the sense organ, the sense object, and all kinds of various causes and conditions). So all experiences are constantly self-releasing because there is no 'inherent view', the view of something inherent, that causes us to grasp, abide, cling to. Because one sees through the inherent view about Awareness, there is absolutely no collapsing of anything into an inherent base of oneness or Awareness - instead Awareness is like a mirror 'smashed into a thousand pieces', each piece, each manifestation is a self-luminous, self-reflective, self-felt manifestation without a source, without a One Mind.

In short, what this realization entails is the deconstruction of 'Awareness' into the six streams of dependently originated consciousness, without a cognizer, through the realization that in seeing always just the colours, shapes and forms, and in hearing always just the sounds (the diverse appearance of manifestation). There is just a process and stream of activities of knowing without knower, and each manifestation of cognizance is distinct, disjointed. It is just a diverse display of manifold rather than a collapsing of multiplicity into Oneness such as in the case of One Mind.

When the sense of self/Self is sufficiently deconstructed, you also begin to experience everything as being a stream of activities that dependently originates. You directly see and experience everything as the activity/total exertion of the universe, i.e. the totality of causes and conditions giving rise to this moment of manifestation. Effectively, there is no solid self or universe, and all there ever is is an interdependent process of causes and conditions coming together to give rise to an activity.

Therefore, dependent origination allows us not only to see "just manifestation" as in anatta, but also to see "manifestation" as the dynamic interdependent process of ungraspable, unlocatable, and empty (yet vivid, dynamically manifesting) activities. However, without anatta, without the utter and complete deconstruction and removal of the sense of self/Self, we will not be able to experience everything as the total exertion of all causal conditions. It is only when the sense of self/Self is totally relinquished that we can experience ourselves AS this causal process, without any sense of an agency or personality. Therefore, the insight and experience of dependent origination requires the full maturation of Anatta and No-Mind as a requisite.

Anatta and dependent origination are therefore linked, but not the same. You can realize anatta but not realize dependent origination, but you cannot truly experience and realize dependent origination without anatta (i.e. through dualistic and inherent thought or view). For example, normally we view ourselves as actors, and doers, of our bodily action and speech. We think we are a controller of our thoughts, feelings, and experiences. When we realize anatta, this doer, controller, perceiver, agent is seen to be false and illusory - there never was an agent. This makes it possible for us to penetrate deeper into 'how' manifestation occurs? At this point, an intuitive seeing happens - whatever manifests, manifests as an activity via causality, the sound of 'da da da' on the keyboard does not come from ME, they are not MINE, but the words formulating in the mind, leading almost instantly to a physical movement and action to press the buttons on the keyboard, leading instantly to a manifested auditory experience of the 'da da da' sound.... one seamless impersonal, interdependent and causal process of activities, manifesting upon the aggregation of causes and conditions, subsiding due to the fading away of causes and conditions. One cannot even say that the 'da da da' is the sound of the keyboard any more than it is the sound of the words formulating in my mind - it is just this single causal, impersonal process of activities happening without any agency or source (be it internal or external), happening entirely by causal aggregation.

**4. The Realization of Emptiness (Shunyata)**

Effectively with the realization of Anatta, the substantiality of any self/Self is totally seen through. There is no such thing as a 'self' or an ultimate 'Self' with the capital S at all - always, in seeing just sights, in hearing only sounds, in sensing - just tactile sensations. Manifesting and liberating upon inception... moment by moment. Once seen, there is no longer any more clinging to some ultimate Source or metaphysical essence/substance. Instead, one finds delight in the direct revelation of the sensate world moment by moment, seeing, hearing, tasting, all wonderful, all marvellous, how alive... words can never capture it, the practitioner is no longer concerned with concepts and contents, but instead 'grooves' in the minutest details of every sensation. Freedom from sense of self/Self is very freeing and blissful.

However, having said so much, there is a danger of reifying the sensate world into an actual, substantial, tangible, inherently existing objective universe. This is the phase after the realization of Anatta, and before the realization of Shunyata. At this phase, it is as Thusness have said, "Before the insight anatta first arose, you still risked the danger of seeing the physical as inherent and truly existing. Therefore there is a period that you are lost, unsure and AF [Actualism/Actual Freedom - a teaching that aims to eradicate all sense of self/Self and emotions] seems appealing - a sign that you have not extended the insight of emptiness to phenomena though you kept saying twofold emptiness.", and after Shunyata it is more like "There is just aggregates that are like foams, bubbles, ethereal having all the same taste without substantiality and implicitly non-dual. No sense of body, mind and the world, nothing actual or truly there."

So what is the realization of Shunyata?

When observing a thought in the beginning of June 2011, observing where it came from, where it goes to, where it stays, it's discovered (again, a eureka moment) that the thought is utterly illusory (and likewise all forms and sense perception are the same)! Empty! No-arising, no-staying, no-cessation! Insubstantial! Coreless! Substanceless! Hollow! Unlocatable! Without an origin! Without a destination! Cannot be pinned down! Cannot be grasped! Cannot be found! And yet, as empty as it is, still, like a magician's trick, an apparition, an illusion, vividly manifesting due to interdependent origination out of nowhere, in nowhere! How amazing it is! A sense of wonder and bliss arose in light of this realization, a newfound freedom and liberation. And as wonderful as it sound, there is still nonetheless a growing dispassion to the entire show - it is like a TV show, and when you see that your whole life is like a TV show - utterly empty of any substance, you can no longer become so passionate about it. You see it as it truly is - a dream-like movie playing out. This is the arising of true dispassion and non-attachment.

It should be understood that everything is dream-like, mind-only, in the sense of Emptiness is not the same as Substantial Non-duality of One Mind.

It is now seen that everything is really no different from a thought - as in as baseless and empty as a projected thought like a dream, though it doesn't literally mean everything (including sense perceptions) are mere figment of imagination or projection (if you stop thinking, illusory perceptions still manifest due to natural dependent origination). Since everything is dream-like and illusory, they are fundamentally no different from a thought or a dream, and it is in this sense we can say that everything is mind-only. So all is mind in terms of emptiness signifies this dreamlike nature, vastly different from all is mind from substantialist perspective.

So in short, there is a very big difference between substantialist non-dual of One-Mind and what I said here. In this experience, there is no background reality. It is NOT 'The world is illusory, only Brahman is Real'. It is not about the background Awareness (there is no awareness apart from manifestation!) but rather the foreground aggregates that I am talking about - A thought. Everything is as insubstantial and illusory as a thought or a dream. There is just the aggregates that are like foams, bubbles, ethereal, having all the same taste (of luminosity and emptiness) without substantiality and implicitly non-dual. No sense of body, mind and the world, nothing actual or truly there or here.

Anatta (firstfold emptiness, pertaining to self/soul) makes clear many of the Buddha's teachings about anatta, especially Bahiya Sutta, Anattalakkhana Sutta, and so on. Whereas this realization of Shunyata (as in secondfold emptiness, pertaining to objects) makes clear another set of teachings by Buddha such as the Phena Sutta, and the Mahayana Sutras like the Heart Sutra and Prajnaparamita Sutras.

The realization of twofold emptiness is traditionally (in Mahayana traditions) deemed as the basic criteria for realizing the first bhumi Bodhisattva in the path to Buddhahood, whereas the realization of anatta (no subjective self) is the realization of stream-entry in the path to Arhantship.

### 3 – The Implications of View

The implications of view wasn't very clear to me until more recent months (some time after I realized Anatta and Shunyata), when I began to see that what was causing grasping, clinging, the wrong way of perception, sense of self and so on was actually the latent view of inherency and duality. Even though previously realizations had arisen which had clearly done damage to such views, the impact of views in our experience and living wasn't fully clear until more recently.

What is view? View is a deeply held notion, belief, position, stance, with regards to the reality of self and objects. This view has direct implications on how we view things - how we form a mental conception of self and things which causes grasping and contraction. When you want to cut ignorance, you go for cutting its roots, not its leaves and branches. In this analogy, sense of self/Self is its manifest form (leaves and branches) in the form of a sense of contraction, alienation and self-grasping in the form of craving and emotions, while the latent view is its roots.

As an example: if you view that your self abides in the heart center, then you may sense a contraction in the heart center, if your belief/position is that your self abides in the head, you may sense a contraction or clinging there, as well as that sense of alienation from the sensate world at large, a sense that there is this seer behind the eyes looking outwards at the world in a distance. That felt-sense of contraction and alienation, that sense of self/Self, is its manifest form, while the self-view/position/belief/ignorance is its root. This is why we cannot successfully get rid of the sense of self/Self by will and effort without effectively cutting off self-view from its root through a paradigm shift via realization. There are times of peak experiences which everyone has been through in their lives (usually in childhood) where the sense of a self/Self goes into temporary abeyance and there is just the sensate world, magnificent and wonderful, untainted by any sense of self or emotional contents, just the pristine purity and clarity of the sensate world at large. Yet most of us tend to forget those moments, and continue our lives not transformed by such experiences at all. Why is that so? Our self-view is intact, and no amount of glimpses of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) or NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception) is fundamentally going to transform us unless we cut off the roots of ignorance.

It should be understood that these latent tendencies or view of inherency and duality runs so deep down in our psyche that it is not merely a matter of conceptual belief but a deeply rooted, habitual way of perceiving things through a particular paradigm or framework... so deep and habitual that it cannot be removed even if one has come to an intellectual conclusion or inference that the doctrine of anatta and emptiness is actually something that makes more sense than the view of duality and self. For instance, I myself had faith and was convinced intellectually about the truth of anatta and emptiness way before I had a direct experiential realization that effectively resulted in the liberation of false view.

But I can say in those years where I maintained a mere intellectual or conceptual conviction or inferred understanding of this matter, I did not experience any sense of a freedom from self-contraction, from afflictive emotions, and so on... all these came from tendencies so deeply latent that it cannot be resolved by a mere intellectual transformation of views and beliefs (such as by training yourself in the Madhyamaka reasonings). For false view run far deeper into our psyche that it requires you to truly realize things from experiential awakening/knowledge and vision of things as they are.

Also, a lot of people think 'The Right View is No View' which is true since all metaphysical views pertain to false views of existence and non-existence, however the way they go about resolving the problem is by 'forgetting all concepts'. They think that by suspending all beliefs, by forgetting all concepts and sitting quietly in a state of pure awareness, somehow merely by that, they can overcome false views. Let me offer something for you think about: every day we go into a state of deep sleep where all our beliefs, concepts, views, thoughts are temporarily suspended. But when we wake up, what happens? We are as ignorant as ever. Our framework of viewing self and reality is still the same. We still experience the same problems, the same sufferings, the same afflictions. This analogy should clearly show you that sustaining a state of non-conceptuality or mastering a state of 'forgetting the self' is not going to result in a fundamental change or transformation or effortless seeing, unless true wisdom and insight arises.

I shall offer two more analogies which are related: a person deluded as to see a rope as a snake, will live in fear, trying to tame the snake, trying to get rid of the snake, escape from the snake. Maybe he has managed a way to distant himself from the snake, yet the belief that the snake is still there is nevertheless going to haunt him. Even if he managed to master the state of forgetting the snake, he is nonetheless in a state of delusion. He has not seen as it truly is: the snake is simply a rope. In another analogy, the child believes in the existence of santa claus and awaits eagerly for arrival of his presents on Christmas day. One day the parents decide that it's time the child be told the truth about santa claus. To do this, beating the hell out of the child is not going to work. You simply need to tell the child that santa claus doesn't truly exist. In these analogies, I try to showcase how trying to deal with the problem of false views through means of 'forgetting conceptuality, forgetting the self' is as useless or deluded as 'trying to forget the snake, trying to tame the snake, trying to beat the hell out of the child' when the simple, direct and only true solution is only to realize that there is only a rope, and that santa claus isn't real. Only Awakening liberates us from a bondage that is without basis. A ‘self’ was never truly there to begin with, so why are you trying so hard to get rid of it? Simply stop conceiving that there is one. But you cannot help but conceive a self until the doubtless realization of anatta arises which erases our false view.

Without the right contemplation and instilling of right view, you can 'sit quietly in pure awareness' for an entire lifetime without waking up. I cannot stress this point enough because this is a very prevalent erroneous understanding - even someone at the I AM level of realization will talk about non-conceptuality, non-conceptual Presence-Awareness and think it is final. The same goes for other stages. By overemphasizing on non-conceptuality, they will miss the subtler aspects of insight, they will fail to grasp right view, they will fail to tackle the subtler imprints and mental framework of viewing dualistically and

inherently. They will not even see their framework of perceiving self and things as false that is causing some subtle effort and clinging (to a Self or to an actual ground here/now or to an actual world), just like you will never see your dream as a dream until well... you wake up.

As Zen writer and speaker Ted Biringer says, "Accurate understanding is not authentic realization. At the same time, authentic realization can hardly be expected to occur without accurate understanding. And while an absence of "right understanding" almost excludes the possibility of authentic realization, the presence of "wrong understanding" excludes even the slimmest hope of success. If we aspire to realize what Zen practice-enlightenment truly is, then, as Dogen says, "We should inquire into it, and we should experience it." To follow his guidance here we will need to understand his view of what "it" is that needs to be inquired into, and who the "we" is that is to do the inquiring."

**Non-conceptuality does not mean non-attachment. For example when you realize the I AM, you cling to that pure non-conceptual beingness and consciousness as your true identity. You cling to that pure non-conceptual thought very tightly – you wish to abide in that purest state of presence 24/7. This clinging prevents us from experiencing Presence AS the Transience. This is a form of clinging to something non-conceptual due to the false view of duality (subject-object duality) and inherency (perceiving an essence that is truly existing). So know that going beyond concepts does not mean overcoming the view of inherency and its resultant clinging clinging. Even in the substantial non-dual phase, there is still clinging to a Source, a One Mind – even though experience is non-dual and non-conceptual. But when inherent view is dissolved, we see there is absolutely nothing we can cling to, and this is the beginning of Right View and the Path to Nirvana – the cessation of clinging and craving.**

So as you can see, non-conceptual or even non-dual experience does not liberate - so we have to use the intellect to understand right view, and then investigate it in our experience. This is like a fire that in the end burns up the candle it is burning on, consuming itself in the process, leaving no trace even of itself. In other words, conceptual understanding of right view, coupled with investigative practice, results in true realization that dissolves concepts leaving non-conceptual wisdom - but without that process of investigating and trying to understand right view, merely remaining in a state of non-conceptuality isn't going to help you get free. People who fear engaging in thought, trying to understand the right view, challenging their views and understanding of things, are unfortunately going to stick with their own deluded framework of perceiving things.

Now having diverted our attention so much, let us return to the subject at hand.

There are two kinds of views (with sub categories):

**1. View of Subject-Object Duality**

The view of subject-object duality is prevalent in everyone prior to nondual realization. If you have not realized I AM, this duality is felt as a sense of alienation, separation, distance,

between I as a subjective perceiver inside my head looking at the world 'outside' from a distance.

Having realized the I AM, one no longer doubts one's Existence, Pure Presence, Consciousness. It cannot be unseen, because luminosity is the unconditioned characteristic or essence of mind that can never be removed from sight. In that moment of realization, there is no longer any doubts as it is a direct non-conceptual realization of a fundamental fact of reality.

Yet, due to the taints of dualistic view, this luminosity is abstracted from other experiences (from sense perceptions, thoughts, etc). Due to the view that there is a subjective self, or observer, apart from the perceived objects, there is always this split between Me, the Observing Awareness, and 'that' - the observed objects. Even if one perceives Awareness to be an infinite background container and manifestations to be finite appearances popping in and out of this background container awareness like waves on the ocean, there is always this split between 'awareness' and 'contents of awareness'. Contents of awareness appears 'in' awareness, but is not awareness. The view that Awareness is a container for phenomena but is not a phenomena is a kind of dualistic view/position/stance that is unfounded, but in ignorance taken to be true. This is the subject-object dualistic division. When one realizes non-duality, one no longer sees awareness as the background container of appearances.

However even though dualistic bond is gone and one no longer sees distance, separation, inside or outside, but an intimacy with everything, nonetheless there can still be the bond of inherency - seeing Awareness as something inherent (independent, unchanging), a subtle clinging to the view of a Subjective Self even though usually seen as impersonal [in fact probably seen to be universal] and furthermore without subject-object division: 'IT' is inseparable from, and manifesting itself as, all appearances.

**2. View of Inherency**

The view of inherency is twofold: the view that a subjective self [whether personal or universal], and the view that objects/phenomena have intrinsic, objective substantiality (whether gross such as 'a tree', or subtle, such as elemental existence of atoms).

All metaphysical views come down to 'is' or 'is not'. Either something exists, or something does not exist. The former is eternalism, the latter is nihilism. Both views are extremes and to be rejected according to Buddha.

What is subjective self? Self is seen as being an unchanging subject - in other words, moment by moment, the objects of the field of experience come and go, but there is this unchanging subject or Self that remains unchanged and independent of the objective field of things and events. There is something that is me (what I feel as subjectively existing, unchanging and independent), and something that is not me (that which is experienced apart from myself). The former is subjective self, the latter is the objective pole.

For example, the view that there is a self in here, in this body, that remains unchanged even as the body undergoes birth, growing, ageing, and so on, even death for some (view of eternalism - a soul remains unchanged and continues into eternity even after death) or perhaps only in this life (view of annihilation - the self ceases upon death) constitutes the view of a subjective self or soul. If you were to lose your hand, you still feel "I am the same old me". That view that the self remains unchanged pertains to the stance or position of an existent self.

However, exactly how we view subjective self can get more complicated than that, and this view changes and transforms accordingly, it differs from person to person, and depends also on your spiritual practice and experience (if you have one). But at the basis of it all is the view that there IS (exists) a Self – whatever it is.

The view of what Self is can be very coarse or subtle. For most people, their view of self is not very clear - if you ask, 'do you think you exist'? They will say 'yeah, of course I do'. If you ask them, do you feel you exist as a self? They will say 'yes, of course I FEEL [perceive/project/believe/sense] that I do exist'. But if you ask them, where you located? They usually cannot answer you immediately. They may give you vague answers like, 'well, I'm here, of course'. But if you probe them where is the 'here' they refer to, they need to think. They aren't sure (unless they have contemplated about it before). You can ask them, 'are you located in your hands, your legs…?' and so on? Those locations don't seem like likely candidates since if you remove your hands or legs, you still feel like you're there, unchanged - in other words hands and legs are seen as possessions (mine) rather than self (me). As they try to pinpoint where the Self is, usually some will point to the center behind the eyes inside the head, or somewhere in the heart region. Depending on where they cling to as their seat of the Self, they will feel some tension, tightness, and contraction to that region of self.

Also, regardless of where you pinpoint your self to be at, there is always this ongoing sense of alienation from the sensate world at large, a sense that there is this seer behind the eyes looking outwards at the world in the distance. This clinging to a subjective self veils us from having an intimate, non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception of the sensate world as it is. It keeps "us" in a distance (there will always be a sense of distance when there is a sense of a separate self).

This view of self transforms when you undertake practice of self-inquiry. At the moment of self-realization, the view of Self completely undergoes a life-changing shift. There is this undoubtable insight of what Consciousness IS, what Existence IS, what Presence IS. And this Consciousness is undoubtably present, intimate, YOU, closer than your breath. This undeniable fact of BEING is taken to be the true self. It has nothing to do with the body, nothing to do with the world... so the previous views of a self being inside the body or having to do with a body is overthrown. Rather, all experiences (including the body and mind) are seen to be happening TO a background pure existence-consciousness... and soon (for me in two months) it becomes the ultimate impersonal container of everything - the trees, the door, the floor, the birds, the mountains, everything is not happening outside of me, but is all happening in one universal space - Consciousness doesn't belong

to me any more than it belongs to the door or the cat's, it is all just One Existence, One Life expressing itself in every form and being.

At this point the view of Self becomes more impersonal - you see that this entire universe is simply an expression of this impersonal, universal Self, and that this universal source is what you truly are. So again, the view of Self shifts accordingly to your progression in insight and experience. Still, the view of Self is tightly held - coarse in fact, because now you have a very solid (rather than vague) sense of what You are, in contrast to the uncertainty of what Self is before Self-Realization.

This view can potentially be a hindrance to progress because if you cling too tightly to the view that this I AM or Beingness (which actually simply is a manifestation pertaining to the non-conceptual thought realm) is your truest identity, something most special and ultimate, you will crave or cling very tightly to it. This will prevent non-dual from being experienced in other sense doors and experiences.

But if you are able to let go of this clinging, focus on advancing the I AM in terms of the four aspects and with the right pointers and contemplation, your practice progresses and you will come to a point of realization that Awareness/Consciousness/Existence has never been separated in terms of a subject and an object. This is the point where dualistic view is removed (as mentioned earlier) but not the inherent self view yet. All perceptions, experiences, manifestations, sights and sounds are completely non-dual with Consciousness. In other words, they are not happening TO or IN Consciousness, but AS Consciousness. Consciousness is itself taking shape and experiencing itself as the mountains, the rivers, everything IS Consciousness in expression, everything is Consciousness, All is Mind.

At this point, the view of Self shifts again - now it is no longer a Subjective Witness, the sense of a subjective Witness completely dissolves... into One Mind, an indivisible/undivided field of Consciousness expressing itself as everything. The view of Self at this point takes this One Mind, this undivided One Naked Awareness to be the Self. Even though it is indivisible from everything, expresses itself in everything, nevertheless this One Awareness is unchanging and truly existing. Non-duality at this point is understood not as no duality (in which case there is absolutely no Subject, not even an unchanging Awareness), but as the inseparability of subject and object, a collapsing of dualities into Oneness. As an analogy, Awareness is seen to be an unchanging mirror, which nevertheless cannot be separated or divided from the contents in the mirror - Awareness and the contents of Awareness are completely One - there is only One seamless field of experiencing - the One Naked Awareness. Even though seamless, even though not seen as anything personal or separate, Awareness is still seen as an unchanging Subjective Self manifesting itself as the field of experience. So this seamless One is now deemed as the Self.

When we come to the realization of Anatta, the last vestige of (Subjective) Self-View collapses, resulting in what Buddha calls Stream-Entry and the eradication of self-view (sakkayaditthi). At this point, NOTHING at all - not even Consciousness can be deemed as a Self. And how is this so? By seeing Awareness, deemed as Self, as also not-self, in the

manner of 'in seeing always just the seen', 'seeing is just the experience of sight' - not I, not me, not mine, only a selfless process of self-luminous activities without agency. You know self-view has been overthrown when there is through experiential knowledge and vision that there is no self to be found inside or apart from the process of five aggregation. There is simply no You in reference to what is seen and experienced in any manner (to, in, etc) - in seeing just the seen. At this point you see as the suttas state, that the aggregation cannot be said to be happening TO a self, IN a self, nor can it be deemed a self exists IN the aggregates (like a soul located inside the body). As the Buddha explains, "But, lady, how does self-identity not come about?"

"There is the case where a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones — who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma — does not assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form." in Udana Sutta, and in Bahiya Sutta he says "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 cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in terms of that. When there is no you in terms of that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

The view of self is like this: that in the five aggregates of each “being” – form, feelings, perceptions, volition and consciousness (consciousness is itself divided into six kinds), there exists some central self-entity which links, or is behind, or is united with, or observes, or controls, these aggregates. This is similar to thinking that “water” is a central molecule connecting two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. Obviously this is a wrong view. “Water” is merely a convention, a label, that is being imputed on two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom co-dependently arising. It has no substantial reality apart from being merely imputed. The same goes to “Self”. “Self” is simply a baseless imputation, and because we fail to see its imputed nature, we cling to a false view of “Self”. When we realize anatta, we stop conceiving something – some “Self”, to exist, as some kind of truly existing entity. We recognize the merely conventional nature of “self” imputed on the aggregates.

Once the Subjective Self-View has been dissolved through anatta realization, the view of objective existence still occurs. But it is in fact the same imputation process being reified into reality as described in the previous paragraph. Even though there is no longer the view or sense that there is a seer seeing the red flower - only the experience of the red flower, nevertheless the view of objective existence is that the sensate world we experience actually references an objectively existing world, such that if I close my eye, the red flower I previously saw is actually still truly existing out there in a substantial manner. Perhaps, for more intellectual people, they can adopt a more agnostic kind of view with regards to the world - perhaps it is real, perhaps it is unreal, but whether the world truly exists out there however cannot be known by me. Or perhaps, they can even adopt the view of emptiness (through inference and study on emptiness teachings), yet without true experiential realization, the view of objective existence cannot be dissolved... just as even if you adopt the view of anatta through inference (through analogies such as

the Chandrakirti's sevenfold reasoning), nonetheless as I said earlier, with this inferred understanding you will still experience clinging to the sense of self, a sense of contraction and alienation despite the intellectual acceptance of the doctrine, until you have resolved this matter through direct experiential insight.

However, to get a sense of how this view of objective existence is actually untenable, with the example of the red flower I said earlier as an example (that whether I close my eyes, the red flower truly exists out there), consider this: If we were to observe a red flower that is so vivid, clear and right in front us, the “redness” only appears to “belong” to the flower, it is in actuality not so. Vision of red does not arise in all animal species (dogs cannot perceive colours) nor is the “redness” an inherent attribute of the mind. If given a “quantum eyesight” to look into the atomic structure, there is similarly no attribute “redness” anywhere found, only almost complete space/void with no perceivable shapes and forms. Whatever appearances are dependently arisen, and hence is empty of any inherent existence or fixed attributes, shapes, form, or “redness” -- merely luminous yet empty, mere appearances without inherent/objective existence.

When realization is experientially realized, the entire sensate world, including all thoughts, are seen to be completely empty of any inherent objective existence. You can no longer believe or view objects as having an independent core or substance out there. There is simply no way of clinging at sensate world in terms of 'the flower exists in this way' - there is no more clinging to objects and characteristics or objects as possessing certain characteristics, no longer false views about being able to locate or pin down an actuality of objects, no more grasping them as truly existent. We realize that the appearance of redness is not the “redness of a flower” as if there is an entity “flower” to which the attribute of redness can belong to, but rather it is that “flower” is a mere convention imputed on a conglomerate of mere coreless and dependently arisen appearances, so the red IS flower, conventionally named flower IS just that ‘red’ appearance with nothing beyond that, and the vision of red is simply a complete and whole manifestation in which is nothing real. Everything appears as completely illusory yet vividly appearing, having a magical quality (literally 'appearing like magic') to them.

**In Conclusion**

Non-conceptuality, or even non-duality of subject and object does not mean non-attachment. As Thusness says: non-dual luminosity is blissful, but not liberating. Many people think the non-conceptual Presence of I AM, or the non-conceptual and non-dual luminosity free of subject and object is liberation. It is not.

You can also see from my explanations above on 'view of inherency' that the view of duality is simply a subset of the view of inherency (one particular way the self is seen - as a separate subject), and removing the view of duality does not mean removing all views of inherency (having relinquished the view of a dualistic self or a perceiver separate from objects, you can still cling to a unified self or One Mind).

The complete dissolution of views pertaining to duality and inherency (therefore Right

View is No View) is what results in non clinging, because all clinging have their basis in taking self and things as true existents, as something to cling on to. For example to be able to cling on to something, you must be able to establish something which you can cling to. To be able to cling to the sense of self, the view of self must be intact, to be able to cling to objects, the view of objective existence must be intact... in the same way that in order to cling or crave after santa claus, you must believe in the existence of santa claus, to fear the snake in the rope, you must truly be deluded enough to perceive the rope as a snake. All views are mental proliferations, all mental proliferations cause suffering.

As Nagarjuna says, "Not known from another; peaceful; lacking proliferation with proliferations; non-conceptual; undifferentiated — that is the characteristic of reality." A fully awakened person (a Buddha) who never leaves a state of equipoise on reality does not have views, does not even have concepts and thoughts. His or her actions and speech arise spontaneously out of pure wisdom, not through relying on imagination, fabrication, concepts or conventions. His state can never be conceived through the conceptual intellect.

### 4 – THE PRACTICE

I think the topic of Practice is dealt with more in-depth in other sections of the book, therefore I am going to skim through this portion here.

There are many kinds of practices one can engage in in order to give rise to realization. There are neo-Advaita teachers who teach that "no practice is necessary, no realization is needed", I call bullshit to that. As long as ignorance, false view of reality is in effect, we are going to experience suffering, afflictive emotions, sense of self, self-contraction and all that. Even though there never was truly a self and all these are a result of pure delusion, nonetheless, unless we wake up, we can never be liberated from suffering. There are "pure now-ists" that say, all thoughts of awakening are a dream, your true self is fully evident Here and Now. Well that's ok as a pointer - but to take it as a suggestion that no practice or no realization is necessary? Bullshit again, and even though your true nature is fully evident in the present, unless you realize it, it is as useless as a diamond hidden under a beggar's pillow unnoticed - the beggar is still going to be poor, perhaps for his entire life, which is tragic to say the least.

Then there are some of those teachers who think that "there is no practice guaranteed to lead to realization". Well in a sense yes, I cannot guarantee if you will realize your true nature today, tomorrow, one year, or ten years. Nobody can. If some teacher guarantees you that you will certainly attain awakening if you follow him for two years, he's outright lying and probably a fraud trying to buy followers through false promises. This is not to say that awakening within two years is impossible or even farfetched (far from it as I myself took less than two years of self-inquiry to attain Self-Realization) - but there simply

cannot be guarantees like this. There is no fixed or guaranteed timeframe for awakening like there are fixed timeframe for graduation from a university.

But what I can say is that whatever I practiced, I am confident if done sincerely with right understanding, will surely lead to awakening. You simply cannot apply any formulas like 'today you study this, tomorrow you study that, the following day you'll get your certificate' to awakening. But those teachers who didn't offer a method simply aren't offering people any solution at all - as if their own awakening happened by chance. (They may say that practice and meditation is as useful/useless as walking down the beach since awakening can happen in both instances) In that case their awakening is completely useless and not beneficial to anyone else, and it is a waste of time trying to understand what they say since they don't offer you a solution or method or way where you too can wake up. Well, perhaps you might say, their 'method' is simply to keep repeating the same things over and over again and then someday perhaps, you will finally get it.

Well, good luck with that, because it is my experience that merely listening is insufficient - a form of contemplation, investigation, is what is necessary (from my experience) to effectively result in true realization. You may listen to the same doctrine over and over again, and totally get it intellectually and score 100/100 on a 'non-duality exam' (like I did way before I had any real realizations), but no transformation can happen unless you truly see it for yourself, and that is by investigating and contemplating on them yourself in your own experience.

There are many neo-Advaita teachers who basically teach that "seeking after enlightenment is simply the delusion that there is a seeker and a thing apart from a seeker to be sought, therefore it is dualistic". But the problem is that seeking WILL continue as long as you have not realized that there is no you. In other words, it is not through force, will, or intention that seeking and the delusion of a seeker ends.

How does seeking end? Only by the realization that always already, there is no you, and no 'thing' apart from you that can be sought - reality never had a subject and object dichotomy. The 'self' is a mere delusion... there is just the spontaneous perfection of the inseparability of awareness-emptiness AS all appearances, all happenings. When this is seen, naturally the seeking falls away.

And there certainly are ways that result in such realization. So while it is true that your 'true nature' is not a 'state' that is separate from a 'seeker' but is simply already what is happening right now (but as long as it is not realized this fact is as good as a diamond hidden under your pillow - i.e. as good as useless as you think you are poor), nonetheless there are ways in which this non-dual nature of reality can be directly discovered or realized, which is not through 'seeking after states' but through CONTEMPLATION of what already IS. Contemplation is the investigation into the nature of reality, that results in a quantum leap of perception in a moment of insight. Saying neo-Advaitic statements endlessly like “there is no you, all there is is being” repeatedly isn’t going to help. Contemplating, investigating, and seeing what is true for yourself is going to help.

The reason some of those teachers utter bullshit that puts down practice and realization is because of their lack of clarity. The why may have realized non-duality, but they don't realize the conditions, the path, the realization, and how the realization liberates false views, how this affects or frees us from seeking and our karmic propensities at acting dualistically. In short, they don't know how to help you awaken - but I know how to. Sorry if this sounds kind of arrogant, but I assure you it is not, it is just honesty in stating some plain facts for those sensible enough to see it. As a matter of fact, there are many teachers out there who also offer valid methods and ways and practices that can effectively lead to realization. I am far from the only one that talks about practice (lots of teachers and practitioners talk about it - especially in Buddhism, and even traditional Advaita) - I am only explaining one way, a way that worked for me.

When I talk about practice, I often mention that practice has two types: direct path, and gradual path. Of course I don't mean there are only two types of practices in the world, in reality there are countless kinds of practices (though they do still fall under the category of either direct or gradual) from practitioners following countless lineages and teachers and traditions (in Buddhism there is this saying that there are 84000 Dharma Doors to awakening, 84000 being merely a metaphorical number signifying countless, Dharma Doors can mean practices and gateways to realization), most of which I am not familiar with. I say: more power to them, and go for whatever works. If that practice works for you, or resonates with you, go for it. I am not selling you something and saying that you MUST follow the method I offer (remember: I am not a guru, just someone offering his two cents based on personal experience), or that somehow only this method is going to work, or that this method is THE TRUE AND ONLY way. It is not. It is just one of the many ways... but one that has worked very effectively for me and many others. To me my way is the best way, but this is entirely subjective - to someone else whose other ways worked for them, their way is the best way, and so on. To make a 'one for all' statement is to become biased since it does not allow for alternatives.

So what exactly is direct path? What is gradual path?

Direct path does not mean if you take up this practice, you will attain awakening today or tomorrow (it took me 1 year 10 months of self-inquiry to realize I AM and a couple of months more to realize the further stages of insights, which nonetheless I don't consider too long, and I consider the time I took to realize this stuff as not so surprising given the directness and effectiveness of the direct path contemplation). It is direct, because the practice focuses on a form of very direct contemplation on the nature of self and reality that results in a direct realization of the nature of reality. It does not focus on cultivating experiences (such as merely experiencing awareness, presence, space-like awareness, or any other aspects of experience that becomes natural and implicit after realization). Rather, it goes right to the core of things, very quickly resulting in a direct realization of our true nature.Also, the nature of the direct path is that there is a form of inquiry/contemplation which results in direct, instantaneous, doubtless, 'Eureka!' sort of realization. Without this factor similar to koan, that path cannot be considered 'direct'.

As an analogy I consider self-inquiry (Who am I? that leads to I AM realization), Zen koans (but I'm not a Zen master so can't offer more insights on that), contemplation on non-dual

(where does awareness end and manifestation begin, where is the border between awareness and manifestation, etc), contemplation on anatta like Bahiya Sutta (in seeing always just the seen) or Thusness's two stanzas of anatta, contemplating on where thought arise from, where thought abides and where thought goes to (effective for shunyata insight), all these are forms of direct path contemplation.

As for gradual practice: for example, practicing 'Awareness Watching Awareness', turning the light of awareness upon itself and so on is a gradual method that focuses on the experience of I AM but eventually can lead to realization after the experience has matured and stabilized. That is just one of the various methods, for example even Kundalini practices can result in I AM experiences of cosmic consciousness, and that too is a gradual path practice (though one I am not familiar with).

Vipassana practice and mindfulness practice (experiencing the minutest details of the senses as clear as can be) as Thusness and I understand it can result in Anatta realization in a more gradual manner.

But I should say, when I advise people on how to move from non-dual to anatta, I always advice both direct path contemplation and also the practice of vipassana and mindfulness. So it is not always an 'either/or' case. In a way both can support each other. Without a clear sense of non-dual luminosity, it is also hard for a real effective contemplation on Bahiya Sutta. Without any prior experience of non-conceptual Pure Presence, it is also not easy for self-inquiry to be so effective as one will be looking into conceptual thoughts for answers rather than looking at the reality of their non-conceptual Presence. For example Ch'an Master Hsu Yun focus primarily on self-inquiry, but also talks in one instance about 'turning hearing inwards to perceive one's self-nature', which is basically the practice of 'Awareness Watching Awareness' that Michael Langford talks about. The main focus however, if you want to practice direct path, is to focus on inquiring 'Who am I?'

My practice and the practice I advice differs according to your aim at the moment, and where you are in your practice. By that I mean for example, when I had no inkling about what my real nature is, I took up the practice of self-inquiry to realize the I AM. But after the I AM, you should focus on the four aspects of I AM. To proceed into non-dual, the practice is not self-inquiry any more. You can put self-inquiry aside. Instead you should focus on the four aspects, in my case with impersonality first, then later emphasis shifted to the aspect of intensity of luminosity (practice shifts from experiencing luminosity as the background Source to experiencing luminosity as the foreground sensate world and aggregates - sights, sounds, bodily sensations and so on), plus a particular form of contemplation that challenges the view of boundaries, subject and object, inside and outside.

After arising insight into non-dual, you should then investigate into anatta like in Bahiya Sutta (in seeing just the seen). After anatta you should investigate on the 'disjoint, unsupported', as well as contemplate on Shunyata. So again these kind of practices and contemplations differ according to the phase of practice you're at. You should shift your practice as you progress - otherwise if after Self-Realization you get stuck on trying to abide in the I AM 24/7, you cannot progress into further stages of freedom and

effortlessness that require deeper realizations. Some people get stuck in I AM for their whole lives not knowing there is anything further in spirituality. So do not stagnate for too long. Know the maps, know where you are and know how to practice accordingly, and your progress will be faster and you will attain liberation more quickly. But if you have not gotten into any of this stuff, it's best to begin and focus on self-inquiry with the aim of Self-Realization. More practical advice on this subject can be found in the Conversations on Self-Inquiry section of this journal.

Some people may wonder: must I, or should I go through all the steps I have described above? Can I just skip to Anatta instead of going through I AM first? The answer is yes, people have done so. Some schools or teachers don't even mention about I AM, but I usually advise going step by step which does help in clarifying the degrees of no-self (from impersonality to non-dual to anatta), thus allowing you to more fully appreciate the doctrine of Anatta. My highly awakened friend Simpo however has a different opinion, he thinks skipping I AM and going straight into Anatta can 'save time'. I consulted Thusness for his opinion and his reply was this, "This is one area I have been thinking. The main issue is the degree of luminosity. But in no mind or AF (Actual Freedom), we see such experience too." However it is also my experience that after realizing I AM, the progress to other phases of insights happen much more quickly – sort of like entering a fast track, since I AM easily leads to non dual with right investigation since you are able to see the 'taste' of NDNCDIMOP and apply it to everything, and non dual easily leads to anatta with right investigation and right view (at least in my experience). Well not exactly 'easily' but 'easier' (since one can still get stuck unless right view and right understanding is very deeply implanted on day 1).

The luminous essence (as discovered in the I AM realization) must not be neglected, there must be complete conviction of the luminous essence, but the empty nature of luminous presence must also be realized for true liberation. Therefore it is also a good idea to have direct realization and discovery of the luminous essence first, then penetrate into its emptiness. Also, another point that Thusness made before was that hypothetically, if he were to start a new sect or school, he would teach people to start from self-inquiry, since that is the path he walked and therefore he is in a better position to advise accordingly, and if guided properly the practitioner will cut short his/her path, which I agree. He also added that "self inquiry is the speedy way of having a direct touch of Awareness, so is koan."

(Update: Thusness told me to remove the line about 'hypothetically starting a new school' because he thought it was confusing or gives people the wrong impression, yet I am not removing it. However I will emphasize here that Thusness has no intentions of starting a new school.)

At this point I would like to mention something else. There are those who experienced the NDNCDIMOP in foreground sensations (seeing, hearing, smelling, etc) in a peak experience where in seeing the scenery or hearing the sound suddenly the sense of a seer or hearer dissolves and is replaced by the gapless, intimate, and alive perception of the trees, the earth, the surroundings, or one mayeven have realized Anatta. Some of these peoplemay wonder if the 'I AM' is important, or they may think that the 'I AM' is less

important, or worse still they may think that it is some delusional state. This is a wrong conception. First of all, NDNCDIMOP is about direct and pure experience we encounter... be it in sight, sound, taste, etc, the quality and depth of experience in sound, in contact, in taste, in scenery, and so on. If you truly experienced the immense luminous clarity in the senses, what about 'thought'? Have you experienced the immense luminous clarity as a thought with senses shut as a pure sense of existence as it is, and the immense luminous clarity of a thought with senses open? Therefore have a clear understanding before comparing. Just be simple and ask yourself: if one can deeply experience the pure sensory experience in sight, taste, sound, contact, what is the pure experience of mind like? That pure experience (NDNCDIMOP)of mind in its pure intense luminosity is what I call the 'I AM', even if you may not substantialize it into a metaphysical Self depending on your mental framework.

Those who start with self-inquiry first however will often cling tightly to the discovered pure mind which feels like the core of existence itself as their true identity (the I AM) until further insights. In actuality, the NDNCDIMOP in a thought, or in a sound, a sight, etc are all equally primordially pure without hierarchy. Nothing is more ultimate, but discovering the I AM can lead to a strong conviction of what Buddha says, "the mind is luminous", then it becomes easier for them to experience and realize this non-dual luminosity in every foreground perception.

Getting back to topic. Apart from direct path contemplations, daily practice of meditation (both in sitting and daily lives) is helpful, if not for gaining enough mental stability and calmness for true insights to arise, but also to develop the quality of tranquillity and deep samadhi (which will not easily arise without disciplined daily sittings, regardless of whether you have awakened to your true nature or not). In tranquillity, you learn how to drop your attachment to your body and mind, to all thoughts. This leads to tranquilizing of all mental and bodily agitations so that you can enter into a state of meditative absorption which can be very blissful. In meditation, you learn to let go of everything - mind, body, life, teachings, concepts, worries, concerns, agitations, basically Everything. During those days when I practiced Self-Inquiry, Thusness taught me to dedicate sessions everyday apart from self-inquiry, to the practice of Dropping, which is the tranquillity practice I talked about. Of course we should practice letting go in everyday lives as well, but dedicating fixed periods for sitting meditation is also important.

In fact, the whole purpose of Buddha's teachings is to teach us how to let go - of everything, relinquishing all clinging and craving. To be able to do this, there must be insight and tranquillity. As the Buddha said, both insights and tranquillity in tandem is what allows complete liberation from afflictions to take place - both are necessary, both are required. But I do not focus too much about meditation in this book (not that it is not important - far from it), because I wish to focus more on the insight front and leave the details of meditation for other books which have elucidated on those topics far better than I. As an intro, you should read Dakpo Tashi Namgyal's "Clarifying the Natural State" and his more detailed and technical "Mahamudra: The Moonlight" along with Thrangu Rinpoche's commentaries on these texts in books "Crystal Clear" and "Essentials of Mahamudra". All these books are full of deep meditative insights and experiences from clearly awakened masters.

In fact, it is best to take meditation seriously and sit one hour a day. It could be split into two sessions. At least thirty minutes if you do not have time. You can stretch or shorten the sessions depending on your circumstances, there is no quick rule. However a certain period of consistent and regular meditation is necessary to be able to experience the qualities and benefits of meditation in full. Repeat: **consistent and regular practice.** It is useless if you meditate a day or two, then stop for a week. Your practice will not build up this way.

If you cannot sit that long in the beginning, try 20 minutes or 15 minutes, and gradually lengthen. Thusness told me many years ago that it is important to "go beyond names and labels to touch our pristine awareness and experience reality as it is, (in which) gradually the bond will loosen and subside, (whereby) the clarity, vitality and intelligence of our nature will take over". However he said that one must be able to sustain "at least 30 minutes of thoughtlessness in meditation for the clarity and vitality to arise". Note that it does not mean "30 minutes of meditation" (which can be spent in distraction anyway) but rather "30 minutes to maintain the gap between two moments of thoughts" (in the beginning one can hardly maintain more than a minute or even a few moments, but gradually our practice picks up strength), he then said it is important to "break the bond of conceptual thought first, then the clarity and vitality aspect can arise and you can begin to understand more, (however) without a realisation, it becomes a stage of achievement (which can be entered and left)". He said to me since the beginning that I must "learn how to meditate and practice mindfulness till you are able to go pre-symbolic, the actual experience is most important".

Now it does not mean one must be without thought throughout the day (this is not so practical) - thoughts will lessen as our practice develops, but they can arise and be integrated easily with our insight at a later phase. Yet, to have a non-conceptual touch of our essence in the beginning is important which is why meditation practice to quieten our conceptual thoughts is important, and anyway a strong base of tranquillity is important and beneficial regardless of our level of understanding and realization. Even Buddha meditates, as I said. Thusness has often told me to “spend quality hours in meditation and experiencing naked awareness” everyday, especially after the arising of insight. Once he told me about his wish to retire and spend at least 4 hours a day in meditation. Currently due to his busy work commitment he sits probably an hour everyday.

He also criticized teachers who put down the importance of meditation by telling me “do not listen to people saying there is no need for meditation, these are people with only small attainment and realization”. That said, there is a time when everything becomes effortless and non-meditation takes over effortful meditation. However it should be clarified, as Thusness explains, “Meditation can only be deemed unnecessary when a practitioner has completely dissolved the illusionary view of a self. If a person is able to totally dissolve the self in his first experience of non-duality, he is either the cream of the crop among the enlightened… or he is overwhelmed and got carried away by the non-dual experience. More often than not the latter is more likely. It is a pity if a person has experienced non-duality and yet is ignorant of the strength of his karmic propensities. Just be truthful and practice with a sincere heart, it will not be difficult to discover the deeper

layer of consciousness and experience the workings of karmic momentum from moment to moment.

Having said so, it is also true that there will come a time when sitting meditation is deemed redundant and that is when the self liberation aspect of our nature is fully experienced. By then one would be completely fearless, crystal clear and non-attached. The practice of the 2 doors of no-self and impermanence will prepare us for the true insight of the spontaneous and self liberating aspect of our nature to arise."

The Buddha realized enlightenment (as well as recalled countless past lives and understood the workings of karma among his three knowledges) through the practice of anapanasati meditation (mindfulness of breathing). Even after his awakening, he continues to meditate on anapanasati for long hours regularly, explaining that it is for "pleasant abiding" as well as set a good example for his followers. In a sense this is very true – meditation continues to be very beneficial even after awakening. It is like exercising in a way. Even when you become fit, you don't stop exercising, do you? Meditation is similarly beneficial for the mind and body. Even today, I still do anapanasati meditation. That being said, meditation takes a different role after the realization of the twofold emptiness. Meditation no longer becomes an experience-seeking thing, but rather all activities including sitting, walking, standing, acting and so on are simply the natural and effortless actualization of our Buddha-nature, but I digress for now. Suffice to say, meditation continues to be healthy and beneficial but no longer with the kind of seeking and attachment as before realization.

Zen Master Hakuun Yasutani wrote on the importance of meditation in Flowers Fall (a great book), "the essential points of the actual practice of the Buddha way are the three studies: moral foundations, concentration, and wisdom, and within those zazen is the heart of the actual practice of the Buddha way. Therefore the practice of Shobogenzo is the samadhi of zazen."

*Note: Zazen is the Zen meditation practice of "just sitting".*

Having said this, the Samadhi being spoken here is not the mundane Samadhi of jhanas and altered states of perceptions. Those are shamatha or concentration states that are very pleasant and beneficial both to one's well being and also serves as a foundation for insight, but they are not insight themselves. In and of itself, jhanas and mundane samadhis do not lead to liberation. Therefore not all meditators attain insight or liberation, because they could simply be experiencing all those mundane altered states and not know how to investigate the nature of reality, which is the practice of insight meditation (vipassana/vipashyana) resulting in the arising of true realization. This book contains instructions that when contemplated on, results in direct realization. In summary, meditation is conducive to the development of insight and tranquillity, or wisdom and samadhi. It is an important practice.

In Buddhism, we say that a person who wishes to attain awakening and liberation should master three fronts: morality, samadhi, and insight/wisdom. This book focuses on the insight/wisdom front, but by no means implying that morality and samadhi are

unimportant. However, many other books have dealt with these topics to a much greater degree than I, and I do not have something better to offer than them in this regards. But basically, if you have truthfulness, harmlessness and generosity in your life, this is going to be of beneficial help to your pursuits in samadhi and wisdom, because a mind attached to lying, harming, and selfishness is going to cause afflictive hindrances (hatred, guilt, greed, and other mental disturbances or hindrances) preventing true samadhi and insight from arising.

For more info check out the "Measureles Mind" by Geoff https://www.scribd.com/document/274168728/Measureless-Mind , as it explains Buddha's teachings on ethics (as well as on meditation, insight, etc). To quote from the author Geoff: "Ethical conduct is one of the three main lines of development of the noble eightfold path. Skillful ethical conduct is considered to be a necessary prerequisite for the other two lines of development, which are meditative stabilization and discernment. This consideration of ethics is functional and straightforward: if we are engaging in unethical conduct the mind will be conflicted and unable to develop the mental qualities needed for steady mindfulness, full awareness, and mental composure. And without the stability of meditative composure the mind cannot develop discernment. This is the case regardless of whether or not we are aware of any conflicted defilements… …And so ethical conduct isn't to be understood as an end in and of itself. It's a means skillfully employed to bring the re-becoming process of saṃsāra to an end. It's a line of development oriented towards the goal of ending birth and death. Therefore this contemplative conduct actually transcends conventional norms of "goodness."

The cultivation of virtue itself can also cause a wholesome joyous mind, and a joyous mind or a mind imbued with good mental qualities like loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity is conducive to the cultivation of concentration and insight. The cultivation of virtues also result in merits, which is an important requisite for awakening, a topic I shall not elaborate here but is already explained in other forum threads such as http://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/409161.

### 5 - THE RESULT/FRUITION

You may be wondering, what is all these fuss about? Why should I bother with this stuff? Why get awakened? What is the results out of this? Is there any practical transformations in life?

There are many "awakened persons" who say there are no perceivable differences apart from perhaps having a sense of resolving the question about 'self', reaching the end of seeking, the end of false notions about self, and maybe having more clarity in life.

But to me, in my experience, when you have sufficiently deep insight and experience, a far more profound and life-changing transformation takes place.

As spoken in the other chapter in the book on maps of awakening, speaking from experience, I can report a gradual emotional transformation or attenuation after the initial insight into anatta. I shall not repeat the details here but summarize them.

Here's what I know can be attained through deep awakening (at this moment these are the ones more apparent to me but as time progresses there could be more):

- a permanent freedom from all delusions of pertaining to the view of an existing self or object

- freedom from any sense of self, separation, alienation from the world, self-contraction

- freedom from attachment to a sense of a body-mind, drop off body-mind - no more inside and outside or any kind of boundaries and weight

- high degree of attenuation of craving, anger, fears, sorrow, attachments, or any afflictive emotions, thus by inference the complete eradication of all mental afflictions, defilements and clinging are definitely possible

- pure bliss and wonder and delight in the intimate and intense aliveness of every moment's experience due to effortless and perpetual NDNCDIMOP: non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception of reality

- deep sense of wakefulness, clarity and aliveness

- wakefulness and alertness increased

- thought activity decreases, discursive thoughts lessens tremendously, replaced by NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception)

- thoughts that do arise self-releases without trace

According to Buddha, when you achieve full awakening in the Hinayana level (the attainment of personal liberation, Arhantship), it also confer things like 'ending the cycle of rebirth' in the literal sense of not having to be reborn again and again in this world of suffering - but then I shall not dwell into this, understanding that not all readers may accept such a doctrine (I do - and past lives are something that can be recalled in meditation so to me it is more than just a theory or a belief, furthermore scientific research like those by Dr. Ian Stevensons backs rebirth). If you are into Mahayana like I do, my aim is to attain full Buddhahood for the sake of benefitting mass sentient beings which is not merely personal liberation - Buddhahood confers things like great compassion, mastery of skilful means in teaching, omniscience, mastery of supernatural powers and the ten virtues (paramis) and so on. I am not a Buddha - just learning and practicing to be one.

Anyhow, the effects of awakening I have currently observed are the natural result of having discovered a true and accurate way of perceiving things, freed from the view and sense of self and objects, resulting in just the NDNCDIMOP of the sensate world as it is. It should be understood that you should not focus on removing emotions head on, or removing thoughts head on, or removing sense of self head on. Why? If you do not go for the roots, but try to cut off the branches, then you leave the root intact. Your delusion is intact even if you managed to 'get rid of the sense of self' (just like your delusion is intact even if you managed to distant yourself from the illusory snake that actually is a rope). But once you cut off the root ignorance, the branches are dealt with, or they naturally fall away easily. So when realization occurs, you honour realization first, understanding that there is no liberation from afflictions without first liberation from ignorance via true knowledge and vision of things as they are. You don't sit in meditation all day trying to cultivate 'thoughtlessness'. You don't try sitting in meditation all day to 'get rid of the self' or 'get rid of emotions'. These are naturally dealt with in the maturation of true insight and experience. They are a natural result of clarity.

Also, if self-view and sense of self is not relinquished, people generally treat 'letting go' as a form of dissociative practice. 'I' or the 'witnessing awareness' dissociate from 'my feelings', as if there are two things that can separate from each other. This simply strengthens the delusion of self, leading to more clinging, not liberation.

This is why Thusness warned a long time ago: "...When one is unable to see the truth of our nature, all letting go is nothing more than another form of holding in disguise. Therefore without the 'insight', there is no releasing.... it is a gradual process of deeper seeing. When it is seen, the letting go is natural. You cannot force yourself into giving up the self... purification to me is always these insights... non-dual and emptiness nature...."

Even if you are able to achieve a state of letting go to a high degree and you enter into samadhi, this is merely a temporary state where afflictions are temporarily in abeyance or suppressed. This is ok - but keep in mind they are merely suppressed, not uprooted. Only wisdom in tandem with samadhi can uproot afflictions permanently.

Buddha taught practice (such as the four foundations of mindfulness, seven factors of awakening, and so on) from his awakened experience, sort of like working backwards for sentient beings, translating his experience into practices. In other words, the experience of pure alertness, clarity, equanimity, and so on... are qualities natural in one's experience after realization, but before realization they are difficult to be experienced effortlessly (though that doesn't mean we shouldn't practice to experience them).

It should be known that there is a difference between practice after realization and the practice before realization. After realization, practice is effortless, without any attempt to modify experience - just resting in the natural equipoise on reality. Such can also be spoken of as 'non-meditation' since it is not really effortful practice. **It should be understood however that only an awakened person can experience 'non-meditation', an unawakened person attempting to do 'non-meditation' will only fall under the power of their own conditioning. For example they may mistake lazing around and day-dreaming with 'non-meditation', which is a tragedy. The conditioning here means falling**

**into the magical spell of duality, the stories about 'me' and 'the world', the stories of 'I', 'me', and 'mine'.**

An awakened person who realizes the nature of reality is able to overcome his view of inherent and duality, because there is no deluded views about 'I', no 'mine', and no 'other' (objects), the awakened person does not give rise to delusion and attachment (therefore requires no effort or antidote) and is naturally and effortlessly authenticated by the unity of luminosity and emptiness (Buddha-nature) in the midst of their life, not just in sitting meditation. For such a practitioner, all thoughts and perceptions are in a state of self-releasing or self-liberation, no effortful practice or antidote is necessary because what self-releases does not cause harm or delusion. Due to the view of emptiness naturally being actualized in daily life, a person does not grasp on 'I', 'me', 'mine' and 'things', and due to non-grasping, there is also no need to make special effort to 'let go' - there is no problems (attachment due to inherent view) that need to be remedied.

As an analogy: a person suffering hallucination may imagine there to be a beautiful paradise in front of him, so he chases after the mirage experiencing craving, attachment, and suffering. Because of his sickness, the person needs to be treated with an antidote - some kind of medication to prevent the outbursts of mania. Such is the dilemma of sentient beings. Seeing things as real and inherent, we grasp and crave after them, but an awakened person knows better - there is no person, nor object that is real - everything is illusory. Having no delusions about it, such a person does not give rise to grasping and naturally no remedy is needed. Such an awakened being is also not delusioned about there being a 'special state' that he therefore craves after (after all, everything is empty) - he is not seeking after some nice transcendental experience, therefore no effort is required, but is simply liberated on the spot.

The need for effort and meditation only arise when one feels some suffering, deviation, or distraction that requires 'antidote', but for one who effortlessly rests in the equipoise on reality, does not require antidote, meditation and effort. But until then, meditate hard, practice hard to awaken (and it doesn't mean after awakening you don't need to sit, but it becomes effortless without agenda or attempt to modify our experience - even the Buddha does regular sitting meditation just because it is healthy and promotes well-being). Do not underestimate the power of our karmic conditioning - it affects our every moment experience until awakening.

Also, before realization, it is truly difficult to experience things like 'the luminosity of the textures and forms of manifestation', 'non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception' and things like that. As Thusness said to me before, to stress on these things to people is to cause them more unnecessary frustrations. They simply cannot see it, even though we (after realization) see it all the time - we can't even unsee it. So the practical thing is not to emphasize these things to them again and again, but advice them to set aside time every day to meditate, practice mindfulness, practice contemplation. Eventually when realization arises, these qualities become effortless. But you can't tell them to experience mindfulness 24/7 - that is just not possible. It will be very good already if they can experience pure clarity in their relatively brief period of sitting meditation, let alone for the entire day.

But after Anatta, it seems that this brilliant non-dual luminosity is very effortless - I don't need to practice anything to be in NDNCDIMOP or the pure consciousness experience. I don't need to practice 30 minutes of mindfulness or meditation to reach a state of pure consciousness or NDNCDIMOP. Every ordinary and mundane experience even in daily life and non-meditation setting is already implicitly so. Before awakening, such experiences seem hard to attain, and are rare and intermittent, requiring much effort in practicing mindfulness and meditation, but after awakening it becomes realized and experienced as the natural state, experienced in real-time in everyday living.

Like Simpo said, "IMO, before the insight of no-self, it is quite hard to not get caught at the content level. This is because, before the non-dual, non-conceptual experience/insight, one does not know how 'not getting caught' in the content is like."

That is why insight is important. But don't worry if you don't experience all those qualities before awakening - it is very difficult to, but it becomes natural after insight, so just focus on insight.

# A MESSAGE FOR BUDDHISTS/MAPS AND STAGES OF AWAKENING

The following posts may be confusing for some Buddhists (that would depend on which tradition, some traditions like Zen do aim for the realization of I AMness first, while some Theravadins/Vipassana practitioner do not go through this phase*), as Buddhism teaches about Anatta, No Self. The 'I AM' and 'divine force' is simply a phase I have undergone and emphasized especially in the earlier part of the document. In the I AM phase, the non-dual ('Brahman IS the World', 'Observer IS the Observed', etc) nature of Awareness is not realized. And furthermore there are further phases like Anatta and Emptiness. Nevertheless I believe that the Buddha had gone through the "I AM" phase prior to his final enlightenment. It should also be understood that the 'Certainty of Being' or 'I AMness' is not denied at later phases; rather, it is simply a progression of insights that integrate the realization of non-duality, and then anatta and emptiness into one's experience (to quote from Thusness, that there is no forgoing of this I AMness but "...it is rather a deepening of insight to include the non-dual, groundlessness and interconnectedness of our luminous nature. Like what Rob said, "keep the experience but refine the views".")

As Thusness wrote to Fugazzi whose emphasis is on Anatta and did not go through the I AM phase:

*Hi Fugazzi,*

*What you have shared are equally precious and indeed the essence of Buddhism is to realize and have direct experiential insight of 'what is' as a process rather than entity. AEN's diary is a sincere documentation of his journey of how he progresses from "I AM" to non-dual to the arising insight of anatta. His conditions differ from yours and some others and therefore his sharing can help to shed some valuable insights for some of us.*
*Happy journey.*

*****Regarding some Vipassana practitioners not going through the I AM phase, see Thusness's explanation in dharma teacher Daniel M. Ingram's forum Dharma Overground (www.dharmaoverground.org) in April 2009:

*"Hi Gary,*

*It appears that there are two groups of practitioners in this forum, one adopting the gradual approach and the other, the direct path. I am quite new here so I may be wrong*

*My take is that you are adopting a gradual approach yet you are experiencing something very significant in the direct path, that is, the 'Watcher'. As what Kenneth said, "You're onto something very big here, Gary. This practice will set you free." But what Kenneth said would require you to be awaken to this 'I'. It requires you to have the 'eureka!' sort of realization. Awaken to this 'I', the path of spirituality becomes clear; it is simply the unfolding of this 'I'.*

*On the other hand, what that is described by Yabaxoule is a gradual approach and therefore there is downplaying of the 'I AM'. You have to gauge your own conditions, if you choose the direct path, you cannot downplay this 'I'; contrary, you must fully and completely experience the whole of 'YOU' as 'Existence'. Emptiness nature of our pristine nature will step in for the direct path practitioners when they come face to face to the 'traceless', 'centerless' and 'effortless' nature of non-dual awareness.*

*Perhaps a little on where the two approaches meet will be of help to you.*

*Awakening to the 'Watcher' will at the same time 'open' the 'eye of immediacy'; that is, it is the capacity to immediately penetrate discursive thoughts and sense, feel, perceive without intermediary the perceived. It is a kind of direct knowing. You must be deeply aware of this "direct without intermediary" sort of perception -- too direct to have subject-object gap, too short to have time, too simple to have thoughts. It is the 'eye' that can see the whole of 'sound' by being 'sound'. It is the same 'eye' that is required when doing vipassana, that is, being 'bare'. Be it non-dual or vipassana, both require the opening of this 'eye of immediacy'"*

and

*"Hi Gozen,*

*I fully agree with what you said. It is just a casual sharing with Gary as he seems to be experiencing some aspects of the direct path.*

*To me both gradual and direct path will eventually lead us to the same destination. It is rather the degree of understanding we have on a particular teaching. If we practice wholeheartedly, whatever traditions will lead us to the same goal.*

*Frankly without re-looking at the basic teachings of Buddhism about the dharma seals and dependent origination, I will be leaving traces in the Absolute. In vipassana, there is the 'bare attention' and there is the mindful reminding of impermanence, no self and suffering of the transience. It is a very balanced and safe approach.*

*Like in Zen tradition, different koans were meant for different purposes. The experience derived from the koan "before birth who are you?" is not the same as the Hakuin's koan of "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" The five categories of koan in Zen ranges from hosshin that give practitioner the first glimpse of ultimate reality to five-ranks that aims to awaken practitioner the spontaneous unity of relative and absolute are meant to prevent leaving traces. (You should be more familiar than me* *) My point is when we simply see the Absolute and neglect the relative, that 'Absolute' becomes dead and very quickly another 'dead Absolute construct' is being created. In whatever case, we can only have a sincere mind, practice diligently and let the mind figure the rest out.*

*The mind does not know how to liberate itself.*
*By going beyond its own limits it experiences unwinding.*
*From deep confusion it drops knowing.*
*From intense suffering comes releasing.*
*From complete exhaustion comes resting.*
*All these go in cycle perpetually repeating,*
*Till one realizes everything is indeed already liberated,*
*As spontaneous happening from before beginning."*

Lastly, as to how all these lines up with the traditional Buddhist maps about awakening and stuff, this is not an easy topic because there are so many maps: nanas, jhanas, four stages of enlightenment in Theravada (sotapanna to arhantship), ten bhumis in the Mahayana model (or 13, or 16 in Vajrayana), the five ranks of Tozan, the Four Yogas of Mahamudra, the 10 oxherding pictures, and so on. To add to the complexity, different teachers may have different interpretations of each of these maps.

There are some who mistakenly think that the insights and experiences I present here are jhana states or states of samadhi, or even the Visudhimagga-style insight stages (nanas) – which are still altered and shifting states of perspective that can be entered and left and cycled through.

First of all, I would say that Thusness 7 stages (apart from stage 3 which is rather state based but also has some insight involved) are based on realizations, so are not states that

require concentration like jhanas (or nanas). They are not any form of temporary altered states of perception. As to how the Thusness 7 Stages line up, it is all pretty clear: Stage 1 and 2 is I AM, Stage 4 is Non Dual, Stage 5 is Anatta, and Stage 6 is Shunyata. Stage 7 to me is not separated from 4, 5, 6 but something realized in 4, 5, 6, i.e. you realize spontaneous perfection of non-duality in 4, spontaneous perfection of anatta in 5, and spontaneous perfection of emptiness in 6.

There are no entering and exiting. Realizations are permanent, unlike states you can shift in and out of like jhanas. For example in anatta you realize self, agency, seer, 'the awareness', and the likes are an illusion - seeing, hearing, awareness, etc, is always already just the forms, colours, shapes, sights, sounds of the moment. This is not a state that you need to sustain - but something you see through, and once seen through, you can never unsee it (always already, seeing is just seen, hearing is just sounds, thinking is just thoughts, there never is or was or will be an agent, perceiver, or self).

As I told someone who once compared Thusness stages with Jhanas: The descriptions of the jhanas are totally unlike Thusness Stage 5 and 6, for example Stage 5 has nothing to do with "infinite consciousness/nothingness" (rather it is 'in the seen just the seen, in the heard just the heard, no you in terms of that' - Bahiya sutta), and Stage 6 emptiness are not about 'neither perception nor non perception' but rather 'Form is like a glob of foam; feeling, a bubble; perception, a mirage; fabrications, a banana tree; consciousness, a magic trick — this has been taught by the Kinsman of the Sun. However you observe them, appropriately examine them, they're empty, void to whoever sees them appropriately.' - Phena Sutta

Even I AM confers an important realization, so it is not just a state or experience you enter in and out. I doubt the I AM can be equated or linked with the jhana of infinite consciousness (which is a temporary altered state of perception), but it is related to Buddha's statement that "the mind is luminous". In fact it would seem ridiculous for someone self-realized to think that they can lose I AM which is just the luminous essence of mind. Therefore Thusness pointed out that the I AM realization is not just a 'formless state of experience'. However it is true that at this phase one will one want to abide in I AM constantly. And this 'abiding in I AM' could arguably be related to the 'jhana of infinite consciousness'.

What I have told Thusness since long time ago is that the path laid out in Thusness 7 stages has nothing to do with nanas and jhanas and the cycling as I don't begin any sort of cycling through any of those altered states of perspectives through that practice, and this is something Thusness agrees with me. This does not mean I cannot enter jhana, but jhana is something totally different from what the 7 stages present. If anything, the direct path presented here is more about 'noticing' and 'realizing' facts of reality that is always already so (even in the most mundane and ordinary of all circumstances in a non-altered state of perception), and this can result in permanent realizations. As for the sixteen nanas, it is my understanding that one will only experience or go through them if one practice in a particular way – it definitely does not apply to all kinds of practitioners as it does not apply to me or Thusness.

As I said earlier, realization has nothing to do with states of concentration - and while its true my mind was very stilled before I realized I AM, I was not in any altered states of perception (just a very still mind) when that eureka moment of realization occurred for me. Furthermore: anatta realization happened to me Oct '10 in *a non-meditative setting*, when I was marching (lol) to the cookhouse in my military uniform and contemplating on the instructions to Bahiya, when I was in basic military training (as of writing this article, I'm still in army doing my mandatory national service). No jhanas at all. Before that, an intense and long NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct mode of perception) of the senses happened when I was dancing in the nightclub in August 2010. That shifted me from I AM to 'non-dual in the foreground practice'.

You see, such realizations need not occur in a meditative setting, or in an altered state of perception, as it can occur in the most ordinary, mundane, or funny settings. I remember one zen master was so frustrated with not getting enlightened that he left the monastery, went to a prostitute, and then woke up in the midst of sexual intercourse (of course it will be stupid to follow him as an example as every person's circumstance to awaken is different – plus if you wish to achieve complete liberation as the Buddha taught, one must come to experience 'dispassion' which is the freedom from 'passion and craving', so entertaining and fuelling wanton passions and sexual craving and activities is not advisable). Interestingly, you never hear about Zen masters awakening in a jhana state, almost always those enlightenment occurred in a setting like "he hears the bamboo pole making that sound, he hears the sound of bell, he sees the cup breaking," and then he/she woke up.

So one of the Zen masters say, "When I heard the temple bell ring, suddenly there was no bell and no I, just the ringing."

Anatta is not a temporary state of egolessness or a peak experience where sense of self suddenly disappears. It is rather, a dharma seal, the nature of reality which his always already so: never was there an agent, doer, observer, controller, behind experiences, actions and thoughts: in seeing just the seen, no seer, in action just the doing, no doer.

So now we strike out nanas and jhanas as being possible correlates to the insights I present here, do they correspond to the other maps? Yes, I would say, the Mahamudra map and the Tozan's five ranks are ones which I like. However the interpretations for all these maps vary greatly depending on the interpreters. Generally, insight into anatta and shunyata combined might be related to the Mahamudra yoga of one taste to non-meditation. The Zen 10 oxherding pictures depend highly on the interpreter as there are so many interpretations available, and they do not always express deep clarity of insights (however, the commentary by Zen Master Kubota Ji'un very clearly expresses the realization of anatta in Stage 9) –the original text from many centuries ago describes No Mind (the experience of anatta, but not the realization of anatta) as the 9$^{th}$ stage, so the ten oxherding pictures are originally about realizing I AM and then maturing the experience by moving on to non-dual and no-mind and spontaneous action. There are few maps that truly, accurately, and clearly described the realization of anatta (the insight into anatta is not common to begin with).

The ten bhumis and four stages to arhantship are related yet not exactly the same. I would say, the initial realization of anatta is stream entry (first stage to Arhantship) since the realization of anatta confers the end of self-identity view (sakkayaditthi), however, it is also possible that such a realization may result in Arhantship immediately, though rare (for example, Bahiya in the Bahiya Sutta), all depending on how much fetters or afflictions or defilements that person is able to overcome through that moment of insight. In a note to one of the suttas, it says *"The commentary explains that Ven. Nandaka introduces the topic of the seven factors of awakening here to indicate where the nuns have more work to do in their practice. From the questions and answers, it is obvious that they have developed the second factor of awakening — analysis of qualities (or dhammas) — which is the factor associated with insight and discernment. However, for their resolves to be fulfilled, they need to focus on developing the factors associated with tranquillity and concentration."*

In other words, to remove all afflictions/defilements (suffering, afflictive emotions like craving, anger, fear, or any kind of attachments) completely, you need to perfect the seven factors of awakening, which not only includes discernment and insight, but also other aspects like tranquillity and concentration, which is to be developed through meditation practice. This is basically what Thusness told me too: just having insight (while being able to clear the three lower fetters) is not sufficient for the complete ending of all fetters/afflictions, it has to be coupled with some mastery of samadhi and meditation practice. Therefore, I say meditation practice is very important. On another note: the definitions of 'fourth path' are being described differently by different people, for example Daniel M. Ingram seems to describe it as some sort of realization of anatta, Kenneth Folk describes it as "feeling done", and so on. But I am in this case following the Buddha's description which may be very different: the four paths based on the gradual elimination of the ten fetters.

As I recall from Loppon Namdrol (Malcolm Smith), the understanding of emptiness between a 1$^{st}$ and a 10$^{th}$ bhumi, or even of a Buddha, is similar. The only difference lies in the number of qualities (such as the ten paramitas) attained as well as the number or degree of afflictions (craving, aversion, ignorance, fear, sorrow, suffering, any form of attachments) removed, and this difference leads to the different gradations of the 10 bhumi stages resulting in Buddhahood. Similar statements can be said about Anatta in Sotapanna to Arhantship. Usually having an insight of anatta does not confer the end of all fetters, and Thusness informed me over the years that he had undergone stages that cleared fetters even after his initial realization of anatta (for example, overcoming sexual craving is something that Thusness experienced at one stage). This has been my experience too, as I can report a gradual emotional transformation or attenuation after the initial insight.

In instances where loud sounds would cause fear in the past, such as when a sound is so loud that my body jerked forward from a state of sleep automatically as an automatic and spontaneous response, now came with no sense of fear or mental agitation at all – purely a bodily action and experience. Thrill rides appeared scary to my friends, and yet I simply undergo the entire experience without any sense of self, nervousness, fear, bodily contraction, etc - only the pleasant sights and sensations of cool breeze, simply the

directness of sensation (in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard) without any sense of self, there is also no sense of contraction at all – just wide-open enjoyment of the sensate experience as they are without craving/aversion/clinging/fear. (That fear is largely due to identification, possessiveness, and attachment to the body-mind which when dropped completely leads to a form of fearlessness) When I told my dad about this, he said he knew of such people, and they are (physically) lacking a nerve in their brain that could trigger fear or anxiety even when they sit on a roller coaster ride. To my knowledge this is not true for me as fear and anxiety used to arise – and not rarely. Also, situations that would have led to anger, irritation, have stopped resulting in outbursts of emotions. I notice an attenuation of desires and yet there is still some preference to experience the pleasant, i.e. I still listen to music very often, perhaps partly due to habitual tendencies from the past (though not a very strong craving/clinging, as music or no music doesn't affect the perfection, aliveness, and wonder of life at any moment, even the ordinary and mundane sound of raindrop, the sound of aircon humming, everything is just alive, wonderful, intense, brilliant, even blissful - so basically I can easily do without music as every moment of aliveness is like music to my senses).

Am I free from emotions? I cannot make such claims as latent tendencies are not something immediately obvious under limited stress-conditions (who knows if some very very stressful situation may lead to them arising again), but at least as I can see it, they no longer show up much these days, and experience is effortlessly 'in the seeing just the seen, in the hearing just the heard' without any sense of a self/Self. Am I free from all unskilful and negative habits? Certainly not, just that there isn't much of a push/pull (craving or aversion) to experience, and yet unskilful habitual behaviours (in speech, in action) still can surface for me that needs to be worked on, and perhaps without much life wisdom learnt in life (reminder that I'm still 21) I will never be able to perfect them. As Thusness puts it aptly: growing wisdom is not the same as prajna wisdom. Having prajna wisdom, the wisdom into our true nature, does not confer worldly or growing wisdom. For the latter, you need to be honed by life experience gradually (it is 'growing' over time). On the other hand, I do not kill anymore (not even mosquitoes, etc), avoid harming oneself and others, and I think I have a reasonably high standard of moral conduct.

As for bodhisattva bhumi systems: many interpretations again but generally, the anatta and shunyata combined (the realization of twofold emptiness) is the base criteria for 1st bhumi. Also, the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions generally also place equal emphasis on the insight of secondfold emptiness (where the aggregates are also emptied), in contrast to the Theravada tradition which generally only teaches or emphasizes the firstfold emptiness (anatta) which reduces or deconstructs the subjective self or essence into the constituents of the aggregates.

Lastly, on powers, chakras, and the likes: many people asked me if I experienced anything related to chakras, chi, energy, etc etc… my answer is no. At least until this point, I did not experience such phenomena. It may be that under certain circumstances or meditative states, such phenomena may arise, but due to the nature of my direct path practice (after all my practice isn't awakening the Kundalini and so on) such phenomena are not obvious to me. I can't say the same for Thusness as I'm sure he has experienced stuff I didn't (he did mention experiences related to energy, chakras etc). But one thing I can say for sure

is this: what is experienced for another person may not apply for another and usually has to do with the way of practice being different for each person. Therefore these phenomenologies are simply not the kind of criterias which you can use to judge or guage someone's level of awakening. Everybody is unique. It may be related to one's awakening for one person but it may have nothing at all to do with another person's awakening.

As for supernatural powers: Does awakening naturally confer things like psychic powers? Again the answer is a definite no, as psychic phenomena (recalling past lives, reading others' thoughts, hearing and seeing without limitations of distance, manipulation of elements, or even amazing stuff like levitation, walking through walls etc etc) are side-effects of samadhi states, or states of very strong concentration or absorption. (And it is not just ancient yogis who have achieved such feats – even someone like the modern lay Vipassana master Di Pa Ma was said to have such mastery of psychic powers as to be able to walk through walls and appear as two persons at the same time) In such altered states of experiences or absorptions, or in deep jhana states, one can certainly have psychic powers – and one does not even need to be awakened at all. But it is not true that all liberated persons have powers. The Arahants in the Sushima Sutta did not have powers, and the Buddha pointed out that those who gained liberation solely through wisdom/insight (and were not trained in the higher absorptions) do not have powers.

The sutta can be read in https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN12_70.html

That being said, my highly awakened friend Sim Pern Chong (simpo_) had recounted to me in details many of his past lives he could recall in jhanas or meditative absorption (and even explained the karmic implications on this life), it was very interesting to say the least. He had psychic powers even before knowing Thusness or having a deep awakening. Thusness himself also recalls many of his past lives in meditation. So these kind of things are definitely possible if you have certain mastery of your meditation practice. However it should not be confused or associated with awakening or liberation. There are a lot of bullshit misinformation and false expectations about awakening propagated by those who are not themselves awakened. I'm just glad to be able to do my part in clarifying some of these misinformation.

# JOURNAL AND CONVERSATIONS
# I AM

**Note***: Unless otherwise stated, all underlined words refer to articles that can be found in my blog*: **http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com**

(Based on a post on 10th February 2010)

Thusness told me to write this down. So I'll just note down some of my meditation experience yesterday.

I was doing self inquiry yesterday with my back straight and legs crossed in the position of sitting meditation, contemplating 'Who am I', 'Before Birth Who am I'... with an intense desire to know the truth of my being. As the thoughts subside, an intense and palpable sense of beingness and presence, the only 'thing' that remains that I feel to be my innermost essence... became very obvious... very very vivid and intense, and feels like a constant background in which everything is taking place, thoughts (almost none at that moment, but arise afterwards) that arise are also taking place in this unchanging background... and there is this certainty and doubtlessness about this I AM-ness, IT is absolutely real and undeniable. IT/I AMness/The Witness is the only solid and undoubtable Presence and is clearly present with or without thoughts.

I remembered briefly thinking after having experienced that, "So this is it! This is enlightenment!" and "No, not enlightenment", but it's funny how these thoughts are just passing thoughts like wind, occurring in this solid constant undoubtable sense of presence. Inconsequential and illusory doubts and concepts are arising within undoubtable presence... passes away as soon as they arise because there is no more identification with the mind/ego. After all, I am just this Reality, this background of awareness that is ever-present and watching, I'm not any of those thoughts that come and go. The part that thinks 'I am enlightened' or 'I am not enlightened', that is not what I am and can never be 'enlightened' and thus totally irrelevant, while what I am, is always already completely clear and perfect beyond doubt, already and always perfectly 'awake'/'aware'. From the perspective of Consciousness, all thoughts and perceptions are just illusory appearances coming and going within consciousness.

I just found a quote by Nisargadatta Maharaj that puts it so well: "**This reality is so concrete, so actual, so much more tangible than mind and matter, that compared to it even diamond is soft like butter. This overwhelming actuality makes the world dreamlike, misty, irrelevant."**

Just a pure sense of existence and beingness. An unmoving context, like a screen in which the entire display of life is shown in. This background of presence and awareness is formless, behind, and prior to all thoughts and forms. Feels most vivid when there is no engagement in thoughts, no thoughts, just BEING it. Though, thoughts that arise didn't affect the background sense of presence. Presence remains unmoved, unaffected, undeniably present. It may be apparently obscured when the attention goes all out at thoughts and feelings, such that we are so totally identified with them that we think that they are the entirety of our being. That is why we need to self-inquire seriously, not taking any concepts to be truth, but relentlessly inquire into the depths of our being without any conceptual perception until we feel with confidence this solid, thoughtless being and presence is the undeniable, unmoving essence of being. It reveals itself easily if we let go of our thoughts in meditation, like a jewel at the bottom of the lake reveals itself if the surface is calm.

Keep inquiring: Who am I?

Doubt (stop following) every single thought until only the undoubtable, vivid, non-conceptual self-knowing Presence and Beingness remains. It is free from all conceptual constructs, separation and attributes. Understand that no concepts and thoughts are an accurate representation of reality, self, or the world. Absolutely no thought is the (absolute) truth. Naked Self-Knowing Presence is the only source of true certainty, all thoughts are doubtable and disposable, like a dream that when we wake up we realise to be simply projections and imaginations.

You are non-dual self-knowing Awareness. Without even using thoughts, you can't deny that sense of existence that You Are. That which knows/is certain of I AM is I AM itself.

*That which is sure of its existence – the innermost certainty of I Am – is what you essentially are. In other words: I Am this knowing that knows that I Am.* - Leo Hartong

Thusness commented I should experience the impersonality aspect (note: not anatta, but the impersonally aspect of AMness) so much so that I feel I share the ‘same source’, and though I have realised the Self, I have not yet realised that it is the 'non-conceptual, direct' that gives the 'certainty', the undoubtedness. This is what makes the experience of I AM different from ordinary dualistic experience, which has intermediary, is dualistic, and secondary. No direct-ness. And... the depth and intensity of experience can still be improved. He said that if I pursue the experience then non-conceptuality becomes a hindrance and I will suffer because I cannot overcome the arising thoughts, which will lead to struggling. Which I fully agree because the next thing after meditation, frustration started happening for me, when there’s an attempt to 'get back' to the experience and don't know how.

Yet, all attempts are secondary, like trying to rest the mind in awareness when awareness has always been at rest, trying to stop mind movement when Awareness has always been the still point of the turning world. He also told me deeply inquire on the

old philosophical question about whether a tree in the forest would make a sound if no one were there to hear it. It will lead to nondual experience. If I were to go through the motion, I will not realise it. It must be the sort of experience I have with I AMness.

Note: *This is not enlightenment in Buddhism as it is not the realisation of anatta and emptiness. It is Self-Realization, a form of awakening, but not yet the enlightenment of Arhants or Bodhisattvas or Buddhas. See Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment for more info. I am merely noting some of the experiences I had, I'm just a learner and practitioner.*

With regards to the above experience, Thusness also said that this is the Rigpa, the luminous presence, the light... it is just (a matter of having) the right understanding of this with the right view.

As the Buddha himself taught in the earliest Pali suttas, "This mind, monks, is luminous, but it is defiled by taints that come from without. But this the uninstructed worldlings understand not as it really is, wherefore for the uninstructed worldlings there is no cultivation of the mind, I declare. This mind, monks, is luminous, and it is cleansed of taints that come from without. Wherefore, for the uninstructed noble disciple there is cultivation of the mind, I declare."

Also, I have had many previous glimpses both in and out of meditation of the I AM/Witness... what makes this somewhat different from the previous experiences is the sense of certainty and doubtlessness of Being. It is hard to explain.

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Doubts
By turning the attention to the mind, immediately there are doubts. More thoughts rush in to question the questions, confirm or contradict other thoughts. A maddening cycle...

Notice when thoughts are paused there are no doubts; the certainty of (doubtless) Being is obviously present; the unquestionable FACT of EXISTENCE. Notice that the Being is ALWAYS presently shining, effortlessly and spontaneously. Stay with that undeniable non-conceptual confidence. Your Being has always been present for every single experience. That natural cognition in which all experiences arise is not a person.

Be as you ARE and not what you imagine yourself to be.
~ Jason Swason, May 8, 2010

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07 Mar 2010

I had a discussion with Thusness where I told him about my experience where the sense of self dissolved into an impersonal space, where Awareness becomes separated from the sense of self and becomes/IS the space in which everything arises, and I cannot say that Awareness is mine anymore than it is the door's or anything's. Somehow it is like

nondual experience as the sense of self dissolved, yet I do not think it is exactly non-dual since it is not an experience of no subject-object division with everything, but it becomes clearer how Awareness/Presence is confused with individuality where in fact it is not the same.

He replied that it is not non-duality but more related to the aspect of impersonality of I AMness. However it is not the 'impersonality' he is speaking of, but the beginning of it. He also told me I was able to recognise that and the term 'impersonality' came when I experienced it because he had told me before, otherwise I will not be able to discern it correctly.

He also told me that the sense of self/personality/individuality is another 'mental construct' that prevents me from refining the experience of 'I AMness'. Similarly, when I experienced the "I AM", the 'non-dual' aspect isn't present, as I still experience the world as divided (in terms of subject and object). Furthermore, when one experienced "non dual", it does not necessarily mean one also experiences the "no coming and going". It is not automatic.

Only through maturing one's experience that one realizes the relationship between mental constructs and the experience/realisation I have. And that these mental constructs when "inherently" held, blinds us. A predictable relationship exists.

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12 Mar 2010

You may think "I still don't know who I am".

But then, your true self is the only thing you can ever know. You think you know all the things in the world but not yourself, whereas in reality, your own Mind is the only thing you can ever truly know. But this is not a form of mental knowledge. It is a form of certainty coming from a source prior to thinking.

What is the only thing that is undeniably present even without thought?

And even when there are thoughts?

What is it that is independent of mental analysis or projections?

Any knowledge and conclusions that depend on mental analysis are simply more analysis, after thoughts or commentaries of an experience, and there is no certainty in thoughts. For example, you might see a person who looks nerdy and wears thick spectacles, and you might infer that ‘he must be very knowledgeable’ or ‘he must be a nerd’. But how can you know for sure? You can’t!It is inferred knowledge and will be prone to doubts. Thoughts change every moment but mental knowledge of something is not the same as the irrefutable present reality itself. You can believe in your thoughts, but there will not be true certainty. You can always doubt your thoughts, but even without thoughts, what is undoubtedly present?

What is undeniably present in every moment? Whether or not you are thinking or not thinking at all? Irrespective of the actual content of thoughts, there is awareness. Even when thoughts are not present, awareness is there.

So how can you say you don't know your true nature, and in the first place is it possible for the mind to intellectually understand what it is? (since this reality is prior to thinking) It just IS, just look. It's undeniable. You feel certain. You feel that all you are ever certain of, is this presence, beingness, awareness. You feel you never truly know of anything other than this. All else is just thoughts, which are doubtable mental positions. There is no true certainty in mental knowledge.

Certainty lies in directness, without even a thought, without even a concept, without intermediary, without anything secondary. Just ISness.

The sense 'I AM' as pure presence and beingness even without a word, is undeniably present. The afterthought 'I am this and that' are doubtable positions and imaginations.

The sensation of a sight, a sound, even without a word, is undeniably present. The thought 'oh, that must be a flower, oh that is ...' are doubtable positions and imaginations.

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31 Mar 2010

I think the noting is very important... for me it's like a shift from being identified with the stories of the mind, to objectifying the thought as simply a thought. Like within the story everything seems so real 'out there', but through noting we notice the present reality... it is actually just a presently arising thought occuring in awareness.

This brings me back into presence... and from the perspective of presence/witnessing everything is just seen as it is but nothing 'sticks' because there is no identification with them or commenting on them, they just come and go, like dream images popping in and out of vast presence but without any thread of continuity (probably due to little or no identification in the state of presence).. I do experience this even while lying on bed.

I even noticed once that my mind and body is falling asleep, my head was nodding off, yet when I 'woke up' I noticed that the continuity of Presence was uninterrupted even as my mind and body was falling asleep. However Thusness told me it is no good and that I have not understood what is “when time to sleep, just sleep”. I have several episodes of lucid dreaming and witnessing in sleep, but I have not experienced sustaining witnessing throughout dreams and dreamless sleep (and was told not to do so). Reminds me of Thusness’s recount of his past experience having insomnia due to attachment to the I AM Presence which he was only able to solve after realizing anatta.

I also noticed that as for Presence itself... nothing really can be done to 'experience it'... since it is what is always already present in This Moment, any attempts, anything we 'do'

is extra and secondary and 'over-complication' and overlooking something fundamental... it becomes clearer when we relax all our desires and just rest.

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15 Apr 2010

While having a conversation with a friend yesterday I noticed something.

There is just one thought happening spontaneously, one action happening spontaneously at every moment.. but the sense that a 'me' led to a thought or action is actually an illusion... is also just an arising thought... therefore any effort or action to control thoughts or do anything is also the result of the illusion, theres actually just a presently arising thought. There is always only presence and spontaneous arising... theres nothing 'we' can ever do or have ever done.

The sense that theres something that must be done to experience presence is also really just story, actually there is always just a thought, an action arising in presence.. only in concepts do we create a sense of distance and a need and a 'doer' to fulfill certain things like getting rid of certain thought or feeling to 'reach' presence.. in direct nonconceptual looking one sees there is just always just presence and spontaneous arising.

(seeing that there is no 'doer' really has an effect in surrendering to the present moment/'what's spontaneously happening' instead of seeking resolution to issues/situations by 'doing')

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19 Apr 2010

While I was meditating, suddenly there were sounds of thunder and the sound of rain pouring was very loud... a spontaneous inquiry started on "Who is listening to the sounds". As a result of this inquiry I noticed that Awareness doesn't seem like a localized witness, but it is more like a field of knowing which is impersonal and universal. And I am this universal consciousness, and everything emerges and subsides from this field of awareness. Literally everything manifests from IT.

The answer to "Who Listens" or "Who Perceives" is this impersonal non-localized space-like field of awareness, not a dead physical space but an all-encompassing space with an intrinsically aware essence, the non-localized Witness which actually is universal. Consciousness is simultaneously nowhere, everywhere, and also here and now. I notice that the sense of self dissolves just by resting in awareness, where previously there was a sense of self and locality tied to awareness... a sense that there is a Witness 'in here' watching things out there. Now, it is more like I am this universal consciousness perceiving/manifesting everything, whether it is thoughts, sounds, visual objects... all popping in and out in this non-localized all-pervasive awareness. Consciousness is totally not related to me as an individual or person (and in fact an individual person as such

doesn't truly exist and is only really thoughts and sensations arising in this field of awareness, nothing substantial), and whatever we consider as 'me, the individual' is too cognized by and manifested from this universal non-personal consciousness, like dust appearing in space. There are no individual experiencers of life, only individuals experienced by the Universal Life.

If there is no locality to Awareness (i.e. over here in contrast to over there), but is all-pervasive and encompassing, then nothing exists outside of consciousness, but rather everything is an appearance of, and perceived by, this field of consciousness. I also noticed that no matter how the mind appears to move, it is still an appearance of unmoving consciousness, like the fast-moving scenes in an action movie are still images displayed on an unmoving screen (i.e. consciousness).

Thusness also discussed this with me, told me to focus on this impersonal and universal aspect of consciousness just described by me, refine the four aspects of I AMness*, then experience non-dual.

*(from an old post about the 4 aspects)

*Thusness told me that at present try not to talk too much about non-dual (to someone else in another forum) and he also talked to me about the deepening of the "I AM" in 4 aspects: 1) the aspect of impersonality, 2) the aspect of the degree of luminosity, 3) the aspect of dissolving the need to re-confirm and abide in I AMness and understanding why such a need is irrelevant, 4) the aspect of experiencing effortlessness (Thusness: any form of clinging, be it Self/self or Presence, will prevent a practitioner from correctly experiencing 'effortlessness')*

*Impersonality will help dissolve the sense of self but it has the danger of making one attached to a metaphysical essence. It makes a practitioner feel "God".*

*The degree of luminosity refers to feeling with entire being, feel wholely and directly without thoughts. Feeling 'realness' of whatever one encounters, the tree bark, the sand, etc. (see the next post)*

*Dissolving the need to re-confirm is important as whatever is done is an attempt to distance itself from itself, if there is no way one can distant from the "I AM", the attempt to abide in it is itself an illusion.*

*On the other hand, abiding in presence is a form of meditative practice, like chanting, and leads to absorption. It can result in the oceanic experience. But once one focuses on the 4 aspects mentioned above, one will have that experience too.*

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20 Apr 2010

Without moving a step forward, I have arrived. For what I am searching is what I already am, effortlessly shining as the silent backdrop of all existence. The endless search is but a trick of thought, a case of mistaken identity.

It all comes down to clarifying the truth of your identity.

The mind may have complex ideas of enlightenment, but nothing can be more simple than THIS: Ordinary wakefulness. Nothing special, nothing for the ego to claim. The ego (false self) can die into the space which belongs to no one, belongs to no thing, but from which all things emerge.

This is no attainment. Nothing is gained, for what is gained will be lost, but your natural state has no coming and going

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21 Apr 2010

Some notes on mind and identification:

If there is any fears, suffering, doubts, worries, discontent, etc... or simply an incessant stream of thinking beyond your control... it means there is still some kind of misidentification - i.e. identifying yourself with the mind, body, who you think you are, your stories. The habit of false identification to 'pull us back to samsara' is hard to avoid and has a momentum on its own unless we take our stand as presence-awareness. The apparent 'loss of presence' is not an actual loss of presence (presence is always there and can never be lost), but rather the habit of mind to fixate and misidentify with the conceptual mind and stories, thus losing vivid sight of non-conceptual naked awareness.

But actually you are not your mind, and just to realise this brings a sense of freedom and release.It is because when you exclusively identify with your mind and its stories.. when one identifies purely with the conceptual.. one invests belief in the thoughts and one will be compelled to react to and chase after every single thought that arises, whether they are happy or sad stories, identifying with our thoughts in a personal manner, by identifying with things as ‘me’ and ‘mine’.

But if we go beyond pure conceptual view and simply directly SEE... we see that really whatever we identify with are just mind movements/thoughts which are impersonal happenings spontaneously arising and perceived in consciousness. When we go beyond purely identifying with the conceptual mind/false self, beyond the notion of individuality and all its stories, there is no basis for the fears, suffering, etc. You see that the notion of being an individual self is purely conceptual and never was real or present to begin with. You see that what you are this non-conceptual reality without limitations. The belief in a conceptual identity is dropped, along with all the suffering, fears, unhappiness, etc. The key lies in discovering one's identity as the timeless non-conceptual presence-awareness.

If we truly see a thought as just an impersonal transient arising in awareness rather than identifying with it or getting lost in the conceptual content, then they can be left as they are, seen for what it is, but not reacted to. Awareness is like a non-stick pan, the thoughts that appear are not being identified with, and so they lose the power to 'chain up' into further stories. In other words, they just dissolve of their own accord. Being rooted in the non-conceptual clarity, conceptual thoughts and stories that appear are not being taken with absolute seriousness. One will find oneself increasingly simply resting in non-conceptual naked perception of Awareness. One will know a much vaster realm of knowing, intelligence, clarity, bliss, joy, peace.

All suffering have their origins in a root sense of being an individual person, a 'me' that owns or is its mind, stories, its body, its history, etc. Investigate who you are, remove the core false assumptions we have of our being. You are not the mind, the mind are transient waves appearing in non-conceptual, oceanic awareness. Rather than fully fixated on thoughts... release your fixation and identifications by recognizing the non-conceptual wide-open space of awareness in which thought appear. Rather than being identified with one of the waves separate from all else... have your stand as your true identity, infinite-being-awareness, beyond the realm of conceptual, and be free. (and you are still free to use your mind as a tool without being binded by it)

In a way it is like lucid dreaming: you can still dream/think, yet you won't fear because of the dream image of a tiger as you know the dream self and the dream tiger are not absolutely real but are just illusory projections manifesting in one's consciousness. Rather than being lost in one's stories, if you realise we are not the dream self and dream content but the Awareness in which all that appears, we can be lucid and aware in the thinking and playfully 'manipulate' the objects of the 'dream' without suffering and being absolutely lost in the stories.

**"The vast and empty sky does not hinder the clouds from coming and going." Shitou Xiquian**

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30 Apr 2010

Just 2 days ago... I was noticing my mind's attempts to re-confirm and abide in the Self that I intuitively felt shouldn't be necessary. I was also thinking could this be related to what Thusness said about dissolving the need to re-confirm, and I was thinking of asking Thusness.

Without my asking him... the next day Thusness just told me (somehow he knew) that I'm in the midst of attempting to re-confirm the Self, and that I have to get over this phase as well. He also told me that I will cycle through the 4 phases of I AM again and again, without knowing it, so it is good he pointed out the phases for me. He also told me I should take it only as a guideline, it is not a bible, and that he told me as he thought it will be help for me to know exactly what I am experiencing, not to hinder my progress.

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05 May 2010

**Distraction, Attention, and Natural Awareness**

(reply to poster) On the other hand, full-fledged awareness is always already present whether you notice or not ;) In fact there is no half fledge, full fledge... there is just Awareness. It is just thoughts that separates it.

For me if I'm lost in distractions, I might ask, Who is distracted? And then you see that it is not so much that I am a separate self being distracted from Awareness, all that is happening is that thoughts are occuring, there is misidentification with the mind (thoughts) and the body, but in actuality there are simply thoughts appearing in the Presence of Awareness which I am. You have in actuality never been (someone) distracted from Awareness, because you Are Awareness, you are not a limited self separate from Reality.

It's like misidentifying yourself as some objects or characters in the cinema screen, and then asking "where is the screen?". You may then try to 'resolve the attention', do something about it in the movie etc but with the delusion of still being that separate self and hence not really resolving the issue - actually, the screen is always here, you just misidentify yourself as a particular object and overlook your true nature as Total Presence (i.e. the screen). In fact as I see it... attention can only change from one object to another (in the cinema screen). We are always paying attention already one way or another. Previously you are attending to/chasing some moving objects in the cinema screen, but now you are focusing on a stable object on the cinema screen, and yet there is still no clarity on what the screen is. Attention simply amplifies a particular object of awareness - attention is not the same as awareness, attention is a focused thought form, while awareness simply awares everything without choice. The question that needs to be asked is, to whom is attention happening, without which there can be no attention? And further: when you are paying attention to your breath, what is it that choicelessly hears the sound of bird chirping even without your intention to do so? What is the screen in which all is occuring?

As Rupert Spira said to me (I asked him about distractions months ago):

*This 'I' that we now consider ourselves to be seems to be distracted, to believe such and such, to overlook Awareness and to enter a dream. However, this 'I' is non-existent as such. A non-existent entity never does anything. With this understanding, the 'I' is returned to its proper place, as Awareness.*

When the 'I' is returned to its proper place, then you are back at the naturally abiding Awareness. You realise you are not a limited self entity that can be distracted from, or even experience, Awareness, you are also not even attention (which is another contrived thought form), rather you ARE the natural, effortless, ordinary Awareness. You don't have to try to maintain the Awareness, there is just this recognition that it is there

- as Adam says, *Awareness is brightly aware as its natural state, there is not effort - no doing.*

Afternote:

To focus attention on an object is fine at the beginning - in fact it will help develop good qualities like the Tranquil Calm that Thusness mentioned.

However this does not directly lead to the arising of insight into our nature. The question of identity must be resolved for insights into our pristine awareness to arise.

As I quoted from someone before.. *Imagine a torch shining on a wall...The torch symbolises the SEEING, and the light which emanates from the torch and hits the wall symbolises the thoughts. The problem is that you are trying to find the torch, (ie: the SEEING), but you are looking for it on the wall, (ie: in the thoughts). Also, thoughts can happen thick and fast and can be quite erratic... so not only are you* **looking in the wrong place**, *but you are chasing a moving target. A mantra at least steadies the appearance of the thoughts. It's like steadying the light on the wall, so you have a better chance of tracing the beam back to its source, but never forget, only the torch (the SEEING) is the source. The mantra is nothing but a thought, an appearance that has no independent nature, repeated. However, as I have said, whilst a mantra can help on the so called 'search', it is not actually necessary. Knowledge is the DIRECT method.*

*No techniques are needed. The SEEING ( the ordinary everyday awareness ) does not need to do anything to BE, to exist. Any techniques can only be on the level of thought, and therefore are outside of the only reality which is the SEEING. The SEEING is NEVER not there, it is ALWAYS seeing the thoughts, no matter what they may be. It is always aware of everything, it cannot under any circumstances not be there, you can't lose it. So just BE IT. HAVE A SENSE OF IDENTITY WITH IT AND NOTHING ELSE. You ARE the torch !*

And also, Zen Master Anzan Hoshin said:

*Simply focusing our attention on something else, say [counting] the breath or [focusing on] a mantra or a visualized image is exactly the same thing that we have been doing that has been confusing us in the first place, except that we are just going to learn how to do it better so that we can become even more thoroughly confused. Because all that we will have done is focus on one fragment of our experience. We will not understand what our experience in itself is, what our life in itself is, or who we are because the most fundamental question, of course, is what is it that is experiencing experience? What is it that is aware?*

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07 May 2010

Yesterday I wrote in another thread,

*When you are abiding as I AM, there is no sense of time and space. There is only the all-pervading Self. It is very obvious that Awareness doesn't move! It is totally timeless. From this perspective, there is no death. Why? Because Awareness is the Ground of Being, the Eternal Now, in which things come and go, pops in and out of this Ground, but this Eternal Present, this Awareness, which is what you are, is unaffected, unmoved. As Awareness, you are unborn, undying. Ask yourself - things come and go, thoughts come and go, but have you ever moved out of the Present Moment, and is the Present Moment even affected in any way by the comings and goings? The answer is No!*

Today just found something similar in Standing As Awareness: The Direct Path by Greg Goode (recommended book):

**Experiment with being awareness**

To get a taste of being awareness, here's something you can do at any time during the day or night. Take a moment and just be, without preconceived notions, even notions about awareness. Don't be a body or mind. Don't take yourself as anything at all. And just openly notice how images and appearances and even gestalts and points of view come and go. Check to see whether you have the experience that YOU come and go. Or do you as witnessing awareness remain perfectly and peacefully present and unmoving, clear and open?

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09 May 2010

Something I wrote days ago:

....Also... I notice that though Awareness is always present, there can be degrees of luminosity - clarity to it.

Actually Awareness is 100% fully present all the times, but if we keep engaging in conceptual activities, then awareness is not experienced as vivid as before.

Why is that so?

Because Awareness can only be experienced directly, without intermediary, it must be directly touched. That is why the importance of "*not being distracted by having our attention divided by activities of mind"*

The further we drop... the brighter and more intense the luminosity is experienced. Perception becomes vivid and 'intense' (not that things becomes more intense, but even ordinary things like eating and walking becomes vivid and clear and wonderful). That is why Adam says be 'brightly' aware. Sometimes I even get a mental image of my mind as brightly shining like a sun, even though the mental image is not the reality itself but the closest conceptual representation of the formless 'thing' that the mind can find.

It can be so intense that you will spontaneously smile, there may even be tears, at the sheer wonder of it. Friends may find you weird if you are walking with them. LOL

So why did Mahakashyapa smile at the twirling flower?

By the way... the letting go and the luminosity re-inforces each other: the more you let go, the more luminous perception is, and the more luminous perception is, the more willing you are to let go of the mind activities. Because it is so wonderful!

Perhaps this is what Thusness meant when he said years ago,

*To drop the bondage/deep conditionings, the mind MUST realise that another way of 'knowing' is possible; an effortless, total sensing and experience of wholeness. Next the experiences of the joy, bliss and clarity of wholeness. Without the insight into the possiblity and the experience of the positive factors, the mind will not release itself from holding.*

*Even open pure and innocent inquiry is a deep conditioning. Makes the mind chatters incessantly. Every what, when, where and why by itself is a distancing from start. Freeing itself from such mode of inquiry aka 'knowing', the mind rests. The joy of this resting must be experienced for the 'willingness' to arise.*

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09 May 2010

I notice that Presence, Beingness, Awareness is only truly 'in the foreground' if we stop *all* thoughts. This cannot be forced but is a natural result of letting go in meditation. You will never notice your true essence if you are caught up in conceptualizing, as What You Are can only be touched directly without intermediary and concepts. In a moment of complete silence and thoughtlessness, if you ask "Who am I?" "What is This?" your Buddha-Nature and True Self will shine forth you will realise the blank and void you thought was there is suffused with spacious presence, beingness, existence, aliveness, clarity and awareness. It is THAT which knows the absence and presence of thoughts. You will have no doubt that You Are, that palpable I AM-ness is the most (in fact, only) undoubtable and obvious fact of your being, and what you truly are is not who you thought you are, but something prior, more fundamental and closer than your own thought and breath.

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(Back in 01 Dec 2009):

*I wrote: I think 'What is it' is a powerful koan and pointer. Whatever you say isn't It (it's your interpretation of It, which thus is not It), you can only 'know' it by becoming ONE with it. Actually there is not even a becoming one, there is only actually IT, our mind merely projects separation.*

*When we experience Awareness directly without using our thoughts, everything is experienced as having a magical, alive, shimmery, fresh, amazing and blissful quality to it. Life is not the 'boring and ordinary'as the mind interpretes it, even the most ordinary things (such as eating, walking, etc) just feels awesome. You will be naturally attracted, pulled towards the pristine awareness than to stressful thoughts. The ego will melt in the wonder and majesty of awareness. Awareness will literally blow your mind away. One moment I was just dreaming stressful thoughts, the other moment I 'woke up' and was totally drawn to Awareness itself... there was no compulsion for me to go back to the dream. It's just such a huge contrast. Sometimes it's so blissful that people around me wonder why I'm smiling. But surely I'm not mad... it's mad to not notice Life... hahaha*

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I was reading this interview by Eckhart Tolle just now and thought to myself "Oh my god, that's exactly the same order as I have experienced it". First I was lost in suffering thoughts, then I had a compulsion to transcend the thoughts as I can't stand them and what I did is precisely the same: asking Who am I? Then everything was dropped off and what remained was just this I AM, this beingness that doesn't have a form but is clearly present. Afterwards I'm just absorbed in this formlessness and next there was just this amazing clarity and experiencing everything as if like a miracle with almost no thoughts, like he said, 90% of the thoughts gone. There's just no more interest in the thought, I'm just basking in wonder of pure awareness, everything ordinary becomes wonderful. I'm only interested in 'feeling' everything than thinking about it.

And I too felt that I needed to write it down "in case it leaves me or I lose it", and that is why I wrote it here. The experience isn't equally intense in all moments of my life, but this 'peak experience' is actually not a distant experience but is something accessible at any moment (there's only One) Right Now in the Present Moment, Pure Awareness is the ever-present shining sun that can never be lost. It just becomes temporarily obscured as we become fixated on thoughts, or become distracted... if we just turn the light around we discover this state is our natural state and never leaves.

The thought that Eckhart Tolle's intro chapter in The Power of Now was very similar to mine did come to mind on that night as I was writing the post, but it never occured to me that the order it all unfolded was actually similar.

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14 May 2010

Whatever comes and goes: emotions, thoughts, feelings, etc.... even subtle feelings of expansiveness, spaciousness, and so on... all these are not your Essential Self.

Your Essential Self is not something which comes and goes, it is not even feelings of expansion or spaciousness.

Rather it is the spaciousness in which all experiences (even that of spaciousness) arise and subside from. THAT does not come and go.

If you ever felt frustrated that you lost something, e.g. an experience of spaciousness, etc... just know that whatever is lost cannot be Who You Are and therefore is not really important.

Underneath all comings and goings is complete still-ness which can never be lost.

Abide as THAT, let that still-ness and Certainty of Being fill your entire existence.

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14 May 2010

Today I found an old conversation I had with Thusness in February 2009 that I think is relevant to this thread (Certainty of Being).

**An Eternal Now** says: You mentioned last time thevoice knows the luminosity aspect... but he told me something like he dont know what pure awareness means and he has never experienced that before. But enhanced or expanded awareness maybe?

**Thusness** says: Yeah. I said he treated it like individuality. He knows the 'I', but as individuality. Not as pure awareness. I told you “I AM” has various phases. Means he knows he is not the body, but not the Eternal Witness sort of experience.

**An Eternal Now** says: Different from witness?

**Thusness** says: Not so much of witness but that he is more than a body, like spirit, but not a direct experience of "I”.

**An Eternal Now** says: What do you mean?

**Thusness** says: It is like what that is being described in what you posted in the forum. It is not a direct experience of eternal witness. It is inferring, relating, testing. But the person knows he is not the body, knows vaguely about awareness, but have not directly touch awareness. Do you know that touching awareness directly even at the "I AM" is totally different from what was being described. It is like what Ken Wilber said: beyond the shadow of doubt. It is like what Ramana Maharshi described. It is not the part where he said he is being carried as if he is dead, that is like what thevoice is experiencing, (rather,) it is the direct experience of the I AM: complete stillness, ultimate, without thoughts. Complete certainty. Ramana Maharshi at later phase is talking about that - resting completely as Self . When he visualized that he is being dead and carried to be burnt, he realises he is not the body – (that part) is not the direct experience of "I AM"

**An Eternal Now** says: Not?

**Thusness** says: Yes, not. It is just a glimpse, not that direct experience. That experience is like what a Zen master asking a koan. It is that sort of experience. Direct realisation of the 'I', found it -without thoughts, no inference, entire and complete. Just that experience rest in the I, not as everything, and the empty nature is not seen. That experience is correct

**An Eternal Now** says: Correct?

**Thusness** says: Yeah. Have you read my Stage 4?

**An Eternal Now** says: Yeah. What about it?

**Thusness** says: I said the sound is exactly like I AM

**An Eternal Now** says: Its same as "I AM" but in sound, etc rite

**Thusness** says: It is not like your experience of sound leh

**An Eternal Now** says: What do you mean? That it's totally non-dual?

**Thusness** says: Non dual is no separation. There are differing degree. Do you feel like you are God? When one experiences "I AM", he feels like he is God. That sort of experience. Can that experience be ordinary?

**An Eternal Now** says: nope

**Thusness** says: It is transcendental, that is why one is lead to the journey into perfecting that state

**An Eternal Now** says: I see. Just now you said the forum theres this article that was inferring and not direct experience. Which one were you referring to?

**Thusness** says: Like you do this, shake a bit then you realise that. Like it is like a screen… (the realization of I AM is) nothing like that.

**An Eternal Now** says: Oh that one, I see

**Thusness** says: You cannot understand awareness that way. It is either by self enquiry you directly experience it, or koan. There is no such thing as unsure.

**An Eternal Now** says: oic.. Video on Ramana Maharshi: {Youtube Video: "Ramana Maharshi – Abide As The Self}

**Thusness** says: If a practitioner can experience like what maharishi experience as SELF in anatta, then he is near full enlightenment. :P

**An Eternal Now** says: I see. You mean someone who experience anatta may not

experience what Ramana experience? Both are required?

**Thusness** says: It is the thoroughness and the depth and degree of luminosity. For non-dual anatta to have that sort of presence, there must be complete effortlessness.Because unlike concentrative mode of practice, non-dual or the formless and pathless path requires one to be completely effortless and spontaneous to have total non-dual luminosity.

**An Eternal Now** says: I see. For Ramana its still a concentrative mode of practice right? Like abiding on self.

**Thusness** says: To me, yes. That video is a very good video, but don't post it in the (Buddhist) forum. If a person can have that experience then go into nondual, it is different. If anatta can be experienced, it will be better

**An Eternal Now** says: I see. What do you mean by 'it is different'?

**Thusness** says: A person can experience non-dual, there is no separation, but there is no such experience like "I AM", so he does not have that 'quality' of experience. However if that is a practitioner who experienced that "I AM", then when one experiences non-dual, he knows that there is such an experience, and all experiences are really like that.

**An Eternal Now** says: I see. Do you mean that the nondual experience will be more indepth?

**Thusness** says: No. It is all the same, but (now realized to be) found in all manifestation, not as a stage.

**An Eternal Now** says: I see

**Thusness** says: I wrote in luminousemptiness, that if luminosity and emptiness is taught but there is no realisation that it is the great bliss, then one has not realised anything. But Chodpa said, not that it is pointless but it is just a step along the path. So what is the great bliss?

**An Eternal Now** says: Absorption in luminosity? Clarity? I don't know. I have experience of bliss but don't know if that its what you meant.

**Thusness** says: It is actually a sort of absorption

**An Eternal Now** says: Yes, I notice theres bliss when theres absorption

**Thusness** says: Will talk about that next time. Ithink i will write about anatta. So that you don't get confused with non-dual. Anatta is about no agent, clarity that there is no agent, and because there is no agent, it has to be direct, it is naturally non dual

**An Eternal Now** says: I see. I wrote something to you just now, but don't know if you received it.

**Thusness** says: nope

**An Eternal Now**: When self becomes more and more transparent,
Likewise phenomena become more and more luminous.
In thorough transparency all happening are pristinely and vividly clear.
Obviousness throughout, aliveness everywhere!
this became apparent to me just now

**An Eternal Now**: The more the self disappears the more everything manifest its clearnessand naturalness and spaciousness... but spaciousness is not like void.. but the more spacious the more clear everything is.. Today im surprisingly awake even though i only slept 2 hours

**Thusness** says: Yes. I want to experience this clarity. You must sleep, later into anatta. What you experienced is non-dual. Now you must practice anatta and letting go. You will naturally experience that clarity

**An Eternal Now** says: I see

**Thusness** says: You must understand anatta and DO also implies imprints. You are always dealing with imprints. Then wait for the right conditions for ripening of your experience

**An Eternal Now** says: I see

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14 May 2010

**Walking/Jogging/Running meditation**

While jogging just now, I 'forgot' my mind and body. It feels like I'm the still presence in which the world moves through. Instead of being a body running on the road from here to there, it's seen that I am the space that encompasses the whole world and the whole world moves through me. I am not moving. The world is moving through me.

It feels like you're running on the treadmill, you're not actually moving! Except that the scenery moves through you.

You can practice seeing this next time when you walk or jog. This space of awareness is unmoving, whether or not the world is moving.

Later I was reminded of this video http://www.headless.org/videos/still_point.htm

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15 May 2010

From: http://www.taozen.se/host.htm

**Host and Guest**

In the Surangama Sutra Arya Ajnatakaundinya puts the question: "What is the difference between the permanent and the changing?

He answers by giving an example of a traveler who stops at an Inn. The traveler eats, sleeps and then continues on his journey. He doesn't stay to settle in the Inn, but pays his bill and leaves.

But what with the Innkeeper? He doesn't leave. He keeps on staying at the Inn to receive and take leave of guests, because that is where he lives.

" Therefore, I declare that the changing is guest and the permanent is host", says Arya Ajnatakaundinya.

In that way we identify all thoughts that comes and goes as changing, travelers that arrives and leaves and that doesn't need any further investigation.

Our Buddha-self is the host who lets the traveler - the thought - leave without hindrance. A good host doesn't keep up the traveler at his departure.

Another way to illustrate this is by imaging an empty space with a sun ray shining in. In this ray you'll see a lot of dust in the empty room. The dust is moving but the space is empty. That that is still and clear is called space, that that is moving is called dust, because that is the being of dust.

Guest and dust refers to illusory thought, while the host and space refers to the Buddha-nature.

This shows that the permanent Buddha-nature doesn't follow the illusory thoughts in their coming and going, rising and falling. So if one is unaffected by things, there won't be any hindrances even if one is surrounded by the ten thousand things.

Illusory thoughts comes and goes by themselves and don't hinder the True Nature of Suchness.

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15 May 2010

Those who wish to practice self-inquiry should read *Methods of Practice in the Chan Hall* and the *Essentials of Chan Practice* by Ch'an Master Hsu Yun

15 May 2010

Just had a discussion with Thusness. I think there is something very important to caution readers here based on what he told me.

The experience of the Witness is important, and is undeniable. The Certainty of Being is a natural certainty that cannot be negated. This is not wrong. You cannot deny your own existence (how could you? if you try to deny it, who is it denying it?)

There is nothing wrong experiencing directly without intermediary the pure sense of existence. But after this direct experience, one should refine the understanding, our views, our insights. Instead of deviating from the right view, re-enforcing the wrong view, after the experience.

Thusness also told me that what I have experienced has nothing to do with 'beingness being unchanging, constant and permanent'. Yet I was re-enforcing this wrong view into my consciousness like chanting. He told me not to do that, and that what I described is not my direct experience, but instead it is my mind playing tricks. What is experienced is just luminosity, non-conceptuality, directness, nothing more than that. So instead of describing what I experienced, I was reminding myself what is not true. We actually never experience anything unchanging.

He also said that though I am experiencing the "host and guest", he told me not to focus on 'permanent, unchanging, and independent' aspect as by doing so with a few more months of intense training, I will become stuck for decades in the formless realms and it will be difficult to get out. Instead, I should be focusing on the impersonality aspect, and the four aspects of I AM he talked to me about, then afterwards experience non dual and anatta.

It is not about denying the Witness, but refining our insight of it:

- what is meant by non-dual?
- what is meant by non-conceptual?
- what is meant by being spontaneous?
- what is the 'impersonality' aspect?
- what is luminosity?

p.s. just had a conversation with Thusness to clarify on the 'unmoving' nature of Awareness in Shurangama Sutra.

I think it is pretty clear in explaining how the 'unmoving' nature of awareness is not the Hindu understanding of 'permanence of Self, impermanence of objects'. I posted another good excerpt from Shurangama Sutra also in

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Two Sutras (Discourses by Buddha) on the Mistaken Views of Consciousness

An Eternal Now: i saw something in shurangama sutra just now,

*The Hinayanist's inverted views The Buddha then bent, straightened and rebent his fingers and asked ânanda: 'What did you see?' ânanda replied: 'I saw the Buddha open and close His fist.' The Buddha asked: 'You say that you saw my fist open and close; was it my fist or your seeing that opened and closed?' ânanda replied: 'As the Buddha's fist opened and closed, I saw that it and not the nature of my seeing did so by itself.' The Buddha asked: 'Which one moved and which was still?' ânanda replied: 'The Buddha's hand was not still; as to the nature of my seeing which was already beyond the state of stillness, it could not move.' The Buddha said 'Correct.' Thereupon the Buddha sent out from His palm a radiant ray of light to ânanda's right, and the disciple turned to look at it. Then He sent out another ray to ânanda 's left and the disciple turned to look at it. The Buddha then asked: 'Why did your head move?' ânanda replied: 'I saw the Buddha send out radiant rays of light to my right and left, I turned to look at them and so my head moved.' (The Buddha' said 'As you turn to the right and left to see the Buddha-light, is it your head or your seeing that moves?' (ânanda replied 'World Honoured One, it is my head that turns; as to my seeing which is already beyond (the state of) stillness, how can it move?' The Buddha said: 'Correct.' 19 The Buddha then declared to the assembly: 'So every worldly man knows that what moves is dust. and that he who does not stay is a guest. You have seen ânanda whose head moved of itself whereas his seeing was unmoved. You have also seen my fist which opened and closed of itself whereas his seeing neither expanded nor contracted. Why do you still regard the moving as your body and surroundings, and so, from beginning to end, allow your thoughts to rise and fall without interruption, thereby losing (sight of) your true nature and indulging in backward actions? By missing the (True) Mind of your nature and by mistaking (illusory) objects for your Selves, you allow yourselves to be caught in the wheel (of saüsàra) thereby forcing yourselves to pass through transmigrations.20 and then the commentator wrote 19. The Buddha wiped out both the worldly view of permanence and the Hinayanist view of impermanence which have no room in the Absolute which is beyond both illusory states. 20. The Buddha reprimanded both worldlings and Hinayanists for their inverted views to eliminate both the worldly and saintly states. If people in this world already know that the moving is 'dust,' it is clear that saüsàra is impermanent, but why do they still regard it as (real and) lasting? If Hinayanists know that the head moves whereas the nature of seeing is unmoved, it is very clear that the latter is really lasting, but why do they still regard it as impermanent? The Buddha meant: 'Since you now know what is and is not permanent; why do you still hold that what moves are your bodies, and (external) objects?' These two rebuttals implied the Buddha's idea of eliminating both the false and the real. He meant that if this body and all objects (outside) it were impermanent, why did worldly men regard them as permanent? Thus He reprimanded all worldly men. If this very body and all things (external to it) were really permanent, for 'the non-existent body of illusion is Dharmakàya,' then why did the Hinayanists hold that they were impermanent? Thus He reprimanded the Hinayanists.*

*These discriminations result in the continuous rise and fall of endless thoughts while the True Nature is overlooked. This is why people indulge in backward actions and lose (sight of) the selfpossessed Nature of Mind. 'For you have recognized (external) objects as your Self and are caught in the midst of wrong actions so that you turn the wheel of birth and death.' (In other words to root out the worldly man's 'is' and the Hinayanist's*

***'is not' to reveal the 'Mean' which includes both existence and non-existence.)***

**Thusness**: What do you mean by inverted view?

**An Eternal Now**: That means opposite of whats true.. like taking what is impermanent to be permanent? But I don't get his 'reprimand' of the hinayanist

**Thusness**: The Hinayanist is not what that is wrong. Some of the sutra like to belittle Hinayanist. :P

*(Note by Soh: It is known nowadays that Shurangama Sutra, the scripture from which the notion of Host and Guest comes from, is a Chinese invention - it talks about Taoist 'xiens' (immortals) and is evidently a Chinese composition not of Indian origins, with no counterparts in the Tibetan canon, a topic discussed in My opinion on Shurangama Sutra*

*Mahayana Sutras and Vajrayana Tantras are composed later by unknown authors showing development over time, in contrast to Pali suttas which stays closest to the Buddha's original words, a topic discussed in Yogacara vs Madhyamaka, Authorship of Mahayana Sutras - which is not to say that are any less valuable as it should be noted that Mahayana sutras are generally very profound especially on its elaborations on the emptiness and non-arising of phenomena.)*

What Buddha is trying to teach is about non-movement , but the illustration is not a good one in my opinion. In non-dual insight, nothing moves. When your mind follows phenomena and dwell in dualistic concept, phenomena appears moving. But when insight arises, nothing moves. Now for there to be moving, what must happen? If you cannot measure, cannot grasp, cannot find its locality, from where is it moving? If awareness hasn't moved then how does knowing arise? How is there awareness? IF awareness cannot be said to be moving, then how can we say thoughts are moving? If one taste of both nature and essence are directly experienced, then there is true insight. If you cling to thoughts or discard thoughts, that is also moving. If you see the luminous and empty nature, nothing moves. Get it?

**An Eternal Now**: I think so

**Thusness**: If you say you saw something...that is awareness. Do you consider that to be moving or not moving? You see the words flow…

**An Eternal Now**: The pure experience is not moving, if we measure it then we see movement

**Thusness**: If you are looking from the perspective of object, everything is moving. If you are looking from the perspective of awareness, nothing seems to move . If you realize luminous essence and empty nature, then nothing also moves. The former is One-Mind, the latter is no-mind. But no-mind can have varying degrees of insight and experience. Though people might say it is conceptual to say or categorize further, but it is a skilful means.

21 May 2010

> *Originally posted by Arapahoe:*
> how do one knows one awareness are universal vs individual pyschological perspective and values? while the Observed is the observer but the observer host the observed.

Awareness is not any of the psychological perspective and values. When you ask "Who am I", at first you may think that you are your own psychological perspective, values, beliefs, thoughts, and so on. But then you realise actually you are not that, you are not your mind and body. Those can be likened to waves. But what you are, Awareness itself, is like an ocean.

Awareness, existence, consciousness, Who You Are is not like the waves. It is ever-present and unmovable. Your thoughts and feelings come and go upon the screen of consciousness *every single moment*, but Awareness is still present, just like the screen and the cinema images. No matter what displays on the screen, the screen is still screen. Your 'individual psychological perspective and values' may undergo a 180 degree transformation in a year, yet does that change your Awareness and Presence? In other words, whatever you think at the moment, are you still Aware and Present? Does it feel like it has aged, or changed? The answer is no. The Presence-Awareness looking out through your eyes when you were 10 years old, and the Presence-Awareness looking out through your eyes when you are 80 years old, will feel exactly the same because it is timeless - even though your body, your mind, everything has undergone a lot of changes.

You are that mirror-like awareness. You are not any finite objects, you simply reflect everything for what it is. It has the potential to manifest everything, according to conditions.

Your mirror-like awareness has no limitations, has no boundaries and edges. It does not belong to any object that appears on it. It does not belong to the body-mind object that you identify as 'yourself'. It does not belong to *anything*. But everything arise from that.

> or to re question.....
> Beyond the relam of awareness from observed how do you know it is universal awareness rather than individual perspective of the universe awareness.....

Try to find out if Awareness belongs to an individual self in your own experience. When you are able to go beyond concepts, you realise that it is not 'you' as a body-mind that contains awareness, but rather, the body-mind are appearances within Awareness. The appearances come and go, but Awareness does not move. It is timeless, formless, and capable of manifesting everything. It is like space - space does not belong to anything, yet everything manifests from within that. Your Awareness is like space - it is the

universal/impersonal space in which every thoughts and sight and sensation manifest, but no object or person can claim ownership of space just because they manifested within it.

Right now you identify yourself with your mind and body. This is the cause of the sense of individuality. But if you break that identification, it is like the 'small space' inside your body-mind merges with the 'great space' outside, and you realise there is no difference. There never was separation, there never was a real individual identity.

It is like the light from a small lamp when put under the sun, will dissolve into the Great Light and become inseparable or indistinguishable. Similarly, when you realise your True Identity, your self-consciousness will dissolve into the Universal/Impersonal Awareness.

Some of us may think that it is actually the body-mind that is animating the consciousness, and as such consciousness is a personal/individual byproduct of the body-mind. Actually we got it completely backwards! Consciousness/Awareness is what is animating the body. A dead body or corpse has no consciousness, which shows that body itself is insentient and relies on the Presence of Awareness for its functions.

Impersonal/Universal Awareness is animating or 'powering' the body and the personality like electricity is powering the TV to show the images on screen. Whatever happens on screen is 'run' only by the 'power' of the One Mind. Everything and everyone is the spontaneous functioning of One Mind, there is no individual doers/actors/selves.

> i have notice that most religions organizations althought taught the same idealogy and said the same prayer but there are no spiritual connection between continent. It is almost as to say that spiritually is independent and localised.

Mystics from all over the world report the exact same realisation, which shows that this realisation is not confined to any ideologies at all. No ideologies are an accurate representation of Reality, because Reality cannot be captured into thoughts and words as it is *non-conceptual*. It just requires you to *look*. Then you will be able to see connections more easily. This doesn't mean Buddhism is exactly the same as other religions, but this is another topic.

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21 May 2010

> *Originally posted by Arapahoe:*
> If one is to be intelligently aware that perpetual awareness existed than one must therefore inferential the difference of stillness awareness to a decision awareness.

Can you explain what you mean by 'stillness awareness' and 'decision awareness' just so I don't misunderstand.

> Decision awareness is thus a function of inference of intelligent references of the "different awareness experiences" so how does one know that the “universal awareness” is also not one of the many references of awareness in itself? and you actually are in the moment of "THE Awareness" ?

A decision is a thought. The knowledge that led to the decision, is also more thoughts and inference based on what you see and heard. Thus what you mean by 'decision awareness' probably falls under the category of what I call 'mind', which consists of thoughts, knowledge, inference.

Thoughts are appearances that come and go and are manifested by the impersonal and universal Awareness. Without this primordial awareness, nothing could arise.

Thoughts come and go, but what you are as Universal Awareness is ever-present. For example, one moment you may think you don't know something. The next moment you’ve suddenly figured things out, so now you think 'I understand'. But both the thought of confusion and the thought of 'I understand', and any other thoughts, are just appearances that come and go from your awareness. Can you have a thought without awareness? No thought can arise without awareness.

Furthermore: if there are no thoughts at all at the moment, are you still present and aware? Yes! Non-conceptual awareness does not dependent on thoughts, but thoughts depend on awareness. In fact to get a first glimpse of Pure Awareness, you have to silence your mind and look into the gap between two thoughts. In that gap, ask yourself/investigate/look into 'What am I?' or 'What is This?' That lucid, luminous, clear cognizance and Presence that remains in the absence of thought is what you are. If true realisation arise, no doubts will remain as to your true identity, and self-inquiry is a good way to realise this. But this lucid cognizance is present not only during the absence of thoughts but during the presence of thoughts as well, as the Pure Witnessing.

Hence the 'decision awareness' is not what I called 'Awareness' - rather they are knowledge coming from inference. Your true Essence as Awareness is non-conceptual; it simply reflects whatever arises in your field of experience as it is. For example a thought of confusion arises - it is reflected as it is. A thought 'I know' comes, it is also reflected as it is. A mirror simply reflects everything as it is.

**"If you understand, things are just as they are...If you do not understand, things are just as they are." Zen saying**

> if I follow of what you mention about “It is ever-present and unmovable.” then there are only short statics of silent awareness within the moment because every moment is a intelligent decision to be aware of the slient awareness in order to maintain “ever present and unmovable”

No, 'ever-present and unmovable' is not a state you achieve.

Rather it is pointing to an ever-present fact of awareness: You never actually experience movement!

The reason you think you move, is because you identify yourself with your mind and body. Thoughts and appearances come and go, but Awareness itself has never moved! So you do not make Awareness stop moving, you simply *recognize/realise* that it has Never moved.

I've given an example previously on the **Walking/Jogging/Running meditation**

> Does it also mean that universal awareness is thus chain of many short statics awareness?

No, Awareness is not static, neither is it simply an experience that comes and goes - it is immovable, ever-present, never lost, yet dynamic, having the potential to manifest all forms.

> *Your mirror-like awareness has no limitations, has no boundaries and edges*
> Explain to me what do you mean by the "mirror concept of reflecting" it still need inteligent to reflects....?

You are pure Presence, Clarity, Vitality, and Intelligence already. The intelligence that is being talked about here is not conceptual intelligence. It need not be developed - it is already present as your true essence, it just needs to be recognized/realized.

What I mean is the intelligence that even low IQ people have. For example, if you got poked, you immediately withdraw your hand even without thinking. Why? Awareness.

As for the mirror: what it means is this. Whether you are doing your own work, walking on the street, paying attention to a conversation, etc. Yet if a dog nearby starts barking, you will still hear it without your intention to do so! The sound of dog barking is spontaneously manifested within that field of Universal Awareness.

Your Awareness is like a mirror - it is capable of spontaneously perceiving and manifesting everything of their own accord. Even if you aren't paying particular attention to that object, it is still being perceived! What perceives is not 'you' as a body-mind (the body simply serves as a *condition* for that arising experience, but is in itself insentient), it is not even 'your attention' (your attention is a thought-form that amplifies on a particular experience being perceived, but it is not *what* perceives). Even if you are paying attention to your breath, if some dog barks or someone shouts at you, you'll still be aware whether you want to or not.

Whether that something is considered pleasant or unpleasant, Mirror-Like Awareness equally reflects What Is impartially without prejudices or judgements. Judgements are afterthoughts arising due to the egoic mind.

24th May 2010

> *Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*
> Your mirror-like awareness has no limitations, has no boundaries and edges. It does not belong to any object that appears on it. It does not belong to the body-mind object that you identify as 'yourself'. It does not belong to anything. But everything arise from that…
> …Impersonal/Universal Awareness is animating or 'powering' the body and the personality like electricity is powering the TV to show the images on screen. Whatever happens on screen is 'run' only by the 'power' of the One Mind. Everything and everyone is the spontaneous functioning of One Mind, there is no individual doers/actors/selves.

Just had a conversation with Thusness about this.

He told me that there is a problem of saying more than what is necessary, and that it comes from a clinging mind. That is, stripping of 'individuality' and 'personality' becoming a 'Universal Mind' is an extrapolation, a deduction. It is not direct experience like "in thinking just thoughts", "in perceptions just perceptions", "in seeing just the seen" - just 'what is'.

Similarly when I experienced 'impersonality', it is just 'impersonality', but it becomes a 'Universal Mind' due to clinging which prevents seeing. And if I further reinforce this idea, it becomes a made belief and appears true and real.

Therefore when I said 'impersonality', I am not being blinded as I am merely describing what I have experienced. This Mind is still an individual mindstream, and though impersonality leads one to have the sort of 'Universal Mind' kind of sensation, one must correctly understand it.

Buddhism never denies this mind stream, it simply denies the self-view. It denies separation, it denies an observer, a thinker. It denies a perfect controller, an independent agent. This is what 'Self' means, otherwise why is it a 'Self'? An individual mindstream remains as an individual mindstream, but it is nothing related to a Self.

Hence it is important to understand liberation from the right understanding, otherwise one gets confused. There is the experience of non-duality, Anatta, 'Tada' (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/04/tada.html), Stainlessness (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/04/stainlessness.html), but these have nothing to do with Self. Hence if one wants to understand Presence, then one must clearly and correctly understand Presence.

It is important to refine the understanding of Presence through the four aspects: impersonality, degree of luminosity, dissolving the need to re-confirm and understanding why it is unnecessary, and effortlessness.

These have no extrapolation and are what I am experiencing currently, and these requires improvement so that one can progress from "I AM".

There is the experience of impersonality. It is the stripping off of the personality aspect, and it causes one to link to a higher force, as if a cosmic life is functioning within me, like what Casino_King (a forummer who posted many years ago in both the Christian and Buddhist forums) experienced and described - the impersonal life force, which he called Holy Spirit.

It is as if it is all the functioning of a higher power, that life is itself taking the functioning, so dissolving 'personality' somehow allows me to get 'connected'.

I agreed with Thusness and told him that just yesterday I remembered a Christian quote that is very apt in describing this aspect: *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."- Galatians 2:20*

Thusness agrees and told me that it is about surrendering to this greater power, that it is not you, but the life in you that is doing the work. It is the key of getting 'connected' to a higher power, to a divine life, to a sacred power - and one wants to lose oneself for this divinity to work through us. And this is what Thusness meant by Thusness Stage 3 experience, the 'I' is the block, because of 'holding' one is unable to 'surrender' completely. When one completely surrenders, the divine will will become your 'will'.

This is not the non-dual sort of experience, nor is it about I AM or the Certainty of Being, nor is it about Anatta.

For example, "I AM" allows you to directly experience 'your' very own existence, the beingness, the inner most essence of 'You'.

A true and genuine practitioner must give rise to all these insights, and understand the causes and conditions that give rise to the experiences and not get mixed up. Many people get mixed up over different 'types' of 'no self'.

For example, no-self of non-dual, no-self of anatta, non-inherent existence and impersonality, are all not refering to the same experience - but rather they are different results of dissolving certain aspect of the tendencies.

Hence a practitioner must be sincere in his practice to clearly see, and not pretend that one knows. Otherwise practice is simply more mix-up, confusion, and nonsense. It is not that it cannot be known, it is just that the mind isn't clear enough to see the causes and conditions of arising.

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28th May 2010

Last night I wrote to Thusness,

*"Just now I sense that the certainty of being, the certainty of existence, actually encompasses everything... that means everything seen, heard, experienced is part of that certainty of existence and being. Sort of like the presence/seeing and the seen are inseparable. The certainty of being and what is experienced is simultaneous and I cannot point to where being ends and phenomena begin.*

*And also that everything is occuring spontaneously without effort... Awareness is what is spontaneously happening without any effort at all, as our natural state... when our mind/conceptuality quiets, what's left without any effort required is spontaneous mirror-like perceivingness/awareness and presence and spontaneous happening.*

*It's like extra effort to practice or cultivate something is not even necessary... but what is important is direct seeing and recognition. And I sort of intuit that all the various insights can be integrated in one moment... but I don't think I'm able to see that at the moment."*

His reply was that I am experiencing is still not Anatta. But it is better to drop all theories at this point in time even anatta and emptiness and focus just on this simple presence but direct all attentions to phenomena. What is required now (for me) is not to hold on to any conceptual views including anatta and emptiness, but I will revisit it later.

He also commented on my suggestion that even dancing can become a spiritual practice and be conducive to insights into egolessness, spontaneity and awareness, (based on my experience and the article in http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/399540) and said it not necessary as it is present in all activities but what I have described still lack the understanding yet. However he said I am experiencing all the 4 aspects of "I AM" moving towards non-dual and ready for One-Mind, yet I have not grasped the essence of non-dual awareness yet.

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28th May 2010

> *Originally posted by Arapahoe:*
> The question here is thus Duality vs non Duality or singular. The only way one is to observe the impersonality is the observer. If duality is non existent than how one consiousness is to avoid non observer and still be aware of impersonality? as quoted below.....

The notion that there is an Observer on one hand, and an object of observation on the other hand, is purely the product of conceptual thinking/dualizing.

In actual experience, once you touch that 'certainty of being' that I mentioned, there is no observer and observed distinction. There is just a non-dual sense of Existence, Being, Presence, Knowing, without a sense of 'me' being separated from 'that'. You Are That Knowing which is certain that You Are! The distinction between knower, knowing, and known dissolve into That. You Are That!

Impersonality is a further deconstruction after having experienced the 'Certainty of Being'. There is no one to be aware of impersonality, impersonality is not an object, and neither is there a separate person to be aware of impersonality (and the very idea itself sounds ridiculous!). **Rather, impersonality is the absence of that separate 'me' person that is aware, experiencing, doing things. You see that such a separate person is clearly a fiction of thought. What is left in the absence is pure impersonal perceiving and functioning of the One Mind/Consciousness/Life.**

You clearly see that so called 'individuals' are really the expression, the pure functioning of the One Life, just like different TVs are powered by the same energy.

It is as Ajahn Brahmavamso said: ***you can recognise that that mind, essentially, is no different than that process of consciousness which is in all beings. Whether it's human beings or animals or even insects, of any gender, age or race, you see that that which is in common to all life is this mind, this consciousness, the source of doing.*** - http://www.buddhanet.net/budsas/ebud/ebmed065.htm

> …the many impersonality so we basically move from one impersonality to another?

What Thusness is saying is that impersonality is a type of 'no self' experience. But there are different 'kinds' of 'no self', the term 'no self' can mean different things, as accordance to the Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment. It can mean Impersonality which is still at the I AM level (Thusness Stage 1 to 3), it can mean No-Self as in no subject-object division in Non Dual (Thusness Stage 4) level, or it can mean Anatta (Thusness Stage 5) which is the beginning of what Buddhism considers as enlightenment. All these various stages of enlightenment/insights talk about 'no-self' but what they refer to isn't exactly the same. That is why one must correctly recognise these phases of insights as they occur and not confuse one with another.

Also just a note... the Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment actually applies universally - if you did a 'case study' of all the contemplatives around the world regardless of tradition or religion, you can see a similar pattern of insight unfolding - or rather even if the pattern in which it unfolds is different (certain types of practitioners may some skip to non dual without going through 'I AM'), there will be similar insights unfolding concerning the luminous essence. All these contemplatives will also talk about 'no self' one way or another.

However it is Buddhism that emphasize 'Anatta', 'Emptiness' and 'Dependent Origination' as essential to true liberation from the bond of seeing inherent existence, which corresponds to Stage 5 and 6, and this teaching is peculiar to Buddhism.

> …isn't that a statics movement that it reaches equalibrium and move to the next almost like Jacob's Ladder but Jacob's Ladder introduce the concept of "Time". Time is a function of our mind. Ones minds must be consiousness to count sheep ...?

Time is simply a conceptual way to navigate in the relative world. We navigate relative world in concepts. But it is not the Absolute truth. So when Jacob talked about time, he is talking about it in relative terms, in terms of concepts, inference, relating.

From the perspective of the Absolute, which is your own direct experience, concepts like time and space does not apply. The Absolute is just pure impersonal, non-dual and non-conceptual awareness. It is timeless without any sense of movement.

As I explained earlier, the difference between 'decision awareness' and non-conceptual awareness is that the previous consists of knowledge, thoughts, that are relative truths based on concepts, inference and relating, while non-conceptual awareness is direct, intuitive, without intermediary, without separation, **immediate** - so immediate that it is **before** all thoughts, relating, inference etc. The seeing of clock ticking is just that - seeing of clock ticking, in its immediacy, in its *suchness/thusness/isness*. The Absolute cannot be grasped conceptually, and precisely so it is called Absolute - it can only *be* itself in its completeness and perfection untouched by concepts. The moment you relate, infer that the signs are referring to something - to time, etc, then you have moved from the Absolute to the Relative concepts. But even these concepts are arising in the immediacy of the Absolute. Nothing occurs outside of the Absolute. The Absolute alone IS.

The same applies to 'time awareness' (Relative) and 'timeless, non-conceptual awareness' (Absolute). You do not actually experience moving from the past, to the present, to the future - that is a thought arising due to relating. In actual experience, there is just Timeless, Eternal Now.

As someone wrote before regarding time:

*Dalai Lama likes to say sunyata is simply the discrepency between every thoughtform and how reality is. Time, yourself, other people exist in your mind as highly flawed thoughtform packets/bundles. For example, go look at clock right now. It is just an object with two pieces of metal pointing at two different spots on a dial. There is no such thing as time.*

Furthermore as I wrote previously:

*When you are abiding as I AM, there is no sense of time and space. There is only the all-pervading Self. It is very obvious that Awareness doesn't move! It is totally timeless. From this perspective, there is no death. Why? Because Awareness is the Ground of Being, the Eternal Now, in which things come and go, pops in and out of this Ground, but this Eternal Present, this Awareness, which is what you are, is unaffected, unmoved. As Awareness, you are unborn, undying. Ask yourself - things come and go, thoughts come and go, but have you ever moved out of the Present Moment, and is the Present Moment even affected in any way by the comings and goings? The answer is No!*

> If ones reach the higher level of consiousness isn't simply to say the self isn’t important no more, as it is part of a bigger collectiveness that stretch our

> imagination? so how does surrender to the state of being different different from "I AM"

First of all, 'higher level of consciousness' isn't exactly accurate, since Consciousness is just Consciousness. It is just that we get to uncover deeper and deeper insights into the nature of Consciousness, even though those natures of consciousness is always already so - just not recognized.

Second is, it isn't so much that 'self isn't important any more' - rather, it is that *'***a separate person is clearly a fiction of thought'.**

The 'self' or 'I' that is assumed to be at the center of my life, experiencing and living and controlling our lives, is really seen to be an illusion of thought. The "I" that we imagine ourselves to be is actually non-existent.

What is actual is this impersonal awareness that is non-conceptual: it transcends the imaginative, conceptual faculty of the human mind, it cannot be placed under any mental categories of 'individual' or 'collective' or anything - but there is indeed the intuition that everyone and everything is the expression of the One Mind.

With this insight also comes the seeing that it is not 'I' who lives, it is that we are all **being lived,we are the pure spontaneous and effortless functioning of One Consciousness.**

The difference between surrender and "I AM" is that "I AM" is a deep conviction and certainty of your very Existence, the innermost core and essence of your Being. You realise that I Am, and 'What' I Am, without a single thought and concept. This is a profound realization.

But after the initial glimpse and realization of I AM, the 'individual person' notion is still not totally deconstructed. The 'individual person' notion must be deconstructed in the next step. Then you'll see how everyone, and every thing, is the pure impersonal functioning of Consciousness. At this point you will want to 'surrender' your clinging to any sense of personhood. This is where the monotheistic contemplative/mystical traditions emphasize surrendering into a higher power, such as Christianity, or Islam (the word which literally means 'Surrender'), etc. As I quoted: *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."- Galatians 2:20* and "*Thy will be done*" (*Matt. 26:42*)

However one who has experienced the 'I AM THAT I AM', has experienced the Ground of Being, has known God face-to-face, will not find satisfaction in the usual/ordinary teaching and understanding of God in most churches. They will find satisfaction in Christian mysticism, Islamic Sufism, Judaist Kabbalah, and other mystical/contemplative side of the religion.

Jacob's ladder (http://www.innerfrontier.org/Practices/JacobsLadder.htm) is a good article about the I AM and maturing in terms of the four aspects of I AM.

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29th May 2010

But when it comes to the Absolute, concepts and thoughts are 100% pure useless in helping to understand the Absolute. It is the wrong tool. In fact it is worse than useless: it can become a distraction, an obscuration, if clung to.

At most they serve as a pointer to the moon, but they must not be mistaken with the moon itself. The moon (your true nature) is forever untouched by the finger (the concepts, words, etc). It shines gloriously revealing its wordless luminous essence to everyone who *look*.

**Update:** Thusness commented to me that it is important to cycle through concepts, views and non-conceptual experience. They are interdependent and that is the essence of middle path. If one neglects the view and conceptual clarity, our non-dual and non-conceptual experience will not be stable and mature. Telling someone to drop all concepts and views is not to tell him/her how irrelevant these rafts are but to intensify one's direct experience of luminous presence. Without the right view, our progress will be hindered. Both must be put in the right place, right perspective for the maturing of one's insight.

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29th May 2010

All problems, sufferings and doubts arise from the mis-identification of yourself with some limited self-entity. All sufferings and problems concerns an imaginary self entity that upon investigation cannot be located. Such thoughts are completely illusory and if they arise, inquire into the nature of the 'self' and see that the limited self entity cannot actually be found. Then all thoughts are seen to arise and fall away on its own in the vast sea of luminous space, belonging to no one.

Underneath the mind-created crap and nonsense, is the ever-present natural peace and life.

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29th May 2010

Let go of everything. What's left? Life. Heart beating. Awaring. Hearing, seeing, tasting. All happening on its own... The natural state.

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30th May 2010

> *Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*
> The difference between surrender and "I AM" is that "I AM" is a deep conviction and certainty of your very Existence, the innermost core and essence of your Being. You realise that I Am, and 'What' I Am, without a single thought and concept.
>
> You have to start with that - that means, you have to realize this I AM first, before any meaningful progress can occur.

Just to add something for Arapahoe and other forummers... before we proceed to understand other aspects like impersonality, and so on, it is important to give rise to the realization of who You are. In other words before going to the next step, start from Step 1. Otherwise we would have missed something essential.

The direct path method to Self-Realization is Self-Inquiry (refer to Conversations on the Practice of Self-Inquiry).

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30th May 2010

Something I think is quite important, which Thusness wrote to me last year when I have had glimpses of the Witness, but not experienced the 'Certainty of Being' (also see the post I made on 14 May 2010, on the conversation I had with Thusness about the different phases of I AM in February 2009):

Excerpt:

1. On Experience and Realization

One of the direct and immediate response I get after reading the articles by Rob Burbea and Rupert is that they missed one very and most important point when talking about the Eternal Witness Experience -- The Realization. They focus too much on the experience but overlook the realization. Honestly I do not like to make this distinction as I see realization also as a form of experience. However in this particular case, it seems appropriate as it could better illustrate what I am trying to convey. It also relates to the few occasions where you described to me your space-like experiences of Awareness and asked whether they correspond to the phase one insight of Eternal Witness. While your experiences are there, I told you ‘not exactly’ even though you told me you clearly experienced a pure sense of presence.

So what is lacking? You do not lack the experience, you lack the realization. You may have the blissful sensation or feeling of vast and open spaciousness; you may experience a non-conceptual and objectless state; you may experience the mirror like clarity but all these experiences are not Realization. There is no ‘eureka’, no ‘aha’, no moment of immediate and intuitive illumination that you understood something undeniable and unshakable -- a conviction so powerful that no one, not even Buddha can sway you from

this realization because the practitioner so clearly sees the truth of it. It is the direct and unshakable insight of 'You'. This is the realization that a practitioner must have in order to realize the Zen satori. You will understand clearly why it is so difficult for those practitioners to forgo this 'I AMness' and accept the doctrine of anatta. Actually there is no forgoing of this 'Witness', it is rather a deepening of insight to include the non-dual, groundlessness and interconnectedness of our luminous nature. Like what Rob said, "keep the experience but refine the views".

Lastly this realization is not an end by itself, it is the beginning. If we are truthful and not over exaggerate and get carried away by this initial glimpse, we will realize that we do not gain liberation from this realization; contrary we suffer more after this realization. However it is a powerful condition that motivates a practitioner to embark on a spiritual journey in search of true freedom. :)

(Article continued in Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives)

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09th June 2010

**Enlightenment is not distant!**

Sometimes, it is good to offer pointers on how to directly experience/realize the transcendental. Such pointers should of course come from someone who already have that direct 'touch' of the essence.

In fact, one thing I should stress is that it is not difficult to have that direct 'touch', insight and realisation of the divine. Many have that misconception. Many think that only those who sit in mountains and caves for many years are going to have any enlightenment.

I dare say that if you practice hard, there is no reason you cannot have that realisation after a few months to a few years. Thusness too said this himself before, based on his own experience of course.

Contemplating koan like 'before birth, who am I?', 'who am I?' is going to lead to that realisation pretty quickly. It took me slightly less than 2 years from the time I started on that koan to gain direct insight. And I wasn't even practicing hard! (however I started meditation a few years prior to that, in 2005 in fact)

However... the initial realisation is far from the end of the path. There is a process of deepening insight.

But anyway what you said is very true...

**"read less, analyse less, experience more, feel more."**

This is the essence of koan practice, or vipassana, or dzogchen, mahamudra, etc.... these insights tradition have all in common is a **direct and attentive bare mode of observation that allows the seeing of things as they are.**

The 'direct' mode of attending to Truth is what is most important, is what leads to direct insight, and is what makes koan, vipassana, etc so successful.

p.s. 'Who am I' is not just the only koan... but it is very useful to give rise to an initial realization of your true nature. Other koans are used to deepen/give rise to other insights.

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12th June 2010

Awareness, like a mirror, is totally unconcerned by apparently pleasant or unpleasant experiences.

It's sole 'job' or 'function' is to reflect What Is, without rejecting or accepting apparently pleasant, or unpleasant appearances.

Sweetness is sweet, pain is painful, but there is no one there experiencing it, rejoicing in it, or rejecting it. It is only witnessed as it is, no more, no less.

When we rest as the space-like all-encompassing Essence of Awareness rather than as a false identity of a separate self, there is a natural fearlessness in facing everything (all experiences and all activities) as it is. No longer are we seeking pleasant experiences or pushing away unpleasant ones. No longer are we trying to disassociate ourselves or escape from experiences out of fear.

To try to get rid of unpleasant experiences and 'get back' to the freedom of Awareness is the big mistake of a deluded mind (and this is one of the things my dharma teacher told me on phone the other day but I forgot to mention), as if Awareness had anything to do with a pleasant state of experience or as if the freedom of Awareness is opposed to unpleasant states of experience. Awareness is never obscured by unpleasant experiences, nor improved by pleasant ones, it simply reflects everything as it is.

There is actually nothing that obscures Awareness, Awareness is reflecting everything as it is, including even thoughts and concepts. Through our grasping on thoughts and concepts we lose sight/intuitive vision of Awareness.

But it is not the thoughts and concepts (which are equally an appearance of Awareness) that is obscuring. Rather it is the deeply rooted habit energy we developed since we were born to *believe in the 'me' stories and concepts* to the extent of losing sight of everything else and most importantly our directness and intuitiveness (or the non-conceptual vivid recognition of Awareness). And through the belief in a separate identity comes the chasing after of pleasant experiences (or maybe even 'Awareness', if

Awareness is deludedly mistaken as a 'pleasant experience' or even an 'experience' at all), and the rejection of unpleasant ones, all part of the same story of 'me' and 'mine'.

In fact we can continue in the recognition of fundamental non-conceptual Awareness even in the midst of concepts, then thoughts do not serve as a problem.

Through resting as awareness rather than as an illusory identity as a separate self/thinker/doer, thoughts are seen to be happening spontaneously of their own accordas a self-manifestation of mirror-like Awareness, and spontaneously leave without leaving a trace. There is no need to even 'stand back' from thought and watch it, it (and everything) is simply and already the natural manifestation of all-pervading Awareness.

Because the self-reference is seen through as an illusion, belief into the dualistic concepts and self-centered stories are gradually reduced and they no longer have such a strong hold on us.

Everything is still spontaneously arising and left as it is in its Suchness: vivid, unaltered, unmodified, and uncorrected.

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13th June 2010

Something I wrote in less than 10 minutes (but slightly edited later)

**Pointers**
pointers only serve their purpose until you directly experience what is being spoken about with such certainty that no doubts remain

it is the doubtless certainty of your true Being

once that is being realized, then words no longer serve their purpose. you may still read them, but you do not require them, because you find a wordless and unshakeable certainty in simply Being, you do not need words or people to confirm your understanding

all of the pointers only point to that non-verbal, non-conceptual certainty of being

trying to figure what the pointers mean at a conceptual level is totally meaningless

trying to collect pointers as mental concepts is also totally meaningless (and the pointers will fail to serve its purpose), as in the realm of concepts there will always be doubts (as the mind will always think 'is this correct? am I getting this right? why is this so, what about this and that...' endless relating, questions, and doubts)

trying to figure out the pointers at the conceptual level is endless and inconclusive (because the mind has endless doubts and questions) and the mind will never find satisfaction and peace - but once you touch the Certainty of Being, the mind comes to a complete rest. only complete stillness remains, and in that stillness the Truth is manifested in its entirety, with a full non-conceptual and unshakeable conviction

the only thing certain about your existence is Existence, Being, and Knowing Itself. everything else is speculation

true spirituality isn't about figuring things out at the mind level (the mind is useful for other practical purpose, but not the direct understanding and experience of our true nature). simply Rest in that blissful non-conceptual certainty of being-awareness

with all doubts cast aside with that certainty of being, you begin to truly and directly penetrate into the depths of your being and discover its immense aliveness, knowingness, intelligence, presence, spaciousness

collecting 1000 pointers to the moon is not as good as a direct glimpse of the moon itself

ultimately pointers point beyond themselves and becomes useless at that point (when what is being pointed to is Seen)

**Thoughts**

as being-awareness, thoughts do not become a problem
thoughts only become a problem when they are identified with as 'me' or 'mine'

when thoughts are identified as 'me' or 'mine', we become engrossed in it and its seriousness. we become hypnotized by our thoughts in an unconscious manner, completely drawn/glued to it.

it is very much like watching a movie, and becoming so deluded as to think that we are the characters in the movie, and along with it the belief in the stories, drama, pain and suffering, and all kinds of problems relating to that fictitious self-entity.

when we discover our true identity as being-awareness, we simply watch the characters of the movie but we are not identified with them. we see that there is no separate self identity to be found, except as an illusory image/concept of the mind.

in the same way, thoughts arise and pass but are not taken seriously because we no longer identify with the mind

as being-awareness, there is an undercurrent of peace and equanimity in the face of thoughts

like the luminous sky is ever free and unaffected in the face of clouds. it doesn't grasp,

doesn't reject, doesn't rejoice in any clouds. it simply reveals the clouds for what they are, they simply pass by of their own accord.

all that has ever happened in your life is some thoughts, feelings, sensations, coming and going from the abiding vast presence-awareness.

thoughts still arise of their own accord spontaneously in response to practical situations, but by resting as presence-awareness, they no longer have a hold on us. endless uncontrollable/compulsive mind chatter ceases

most importantly, we must not lose intuitive direct non-conceptual recognition of awareness by believing in the dualistic concepts of thoughts. thoughts only understands things indirectly through separation, between 'me' and 'it', be it God, people, things... but the truth is always direct and non-dual. you are one with all that is. through direct realization of our true nature, you'll see the problems of the conceptual/dualistic mind and its inability to comprehend Truth.

sometimes, mind chatter returns. this is due to strong habitual energy. when the mind chatter is seen to return, simply by recognizing/resting as that pure presence-awareness rather than believing in the thoughts will allow the mind to return to its natural state.

however there is no need to fight the mind, sometimes the mind refuses to stop, so be it. you are not a thinker or controller of thoughts anyway, you are the awareness of the thoughts

however realising your true nature does not mean you will feel calmness and peace forever (due to the strong habit energy of the mind to *attach* and *think*), though the mind begins to tend towards the natural peace and silence of pure awareness. If however you still feel you do not have calmness in life or you have plenty of concerns and attachments in daily lives, the best practical thing may be to keep a consistent sitting meditation practice, and try as much as possible to extend that meditation into daily lives. I believe this is part of the reason why Thusness often talks about the need to continue meditating even after some realizations - the experience of Presence and even non-duality and no-self needs to be complemented with deep calmness. in fact, he says that meditation is only deemed redundant when "the self liberation aspect of our nature is fully experienced" and one becomes "completely fearless, crystal clear and non-attached".

the greatest rest is not in stopping what you do

rather, it's in realizing that you have never been doing anything - ever - everything (thoughts, actions, feelings) spontaneously emerge without a doer

so just be as you are, and you'll see that everything gets spontaneously done in its own time, and everything continues flowing as before in an effortless way without resistance or interference (they are simply left to function as they are in their own ways, with no one at the center doing them/interfering with them)

16th June 2010

> *Originally Posted by* ***imk***
> well in another term, you may call it being in the 5th dimension. The 5th dimension is the new stage of consciousness which you experience no self, no time and now or the emptiness of all forms.
>
> We are spiritual beings having a human experience.

But what I'm talking about is your own true nature! That is not a separate dimension... that is an ever-present fact, a truth of your being, you simply overlooked it.

You said "We are spiritual beings having a human experience." This is true! So how can you say you are an ordinary being having a spiritual experience? This is not about having some cool experience, entering new dimensions, and so on. Whatever experiences is bound to be transient, fleeting, unsatisfactory. But after all, Who is aware of those experiences?

So know that this has nothing to do with entering new states and experiences, but everything to do with realising an ever-present fact of your Being that has always already been so but overlooked, realizing your true nature, your true identity, your spiritual essence.

Question: If you say that the Buddha-nature exists in the body right now, then, since it is in the body, it is not separate from us ordinary men. So why can we not see this Buddha-nature now? Please explain this further to enlighten us on this point.

Chinul: It is in your body, but you do not see it. Ultimately, what is that thing which during the twelve periods of the day knows hunger and thirst, cold and heat, anger and joy? This physical body is a synthesis of four conditions: earth, water, fire, and wind. Since matter is passive and insentient, how can it see, hear, sense, and know? That which is able to see, hear, sense, and know is perforce your Buddha-nature. For this reason, Lin-chi said, "The four great elements do not know how to expound dharma or listen to dharma. Empty space does not know how to expound dharma or listen to dharma. It is only that formless thing before your eyes, clear and bright of itself, which knows how to expound dharma or listen to dharma."7 The "formless thing" is the dharma-seal of all the Buddhas; it is your original mind. Since this Buddha-nature exists in your body right now, why do you vainly search for it outside?

In case you cannot accept this, I will mention some of the events surrounding a few of the ancient saints' entrance onto the path. These should allow you to resolve your doubts. Listen carefully and try to believe.

*Once long ago, a king who believed in a heterodox doctrine asked the Venerable Bharati:*

*The venerable answered, "Seeing the nature is Buddha."*

*The king asked, "Has the master seen the nature yet, or not?"*

*The venerable answered, "Yes, I have seen the Buddha-nature."*

*your majesty were not acting, its essence would be very difficult to see."*

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*it is called seeing and in the ears it is called hearing. In the nose it smells, in the tongue it talks, in the hands it grasps, and in the feet it runs. When it is expanded, it contains worlds as numerous as grains of sand. When it is compressed, it exists within one minute particle of dust. Those who have recognized it know that it is the Buddha-nature; those who have not call it soul or spirit."*

*As the king listened, his mind opened into awakening.8*

*In another case, a monk asked the master Kuei-tsung:*

*The master answered, "I will tell you, but I'm afraid you won't believe me." "How could I dare not believe the sincere words of the master?" The master said, "It's you!" "How can you prove it?"9*

These stories I have just told about the saints of old entering the path are clear and simple; they do not strain the powers of comprehension. If you gain some faith and understanding from these two kongan, you will walk hand in hand with the saints of old.

# CONVERSATIONS ON THE PRACTICE OF SELF-INQUIRY

16th June 2010

I answered someone's questions by e-mail regarding Self Inquiry practice.

Hi,
*Qn: Thanks!*

*Could you summarize your method for practice? As you know, I am very interested in obtaining I AM state. I am interested in any method except Vipassana.*

The I AM is already fully present right now, so much so that it is like asking 'how do I obtain my eyes?'. You cannot obtain your eye, you are already seeing with your eyes. It will be silly to go looking/searching outward (with your eyes) for your eyes. Similarly, it will be silly to go looking outward (through your Self) for your Self. You just have to notice that all along, you are the seeing! You are the non objective Seer, so to go looking for your Self outside is to look into the wrong direction. So know that there is no need to look for Awareness and Presence. It is simply a matter of pointing out, noticing, realizing that Awareness is already present and is what you are. It is a simple statement/description of fact, and not a prescription to go out and search for it. You will realize that You Are, and that is an ever-present fact that always has been so. When you realize, you realize you gained nothing new from it: you do not enter a new state, you simply realize something you overlooked all along.

Nevertheless, the method is indeed important to give rise to realization. Any method that leads to realization must be **direct** - means it must be a means that makes a practitioner bypass all the mind's conceptualizations and inference processes which are all indirect and secondary (which is not a direct realization and experience of your true essence and hence leaves doubts), so that you can touch directly and with certainty the essence of your Being without intermediary. On hindsight there was a period when I first started practicing self-inquiry where I was still intellectualizing about this, like how should I practice self inquiry, what does asking 'Before birth Who am I' mean and leads to, etc, which are all sidetracks and distractions because it is still using the mind and indirect inference and hence not a 'direct' approach to realize the essence of Being.

So do beware of intellectualizing these things, because it will not lead to Self-Realization - only the direct approach to investigate and look (a non-conceptual exploration) into the essence of Self leads to realization.

As you may have seen, my method of practice is self-inquiry. Self-Inquiry is the method that leads to direct experience and realization of your own essence, presence-awareness, so that no doubts can arise any more, because that is clearly seen as a self-

evident, solid, undeniable fact of your being. One thing to note: having glimpses and recognitions of the I AM experience is not the same as having the realization – the latter is more important. Something I think is quite important, which Thusness wrote to me last year when I have had glimpses and recognitions/experiences of the Witness, but not experienced the Realization, a.k.a. 'Certainty of Being' (also see the post I made on 14 May 2010, on the conversation I had with Thusness about the different phases of I AM in February 2009): Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives (see the first part)

As for the method of self inquiry, I wrote this on my forum about two weeks ago, highlighted in red:

*Begin by investigating this sense of existence, this sense of being. What is it? Who am I? This is not meant to be verbally or mentally recited (as Self-Inquiry teacher Zen/Ch'an Master Hsu Yun says, if you want to chant, chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha wholeheartedly will be more meritorious than chanting Who am I? or Who is chanting Buddha?), nor should it be an intellectual inquiry by engaging the mind in concepts to figure things out. No. Rather it is a non-conceptual and non-verbal exploration, investigation, examination of this sense of Presence, what is this Self, what is true, beyond all thoughts and conceptualizations and images we have about who I am. Your conceptualizing mind needs to calm down for true insight to arise (but calmness alone does not result in insight - inquiry does). The inquiry 'Who am I' is a tool to turn the attention inward, to turn the light around and investigate our essential being so that direct realization of this 'I', Beingness, AMness can occur.*
*Keep inquiring in that manner until unshakeable conviction arises through a sudden illumination: the undoubtable sense that I AM, which is beyond all thoughts and concepts - this undeniable, undoubtable sense of presence and existence that is at the same time aware and knows itself and aware of everything. It is both present, and aware. As I wrote:* You Are That Knowing which is certain that You Are! The distinction between knower, knowing, and known dissolve into That. You Are That!
*After this realization, your understanding of spirituality will not remain intellectual/conceptual.*
*However this is just the beginning, as Thusness said before in Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives: this realization is not an end by itself, it is the beginning. If we are truthful and not over exaggerate and get carried away by this initial glimpse, we will realize that we do not gain liberation from this realization; contrary we suffer more after this realization. However it is a powerful condition that motivates a practitioner to embark on a spiritual journey in search of true freedom.*

For me, I was asked by Thusness to contemplate on the koan "Before birth, Who am I?" This was the koan that led both I and him to the realization of I AMness.

Essentially what you have to ask is 'Who am I?' Trace the radiance to its source. You are aware and present, this is undoubtable and undeniable. So Who/What is Aware? Trace the radiance to the source.

You hear sounds of bird chirping, so Who/What is Hearing? Turn the light around, trace the radiance to the source, listen to the listener, investigate 'What Listens', until you can say with absolute certainty and conviction that you realized your true nature. (btw, this is Guan Yin's method of practice - 反闻闻自性)

http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/401963

**Chinul:** *Do you hear the sounds of that crow cawing and that magpie calling?*
**Student:** *Yes.*

**Chinul:** *Trace them back and listen to your hearing-nature. Do you hear any sounds?*

*Student: At that place, sounds and discriminations do not obtain.*

**Chinul:** *Marvelous! Marvelous! This is Avalokitesvara's method for entering the noumenon.[16] Let me ask you again. You said that sounds and discriminations do not obtain at that place. But since they do not obtain, isn't the hearing-nature just empty space at such a time?*

**Student:** *Originally it is not empty. It is always bright and never obscured.*

**Chinul:** *What is this essence which is not empty?*

**Student:** *As it has no former shape, words cannot describe it.*

When walking, you can notice that the body in itself is inert like a log, after the life force has left the body after death the body becomes a corpse. But right now, your body is alive and functioning well, so next time when you are walking or jogging on the street you can inquire on 'Who is dragging this corpse along?' Certainly the corpse cannot walk or move by itself without the power of the Source/Consciousness/Life. What is this core/source of aliveness? Who is it?

So you can do self inquiry in all kinds of situations: hearing a bird chirping (or experiencing anything else), walking on the street, or simply sitting meditation (just ask Before birth, Who am I?), etc. A popular koan nowadays is "Who is chanting Buddha?" but I don't ask this because I seldom chant in the first place, so it may not be as powerful/appropriate for my situation. But whatever it is, it still comes down to this... keep turning the light around and investigate Who am I? I do not want to give people too much to anticipate or expect, but based on my own experience and Thusness's, and observations of others practicing self inquiry, that practice should lead to realization in a few years of practice. It could even be a few months of diligent practice... it depends. You must be very interested to know the truth of your being, to resolve the matter of Who You Are. I believe this is what Zen means by 'great doubt

leads to great realization'. The initial realization should not take too long, though there is a long process of deepening/unfolding of further insights.

p.s. For Self-Inquiry taught in Ch'an/Zen, check out Ch'an Master Hsu Yun's teachings.

For Self-Inquiry taught in Advaita, Ramana Maharshi comes to mind.

But there is no essential difference in method taught as far as self inquiry is concerned as taught between these two teachers, as far as I know.

*Qn: BTW, does you or Thusness have the power to help out people like me?*

Excerpt from
http://nisargadattasmessage.blogspot.com/2006/11/gleanings-from-nisargadatta-now.html

"Nisargadatta Maharaj told me the only way you can help anyone is to take them beyond the need for further help and he did that by showing me what I was not....this body and mind. - He did not and could not show me or explain to me what is the Truth or actual Reality of all things. because That cannot be put into words or seen as an object. - I had to do my own inner work and see the Truth for myself. - See and acknowledge this present awareness that you cannot negate or grasp and you too will be beyond the need for further help. - No guru, new age spiritual master, or outer teacher can do it for you, you have to see it for yourself....."

I don't know what Thusness could do to help you, he will be away in Australia until 20th, and I'll be meeting up with him probably on the 24th, so if you have anything for me to ask him I can relay your question to him.

What he has always done is to observe the person's conditions before giving them appropriate practice advice. However I believe self inquiry is quite safe for me to advice you.

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17th June 2010

While resting as witnessing awareness just now, theres a glimpse, a shift in perception where its noticed that everything is spontaneously occuring in presence and awareness... such that awareness is recognized as not being 'here' looking at 'there'... the sound is not 'there'.. but its equally 'here' in awareness. Awareness is experiencing the sound from the sound, not from a separate vantage point.. so space-like awareness is not in here as a background, rather its a space that encompasses everything and is all-pervasive, non local and without a center. Background and foreground is indistinguishable in Oneness.

Everything you see, hear, feel, is not 'there'... it's here, in and as Presence-Awareness. It is the self identification that separates subject and object.. but that mental identification is simply more mental stories and subtle mental clinging that sections one part of reality

from another... but it does not represent reality as it is. To perceive non-duality one must investigate and see through any 'veils' of separate self identification that prevents non-dual clarity from being fully experienced.

It's not so much that we have to apply effort to enter a state of non-duality... rather it's that the 'veils' have to be lifted to discover and see the nature of reality as non-dual clearly.

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19th June 2010

The greatest bliss does not come from the outside...

It comes from the eternal stillpoint, the source of all existence and consciousness...

Just simply abide in it... the one constant source of bliss, life, energy and existence.

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19th June 2010

> AEN,
> Speaking frankly, I don't know how to avoid turning self-inquiry into intellectual pursue. When I have time, I just practice rest as awareness as taught by Adyashanti.
>
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIX_zk5NN6g
> I haven't seen any effect on me so far. This method I think is better than Awareness Watching Awareness method. AWA method may make a person fall into the trap of watcher.
>
> Regards,
> J

Hi,

Will do. Btw, I just recently read a book by Adyashanti called 'True Meditation'. Recommended. In it he describes two methods which he says cannot be done without, cannot take out either elements for true successful and insightful meditation.

One is a practice of surrendering and letting go of doership, the other is spiritual self inquiry (Who am I?). Basically Adyashanti is a teacher of self inquiry as well. Also, spiritual self inquiry is what led to Adyashanti's awakening. Quite a good book and contains detailed instructions for both parts of the meditation.

As for AWA, it is a pretty good method that leads to the I AM experience, however it is not a direct path method like self-inquiry.

Last year I asked Thusness:

**Me**: btw is it possible to experience I AMness without self inquiry? for example the person who wrote "awareness watching awareness" just focus on awareness alone then experienced I AMness. He didnt ask "who am I". But I think "who am I" is very useful

**Thusness**: it is possible but the sort it is a more gradual approach. It will not have that sort of 'Eureka' factor. The next step (into non-dual) is to bring this into the foreground by practicing bare attention of our body sensations. The Eureka factor is very important part for Realization. Self Inquiry is the Direct (not gradual) method to Self-Realization. The difference between experience and realization is written in

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/09/realization-and-experience-and-non-dual.html

- while I had glimpses and recognitions since 2007 or 2008 of the I AM, those were not considered Realizations, not the realization of 'You' I articulated in the Who am I document.

If you have a recognition of the Observer sort of experience, that is simply recognition, but not the Zen sort of Satori which comes in a form of realization - that is the I AM. An experience/recognition by itself does not mean realization.

Regards

AEN

19th June 2010

AEN

Read your self-inquiry instruction again and have a question here.

*"But right now, your body is alive and functioning well, so you next time when you are walking or jogging on the street you can inquire on 'Who is dragging this corpse along?' Certainly the corpse cannot walk or move by itself without the power of the Source/Consciousness/Life.What is this core/source of aliveness? Who is it? So you can do self inquiry in all kinds of situations: hearing a bird chirping (or experiencing anything else), walking on the street, or simply sitting meditation (just ask Before birth, Who am I?)*

How can you tell who, the ego or the Self, is doing and observing? I believe all I know now is my ego. Everything is perceived, processed and done by my ego. The ego knows the ego. The ego sees the things. The ego does the things....

Regards,
J

Hi,

What is the ego? Ego is defined as the false identification with mind and body and objects.

I like what Daniel M. Ingram said about this:

"ego is a process of identification, not a thing in and of itself. It is like a bad habit, but it doesn't exist as something that can be found. This is important, as this bad habit can quickly co-opt the language of egolessness and come up with phrases as absurd as: "I will destroy my ego!" But, not being a thing, it cannot be destroyed, but by understanding our bare experience, our minds, the process of identification can stop. Any thoughts with "I," "me," "my" and "mine" in them should be understood to be just thoughts which come and go. This is not something you can talk yourself out of. You have to perceive things as they are to stop this process."

So, ego is not a thing! But, it is a process, a process of mentally identifying perceived objects as 'me' or 'mine'. It is a conceptual fabrication of the mind. It is not natural. It is constructed. It is an illusion.

However, what is the True Self?

True Self is something that is unconstructed and natural, that is why Adyashanti talked about letting go of doership and surrendering. If you are still 'doing' something to your experience, trying to change it or whatever, it will never lead to realization. What leads to realization is to inquire and look into What am I?

In the gap between two thoughts, when you ask 'Who am I?' There is a natural, unfabricated, lucid clarity and aliveness that is 'there' by default, doesn't move, is completely still, and is simply what You are. There will be no doubts if you experience/realize this, so doubts will not arise as to 'is this ego?' at that point at all. You just see it, it is utterly real, and there is no beliefs at that point: it is a non-conceptual knowing.

This is different from the ego because the ego means a form of mental identification, or mentally constructed state of identification, but Awareness or True Self is what is naturally there - unconstructed - in the absence or presence of thoughts.

Now, regarding "> How can you tell who, the ego or the Self, is doing and observing? I believe all I know now is my ego. Everything is perceived, processed and done by my ego. The ego knows the ego. The ego sees the things. The ego does the things...."

This is just an assumption, and as you rightly say, 'a belief'. In truth however, it is just thenopposite. Don't believe in your thoughts, question them.Investigate.

Everything is perceived, processed, and done by and through Consciousness/Awareness. Awareness knows ego (as just a bunch of thoughts!). Awareness sees things. Things are spontaneously arising through Awareness. There is no separate person that is a doer or perceiver of things. This is an illusory construct. You ARE Awareness, and through Awareness, everything is spontaneously perceived/accomplished.

When you see an apple, does your awareness or eye say 'I see apple?' No, the 'I see apple' is an afterthought. Does the thought 'I see apple' have the power of seeing the apple? No, Presence-Awareness is what is Seeing. 'I see apple' is merely an afterthought that separates an imaginary 'I' and an imaginary separate object 'apple'. The actual seeing precedes subject-object division, the actuality of it does not have a separate 'I' involved.

Similarly, does thoughts or actions arise spontaneously or are you the doer/thinker of thoughts/actions? Can you know what your next moment of thought will be? No, you can't. Thoughts simply arise spontaneously of their own accord. Ditto to actions. All the causes and conditions come together and something pops up, but no separate doer/thinker/controller can be found. There is only conditioned and spontaneous arisings.

The ego is simply false mental identification that will dissolve upon a bit of investigation where you see the illusori-ness of such mental clinging and constructs.

The ego is not real and has no real power to 'do' or 'perceive' things at all. The 'ego' is simply an afterthought/after-identification of an actual act or perception. It is the identification of something done/perceived as 'me' or 'mine' or perceived/done through a 'perceiver'/'doer' which is false.

Regards
AEN

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20th June 2010

> When you talk to an ordinary unenlightened person who has no knowledge of spiritual literature, if he says it is me who is doing and seeing, you probably would tell him "that me" is not the Self. I am just another ordinary unenlightened person except I have some exposure to spiritual literature so I labeled "that me" as the ego.

Right. Certainly, the "me" that people usually think of will be their mind, their body, their personality. In fact they don't know of anything beyond that in their lives.

So they think that they (as personalities) are in control of their lives or are experiencers of their life.

That is of course... until they do serious spiritual inquiry and discover who they really are. That ego is certainly not true, it cannot be found. Just investigate in your own experience and you see that whatever you labeled as 'me' is in fact, not you at all. They are simply more transient thoughts and feelings arising in the field of awareness, they come and go. What we perceive as an individual person, or a personality, at the center of lives... simply is more patterns of thoughts, actions, feelings, behavior arising in the field of awareness. There isn't a 'me' actually. 'That me' that sentient beings identify with is actually not a 'me' at all. It is only impersonal thoughts, feelings,sensations arising and subsiding momentarily in the field of awareness without any substantiality or separate doer, they are only effortless/spontaneous expression of One Life. You clearly see that we are not separate selves living our lives, but we are all being lived as an effortless expression of One Life.

Seeing this, what you labeled as 'me' is seen to not have any existence in the first place. There is no separate 'me' in control of their lives, there is no separate 'me' experiencing their life. This 'separate me' is a figment of imagination, it is a made-up entity that cannot be found or located, and has no power to perceive, act, or control anything.

But does that mean you do not exist? Your Being, your sense of Existence, is undoubtedly present, and Aware. You will not be able to doubt it, I.e. your existence. If you do self-inquiry, 'Who am I?' sooner or later you will eventually see/realize what this is all about, you will find what you truly are.

Don't see your self as an unenlightened person (and likewise even if you realize your Self, don't see yourself as an enlightened person), because both images are illusory images of ego (false self identification). In other words, if you even start to say that you are a 'person', you have believed in a lie fabricated by the mind. You are not a person (whether enlightened or unenlightened). You are Awareness only (and even this is not true on a mental level - that is, if the mind believes in this statement and make it into a mental/egoic identification). This can only be known intuitively through direct investigation.

Regards
AEN

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20th June 2010

> Actually, I have kept telling myself about the illusion you just described all the time. I know all of this, but just can't break through the illusion and see the truth directly.
>
> &
>
> If I tell you that I have read what you just said and have said many many times in the books I read or from internet, what should I do next?

…

As you know, I didn't really start doing some practice until recently. I understand that waking up is a personal work according to most of the spiritual teachers and writers I read. Just ask and see if you and Thusness might have some different view or shortcut. :) For me, spending 15 years reading and searching the truth was quite gruelling experience. It is like the dog chasing its own tail: finding no way out and can't stop doing so. I went to several spiritual retreats in America before because the followers said their teachers are able to awaken a student. But I didn't wake up and found their students' experiences are quite shallow after talking to them.

I have some email exchanges with Anadi:

http://www.anaditeaching.com/teachingintro5.htm

He said:

You must awaken and find who you are. Go and learn, experiment, meditate. If a teacher cannot awaken you in his first meeting with you, this means that either he is not a real teacher, or that you yourself are spiritually immature.

He is kind of my last hope so far, but I haven't been able to attend his retreat due to time conflict.

Regards,
J

Hi,

You will have to do self inquiry... it is the direct path to Seeing. By the way I can see from your posts that you really 'yearn' for enlightenment, and this is also in my experience for quite some time in the past – seeking after some sort of 'event' or 'experience' (well even now these concepts may pop up due to habit but aren't taken so seriously anymore because it is seen that the truth of Being lies not in a future/past experience but as an experiential *fact* shining in plain view). This is a good sign and is an indication that you are now yearning to know and get to the bottom of knowing Who You Are.

However, try not to rush through the process of self-inquiry in hopes of/expectations of gaining enlightenment quickly or gaining anything at all. Don't hold on to any expectations, because any holding is going to distract you from the truth of your Being, not to mention it can be very painful as well. Do it slowly and patiently. It's actually good (even important and necessary) to have a yearning to know the truth, but direct that yearning/attention to Being Itself. What you want is to know and get intimate with (not that you ever left it) the truth of your Being, not 'gaining a state of enlightenment' which leads to chasing after illusory future events and causes you to overlook your immediate

ever-present timeless Truth. After all, this is only about your already-present naked Truth of your Being, and nothing else.

Anything else is mind-made illusions, it is not the Truth. What you want is the Truth. 'Enlightenment' is simply the ever-present truth of your Being, it is not a future (or past) event happening to someone (which is an illusion). This is the problem with people giving you expectations, and why I am hesitant and reluctant to even mention things like 'enlightenment should happen to you in xx months or years if you do this' because it sets up false hopes and expectations and illusions to dwell in. All these statements presume the reality of time and separate persons and are merely appearances or 'relative truths', but can be easily and mistakenly grasped as 'ultimate truth'. However, I did mention that to let you know that self-realization is definitely possible and is not a distant thing, so there is no reason to be disheartened because you have spent the last 15 years intellectualizing over these and not found the answer (because you are looking at your conceptualizing mind and not the Self)... now that you have the key, simply apply it and investigate your own direct experience to find out who/what you truly are, and the truth will be 'revealed' (as it always has, so self-evidently and clearly present right now, aware and perceiving these words) in no time

I really like a certain quotation from a (very old and authoritative) Dzogchen text/tantra that I feel is relevant here,

*"The desire for happiness is the disease of attachment; one can be happy only when free of desires. Realization is not achieved by striving for it; it arises spontaneously when one abides in the natural state without seeking anything. So remain in the natural state without seeking, without concepts! Even though the name "enlightenment" is used for the real nature, this does not mean that "enlightenment" concretely exists. If someone believes the opposite, [let them go ahead and try to find] enlightenment: apart from the dimension of fundamental reality, they will find nothing at all. So, instead of aiming for enlightenment, one has to understand the nature of one's mind beyond action. On examining one's mind, one finds nothing, yet at the same time there is clarity that is ever present. It does not manifest concretely, yet its essence is all pervading: this is the way its nature presents itself."*

*~ The Supreme Source*

Try to have a habit of meditating 20 to 45 minutes per day. Consistency is key.

By the way regarding the 'short cuts' email, I will still check with Thusness on his opinion on the matter... but as far as I know, there is no short cut in spirituality. But at the same time Thusness has told me years ago, self inquiry is a short cut to realization. Both are true. Self Inquiry is in fact the short cut (Thusness calls it 'direct path' in contrast to 'gradual path') to self-realization, it leads to realizing your luminousessence very quickly. However the first realization of I AM does not mean it is theend of the path - there is a gradual deepening of insight through integrating non-duality and anatta and emptiness just as described in the Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment. In other

words there is a process of refining insights and view. So in this way, there is no 'short cut' - everyone will have to go through a process that often takes several years and decades... even though it is true that Self Inquiry can lead to a sudden awakening of our true self very quickly.

Even that however, usually takes months or up to a few years of sincere practice. It isn't so much of the amount of time - nobody can tell you how long it will take. However I notice that a very strong desire to know and penetrate the truth of your being, as well as knowing the right way to practice (not intellectualizing things but a Direct looking/exploration of the nature of your Being), is going to make self inquiry successful.

However, I will relay your message to him and see what he replies you.

p.s. "If a teacher cannot awaken you in his first meeting with you, this means that either he is not a real teacher, or that you yourself are spiritually immature." by Anad is very true, however, most of us are 'spiritually immature' because 'maturity' means many factors like investigation, past insights and experience, deep interest in truth, possibly/probably conditions and factors from past lives... all coming together and makes a student 'ripe for picking' by the master. Seldom do you hear of people who are spontaneously woken up by a teacher upon their first meeting (though it happens), however I have heard of many people who woke up after years of practicing... then, when they are ripe, all the master has to do is to point them out, sometimes just hitting them with their shoes, sometimes hitting them on their head, or just a short pointer, and everything falls into picture. Sometimes if the person is ripe no teacher is even necessary (but he/she would probably have trained for years under a teacher previously) - all it takes is a sound or a sight, pebbles hitting each other, something fell down, bell sounded, a cup broke, or just seeing something... that is how many Zen masters of the past got enlightened. Much like how Thusness got enlightened after hearing the 'Tonggg'. They were ready, and so a Master, or a sound, a sight, is all it takes to wake them up. But what is often not mentioned is that they often have a history of spiritual inquiry and practice and that is why they are 'ripe' at that particular moment.

Sometimes they are already ripe... but what is lacking is a true teacher to point them out. Often however, we start as beginners, 'unripe'. For example... Someone in my forum by the name of JonLS realized non-duality simply by reading a phrase written by Thusness, 'Manifestation is Source'. Thusness wrote to him because he knew that JonLS is 'ripe', his conditions were there for certain insights to arise, just needed some pointers. All it took was a few posts, a few days of conversation in the forum since they ever knew each other, and it 'happened'. My Taiwanese teacher woke up 4 days after meeting my Master (he was already ripe then - and my Master knew he was coming even before he arrived, and said upon his first meeting 'you have finally come!' as if he knew him before - which is true, because they had Master-Student relationship even from past lives and both were abbots and Zen masters of a Zen monastery in Kyoto, Japan in their past lives). For me however, it has been years since I knew Thusness and my dharma teachers and Master but I am only beginning to scratch the surface. That is the difference.

BTW, it is often the case that a teacher may be able to lead even beginner students to a spontaneous recognition of their true nature simply by pointing out instructions. However, a deep and lasting realization will not usually come so fast. But the 'recognitions' eventually leads to the 'realization'. Again, 'recognition' and 'realization' are different as I discussed earlier. As Thusness said, even Ramana Maharshi's first experience at age 16 is a form of 'recognition' arising after a process of inference, but that is still not the direct experience/realization of the Self. That arose afterwards, so we can say that his initial recognition led on to the realization.

Regards
AEN

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20th June 2010

> AEN
>
> I think my problem is I didn't do enough practice. I should practiceas earnest as I did for intellectual pursue. Treat it like pursing a career or chasing a woman. I guess. :)
>
> Since you mentioned True Meditation, Actually Adya's Meditative Self-Inquiry is a little bit different from your self-inquiry if I read it correctly. His SI is the same as Jed McKenna's Spiritual Autolysis. Both uses the discriminative power to eliminate false beliefs so that in the end the truth will shine itself. If this is true, I have another question here: is discriminative power part of Awareness and not some illusory existence?
>
> Regards,
>
> J
>
> &
>
> I meant I should be earnest in practice but setting no goal or not expecting any end result according to you and other teachers.

Hi,

Both Adyashanti and the self-inquiry I'm talking about are essentially exactly the same thing. I am not so sure of Jed McKenna's Spiritual Autolysis, haven't really read it. But Adyashanti is basically asking 'What am I?' By dropping everything else, he describes tracing back to Awareness itself, or whatever remains after everything else is dropped.

The 'discrimination' is not a mental discrimination, it is simply the discrimination between Self and not-Self, in other words by rejecting/letting go of whatever is not-Self, what remains is Self which is beyond discrimination. But this is not a mental rejection.

For example, a thought arises, "I am J", then in spiritual self inquiry you discriminate and know that the thought "I am J" is not your true Self and is merely an arising thought and label, so you simply let go of it and continue inquiring. This kind of 'discrimination' is important in any self-inquiry (whether Adya, or Ramana Maharshi, or Master Hsu Yun, or whomever) because otherwise you will continue identifying with whatever you identify with as your self and not progressing in your inquiry. But as you can see it is not a mental discrimination or labelling 'this is not true self', rather, it is simply a spontaneous seeing and letting go. But that doesn't mean you forcefully try to get rid of your experiences or your thoughts, that is too much contrivance and doesn't help, rather you simply notice that whatever you identify as your self is not in fact who you Truly are. That is enough. To see the false as false is enough, you will naturally stop believe in them - the stories/ego/false identifications. As Nisargadatta puts it - "Truth can be expressed only by the denial of the false -in action. For this, you must see the false as false (viveka) and reject it (vairagya). Renunciation of the false is liberating and energizing. It lays open the road to perfection. (314)"

It is also not an intellectual exercise because intellectual exercise gets you nowhere. The discrimination part simply aids in the letting go of the not-Self so that what is your True Self can manifest. But ultimately what you are interested to know is your True Self, the emphasis is to know the positive truth of your nature, not the 'neti neti' part which is endless and inconclusive and doesn't resolve the issue (but merely is an aid to let go of the false – but don't fall into the mistake of endlessly labeling every experience as not-self and not looking into the nature of Being which is the main point), but knowing your True Self resolves the issue because no doubts can arise any more after you experience the Certainty of Being. So don't mentally look for things to reject, simply look into what you truly are, but if thoughts arise that says 'I am this or that' simply let go of them as 'neti neti' through the 'discriminative power' you mentioned and continue your inquiry. Do note that this is meant to be an 'experiential inquiry', it is to look directly in your experience to realize your true Self itself.

Here is what Adyashanti said about his self-inquiry,

"...this "I" is not what the mind thinks it is. Meditative self-inquiry allows you to discover for yourself who and what this "I" really is. I callit "meditative self-inquiry" because it is very experiential. It is not philosophical. It is not intellectual. Here, "meditative" means "experiential." Inquiry is only powerful when it is meditative, when we are looking in a sustained and focused and quiet way into our own experience."

This is what Ramana Maharshi taught as well, or what Master Hsu Yun and others taught as well. It's all the same.

And yes, earnestness to know Truth, while not clinging to expectations... this is an important attitude.

Regards
AEN

20th June 2010

> AEN,
>
> Both Adya and Jed McKenna propose 2-step model for enlightenment process.
>
> Adya: 1st awakening, 2nd awakening/enlightenment
> Jed: 1st step, done
>
> Both stress the 1st step/awakening is very important. After that, reaching the final awakening is just a matter of time and inevitable. It is like after something is very hard to break, but once you crack a hole, the task becomes much easier. That said, 1st step is the most elusive and there is no guarantee that would happen regardless of how much effort is spent. That is why some teachers even say: "Awakening is a gift, the supreme act of grace from the divine."
> I think what you said about 'recognition'(initial glimpses) and 'realization' is equivalent to the above model. Correct?
>
> Regards,
> J

Hi,

I am not too sure. It could be that Adyashanti was describing two distinctrealizations. It could also be the recognition/realization issue.

By the way... I don't like to call anything 'final awakening'. Even Adyashanti is only beginning to penetrate the depths of Non-Dual (Stage 4 of Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment), IMO, as of the most recent book. Some of his earlier books and expressions were rather dualistic. And even now the Anatta and Emptiness part is still not clear. Nevertheless, this is no matter because there are valuable things to be learnt from no matter what level of insight they have. I still like to read Eckhart Tolle sometimes even though it is on the I AM.

In a youtube video by Vishrant on self-inquiry (now taken off), Vishrant said, "the teachers that are flying in and out and telling people they are awake are actually misleading people. The terrible side of that is when somebody is told they are awake, the ego grasps it and says, 'I am awake', and then stop seeking, and then these people stop looking because they think they've already found. So it cuts off their chances for ongoing awakening. It's very sad."

Very important point. Also, what he said is true about self-inquiry because self-inquiry and 'turning the light within' only leads to I AM (and in his own words, only the 'first day in kindergarten'), but what Vishrant is saying is the way that leads to non-dual realization.

However, go through self-inquiry first. Then when your I AM insight matures (via the four aspects of I AM in the earlier email), gradually progress to non-dual (and further) insights. But no matter, a progression of insights is inevitable if one is earnest in practice, and of course avoiding early conclusions like 'I am awake', etc.

Regards
AEN

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20th June 2010

> AEN
>
> Thanks for your kind pointers!
> I saw you post Jim Carrey's video in your post. I first saw his videos in David's blog: http://in2deep.wordpress.com/2010/01/27/i-am-the-stadium/
>
> Interesting to see all of the awakened people are saying the same things.
>
> Jim Carrey said: I am the Universe.
>
> Nisargadatta said: Your world is personal, private, unshareable, intimately your own. Nobody can enter it, see as you see, hear as you hear.. In your world you are truely alone, enclosed in your ever-changing dream, which you take for life.
>
> Do you agree what Nisargadatta said?
>
> Again on Oneness or I am everything. It seems the Universe or the dream is created by the Self. All awakened people say they are the Self, but at the same time they also say they don't know what would happen in next moment. It sounds like there is still a division out there(part of the Self doing observation and part of the Self doing creation) and does this contract with Oneness? Another paradox? another thing cannot be comprehended by mind?
>
> Regards,
> J

Hi,

No, what Jim Carrey said and what Nisargadatta said is different. Jim Carrey's 'I am the Universe' is not 'personal, private, unshareable'.

Nisargadatta is saying that we are locked in our private dream and imagination, so we are unable to realise Universal Consciousness which he did. In dreams we can dream a thousand different things, each person hastheir own individual dreams and who knows what they are dreaming, but when they wake up, 'they' see only One.

Jim Carrey is talking about the I AM, the universal I AMness which he experienced.

So, it is spoken on different contexts.

Nobody knows what will happen next, even enlightened sages, because nobody is a separate controller of life... as I have discussed earlier, everything emerges spontaneously. The mind is an emergence or subset of Life/Consciousness, and hence the mind (even of enlightened beings) will not be able to comprehend the totality/workings of Life. The Self is universal and infinite, but the mind (the part that doesn't know what will happen) is a finite subset and therefore cannot comprehend Totality, and hence this is not contradictory at all. But what you can feel is the connection with the Will of the Universe, that you are one with the workings of Totality and you are the very expression of the Will of the Universe.

That Self/Consciousness manifests the universe does not mean you are consciously creating the universe through volition, it is nothing like that. Rather, it is saying that the universe emerges as it has to *regardless* of your intention - sound of bird chirping is spontaneously perceived through Awareness, whether you want to or not. Smell of garbage is registered in Awareness whether you want to or not, when the conditions (like wind, garbage, etc) are there. Both the 'observing' and 'manifesting/creating' part of Consciousness are happening spontaneously *of their own accord*. There is no such thing as an individual observer or an individual creator/controller/doer. There is only Universal Awareness observing and manifesting spontaneously of their own accord, and the so called 'individual' and 'mind' is not an observer or doer: it is merely arising observed perceptions, and an arising perception cannot perceive nor create/control. It is not the case that there is a division between the'Self doing' and the 'Self observing', since it is equally the Universal Consciousness that is doing (manifesting) and observing and no individual doers or observers can be found.

You are being lived by One Life, you as an apparent individual person is amanifestation/emergence of Life, and hence we are not separate selves living our lives. Everything spontaneously emerges according to various conditions. Sure, you can predict how conditions may play out much like weather forecasters, but you cannot control it, you are not a separate doer of it. But this is not fatalism/determinism. You/Life may very well 'do something' to change the conditions, but even the 'actions to change the conditions' is the 'being done', not the 'doer'. There are no doers.

Consciousness is manifesting and observing simultaneously. 'It' manifests as various experiences (though having the same nature/essence, aka One Taste), and its manifestation is its observation. The observer is the observed. There is only One.

As Steven Norquist said:

"You see, with enlightenment comes the knowledge that even though there is much activity in the world, there are no doers. The universe is in a sense, lifeless. There is no one, only happenings and the experience of happenings. Enlightenment reveals that the universe emerges spontaneously. It's emergence and pattern are perfect in mathematics and symmetry and involve no chance. Nothing is random, everything emerges exactly as

it has to. There is no random chance, or evolution based on chance. The universe is perfect, nothing is wrong or could be. There seems to be chance or unpredictability from a human perspective but that is only because our time frame reference can not see the universe emerge through its whole life span in a matter of minutes. If we could see that, then we would clearly see how every event was not only perfect and necessary but even predictable.

Now lets summarize so far, the universe is perfect, no one exists, yet the experience "universe" persists. How can this be? Consciousness. Consciousness is aware. If it were not, then there would be no universe. The very nature of existence implies consciousness. One can not exist without the other."

- http://www.spiritualteachers.org/norquist_article.htm

Regards
AEN

---

21th June 2010

> AEN,
>
> Thanks! You answer is much better/clear than several other people I talked to.
>
> Regards,
> J

Hi,

No prob.. interesting questions and I've edited my post a little to refine the explanation. But anyway, all these are explanations.... don't get too caught up in intellectualizing them. It gets much simpler in direct *seeing*.

Regards

AEN

---

21th June 2010

> *"You may very well 'do something' to change the conditions, but even the 'actions to change the conditions' is the 'being done', not the 'doer'."*
>
> *This is the most confusing part. Do you think an unenlightened person is ever able to understand this?*

Hi,

It can certainly be confusing to the mind but it is much simpler in direct *seeing*. My advice is to investigate and see through the sense of doership. Then everything will be clear. Actions, intentions, continue to arise in response to conditions as before, nothing changes on that level of appearance... but there is no notion or sense of a separate doer.

Regards

AEN

---

21th June 2010

> AEN,
> Sorry to keep bombarding you with questions.
>
> Just read Steve Norquist's article you referred.
>
> He said:
>
> Enlightenment tends to make one quite lazy.
>
> I have heard this from several other awakened people too. Do you feel the same way? If not, why is there such discrepancy among awakened people? According to you, Thusness is a successful businessman. He must be still very energetic as opposed to lazy. Maybe "Everything spontaneously emerges according to various conditions." is the explanation.
>
> Any other comments about Steve Norquist's views?
>
> Regards,
> J

Thusness answered your questions in his comments on this article 3 years ago - http://sgforums.com/forums/19/topics/241213

“The first level non-dual will normally result in this and knowing such danger, the seven factors of enlightenment are outlined to serve as a guide so that we would not fall prey to our own karmic propensities and misinterpreted non-action as lazing around after the initial experience of non-duality.” (Excerpt)

Anyway don't worry about sending in questions :)

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21th June 2010

*Thank a lot!*

*Your self-inquiry instruction is almost like a hint. It is rather hard for low-intelligent people like to comprehend and follow. :) RM and Adya also gave out instructions like yours. Could you give a couple of examples and describe the detailed steps you do self-inquiry from the beginning to the end?*

*For example,*

*Hear a bird chirping*
*Who hear that?*
*It is me.*
*No.*

*.....*

Hi,

Steps are not necessary in self inquiry, because this method is meant to cut through all steps, thought-inference-process, conceptualizations, to directly awaken to your True Self. This is why Koan and Zen is known as the method and school of Sudden or Instantaneous Awakening, not gradual or step-by-step awakening. This is the Direct Path.

For example,

Hear a bird chirping.

What/who is hearing?

(silence)

Silence means you aren't trying to answer the question using your mind (because the answer cannot be found there - the more you try to figure out with your mind the more time is wasted because you are looking at the wrong direction), but instead you are directly looking at 'What Hears' and experiencing your True Self, your Hearing-Nature/Pure Awareness. The inner cognizer (I AM) turns within and cognizes itself, its true nature.

The pure silence underneath the sound is your true nature, but it is not an inert nothingness, in fact not even silence as such, but more accurately a featureless wide-awake space which perceives all sounds, all sights, all thoughts, etc. It cannot be understood by the mind. You have to trace the hearing, the radiance, the seeing, to its Source.

If you truly and successfully traced all perceptions to its Source, you will realize and experience a Certainty of Being, an undeniability of your very Consciousness which is formless and intangible but at the same time a most solid self-evident fact of your being.

However if during the process of self-inquiry a thought arise like "could this be it, what is Awareness, etc", just ignore the thought, don't attempt to answer them using the mind/logic, but continue turning the light around, asking "Who am I" or "Who is aware of the thought?" and so on. Turn away from all doubts to the Doubtless Certainty/Undeniability of Being/Consciousness, and all your doubts and questions are resolved in an instant.

As Jason Swason said:

*"By turning the attention to the mind, immediately there are doubts. More thoughts rush in to question the questions, confirm or contradict other thoughts. A maddening cycle...*

*Notice when thoughts are paused there are no doubts; the certainty of (doubtless) Being is obviously present; the unquestionable FACT of EXISTENCE. Notice that the Being is ALWAYS presently shining, effortlessly and spontaneously. Stay with that undeniable non-conceptual confidence. Your Being has always been present for every single experience. That natural cognition in which all experiences arise is not a person.*

*Be as you ARE and not what you imagine yourself to be."*

And as Ramana Maharshi instructed*:*

*"If other thoughts arise, one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire, 'To whom did they occur?' What does it matter if ever so many thoughts arise? At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires 'To whom did this appear?' it will be known 'To me'. If one then enquires 'Who am I?' the mind will turn back to its source and the thought that had arisen will also subside. By repeatedly practising in this way, the mind will increasingly acquire the power to abide at its source. When the mind, which is subtle, is externalised via the brain and the sense organs, names and forms, which are material, appear. When it abides in the Heart, names and forms disappear. Keeping the mind in the Heart, not allowing it to go out, is called 'facing the Self' or 'facing inwards'. Allowing it to go out from the Heart is termed 'facing outwards' When the mind abides in the Heart in this way, the 'I', the root of all thoughts, [vanishes]. Having vanished, the ever-existing Self alone will shine. The state where not even the slightest trace of the thought 'I' remains is alone swarupa [one's real nature]. This alone is called mauna [silence]. Being still in this way can alone be called jnana drishti [seeing through true knowledge]. Making the mind subside into the Self is 'being still'. On the other hand, knowing the thoughts of others, knowing the three times [past present and future] and knowing events in distant places - these can never be jnana drishti."*

Don't try to comprehend the process intellectually. Don't stop at any thought-conclusion, like "to me" (which is simply an inferred thought), but trace all thoughts and

perceptions to its source by asking "Who am I?" to discover your True Self. Spending more time trying to figure out how this works in the mind is just going to prevent you from directly realizing and experiencing your True Mind. The purpose is to trace the radiance back to the source, then abide at the Source as Ramana Maharshi said. This is what I warned you earlier (as I know you will have such doubts and questions which I myself did earlier on):

http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/390582?page=4#post_9849278

*Nevertheless, the method is indeed important to give rise to realization. Any method that leads to realization must be* **direct** *- means it must be a means that makes a practitioner bypass all the mind's conceptualizations and inference processes which are all indirect and secondary (which is not a direct realization and experience of your true essence and hence leaves doubts), so that you can touch directly and with certainty the essence of your Being without intermediary.* On hindsight there was a period when I first started practicing self-inquiry where I was still intellectualizing about this, like how should I practice self inquiry, what does asking 'Before birth Who am I' mean and leads to, etc, which are all sidetracks and distractions because it is still using the mind and indirect inference and hence not a 'direct' approach to realize the essence of Being.

So do beware of intellectualizing these things, because it will not lead to Self-Realization - only the direct approach to investigate and look (a non-conceptual exploration) into the essence of Self leads to realization.

Don't worry about doing it the wrong way, if you keep asking 'Who am I?' and turn the light around to its Source instead of intellectualizing it or following the mind, you are certainly on the right path.

Anyway I don't know if you read this before, you probably did, but anyway here's a good article by Ken Wilber:

*"There are many things that I can doubt, but I cannot doubt my own consciousness in this moment. My consciousness IS, and even if I tried to doubt it, it would be my consciousness doubting. I can imagine that my senses are being presented with a fake reality – say, a completely virtual reality or digital reality, which looks real but is merely a series of extremely realist images. But even then, I cannot doubt the consciousness that is doing the watching…*

*The very undeniability of my present awareness, the undeniability of my consciousness, immediately delivers to me a certainty of existence in this moment, a certainty of Being in the now-ness of this moment. I cannot doubt consciousness and Being in this moment, for it is the ground of all knowing, all seeing, all existing…*

*Who am I? Ask that question over and over again, deeply. Who am I? What is it in me that is conscious of everything?*

*If you think that you know Spirit, or if you think you don't, Spirit is actually that which is thinking both of those thoughts. So you can doubt the objects of consciousness, but you can never believably doubt the doubter, never really doubt the Witness of the entire*

*display. Therefore, rest in the Witness, whether it is thinking that it knows God or not, and that witnessing, that undeniable immediacy of now-consciousness, is itself God, Spirit, Buddha-mind. The certainty lies in the pure self-felt Consciousness to which objects appear, not in the objects themselves. You will never, never, never see God, because God is the Seer, not any finite, mortal, bounded object that can be seen…*

*This pure I AM state is not hard to achieve but impossible to escape, because it is ever present and can never really be doubted. You can never run from Spirit, because Spirit is the Runner. To put it very bluntly, Spirit is not hard to find but impossible to avoid: it is that which is looking at this page right now. Can't you feel That One? Why on earth do you keep looking for God when God is actually the Looker?*

*Simply ask, Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?*

*I am aware of my feelings, so I am not my feelings – Who am I? I am aware of my thoughts, so I am not my thoughts – Who am I? Clouds float by in the sky, thoughts float by in the mind, feelings float by in the body – and I am none of those because I can Witness them all.*

*Moreover, I can doubt that clouds exist, I can doubt that feelings exist, I can doubt that objects of thought exist – but I cannot doubt that the Witness exists in this moment, because the Witness would still be there to witness the doubt.*

*I am not objects in nature, not feelings in the body, not thoughts in the mind, for I can Witness them all. I am that Witness – a vast, spacious, empty, clear, pure, transparent Openness that impartially notices all that arises, as a mirror spontaneously reflects all its objects…*

*You can already feel some of this Great Liberation in that, as you rest in the ease of witnessing this moment, you already feel that you are free from the suffocating constriction of mere objects, mere feelings, mere thoughts – they all come and go, but you are that vast, free, empty, open Witness of them all, untouched by their torments and tortures.*

*This is actually the profound discovery of… the pure divine Self, the formless Witness, causal nothingness, the vast Emptiness in which the entire world arises, stays a bit, and passes. And you are That. You are not the body, not the ego, not nature, not thoughts, not this, not that – you are a vast Emptiness, Freedom, Release, and Liberation.*

*With this discovery… you are halfway home. You have disidentified from any and all finite objects; you rest as infinite Consciousness. You are free, open, empty, clear, radiant, released, liberated, exalted, drenched in a blissful emptiness that exists prior to space, prior to time, prior to tears and terror, prior to pain and mortality and suffering and death. You have found the great Unborn, the vast Abyss, the unqualifiable Ground of all that is, and all that was, and all that ever shall be.*

***But why is that only halfway home?*** *Because as you rest in the infinite ease of*

*consciousness, spontaneously aware of all that is arising, there will soon enough come the great catastrophe of Freedom and Fullness: the Witness itself will disappear entirely, and instead of witnessing the sky, you are the sky; instead of touching the earth, you are the earth; instead of hearing the thunder, you are the thunder. You and the entire Kosmos because One Taste – you can drink the Pacific Ocean in a single gulp, hold Mt. Everest in the palm of your hand; supernovas swirl in your heart and the solar system replaces your head…*

*You are One Taste, the empty mirror that is one with any and all objects that arise in its embrace, a mindlessly vast translucent expanse: infinite, eternal, radiant beyond release. And you… are… That…*

*So the primary Cartesian dualism – which is simply the dualism between… in here and out there, subject and object, the empty Witness and all things witnessed – is finally undone and overcome in nondual One Taste. Once you actually and fully contact the Witness, then – and only then – can it be transcended into radical Nonduality, and halfway home becomes fully home, here in the ever-present wonder of what is…*

*And so how do you know that you have finally and really overcome the Cartesian dualism? Very simple: if you really overcome the Cartesian dualism, then you no longer feel that you are on this side of your face looking at the world out there. There is only the world, and you are all of that; you actually feel that you are one with everything that is arising moment to moment. You are not merely on this side of your face looking out there. "In here" and "out there" have become One Taste with a shuddering obviousness and certainty so profound it feels like a five-ton rock just dropped on your head. It is, shall we say, a feeling hard to miss.*

*At that point, which is actually your ever-present condition, there is no exclusive identity with this particular organism, no constriction of consciousness to the head, a constriction that makes it seem that "you" are in the head looking at the rest of the world out there; there is no binding of attention to the personal bodymind: instead, consciousness is one with all that is arising – a vast, open, transparent, radiant, infinitely Free and infinitely Full expanse that embraces the entire Kosmos, so that every single subject and every single object are erotically united in the Great Embrace of One Taste. You disappear from merely being behind your eyes, and you become the All, you directly and actually feel that your basic identity is everything that is arising moment to moment (just as previously you felt that your identity was with this finite, partial, separate, mortal coil of flesh you call a body). Inside and outside have become One Taste. I tell you, it can happen just like that!"*

*(Source: Boomeritis, Sidebar E: "The Genius Descartes Gets a Postmodern Drubbing: Integral Historiography in a Postmodern Age". More to be found in The Simple Feeling of Being, a collection of Ken Wilber's inspirational, mystical and instructional passages drawn from his publications, based on his experiences.)*

Regards

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21th June 2010

*Previously:*

> *p.s. "If a teacher cannot awaken you in his first meeting with you, this means that either he is not a real teacher, or that you yourself are spiritually immature." by Anadi*
>
> *etc etc*

Hi,

Just flipped to a few random pages in 'I Am That' by Nisargadatta, and found something relevant to what I was discussing earlier, so I'm sharing with you.

.....

**Q:** Ups and downs in *sadhana* are inevitable. Yet the earnest seeker plods on in spite of all. What can the *gnani* do for such a seeker?

**M:** If the seeker is earnest, the light can be given. The light is for all and always there, but the seekers are few, and among those few, those who are ready are very rare. Ripeness of heart and mind is indispensable.

**Q:** Did you get your own realisation through effort or by the grace of your Guru?

**M:** His was the teaching and mine was the trust. My confidence in him made me accept his words as true, go deep into them, live them, and that is how I came to realise what I am. The Guru's person and words made me trust him and my trust made them fruitful.

**Q:** But can a Guru give realisation without words, without trust, just like this, without any preparation?

**M:** Yes, one can, but where is the taker? You see, I was so attuned to my Guru, so completely trusting him, there was so little of resistance in me, that it all happened easily and quickly. But not everybody is so fortunate. Laziness and restlessness often stand in the way and until they are seen and removed, the progress is slow. All those who have realised on the spot, by mere touch, look or thought have been ripe for it. But such are very few. The majority needs some time for ripening. *Sadhana* is accelerated ripening.

**Q:** What makes one ripe? What is the ripening factor?

**M:** Earnestness of course, one must be really anxious. After all, the realised man is the most earnest man. Whatever he does, he does it completely, without limitations and reservations. Integrity will take you to reality.

.....

**Q:** In the beginning we may have to pray and meditate for some time before we are ready for self-inquiry.

**M:** If you believe so, go on. To me, all delay is a waste of time. You can skip all the preparation and go directly for the ultimate search within. Of all the Yogas it is the simplest and the shortest.

.....

**M:** The seeker is he who is in search of himself.

Give up all questions except one: 'Who am I?' After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The 'I am' is certain. The 'I am this' is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality.

To know what you are, you must first investigate and know what you are not.

Discover all that you are not - body, feelings, thoughts, time, space, this or that - nothing, concrete or abstract, which you perceive can be you. The very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive.

The clearer you understand that on the level of mind you can be described in negative terms only, the quicker will you come to the end of your search and realize that you are the limitless being.

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22th June 2010

AEN,

Thanks for your elaboration on self-inquiry. Now I fully understand how to do it.

Regards,

J

*On Mon, Jun 21, 2010 at 1:03 AM, AEN wrote:*

*Hi,*

*Steps are not necessary in self inquiry, because this method is meant to cut through all steps, thought-inference-process, conceptualizations, to directly awaken to your True Self. This is why Koan and Zen is known as the method and school of Sudden Awakening, not gradual or step-by-step awakening. This is the Direct Path.*

---

24th June 2010

> *"I do not experience a world out there, so yes. The notion of a world out there is just a thought. In truth, there is only Consciousness. Everything experienced is an appearance of the all-encompassing space-like Consciousness, it does not exist outside."*
>
> Really envy people who have such experience. Only theory for me so far!

Hi,

This is actually 'your' experience too. Can you say that a world exist outside awareness? Isn't that notion a thought only, happening in awareness? Isn't there simply just thoughts, sensations and perceptions happening within awareness?

Actually there is no such thing as 'my experience' or 'your experience' btw, there is only spontaneous, impersonal arisings of awareness. Furthermore there is no such thing as 'my awareness' or 'your awareness' - Awareness is absolutely impersonal, we (the body-mind) are objects arising from space-like impersonal/universal Awareness, in the same way that tables and chairs are appearing out of Awareness but Awareness does not belong to the tables and chairs. And there is absolutely no difference as far as Awareness is concerned (just like there can be no difference as far as space is concerned)... just investigate and you'll see how simple this is. Nothing changes as far as experiences are concerned - so do not treat enlightenment as an experience to be 'had'. Rather, you simply realize your true identity as (always been) Awareness, and that all experiences are arising and subsiding in Awareness, all along...

Regards

AEN

---

27th June 2010

*Qn: AEN,*

*Ramana Maharshi: "If one then enquires 'Who am I?' the mind will turn back to its source".*

*When I enquire 'Who am I?', basically the mind becomes blank and no answers at all. Does this mean the mind has turned back to it s source?*

No. What you have done is that you get stuck and identified with a subtle mental state or experience, in this case an experience of blankness. Don't stop here. You are now progressing from total identification with mind and concepts to identification with a state of blankness. So you are progressing beyond the gross concepts of mind, but this is still not 'it', it is still another experience, so do not get stuck. This state of blankness is well known and many masters have warned us against getting stuck in such a state. However, do not seek for a conceptual answer - if the mind becomes blank and no

answers come up, know that this is still much better than clinging to a conceptual answer - do not try to make up your 'no answer' with a conceptual answer - if you don't know through direct experience, keeping a 'don't know' attitude is much better as that means you are open to continue *exploring* your direct experience, rather than clinging to a mental conclusion/speculation that blocks direct realization. Yes, there is an answer to your Koan, but the answer cannot be found in the mind. The answer is found through an immediate, intuitive Realization, it cannot be fabricated.

If you experience the blankness, ask yourself, "Who is aware of that blankness?" What you are looking for is not an experience or state (whether blankness or somethingness), but what you are investigating is 'What is Aware of those states and experiences', whether the states be blank, something, or what not. To have an experience of blankness or somethingness, there must be a Witnessing, an Awareness of that experience. You are that ever-present Awareness. So What is Aware? Don't think - but *look, investigate,* until you touch your Being so directly that a non-conceptual certainty arises. All certainty and doubtlessness comes from immediate non-conceptual directness (direct experience), all doubts and questions come from conceptual thinking and inference. By doing this inquiry, you are turning the light around even from the *experience* of blankness, to the *Source* of the experience of blankness. Underneath the comings and goings of thoughts and blankness, there is a constant shining Presence-Awareness that allows these experiences to arise, and That is what you are.

Looking back, right before the Certainty of Being arose, thoughts gradually died down until only a state of blankness prevailed. But there is still a sense of dullness or unclarity in this state. This is just one step away from realization, because if you are unable to let the thoughts 'die down', it is very difficult to look non-conceptually. But a blank state is still not it. But anyway, at that point, while I was in that blank state, I turned around and look at Who am I? Even in that blank state, I am undeniably Present and Aware, to *know/see* that blank state. I cannot deny my sense of existence. So What is This? What am I? What is Aware? It all happened very quickly through this inquiry and though by writing this made it sound like a narrative or inferential/conceptual process, the process of inquiry was actually much more direct and intuitive than narrative and inferential... through this direct inquiry/direct *looking*, a sudden noticing and realization of the undeniable I AMness 'happened' - and the truth was shone so vividly and brilliantly that there can be no doubts to it.

The Grand Master Hsu Yun cautioned: "in our meditation if we lose sight of the hua tou, while dwelling in stillness, there results an indistinct void ness where-in there is nothing. Clinging to this state of stillness is a Chan illness which we should never contract while undergoing our training. This is the unrecordable dead emptiness." On another occasion he said; "awareness without contemplation will lead to confusion and instability, and contemplation without awareness will result in immersion in stagnant water." This unrecordable dead emptiness is a state where there is little activity of mind - no thoughts. It is a state where cognition is lost or diminished and the meditator has entered a trance. It is important that a highly focused state of mind be maintained at all times. This is the mind that dwells on and in the hua tou it is a union with that which is "the unborn, undying."

Tenzin Wangyal says, "The gap between two thoughts is essence. But if in that gap there is a lack of presence, it becomes ignorance and we experience only a lack of awareness, almost an unconsciousness. If there is presence in the gap, then we experience the dharmakaya [the ultimate].", and, “At the moment when a desire is satisfied, the desire ceases and the apparent duality between the desiring subject and object of desire collapses. When that duality collapses, the base, the kunzhi, is there, exposed, though the force of our karmic habits usually carries us into the next movement of duality, leaving a gap in our experience, almost an unconsciousness, rather than the experience of rigpa.”

Sailor Bob Adamson says, "What you are in essence is self-shining, pure intelligence. The very idea of shining implies a movement. Movement is energy. So, I call it 'pure intelligence-energy'. It is shining through your eyes. You cannot say what it is, and you cannot negate it either. It is 'no thing'. It cannot be objectified. It ever expresses as that living, vibrant sense of presence, which translates through the mind as the thought 'I am'. The primary thought 'I am' is not the reality. It is the closest the mind or thought can ever get to reality, for reality to the mind is inconceivable. It is no thing. Without the thought 'I am', is it stillness? Is it silence? Or is there a vibrancy about it, a livingness, a self-shining-ness? All these expressions are mental concepts or pointers towards it, but the bottom line is that you know that you are. You cannot negate that knowing that you are. It is not a dead, empty, silent stillness. It is not about keeping the mind silent, but seeing that what is prior to the mind is the very livingness itself. It is very subtle.

When you see that that is what you are, then the very subtleness expresses itself. That is the uncaused joy. Nisargadatta puts it beautifully. He puts it in the negative: 'There is nothing wrong any more'. We think that we have to attain something and then stay there. Realize that you have never left it at any time. It is effortless. You don't have to try or strive or grasp or hold. You are That."

> *Qn: Adya's Rest As Awareness seems to ask mediators to rest the mind in its source. If so, what is the difference between self-inquiry and this method.*

Self-Inquiry will lead to a Realization, a sudden, intuitive, unshakeable 'Eureka!'-like Realization of You/Who You Are. It is not simply an experience of Awareness, but the Realization of YOU, your true identity, as that Awareness. It is a non-conceptual realization, certainty, of your very Being. I had lots of glimpses, experiences and recognitions of Awareness prior to the Certainty of Being that I wrote, but the experience is different from the Realization. Resting as Awareness is important prior and after the Realization of Awareness (and the Realization will also make you understand the importance of natural resting in the non-conceptual certainty of your Being rather than chasing after thoughts), but the Realization part is very important as well. Otherwise, why would Adyashanti teach self-inquiry apart from 'resting as Awareness'?

What you must understand is this: Resting as Awareness is important, because you need to rest the mind's conceptualizations in order to directly *touch* the essence of Awareness. However that 'resting of conceptualization' **should not prevent you from investigating/self-inquiring in a non-conceptual way.** It is actually not

contradictory. But if you simply stop defining and conceptualizing and neglect the investigation part, you will never know Who You Are. You have to directly and intuitively experience that non-conceptual certainty of I AM. And this is what I have been trying to tell you.

Again... the topic of experience/realization is being discussed (though I think you have read it) in 3) Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives

*Qn: Some questions about thoughts. When I worked on a difficult math question, I noticed my mind was intensively processing the thoughts: connecting them and referencing them. Were all of this done by the mind? Or Awareness/the source was involved too?*

All these are conceptual thoughts arising in the mind. There is no problem using the mind to solve practical daily problems. That is what the mind is good at, and it is a necessary tool for us to function intelligently as human beings in the world (though 'intelligence' has a far deeper depth than the conceptual realm which is merely a tiny figment of it). There is no need to reject or deny thoughts in daily lives as they are part of the natural functioning of Intelligence/Awareness/Life. There is no point making ourselves into zombies or animals. Just make sure you don't get so caught up in the mind until you lose direct-intuitive recognition of Reality into the believing/attaching to the fictional stories of the conceptual mind as facts/reality.* By believing in them as reality, you are perpetuating the stories of a fictional self and fictional world/objects. In other words, don't give transient thoughts more solidity/reality than they are: as transient dream-like phenomena arising and dissolving instantly in infinite Awareness, leaving no traces. It is like a ball, if you throw it into space, it has no place to stay/abide/latch on to, and it just falls back as soon as it goes up. The space in this analogy is referring to your space-like Awareness, the ball is referring to your thoughts. In this way, thoughts that do arise don't leave traces, they just come and go naturally according to circumstances but there is no latching on to them. You are like a non-stick pan of Awareness itself.

However if you use the mind in the same way as you use the mind to solve maths at solving 'Who am I', it will never work. Why? Because you are using the wrong tool. The mind is the right tool for practical, daily lives situations, but the wrong tool at solving spiritual inquiries and koans. Yes, sure, even thoughts are manifestation of Awareness, but the problem is that we will never realize that if we are lost in and continue engaging in conceptual thoughts. It can only be understood/realized through non-conceptual Looking. You will never solve the question of your true identity through inference and connections.

*on direct-intuitiveness, I wrote in one of my posts:

*Thoughts are never the problem and can never obscure awareness.*

*Rather, it is believing in the dualistic concepts and stories and losing direct intuitive awareness that creates the sense of separation, doubts, problems and confusion. If a sense and concept of self and separation arise (out of habit and conditioning), question and investigate that assumption of a 'self' and let those concepts dissolve into the clear light of Awareness.*

*Non-conceptual Awareness is different from conceptual thinking as it only knows Itself by Being itself in a clear, direct, and non-dual way without intermediary. It allows no doubts and confusion.*

*From direct seeing, thoughts are almost like waves appearing in vast ocean, it is seen as insubstantial arisings in infinite Awareness.*

> Qn: I think for unenlightened people, the problem is their awareness is "too close" to the mind/thoughts so that they can't differentiate them and notice the existence of the awareness. Is this a correct description?

No I do not see it this way. Awareness is simply Awareness, there is no question of Awareness being closer or more distant to thoughts. Thoughts come and go in Awareness, but Awareness remains as it is. But as thoughts cannot arise without/apart from Awareness in just the same way that the hearing of sounds cannot arise without/apart from Awareness or the seeing of a mountain cannot arise without/apart from Awareness, and hence they cannot be said to be 'distant' from Awareness as well - rather, thoughts are the very self-manifestation of Awareness. As all thoughts are made of Awareness, they have 0 distance from Awareness as well. In a piece of mirror the images in the mirror appear to have depths and distance, but in actuality they are all equally happening in and as the mirror itself - there is absolutely no 'distance', everywhere you touch in the mirror is the 'flat' mirror itself expressing as those apparent forms and 'distance'.

Awareness is a fact/truth of Reality and the essence of your Being that is always so and is not an object of ownership - it is the same for every person, and the question of 'unenlightened' and 'enlightened' person is moot and irrelevant here. You are not a person, You are Awareness, but Awareness cannot be termed 'unenlightened' or 'enlightened' - it just IS and remains the same for every single Buddha or sentient being. It will remain the same whether you are so called 'enlightened' or not - it will remain the same from 10 years old to 80 years old, the same formless Presence of Awareness that looks through your eyes still remains and feels the same even though your body and mind has undergone many gradual transformations. Awareness is simply a Timeless, Ageless Truth of your Being. And anyway 'Your' Awareness and 'Buddha's' Awareness is not in any way different, and even the conceptual divide into 'yours' and 'buddha's' is simply more conceptual nonsense. There is only Awareness, One without Second, just like Space cannot be divided into 'your space' and 'my space' - there is only One Space from which everything manifests.

What happens however, is that most people are so fixated and caught up in their thoughts and feelings, that they never even notice the Reality, the existence of Awareness. It is like you are so caught up in a cloud that you lose sight of the whole sky.

Or in the mirror analogy, you are so engrossed in a particular reflection that you have mistaken to be 'objectively existing' or an object of identity ('me'/'mine') that you lose sight of the fact that the appearance is simply a reflection of an all-encompassing mirror-like Awareness. Actually the sky or mirror is always here - just overlooked. Most people's identities and understandings are entirely limited to their thoughts and feelings. They do not even know anything other than that. Yet all it takes is a bit of looking to realize what they have missed all along, the truth of their own nature which is always shining right here, right now.

Deeply contemplate this verse by Zen Master Huang Po (his stuff is good):

*All the Buddhas and all sentient beings are nothing but the One Mind, besides which nothing exists. This Mind, which is without beginning, is unborn and indestructible. It is not green nor yellow, and has neither form nor appearance. It does not belong to the categories of things which exist or do not exist, nor can it be thought of in terms of new or old. It is neither long nor short, big nor small, for it transcends all limits, measure, names, traces and comparisons. It is that which you see before you – begin to reason about it and you at once fall into error. It is like the boundless void which cannot be fathomed or measured. The One Mind alone is the Buddha, and there is no distinction between the Buddha and sentient things, but that sentient beings are attached to forms and so seek externally for Buddhahood. By their very seeking they lose it, for that is using the Buddha to seek for the Buddha and using mind to grasp Mind. Even though they do their utmost for a full aeon, they will not be able to attain it. They do not know that, if they put a stop to conceptual thought and forget their anxiety, the Buddha will appear before them, for this Mind is the Buddha and the Buddha is all living beings. It is not the less for being manifested in ordinary beings, nor is it greater for being manifest in the Buddhas.*

Regards,

AEN

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28th June 2010

> Does mind have awareness? After realization, the Awareness becomes aware of itself. Does the mind become aware of the Awareness afterward too?
>
> Thanks,
> J

Hi,

It depends what you mean by "Mind", which sometimes means Awareness, or sometimes means thoughts, depending on context. Mind (defined here as thinking) is a

reflection of Awareness, just as all phenomena are the reflection/manifestation of Awareness. The mind does not cognize Awareness. First of all, the mind is an arising perception, a cognition, and being a transient perception that comes and goes from the field of awareness, it cannot possibly be a perceiver. How can a perception perceive its perceiver? How can the table you see in front of you perceive Awareness? Awareness perceives the table. You are Awareness, the perceiver of mind, not the other way round. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, mind has no power of cognition - I.e. the thought 'I see apple' has no power to be aware of apple. The seeing of apple precedes mind. Awareness precedes mind.

Awareness cognizes the mind. Awareness cognizes ItSelf through and as the body-mind in the miracle we call Life - even the mind is part of the field of awareness. Everything is the manifestation of Awareness. There is no such thing as an unheard sound, unseen sight, uncognized thought, etc. All phenomena are consciousness, cognition, and all cognitions are only Awareness - there is no such thing as an un-awared cognition, or cognition that exists independently of Awareness. So in finality, there is Awareness only, in experience. Whatever you see, hear, smell, is also Awareness only. So my previous statement 'You are Awareness, the perceiver of mind, not the other way round.' is not the final realization, since it implies a perceiver and perceived, but in reality Awareness is non-dual. It is an integrated, undivided reality that is utterly indistinguishable in terms of subject and objects. At this point, there is no question of 'something' being aware of 'something else', since there is only Oneness.

Regards

AEN

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29th June 2010

> *Could you link what you said here to your explanation about mind as a tool when solving a math problem?*

Hi,

Seeing depends on awareness/aliveness. Hearing depends on awareness/aliveness. Thinking depends on awareness/aliveness. They are all the manifestation of Awareness. They are all the natural functioning of awareness. The mind is a tool just as the ear or the eyes are a tool to help us function in life. They are all part of the natural functioning.

The only problem with thoughts is when we believe and identify with and attach to a story of a separate self, and this causes all other kinds of problems/sufferings. Otherwise thoughts are just like any other kinds of phenomena (like sights and sounds), arising naturally according to circumstances, and then subsiding without leaving traces (attachments).

Know that no thoughts actually make you lose awareness. Thoughts cannot exist outside or apart from awareness. Awareness only becomes apparently obscured when you believe/become hypnotized in dualistic thoughts and lose intuitive awareness, direct experience/recognition of non-dual reality. In actuality it is ever-present as your self-shining nature, never lost (even in the midst of thoughts). Thoughts come and go, but your true nature of Awareness is abiding. Let thoughts come and go of it's own accord, don't grasp, don't reject.

"The vast and empty sky does not hinder the clouds from coming and going." Shitou Xiquian

I'm not sure what question you have in mind so that's all I can say for now.

Regards

AEN

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29th June 2010

> I meant you said mind can't do perceiving. But you also said when a person tries to solve a math problem, all the work is done by the mind because the mind is the best/right tool for this. Solving a math problem requires connecting the dots together and figure out the solution. This means the mind needs to connecting the thoughts together. Does this mean the mind is aware of the thoughts?

Hi,

You must understand I am using the term 'mind' and 'thoughts' interchangeably (some others may use the terms differently - I.e. Mind is Buddha-Nature). Since mind = thoughts, how can 'mind' be 'aware' of 'thoughts' as if they are two things? Mind is simply a 'label' to the functioning we call 'thinking'. And this functioning depends/manifests through Awareness.

You must also understand that thoughts arise without a thinker. There is no agent behind thoughts. Things arise spontaneously on their own accord, there is no such thing as an entity called 'mind' behind the arising of thoughts. The mind IS the thoughts, the thinking process only. They all happen spontaneously without a doer/thinker.

Regards

AEN

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30th June 2010

*AEN,*

*After realization, can Awareness exert any influence on this spontaneity?*

Hi,

What kind of influence do you have in mind?

Everything has been happening spontaneously without a doer (whether realized or not realized). However, this may not be 'understood'. In other words, even though things happen spontaneously without a doer, most people identify with a doer.

For example, an action of standing up and walking is just that - body standing up, and walking. Then later, a thought comes up 'I walked from there to here', which assumes doership of that action. It is always an afterthought/after-identification of an actual fact.

In actuality, the thought is referencing to a non-existent entity. In actuality, there is no controller or doer of actions, actions happen spontaneously - body acts, mind thinks, but no doer or thinker of them.

The imaginary self-entity, being fictitious and illusionary in nature, does not have a power (since it is non-existent) to be of real influence to actions and experiences. It is simply an afterthought, after-identification.

Look very closely in your experience... investigate... is there such a thing as a separate self at the center controlling or experiencing actions and things? Like, does typing on this keyboard have anything to do with an 'I' or an 'I thought' and where is the 'I' to be located? Or is it simply the fingers typing? Yes, there is a thought/intention to type, followed by the typing, and they have inter-dependent relationship but then again both are two separate manifestations. The intention is also a spontaneous arising, not an agent or self. You will discover that the 'I' cannot be located at all, that all that is happening is universal functioning - non-personal, spontaneous functioning of Awareness.

That is why I said the identification with a separate 'I' or a subject-object division is always an afterthought of an actual act or experience. During that action or experience, it is just non-personal, spontaneous function, but later on the mind identifies with it by referencing to a central 'I' entity that is doing them or experiencing them, I.e. 'I did', 'I see', 'I hear', 'I smell'. But upon closer investigation this central and separate entity simply cannot be found. There is no 'I' that persisted from just now till now. There are simply ownerless actions and experiences arising and subsiding moment to moment until right now, with no consistent self or agent behind their functioning.

If you look at your thought and see that all thoughts of 'me' are referencing to a non-existent entity, much less energy will be invested in the mind stories. You simply see that it is not true. You do not believe in dualistic and separate-self stories.

Suddenly, thoughts become integrated with the field of objects, like anything else - totally impersonal happenings. When you first noticed this, it may seem funny because it is so different from the way we normally perceive our experience and thoughts in a dualistic way. All thoughts and experiences are happening on its own in spite of you, or rather, without a you (as a personal self/doer), and yet not apart from You (as Awareness). There is no sense of thought as 'mine' in contrast with the environment as 'not mine'. Thoughts are part of the environment, so to speak. And being the case, these thoughts no longer serve as a cause of your fears and anxieties and sufferings. You clearly see thought as it is: simply being a thought as an ownerless object, not a 'me/mine' subject or object.

Realizing Awareness is a step towards total non-identification with a personal agent/self. It frees the mind from identification to realize the freedom of spontaneity. That is the 'influence' of realization.

Now you clearly see that actions have no influence from a pseudo subject or agent which is non-existent. A separate controller/doer/thinker/experiencer simply cannot be found. But surely, actions must have their influence. They always have, they can't just appear for no reason. What is the influence? They are influenced by intentions and imprints. This has always been the case whether before or after realization. I believe I told you this in an e-mail very long ago regarding free will and Dharma Dan's reply. But anyway, any influence on the spontaneity that are happening are also part of the spontaneity. There is nothing outside spontaneity. Awareness is spontaneously manifesting... as this sound, this sight, this thought.

But to finally answer your question: you can't say Awareness is an influence: because only phenomena (like events, imprints, intentions, friends [e.g. peer pressure], etc etc) can be an influence to your actions or experiences, but Awareness is not a particular experience or phenomena but simply a non-interfering substance/ground of all phenomena/experience. It is simply the basis for which experience can arise (whether before or after realization): how can phenomena arise without perceiving-awareness?

Or you can ask, does the mirror (Awareness itself) influence or interfere with its reflections? The answer is no. The Mirror simply *reflects* all phenomena as it is, without judging it as a good or bad, without altering its contents.

Regards

AEN

Comments (14/6/2012): I wrote in another forum something which I feel is relevant here –

*First of all, your notion of awareness as having 'will', 'intention', 'choice' is itself not the refined or transparent 'version' of Witness. In the terms of Dr. Greg Goode in 'The Direct*

*Path', based on the teachings of Sri Atmananda, our undestanding of awareness having will and choice and intention is known as the "lower witness" or "thick witness" or "opaque witness" in contrast to the "thin", "higher", "transparent witness" in which we strip our ideas, notions and constructs (having to do with personality, will, etc etc) away from the witnessing awareness.*

*Without even going to the step of collapsing the witness into non-dual awareness or One Mind (which is dealt with in the next chapter in Greg Goode's book), without even investigating or challenging the stance of a witness, he asks us to first investigate the notions we have about the witness that prevents us from experiencing the refined or 'transparent witness'.*

*Greg Goode says "here are some sound-bites from nondual teachings that tend to personify awareness (i.e. the lower witness, opaque witness, by making awareness sound as if it has personality, desire, will, etc). They may all sound familiar. 'Consicousness knew itself but wanted to experience itself. So it emanated phenomenality.' 'Consciousness was bored, so it made the world.' 'Consciousness wants to wake up and realize our true nature.' 'Consciousness has a plan for your life.'" etc etc*

*Some exercises are given to investigate these notions. For instance,*

*"Now check - is there anything about this desire that makes it part of the nature of yourself as witnessing awareness? If it is really part of witnessing awareness, then can you still be witnessing awareness when this desire is not present? Or is this desire an appearing object arising in awareness? In this case, you are still witnessing awareness whether this desire arises or not. Its presence or absence does not change what you really are.", "You can repeat this exercise by looking for other mental features that awareness might have, such as boredom, free will, choice or the intention to make humans wake up and discover their nature. If these features are really built into the witness, they should be discoverable when you look into the depths of experience. But are they? Or are there in fact many times that no desire, boredom or other state is present?*

*And even if these features are present, they are nothing more than arising objects like "green" or "itch" or "2+2=4". As arising, they can't be structurally built into witnessing awareness. They can't be part of its functionality.*

*You can also repeat the experiments we did while inquiring into the mind. This time, apply them to awareness. Does awareness have any intrinsic properties other than seeingness?"*

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30th June 2010

*AEN,*

*Another odd question.*

*When a thought arises from nowhere(Awareness) and then disappears to nowhere, Awareness is aware of this process. A thought is like a distinct entity out there and its coming and going can be described. How about the world being seen in my eye? How these images are created?*

*Thanks,*
*J*

Hi,

They are not exactly 'created', since 'creation' almost implies as if it has a substantial existence 'out there', made by 'something' or 'someone', over a gradual period of time.

Actually, everything spontaneously emerges (and subsides) momentarily. It is not creation. As Jean Klein puts it:

The world exists only when we think about it; creation stories are for children. In reality the world is created every moment.

And Nathan Gill puts it:

*This manifestation isn't created - it spontaneously appears.*

How are these images 'spontaneously appearing'? They aren't created, they spontaneously emerged due to the meeting of causes and conditions. I highly recommend reading the article I just posted to my blog which I (and Thusness) think is superb, The Magical Illusion of Self

Read the analogy on the sound and the drum and the eye consciousness. Then read the whole article... it really clarifies a lot. You'll understand how phenomena including vision, sounds, and thoughts, spontaneously emerge without origin ('out of nowhere' so to speak), but arises in dependence with factors and conditions. You'll see how there is no 'I' or 'me' involved.

Regards

AEN

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30th June 2010

*I still quite don't believe Thusness didn't insert any influence into his destiny. So if everything the dream character does just happens spontaneously or as if following from a script, then I am thinking maybe Thusness' Awareness(if I can say this way) insert some influence to change the course of his dream character(working hard to become successful). As you know, happening spontaneously sounds like pre-determinism or you(ego) have no control over the life course whatsoever. Why bother to work hard if this is true?*

Hi,

There is no control, but this is not the same as determinism. You can do something about it. Nothing is fated or fixed. For example, Thusness did something, I.e. work hard. This changed his life course, as opposed to someone who lazes around and gets nothing done in life, for example. So obviously ***something*** can do something to change the future. But the action that is arising is done without a doer.

So:

Action arises, just no doer.

Sound is heard, just no hearer.

etc etc...

Everything: actions, experiences, etc continue to arise without a personal doer. As I explained earlier, the ego or personal doer does not even exist and hence has no power to influence your life, actions and experiences (like how can Santa Claus influence your life since it is non-existent). Yet, actions and experiences still arise to get something done.

I don't see any contradictions at all. We always think that to act, to do something (to change the future), implies a controller/doer. **This is just an assumption, not a fact. The only fact is that action arose. To reference that action to a doer is simply an afterthought, an assumption.**

Changing the future is possible, nothing is pre-determined. But contrary to what people think - i.e. 'I, the controller, am going to control and change the future by doing this and this', in actual fact, it is more like, the thought of wanting to change the future happened, then the subsequent actions to 'change the future' followed. None of these thoughts or actions is actually produced by a personal doer or controller. They simply arose spontaneously. Is hard work necessary for success? Absolutely. Is there a doer behind the hard work? No.

Regards

AEN

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30th June 2010

*AEN,*

*Sorry to keep pursuing the same question. But I think this is a simple question*

*that a sane person would not avoid it.*

*"You can do something about it"*

*Why You here is not Awareness/the Self instead of body-mind? Someone said only Awareness has will to change things.*

*"Yet, actions and experiences still arise to get something done."*

*Sounds like there must be someone behind the scene to orchestra the whole things, to be the "willer". Only possible suspect left so far is Awareness.*

Hi,

*Qn: Why You here is not Awareness/the Self instead of body-mind? Someone said only Awareness has will to change things.*

No, neither body-mind nor Awareness is a controller or doer of actions. Every experience and action arise through/in/as Awareness which is the Source of All That Is, yes, but it doesn't mean Awareness is some kind of controlling agent, like a personal God in the Old Testament. I simply used the term 'You can do' because I couldn't think of a better way to phrase it at that moment. But I edited it later after posting to my forum - *"So obviously* **something** *can be done to change the future. But the action that is arising is done without a doer."* This is better than saying "You can do something about it to change the future". Something can be done, yet it does not imply that there is a 'you' who is the doer of it.

See my updated reply at
http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/390582?page=5#post_9876194

*Qn: Sound like must be someone behind the scene to orchestra the whole things, to be the "willer". Only possible suspect left so far is Awareness.*

The Totality, the Universe, is behind this arising thought, this arising action, this arising experience. So yes, Thy Will be Done. What is Thy Will? As Jacobs say, it is the Sacred Will of the World. (http://www.innerfrontier.org/Practices/JacobsLadder.htm - good article that can be mapped with Thusness's 4 Phases of I AMness)

What does that mean? Deepak Chopra says (http://www.anhglobal.org/en/node/591), *A flower is seen as a flower but is also experienced as rainbows and sunshine and earth and water and wind and air and the infinite void and the whole history of the universe swirling and transiently manifesting as the flower. In other worlds every object is seen as the total universe transiently manifesting as a particular object. And behind the scenes one can feel the presence of the same ever-present witnessing awareness that is now in both subject and object.*

See Mahasi Sayadaw's article The Magical Illusion of Self which also explains how the 'entire universe' is transiently manifesting as a particular (distinct, new) experience or action due to the combination of various factors and conditions.

Regards,

AEN

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1st July 2010

*(to Thusness)*

My understanding is that Presence and Awareness is 'universal' and through universal awareness, everything spontaneously manifests. No doer involved. Bird chirping is registered spontaneously in Awareness without intention. Smell of garbage is registered spontaneously without intention. It is non-personal, but then the mind identifies with 'I heard', 'I saw', 'I did', etc. It references the actual universal functioning with a self-center who 'did that'. Actually seeing, hearing, everything is the universal function of awareness without a self-center. No individual doer or experiencer is there in actions and experiencing. Universal awareness alone is perceiving and manifesting experiences.

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2nd July 2010

Yesterday I realized the implications of Sailor Bob Adamson's book title 'What's wrong with right now unless you think about it'. I realized that we make a problem out of everything, including even our thoughts and emotions, simply by naming them... but if we stop labeling them, like 'fear', etc, then we don't make a problem out of anything. Everything becomes a play or energy of Awareness rather than an obscuration. You simply 'enter' into a sea of wordless vibration that arises and passes in awareness but doesn't leave any traces.

In light of this, there is nothing that needs to be done... because anything to 'do', to 'meditate', implies altering or changing this moment of experience... but this moment of experience is as it is and without making a problem out of it, is perfect/complete as it is without a need for alteration/meditation/etc.

*Do not meditate – be!*
*Do not think that you are – be!*
*Don't think about being – you are!*

**~ Ramana Maharshi**

.....

**Six Words of Advice**
**from Tilopa**

ཅཱཡཱཁནྡ་ཀྱི་གཅེར་བྱུག།

Six Points.

མི་མནོ་
Don't anticipate.

མི་བསམ་
Don't plan.

མི་སེམས་
Don't think.

མི་དཔྱོད་
mi dpyod
Don't analyze.

མི་སྒོམ་
mi sgom
Don't cultivate.

རང་ས་ར་བཞག་
Stay where you are.

~ translation by Loppon Namdrol (Malcolm Smith)

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4th July 2010

It is like the analogy of snake and rope... Illusioned, we cover up the rope by grasping on names and forms, and mistaken the rope for the snake, and having mistaken the rope for a snake, we fear, we try to manipulate, control the snake.

Actually it is just rope.

Similarly... illusioned, we cover up our experiences by grasping on descriptions, names and forms, and mistaken Omni-Presence for a multiplicity of objects, which we then fear, and try to manipulate them.

Wake up! All there is is One Presence vibrating into apparently different energies while always remaining One in essence. It is all You!

---

4th July 2010

Enlightenment is not distant or obscure. The fact of your being is precisely what enlightenment is, or the only enlightenment there is. The fact of your being is a vivid naked truth shining in full blaze right here and right now so undeniably that try as you might, you will never be able to successfully deny its presence, for any attempt at denying IT is only borrowing its presence from the Presence-Awareness that you are. You can't escape your Being. Checkmate.

Nothing mystical, obscure, or distant is involved. People seeking the mystical and obscure are simply going off-track. They may attain some interesting (but transient) states and experiences, but not the enlightenment they seek. Enlightenment has the least to do with altered states of consciousness. It is a simple ever-present plain fact for everyone to notice. It is ever-present throughout apparently heavenly or hellish states or experiences in life. Effort can get you to interesting places, but effort can't get you to where/what you already are. You already ARE, simply inquire into 'What am I?' - that is the only 'effort' you need until the need itself drops off upon clear seeing. As Ramana Maharshi says, "The thought 'Who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then, there will arise Self-Realization."

This is literally simpler than A-B-C because it is prior to the use of mind and logic. Perhaps that is why this is overlooked since time immemorial for most of us, because by our usual habit of dealing with worldly matters, we naturally think that this (spiritual enlightenment) must be complicated, and we go searching (using the mind) for an answer where it cannot be found (in the mind, in experiences). Over-complicating this and searching all over the place (for higher experiences, higher understanding, etc) for your own Being doesn't help you, much like searching all around for your eye will never help you find your eye - you are already seeing/searching with your eyes. You are That which you are searching for. You can't obtain something you already 'have', you simply have to *realize* that fact.

.....

Don't try to be aware. You ARE Pure Awareness shining brighter than the sun. Just stop avoiding your true nature. Stop denying the undeniable.

There is no need to maintain or develop awareness. You can't add or subtract from Total Brilliance. Why do you attempt to put effort in lighting up a candle when you are already standing under the blazing sun?

.....

There is nothing you can understand about Awareness. If that's what you want to do, forget it, give up. Awareness is not a thought; it is the SEEING of the thought. A thought that momentarily comes and goes from the Brilliant Awareness will never be able to grasp it. Your true nature is not within the realm of objects, and thus not within the field of knowledge, like an eye that sees but cannot see itself, a knife that cuts but cannot cut

itself.

You can't 'know' Awareness, for you ARE Awareness, and you can only BE Awareness.

.....

Remember what I said about the Certainty of Being? It doesn't come from knowledge. The 'I know that I exist' is not it. The pure sense of 'I AM', even without the words, is IT. All knowledge are within the realm of conjectures and speculations and therefore, has no quality of certainty.

The REAL Certainty of Being comes from YOU, Existence-Awareness itself. It is the undeniability of Presence-Awareness.

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5th June 2010

> *Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*
>
> **Walking/Jogging/Running meditation**
>
> *While jogging just now, I 'forgot' my mind and body. It feels like I'm the still presence in which the world moves through. Instead of being a body running on the road from here to there, it's seen that I am the space that encompasses the whole world and the whole world moves through me. I am not moving. The world is moving through me.*
>
> *It feels like you're running on the treadmill, you're not actually moving! Except that the scenery moves through you.*
>
> *You can practice seeing this next time when you walk or jog. This space of awareness is unmoving, whether or not the world is moving.*
>
> *Later I was reminded of this video*
> *http://www.headless.org/videos/still_point.htm*

Found something by Ken Wilber which talks about this (from One Taste):

http://www.scribd.com/doc/31796687/Wilber-Ken-One-Taste

**Wednesday, June 4**

Worked all morning; decided to go jogging down behind my house. If you remain as the Witness while you run, you don’t move, the ground does. You, as the Witness, are immobile—more precisely, you have no qualities at all, no traits, no motion and no commotion, as you rest in the vast Emptiness that you are. You are aware of movement, therefore you as the Witness are not movement. So when you run, it actually feels as if you are not moving at all—the Witness is free of motion and stillness—so the ground simply moves along. It’s like you’re sitting in a movie theater, never moving from your seat, and yet seeing the entire scenery move around you.

(This is easy to do when you're driving down the highway. You can simply sit back, relax, and pretend that you are not moving, only the scenery is. This is often enough to flip people into the actual Witness, at which point you will simply rest as choiceless awareness, watching the world go by, and you won't move at all. This motionless center of your own pure awareness is in fact the center of the entire Kosmos, the eye or I-I of the Kosmic cyclone. This motionless center—there is only one in the entire world and it is identical in all beings, the circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference, nowhere—is also the center of gravity of your soul.)

This is why Zen will say, "A man in New York drinks vodka, a man in Los Angeles gets drunk." The same Big Mind is timelessly, spacelessly, present in both places. So drinking in New York and getting drunk in L.A. are the same to the motionless, spaceless Witness. This is why Zen will say, "Without moving, go to New York." The answer: "I'm already there."

As the Witness, I-I do not move through time, time moves through me. Just as clouds float through the sky, time floats through the open space of my primordial awareness, and I-I remain untouched by time and space and their complaints. Eternity does not mean living forever in time—a rather horrible notion—but living in the timeless moment, prior to time and its turmoils altogether. Likewise, infinity does not mean a really big space, it means completely spaceless. As the Witness, I-I am spaceless; as the Witness, I-I am timeless. I-I live in eternity and inhabit infinity, simply because the Witness is free of time and space. And that is why I can drink vodka in New York and get drunk in L.A.

So this morning I went jogging, and nothing moved at all, except the scenery in the movie of my life.

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5th July 2010

No matter what you are experiencing, You are always this Witnessing Awareness of the experience. See how effortless this is? This is not some special state of Awareness. You can never leave this. All things can leave your awareness but Awareness always remains, always effortlessly registering everything without your intention to do so. So Awareness is 1) Effortlessly present (regardless of your intention to make it present/absent), 2) Effortlessly registering everything (regardless of your intention to make things registered/unregistered). IT is an inescapable fact of your being.

Our life is like a movie displayed on a screen, being lost is like mistaking oneself as the central body-mind character in the movie and thus suffering the pain and drama of an apparent individual self, but even then the screen is there, showing the character (among other things) - without which the character in the movie cannot appear. Awakening is dis-identifying yourself as a limited entity in the movie, and realizing that you are the screen (the luminous, aware space) in which the movie plays. Yet to complicate this by searching for the screen in the movie is moving into the wrong direction again. Simply notice what is observing the whole show. You literally feel like

waking up from a dream - and realizing that everything in your life is like a dream playing out in the light of Awareness.

Imagine the relief when you discover that you are not the character in the movie, but you are simply watching a movie - a show - playing out in the cinema screen. The seriousness due to false self-identification with the story of life is taken out, and yet life continues as it has before - the body-mind continues doing effortlessly and spontaneously what it is meant to do (and it is now known that there is no doer, only spontaneous happenings, a movie playing out of their own accord) - with a greater sense of freedom and 'security' (in knowing that you are not the body-mind that is born, lives, and dies in time) as the Deathless. The Knowingness has no stake in birth and death - it observes the play of life, it observes the arising and subsiding of phenomena including the mind and body, but is itself timeless and deathless, non-arising and non-ceasing. The screen is not created due to the movie playing, and it is not destroyed by the death of the character in the movie, it cannot be burnt by fire or cut by knives of the movie, yet it (the screen/Awareness) allows all these to be displayed. Before Birth, Who are You?

It's amazing how we over-complicate things and think we can ever 'lose' IT - which, in the first place, presumes that we are a limited self entity that can 'own' and 'lose' IT, whereas in reality, 'we' (all thoughts, sensations, perceptions) are being manifested by IT. IT is effortlessly present and registering everything and cannot ever not be so. Instead of endlessly searching, simply ask Who am I? and Rest as That which manifests/remains in the inquiry after all identifications have been rejected. Since You are already what You are, no doing is necessary, only Seeing and Being (which is the same) is necessary. A non-conceptual exploration (via self-inquiry) can lead to this Realization.

Finally, realize that the Observer is the Observed. That which observes is not other than what is observed. Awareness is not merely standing back and watching, it is integrated and not separate with all manifestations. So the next 'step' is to realize Awareness 'AS' Manifestation.

As John Welwood says,

“If we use the analogy of awareness as a mirror, prereflective identification is like being captivated by and lost in the reflections appearing in the mirror. Reflection involves stepping back from the appearances, studying them, and developing a more objective relationship with them. And transreflective presence is like being the mirror itself – that vast, illuminating openness and clarity that allows reality to be seen as what it is. In pure presence, awareness is self-illuminating, or aware of itself without objectification. The mirror simply abides in its own nature, without either separating from its reflections or confusing itself with them. Negative reflections do not stain the mirror, positive reflections do not improve on it. They are all the mirror’s self-illuminating display.”

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9th July 2010

I remember that thoughts of losing awareness used to happen quite often for me in the past. But this is all seen to be totally baseless and ridiculous nowadays.

All thoughts of "I lost awareness" or "I need more effort to maintain awareness" or anything along that line implies having had some 'recognition' or 'experience' of Awareness, but not having the Realization of Who You Are.

This is why, looking back, I think Thusness was very apt in telling me the difference between Experience and Realization last year. He said *"You may have the blissful sensation or feeling of vast and open spaciousness; you may experience a non-conceptual and objectless state; you may experience the mirror like clarity but all these experiences are not Realization. There is no 'eureka', no 'aha', no moment of immediate and intuitive illumination that you understood something undeniable and unshakable -- a conviction so powerful that no one, not even Buddha can sway you from this realization because the practitioner so clearly sees the truth of it. It is the direct and unshakable insight of 'You'. This is the realization that a practitioner must have in order to realize the Zen satori. You will understand clearly why it is so difficult for those practitioners to forgo this 'I AMness' and accept the doctrine of anatta. Actually there is no forgoing of this 'Witness', it is rather a deepening of insight to include the non-dual, groundlessness and interconnectedness of our luminous nature. Like what Rob said, "keep the experience but refine the views"."*

And this is just the case. Having an experience of Awareness still leaves doubts (including doubts like 'I lost awareness', 'I need to maintain it', etc). This is because you have not resolved the question of your true identity. You can have a clear sense of presence and spaciousness, and yet have no real understanding or insight and an **unshakeable conviction** of Who They Are which turns their sense of self and identity upside down. **It is the realization beyond a trace of doubt the undeniability of your true identity as that Pure Awareness.**

If you realized this, then doubts like "I lost awareness" will not be arising, and even if it had, the thought is **completely seen as an illusion** - an illusory thought arising in the undeniable presence of YOU. Such habits of mind once seen in the light of realization will **never be able to shake you** from true seeing and being - it is simply exposed for being an illusion which they are, like the words 'this place is dark' written on the wall revealed by bright light in the room simply reveals the illusion for what it is. See how baseless those words/thoughts are in the light of clear seeing?

So it is not about sustaining a state of experience, **it is seeing how this is your True Self, what you already are, and no illusion will be able to shake you out of that - for it is not a state or experience that requires maintenance, rather it is the undeniable Presence of What You Are and all thoughts and illusions that comes up still only come up in that Undeniability of Immediate Presence and are immediately seen as illusions.**

Through Realization, your so called 'understanding' (though it is not a conceptual understanding) of Awareness will shift from being 'experience' or 'state' based to clearly seeing how Awareness is the undeniable ground of Being and Knowing in which all phenomena comes and goes, and yet Awareness ever remains unmoved.

Can you escape the present moment? No you can't. Can you escape You? No, of course not! Every attempt to avoid Presence is still experienced in unavoidable and undeniable Presence.

So the difference between experience and realization is this - in realization, Awareness is vividly and clearly experienced, **but more than that, it is a clear insight into that fact of your Being that burns away all doubts and questions until only the Light of Awareness remains and is clearly seen to always be so. And in that unshakeble certainty of Being you clearly see you do not need to maintain anything - you simply Are That.**

**It is not an experience, but the realization, the understanding (but it is not a mental understanding but a feeling/being-realization), that makes you unshakeable in the face of doubts by exposing them as the illusion they are. Without the realization, doubts will be 'believed'.**

Lastly, never think that this realization that I am writing sounds 'difficult to obtain' as I can assure you it is Not. It is simply an *ever-present* and immediate fact of your being shining in plain view waiting to be discovered and realized. It is not a state that you need to gradually develop over time through some kind of technique - rather, it is always already timelessly present right here and now. You simply need to know what and how to investigate (e.g. self inquiry) and you are on your way to true insight and freedom.

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9th July 2010

The sense of presence is so strong yesterday that I had difficulty sleeping until I relax my focus on it, and even then, I kept waking up and finding myself in utter clarity.

Funny I just found a conversation from 2006:

**Thusness**: i am trying to prevent you from undergoing such suffering.
**AEN**: of insomnia?
**Thusness**: :)
**AEN**: but how would i suffer from insomnia. i sleep very well and deeply, lol
Thusness: later stage, not now.

.....

Posted in Kenneth Folk Dharma:

I hope this wouldn't be too much off topic. Do you mean you have trouble sleeping? Yesterday night, perhaps due to having just sat in meditation right before sleep, the 2nd gear Witness is very strong and I had difficulty sleeping (prior to having access to 2nd gear, I usually fall asleep in one minute, but if I am in 2nd gear mode, that can take up to an hour). It happens sometimes, I notice, usually if I have been practicing/meditating just prior to sleep.

Any thought that being 'followed' might have led to a dream state... is in the 2nd Gear mode simply seen to be an illusion occuring in a bright, undeniable and unavoidable background of Awareness. As such those 'dream thoughts' just pop in and out of Awareness without a thread of continuity. The effortless sense of Presence is so strong that I had to relax my focus on the Witness to fall asleep.

However, I still kept waking up soon after I fall asleep, and when I wake up I am in a state of full clarity almost immediately or immediately. After repeated attempts at relaxing the focus I was able to sleep soundly until the next morning.

Sometimes the Witness mode persists in dreams, sometimes not.

.....

Thusness told me (regards to my 'insomnia' yesterday):

Thusness says: You need non-dual to solve the problem. Now relax for some time...don't over do. You must learn how to feel and experience vividly all arising as if the 'I' never existed. This is a relaxed form of practice... it means your practice should now focus on the foreground and not the background. Lose yourself completely now into manifestation... the raw manifestation...not the content of it.

---

13th July 2010

> *Originally posted by simpo_:*
>
> *Thanks for the sharing.*
>
> *This part described what i tried to do during 'I AM' stage very well....*
>
> *"*
>
> *Attendant to b) is the notion that (first) she is apart from something (desirable); and (second) is driven, by ego motivation, to "attain" or "achieve" it. Subject proposes to "merge" with object. But subject does not comprehend that in a non-dual "merging" bothsubject andobject dissolve. The subject, here, expects to remain an entity to which an (unusual) experience is to beadded. It is a stultifying, frustrating pursuit, a deadening cycle of "arriving" and inevitably "departing". But because of the (temporary) suspension of "conceptual," egoic thought, it is sometimes presumed to be the "liberation" which is spoken about.*
>
> *"*
>
> *IMO, a real' I AM Presence' stage will reveal much about the non-local/all-pervading aspect of reality.... unlike a pseudo experience of visualising/imagining a light that overlight us. Sometimes, the I AM stage may also reveal the luminous/light aspect as well. But for my case, the luminousity aspect was experienced later. IMO, it depends on how that stage was experienced. IMO, Luminousity is experienced due to the deconstruction of perception. IMO, Non-locality is experienced due to the total suspension of mental formation/thoughts.*
>
> *Non-dual will reveal the insight that all along the self does not exist in a concrete manner. It will first be experienced as if experiences are 'flat'... ha ha... i dunno how to describe. In non-dual, there is a gradual maturing process*

*(consisting of distinctive stage of insights)... where the self aspect gets better understood. In the early stage, we may try to dissolve or get rid of the self. In the later state, we begin to realise that the getting rid act is also a sense of self. Later on stage, there is an 'immediate' realisation...which i dunno how to describe and best experienced for oneself.*

*Will like to add that although 'letting go' is not the actual non-duality experience, it is an important part of practice. Slowly and gradually, the practice of letting go helps in creating gaps for the insights to occur.*

Hi.. thanks for the sharing.

I agree that real Presence has nothing to do with a visual sense of luminous light. I in fact have experience of very luminous (visual) lights and a resulting sense of unity years ago, however I categorize them as 'A&P' experiences according to Daniel Ingram's map, but this is not the I AM Presence.

My understanding of luminosity is that the sense of a bright vivid Awareness that is shining and illuminating all experience. This is different from a visual luminosity, but rather it seems that Presence is radiating everywhere and illuminating everything (nothing visual), very intensely. If that vivid luminosity is strong, even normal things like eating, walking, will feel so 'intense' that you will start smiling and there may even be tears. Just pure delight in Awareness. I think you may have a different experience of 'luminosity' though... the luminosity due to the deconstruction of perception was mentioned by my Master but I have not experienced yet (he said your body and mind and the surrounding environment totally disappears leaving only the light of your nature)

The all pervading and non-local aspect is another aspect of the I AM as you described.. so far in my experience it is only vividly experienced in a state of no thought, I do not think I can sustain a non-local, diffuse or oceanic experience in daily life (yet). I think it has to do with how in daily life, we usually fixate/get attached to a sense of a body. However there is the insight that Awareness is not in any way personal, or localized anywhere, and this insight helps us see and let go of the clinging to a locality residing inside the body. Rather than existing somewhere (like, in a body), even the body and the mind are equally seen as objects in the field of perception along with the stuff in the environment, all happening in a non-local field of Awareness rather than outside of Awareness.

The non-dual part is still eluding me... even though I had short glimpses. Again, thanks for sharing. I am still in the process of 'letting go'.

---

19th July 2010

*AEN,*

*Some questions regarding constant consciousness. (referring Ken Wilber's experience*

*at*http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2288*)*

*Which stage in Thusness' classification does a person belong to if he attains constant consciousness?*

*When a person in this stage and talks and writes, who is talking? The Consciousness or the ego?*

*When a person in this stage and dies, will he be aware of the switch between the two lives?*

*Some people use the term "abiding in non-dual awareness." Is this the same as constant consciousness?*

*I guess a person in stage one will access to non-dual awareness on and off like Jim Carrey. Is this correct?*

*Regards,*

*J*

Hi,

Thusness told me weeks ago that Ken's ability to attain constant witnessing throughout day, dream, dreamless is due to the strength of his concentration/absorption. It is not a result of realization, but more like exercising until you build up your muscles. In KW's case, it took him 20 years of meditation practice to reach constant consciousness, as he puts it.

Realization is a different matter. If you realize I AM, you will realize that your consciousness is constant *by nature*. This, I have realized. But if you have this realization but you do not yet have meditative strength, you still get lost in/attached to thoughts. I still get lost in thoughts now and then. I do not experience constant consciousness throughout the three states. But if you develop meditative strength, you will simply abide in pure consciousness regardless of what appears. Thoughts lose their power to condition you, they just come and go within your bright awareness without the least identification with them - you are fully identified/absorbed as Pure Consciousness alone at all times. At least in my understanding that is what will happen (since I do not have access to constant consciousness yet in the KW sense). You may become so absorbed and intoxicated in Presence that nothing else matters (like Thusness said, for people like Ramana Maharshi, even if you cut off his limbs he might feel that it's ok) and the absorption in existence-consciousness/witness remains unbroken throughout all states. Talking and writing happens but you are not identified with the happenings, there is no doer.

Nevertheless, Thusness said that sustaining witnessing into dream and dreamless is *not necessary* and in fact a result of not having realized Anatta. When you realize Anatta, you do not attempt to do that.

Ken Wilber has written about his near death experience (December 26, 2006) and how his awareness remains undisturbed throughout the horrifying experience:

http://www.kenwilber.com/blog/show/214

Regards

AEN

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19th July 2010

> ***soulblader_86*** *wrote:*
>
> *Reality = what we perceive in real life*
> *real life = ??*
>
> *anyway, Living thing can feel our own existence.... even we die, our conscious still exist, why? because we can feel them....we dun exist as "person", we exist as consciousness*
> *I understand this*
> *I, not a object in nature, not a feeling, nor thought*
> *If so, what define our personality? what form our character?*
> *If I am bad person who does a lot of crime...can I say I am not the person who does it?*

Your personality is simply your conditioning, what you learnt from society, parents, friends, etc... it becomes a form of makeup, tendency, habit to act and speak and think in certain ways... and a conceptual image of who you think you are, in relation to the other people (i.e. you are a parent to your son, you are a friend to him, you are ...). Originally it is not there - it is something that is 'learnt' over the course of your life and then 'believed'. It seems very real just like you think the 'person' in your dream is very real until you wake up.

But as you said you are not a "person" but consciousness only.

Your are not a person who does things... deeds are being done (due to various conditionings), but there is no doer. You are not a doer. Everything is happening of their own accord.

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19th July 2010

> **cherhan** *wrote:*

*Perhaps, the theory of souls and that our bodies are mere containers of these souls?*

Interesting question... but....

1) This is not a theory, but a direct insight/realization and experience clearer than day light, once you realize it, you will never be able to doubt it. It is the direct insight into the irrefutable, undeniable, certain fact of your Being/Existence/Consciousness. I am speaking from the realization and experience which I wrote in http://www.box.net/shared/3verpiao63

2) It is not exactly a soul inside a body even though conventionally spoken in this way. 'Body' is really just a concept... in actual experience we only experience visual, tactile, and other sensations vibrating in and out of awareness.... they all appear within the clear light of Mind/Consciousness. We do not experience a soul 'inside' a body... instead, we experience the apparent body inside Consciousness, along with every other perceived object (including those that we usually think of as 'external' of ourselves). Nothing in experience is 'outside' of Consciousness. Everything is a display in and of That. Consciousness is non-local, simultaneously nowhere and everywhere and all-pervading. But the body does allow Consciousness to express itself in all the apparent sensory forms (even though Consciousness is never limited by its vehicle/medium of expression).

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19th July 2010

*AEN,*

*Loosk like Ken Wilber has a lot of girlfriends. :)*

*I need to ask you more questions about constant consciousness.*

*In Jim Carrey's video, he said "that come and go..."*

*Also Tom Stine talks about Half Awake:*
*http://tomstine.com/the-half-awake-half-asleep-club/*

*I thought they are referring to "not being able to achieve constant consciousness"*

*Can a person without any realization achieve constant consciousness?*

*Thanks,*
*J*

*and*

*I sent you the wrong link for Half-Awake. Here is the correct one:*

*http://tomstine.com/to-be-half-awake-and-half-asleep/*

*Another related one:*
*http://tomstine.com/more-on-being-half-awake/*

*I mentioned Adya and Jed McKenna two step awakening model. Tom also talks about the same thing in this article.*

*1st step: Awakening*
*2nd step: Abiding Awakening*

*Does this make sense to you? If so, what stages these steps correspond to in Thusness' classification?*

*Does Tom mean that after reaching 2nd step, a person will no longer get lost in thoughts? He said even if the ego arises, it will fall away instantly.*

*Thanks,*

*J*

Hi,

Your questions:

*"Can a person without any realization achieve constant consciousness?"*

I don't think so but who knows. But Ken Wilber has had deep realization of the I AM followed by Non Dual.

*"1st step: Awakening*
*2nd step: Abiding Awakening*

*Does this make sense to you? If so, what stages these steps correspond to in Thusness' classification?"*

Awakening is awakening. No more doubts. 'Abiding' might indeed be Ken Wilber's constant consciousness. It is not a separate Thusness stage, but a progression of the I AM stage. However Ken Wilber also spoke of non-dual realization. But if you are talking about constant witnessing throughout the 3 states, it is still the I AM stage.

*"Does Tom mean that after reaching 2nd step, a person will no longer get lost in thoughts? He said even if the ego arises, it will fall away instantly."*

I would think so, yes. Because in a state of abiding as the witnessing, necessary thoughts arise but there is no identification. If ego arises, it is immediately recognized as an

illusion and not believed in. This already happens in the first step, but identification /getting caught up with thoughts and feelings still happens intermittently by sheer habit/tendencies.

From the links you quoted, just my own comments based on my experience:

http://tomstine.com/to-be-half-awake-and-half-asleep/

*" Once one is truly awake, or as Jed McKenna would call "done," there is no longer any doubt as to what you are"*

- this is the Realization part. Once you realized Who You Are, there cannot be any doubts. There is no such thing as 'unsure'. There is only 100% Certainty of the undeniable, undoubtable and irrefutable fact of your Being. That is realized on 09 February 2010 for 'my' case.

*"no tendency to re-enter the dream state of separateness."*

Actually you can still re-enter the dream state after realization (being hypnotized in your mind stories of apparent time and space and me and you). You can still get lost in thoughts and emotions, even though the tendency lessens (gradually) due to the insight of your true identity. But you will not have doubts such as 'I lost awareness' because such statements are plain ridiculous: even if identification and thoughts and emotions occur, they occur in the undeniable, undoubtable Presence of Awareness. That can never be lost, ever. You will not be under the impression that you need to meditate or work to get back to a 'stage of awareness' - this is again plain ridiculous. Whatever you are doing or thinking or feeling is happening in Awareness, you can never escape Awareness even if you wanted to.

Ken Wilber's constant consciousness is developing the ability to stay absorbed into the wide perceptual openness of the Witness - as the Witness, all thoughts and objects come and go freely through the open clearing of Awareness itself, without being grasped or identified with, like the open sky allows all clouds to pass without attachments. Even dreams are being witnessed in the presence of the Witnessing and one does not lose sight of the Witnessing by identifying with the dream character. Whereas, for those who do not experience constant consciousness to the extent that their strength of being absorbed in presence-awareness penetrates into all three states, they might still get identified with their thoughts, dreams, etc from time to time, by their habitual tendencies. It is like identifying with a movie character and forgetting that the whole scene is a movie playing in a cinema screen. It is a form of contraction from the natural wide perceptual openness of the Witness into the tiny fragment of your experience - your body and mind along with its thoughts, feelings and sensations, and as a result suffering for being a limited self. It is losing sight of the non-conceptual pure presence over a conceptual identity and story.

An important point here however: having the ability to stay (even if persistently) in wide perceptual openness is not the Realization of I AM, it is simply an 'experience' or 'recognition' and I experienced that since early 2009. Nevertheless, even after Realization of I AM, it does not mean that you will live the rest of your life free of egoic

contraction. Go for the realization, not the experience - and to go for the realization means to practice self-inquiry. As Thusness told me the last time I met him, he doesn't like approaches that emphasize too much on the experience, like focusing to get the experience of the spaciousness of awareness, the mirror-like quality etc, all the various aspects. Why? Because that's like only accessing the fringe, but once you penetrate to the Core of the matter via Self-Realization, then all the aspects are accessible to you, like 一针见血 (go right to the heart of the matter). Not only self-inquiry, but koan practice can also lead to realization.

*"Even more, there is no "one" who is even awake, for the sense of individuality is gone."*

I wrote this on 10 February 2010 as well - the part that thinks I'm awake or not is not who I am, what I am is forever already 'awake'.

*"Consciousness has returned to a clarity, a clearness that is no longer deluded or confused."*

True clarity is in seeing that all apparent delusions and confusion are only insubstantial mind movements happening in a clear cloudless/thoughtless sky of Awareness. That cannot be confused and is ever in equanimity with regards to apparently confusing thoughts. This True Clarity is the natural Clarity of your Being, which is ever clear and beyond all confusions. Realizing this, you can never 'get out' of clarity - it is not something that rises and sets.

*"Some days it is as if my awareness is on a roller coaster, going up then down, over then under and around. Moments of utter clarity then moments of delusion. "*

Clouds come and go in the sky of awareness, awareness itself doesn't go through a roller coaster ride. Sky-like Awareness becomes apparently obscured by fixation and identification with the clouds of thoughts, but only apparently so from the perspective of thought (like you mis-identify yourself with a movie character on the cinema screen and start thinking 'where was the screen?') - not from the perspective of Awareness itself - the ever-shining sun behind all the dark clouds. Even dark clouds are revealed owing to the Presence of Awareness. It is not an obscuration of Awareness, it is the evidence of Awareness.

If you no longer have doubts on who you are, you will not for a moment think that you have 'lost awareness'. Even the most (apparently) deluded of all thoughts are still wordless vibrations/energy arising in and as bright vivid Awareness. So what's wrong with right now unless you think about it?

Second article: http://tomstine.com/more-on-being-half-awake/

*"After the first awakening, it seemed that I fell back asleep. I couldn't forget what I realized, and yet, I felt somewhat lost again. And yet, much of my life was different. I couldn't stay asleep for long without the memory of that awakened state touching awareness. It really was more a* contrast *between the awake state and my new half-awakeness. But after a month or two, it became apparent that "half-awake" was very different from asleep. There was a sense, however, of going "in and out" of awakeness, but never that full experience of awakening that I had."*

This doesn't sound like realization to me, only passing recognitions. This occurred between 2007 to 2009 for me, where there were apparently many 'in and out' of awakeness and recognitions.

*"In the past 6 months, something new has become apparent, something different from what I had been experiencing. Now, I can't really say that I'm ever really asleep. There is no more sense of "in and out." Presence, consciousness, whatever word you care to use for the reality of what we are, is always "just inside my perception," if that makes sense to you. It is like I can see it just out of the corner of my eye. Not really, but that's the sense of it. "It" is here, now, present, and doesn't leave, even in the midst of being occupied by a thought, belief or problem. I'm never asleep, even though I'm not fully awake."*

This is my experience now. But the reason why there is no 'in and out' is not mentioned. The no 'in and out' is a result of the realization of Being, a deep certainty. Refer to my post in 9th July 2010.

*"At some point along the way, no one can say when, no one ever knows when or how, something within simply ceases. The psychological sense of self, the "ego" as it is often called, simply goes from the foreground of awareness to the background. It becomes irrelevant. It ceases to be of importance. The Buddha knew what he was talking about when he spoke of Nirvana, for that word simply means "cessation.""*

This is not Nirvana. It is the I AM.

Regards

AEN

---

24th July 2010

Someone asked:

*How can I know who am I ?*
*I am sure I'm not my mind, nor my body ... nor this or that, but then, who am I ?*

*How did you guys come to the conclusion of who you are, or how do you tell "who am I" ?*

I replied:

One thing for sure... you cannot come to a conclusion of who you are by way of logic, inference, deduction, or induction.

It is not 'I am not this and that, therefore I must be ....' Nothing of that sort. There is no room for such second-hand thought in direct realization and intuition of your true essence.

Rather, you should practice self-inquiry (a non-conceptual exploration/inquiry into Who am I?) until you are able to Realize the "I AM" - and in that realization there is no words, only the actual full authentication of the innermost essence.

Completely certain, unmoved, and still. I AM.

---

27th July 2010

> Originally Posted by **Radicalmommy**
>
> Has anyone here ever felt the presence of God, Being, Divine energy (whatever you might call it) for any sustained amount of time? If so, for how long, 5 seconds, one minute, an hour, days? What was it like? What do you think brought it about?

Yes, it is simply your ordinary, everyday awareness, aliveness, Being, Existence... you simply overlooked it. It is not an altered state of consciousness.

A more crucial thing than 'feeling Presence' is to realize that God, Being, Divine energy is who you truly are.

When you truly investigate what you are... you'll come to see that the fact of Being is simply an inescapable and undeniable fact of reality - it is the ever-present Reality and our true identity - You Are... it is not a state that comes and goes. And if you directly realize and experience Who You Are for yourself... you'll have no doubts about it - it is simply utterly certain and you 'know' that it has always been and will always be so (not forever in time, but outside the stream of time). Everything is taking place in this inescapable reality, the timeless and eternal Here and Now of Being.

It is the ever-present ground of Being and Knowing in which all experiences manifests... but is itself not something that comes and goes. How can you deny the irrefutable fact of Existence and Being shining in plain view? Can you say at any moment that you are Not? Can you stop Being at any moment? Can you not be in the present moment or are you always Presence itself? You may think that you are dwelling in the past or future,

but really, even that thought is itself a manifestation of Presence/Being/God. Even thoughts of apparent past and future are happening in the Ever-Present/Presence. You can never escape that... IT is always-shining like the sun and can never be obscured even by apparent passing clouds of thoughts.

If this is not clear, then one will always imagine oneself to be some separate individual or entity apart from God/Being/Divine, always seeking to return or merge with the divine/god/etc. But truly, there has never been such a separation to begin with, at any time. Once this separation/notion of separate self is seen through, the seeking ends or rather you realize that you are what you seek.

You have never left Being for even a moment in your life... just realize who you are.

The Unreal never was (you never was a person separate from Reality), the Real never is not.

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27th July 2010

> *Raymond Wolter, on 27 July 2010 - 12:47 AM, said:*
>
> *Hi Xabir,*
>
> *I have not had the opportunity to speak with anyone so far who accepts they are self-realized. I, at this point, am NOT interested in a comparison between self-realization and Emptiness/DO or how one transcends the other etc.*

Ok. That was not the point of this discussion anyway. But I should also note that D.O. does not contradict the earlier realizations, it is simply a complementary and additional insight that clears away any subtle views and reifications... but the previous experience, the luminosity and clarity is not denied.

I wrote about this inhttp://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/11/keep-experience-refine-view.html

> *Quote*
>
> *What I am interested to know is what is with you after Self-realization? How has your body changed after this? Have you become healthier?*

No not noticeably for this body - I think if you're talking about physique: exercising, working out at gym, having a healthy diet is more important than self-realization. I am becoming healthier nowadays, but that's because I am changing my lifestyle and training

myself up as I am going to be enlisted into the army soon (mandatory 2 year military service in Singapore).

If a guru tells you that self-realization alone makes your body healthy, he is bullshitting and I will stay far far away from him. That's as ridiculous as saying "self-realization makes you earn a billion bucks".

That said, Thusness, who had a much deeper enlightenment than me, talked about very noticeable bodily changes as the direct impact of realization of non-duality.

For example I wrote based on what he said in my blog:

*Hi,*

*No, Thusness is not a vegetarian. Many enlightened Tibetan and Theravada masters are also not vegetarians. Thusness has been a businessman for many years and it is hard for him to avoid meat and business entertainment.*

*However, he did speak about benefits of vegetarianism. He told me years ago that diet is important and at one stage one will want to be vegetarian, however he still ate meat due to some circumstances. Vegetarianism will help a lot and his meditative experience told him he had to, and that fasting too is important. A lot of people do not know this.* ***There is a bodily transformation, a crystal clear feeling, especially during/after the stabilization of non-duality in all three phases (waking, dreaming, deep-sleep). Thusness speculates that this is the cause of 'sariras'*** ***(***http://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/366959#post_9218519**) or the crystal like relics that Buddha and awakened disciples left after their parinirvana.** *Deep sleep (a natural non-dual samadhi) becomes crucial, however the need for sleep will also be reduced to lower than 4 hours per day.*

*And anyway, vegetarianism is particularly emphasized in the Chinese Mahayana texts (e.g. Lankavatara Sutra, Mahaparinirvana Sutra, etc), because of the practice of Great Compassion in the Bodhisattva path. Therefore it is highly recommended. But I would not go to say that you must be a vegetarian to have those experiences stated. There is no such requirements to realise the nature of mind.*

> *Quote*
>
> *Can you heal?*

No, but my mom can and she isn't enlightened.

> *Quote*
>
> *Do you have heightened intuition?*

Not noticeably.

> *Quote*
>
> *Do you have any so-called Siddhis?*

No, Siddhis usually comes as a result of training in Shamatha and is not directly linked to self-realization - I have many enlightened (and some unenlightened) friends, and even my mom, who have siddhis. Shamatha means you are training in deep concentration that you can enter into the 8 samatha jhanas, which are blissful altered states of consciousness. I have experiences of entering jhanas in the past, but I no longer train in this area, and this is not my area of expertise.

According to Daniel M. Ingram, he manifests siddhis when he reach the 4th Jhana, as accordance to the standard Buddhist texts. You may be interested to listen to this interview with Daniel who spoke about his experience with the powers:
*Buddhist Geeks episode 61: Buddhist Magic: What is Possible with the Powers?*
(http://personallifemedia.com/podcasts/236-buddhist-geeks/episodes/3665-buddhist-magic-what-possible)

Nevertheless, Thusness did make mentions that siddhis can manifest due to a very deep level of clarity/enlightenment, but I have not experienced this so far (see http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/05/different-degrees-of-non-duality.html)

As for my mom, Thusness said her chakras (never asked which) are open that's why she has some powers.

> *Quote*
>
> *Or you are still the same being who feels pain and pleasure but have a greater sense of serenity? Have you found your energy body open up? Do you shoot energy around you with mere presence? So what is that is different now apart from a certain "mental" state of perception/awareness/whatever?*

Yes, there is pain and pleasure and more serenity. Pain and pleasure are simply sensations and feelings and thoughts passing through the sky/opening of presence-awareness. The sky does not obstruct the movement of clouds, the clouds do not in actual fact obscure the bright sky. If you do not identify with them (you no longer believe that the feelings and thoughts are 'me' or 'mine'), they are just more stuff passing along in the environment just fine, there is a fundamental equanimity in the face of all kinds of sensations, feelings and thoughts (that is all that ever happens in your life). Those sensations, feelings and thoughts that pass by are not a problem - they only become a problem when we bring a 'separate me' into the picture and suffer as a result. I have experience of energy even before self-realization.

As for self-realization, when you are self-realized, there is intense palpable

Presence/Clarity/Awareness and the sense of presence also comes with a sense of vitality, aliveness, energy. The intensity varies for me - I don't experience the same intensity throughout the day, but it is not because it is not there - the intensity of presence and aliveness is always Here and Now and ever available - just that if my focus or dwelling goes more towards the conceptual, then the intensity is not so apparent.

As for what is different from the 'state of awareness' and 'realization', the difference is that there is some kind of Realization involved. It is the utter certainty that you have touched and realized the core of your Being, your true identity, who you truly are. And that is not a 'state' that comes and goes. It is what you are - the irrefutable, undeniable fact of Being and Existence. There can be no doubts or uncertainties about it. It is the inescapable ground of Being and Knowing wherein all experiences manifests and subsides, but itself does not come and go.

You no longer have doubts about who you truly are, or notions that you can ever 'lose' your own Being (it is who you are!), or become separate from it, as it is not a 'state' but a 'fact' of reality. You realise you never was a person or self separate from Reality/Being at any moment, that you Are that Reality only.

And you know this not through inference/deduction or any indirect or conceptual approach - but through direct authentication/realization of Being as a result of self-inquiry and direct looking ('seeing with naked awareness' as they call it). The knowing/realizing of who you are IS the BEING of who you are, and that is why Eckhart Tolle calls this 'feeling-realization' which I think could also be called 'being-realization' - both of the terms suggesting the direct-ness and non-conceptuality of this realization. This is not a form of subject-object knowledge: you do not know that you are as an object (that would imply a knower and a known), but the fact shines so obviously and vividly: YOU ARE! YOU are the Self-Shining, Self-Knowing Being-Awareness that Knows Itself by Itself. As I wrote previously, *In actual experience, once you touch that 'certainty of being' that I mentioned, there is no observer and observed distinction. There is just a non-dual sense of Existence, Being, Presence, Knowing, without a sense of 'me' being separated from 'that'. You Are That Knowing which is certain that You Are! The distinction between knower, knowing, and known dissolve into That. You Are That!*Direct, gapless, certain, still, non-conceptual. The moment you seek to 'know' or 're-confirm' it as a form of 'knowledge', you have already set up a distance/separation from IT. The only way you can realize this is to engage in the experiential investigation of self-inquiry (Who am I?) coupled with direct-ness of non-conceptual perception that gives rise to the realization and sense of certainty of who You are.

Self-Inquiry or koans can lead to this realization. I had many recognitions and experience of Awareness prior to Self-Realization, but Self-Realization is different because precisely it is the 'Realization of Self'.

> *Quote*
>
> *Do you experience flashes of brilliance?*

Yes but I call these flashes of brilliance the A&P events and it is not directly linked to self-realization. These flashes of lights and other energetic phenomena, a sudden surge of bliss, and so on are induced by deep concentration.

> *Quote*
>
> *Do your words flow spontaneously when you write or you still find use quoting from the suttas?*

Both. It flows spontaneously, but sometimes I remember a sutta that was very relevant to the topic that has a way of putting it in words very succinctly.

> *Quote*
>
> *I am trying to understand if self-realization has anything to with physiology and energy body at all and anything apart from the "mind".*

Yes, according to my friends there is indeed an energetic component to awakening. Both Thusness and Longchen/Simpo described that an 'energy release' occurs as a lot of energy is fed into grasping onto conceptual thoughts or self. I think only time will make this relation become more apparent for me.

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29th July 2010

> Quote:
>
> Originally Posted by **smilodon**
>
> *How do you self-inquire ?*
>
> and
>
> Originally Posted by **supertom**
>
> *How do i learn self-inquiry? I have the book "be as you are".*

Just wrote to supertom, but you can also refer to my document (posted a link in that thread - Anyone practicing Self Inquiry?) which contains much more discussions/clarifications on the practice of self-inquiry:

Ramana Maharshi's books are good guides... you have all the pointers you need in that book for self-inquiry practice. In actual fact, the question 'Who am I' is itself an adequate pointer to self-realization, and a most potent one. That is all you need. The pointer 'Who am I?' will allow the practitioner to investigate his own experience and touch the Self directly.

But just an additional 2 cents from me:

You don't learn self-inquiry... it's not a technique that you master until perfection like

visualization or yoga - self-inquiry is simply a tool, a question 'Who am I', that allows you to trace the mind back to its Source - and at that point the question itself dissolves. You do not need to master the thought 'Who am I' (what's there to master about it? it's just asking yourself 'Who am I', it's that simple!), you don't need to master the question or technique because the question/technique itself is not the point (though an important tool), rather, just allow the question to lead you back to the Source, to trace the radiance back to its Source as Zen Master Chinul puts it. The true Source of the radiance (all awareness) is upstream from all objects, mind or body… trace all perceptions to its Source by asking 'Who am I?' The thought 'Who am I' is simply a pointer, like a pointer to the moon, you don't grasp/look at the pointer, but let the pointer direct you to look at the moon.

Ramana Maharshi puts it very well when he said: "By the inquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then, there will arise Self-realization."

It is simply an inquiry, an investigation, into 'Who am I?' And this investigation takes you to the core of your Being... it bypasses the mind and its conceptualizations - any mind made conceptual answer will ring hollow and are to be negated/dropped. All speculations, concepts, ideas have no certainty to it - it is merely theories of the mind and always have room for doubts - but the Essence of your Being that lies prior to the mind and the conceptualization rings with utter certainty and undeniability - when you realize who you are, you can no longer deny or doubt your Existence.

Notice that even Right Now... you are undeniably present, your being cannot be negated and is an irrefutable fact of existence. Pause all thoughts, and in that gap between thoughts, you are still effortlessly present and aware - your Being is nothing inert, it is pure aliveness, presence, clarity, vitality and intelligence. You cannot say you are not - undeniably, You Are...

So what is This? What is this sense of existence and presence? Who am I? The question is simply a tool to turn the light around, so that Awareness withdraws its identification with thoughts and forms... to realize ItSelf, it's true identity. The question is not meant to be repeated or recited verbally like a mantra, rather it is simply a non-conceptual exploration, looking, investigation into the fact of your Being... your Existence... eventually all concepts and ideas and even the question 'Who am I' subside, and in that thoughtless gap You realize Who You Are... Self-Knowing, Self-Shining Presence-Awareness reveals itself as your true identity, and there is no more doubts about it - only utter thoughtless certainty, authentication, still and unmoving ground of being and knowing.

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6th August 2010

Nowadays, in daily living, I try to experience the intensity of luminosity. In some ways it is pretty much like mindfulness practice.

It may sound like I am doing a very dualistic practice... as if awareness is not here, and I am trying to 'reach' a state of awareness.

This is not what I mean.

Awareness is already shining in full view Right Here, Right Now, couldn't be anywhere else... It is what you already are, so stop looking elsewhere.It is just about relaxing the focus on the mind and letting Luminosity/Presence-Awareness reveal itself in its fullness and richness.

Just that our focus (by habit) goes so often into mental stories and mental noise that we totally miss out the aliveness and wonder of life itself. We have overlooked the power and intensity of Presence to put it in Eckhart Tolle's terms...

You cannot experience intensity of Presence by trying to seek a 'better' state... it is not about having a 'better' state... it is about experiencing Presence-Awareness in its fullness in the Here-Now (as it cannot be anywhere else)... be careful not to fall into subtle traps of thinking there is a better experience in the future.

Simply be brightly aware of what is... Whatever Is, Is! You just have to be brightly aware of it. Even if you are feeling sleepy, being brightly aware of that sensation of sleepiness will bring you back into the intensity of Presence... Whatever you are experiencing at that moment, whether it is apparent clarity or non-clarity, you can always be brightly aware of What Is and bring the intensity of Presence into focus.In sports term, it is 'being in the zone' - except that you don't have to be doing something dangerous to be 'in the zone', it can simply (and only) be Right Here, Right Now!

Life becomes miraculous, wonderful, 'paradisiacal' (yes this is how it feels like - like walking in a magical wonderland even in your ordinary neighbourhood), radiating all over...

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6th August 2010

It doesn't take even a moment of practice to Dive into your Self.

Because you never left and can never be other than Who You Are.

Without moving a step forward (or backward), You Are - Self-Shining, Self Certain/Doubtless, Still, Unmoved, Abiding Existence-Awareness.

All frustrations exist because you are moving forward and backward to find your Self. Stop, pause, You Are, full-stop.

What's next, you say? Notice that the 'what's next' is simply a thought desiring to move forward or backward again in search of something (which presumes separation between 'you' and 'Source'), but leading nowhere - because even as you are apparently moving forward and backward towards your illusory goal, your True Self remains ever unmoved but by being lost in your seeking you are overlooking that simplicity. See the erroneous-

ness of conceptual thoughts which presumes separation and goal instead of the completeness and perfection of your Self which is your direct experience.

There is no next except to Abide as You Are. It is an effortless abiding, because you cannot *not* be Who You Are - just stop believing in false thoughts and simply rest in the non-conceptual and non-dual authentication of your innate nature, pure being-consciousness.

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17th August 2010

A friend asked me: If Awareness is the true nature, then how come effort/willpower is necessary to realize it?

My answer: This is because we are always lost and chasing after thoughts and outer things that we have become totally ignorant of our true identity. We confuse ourselves with those stories, mind, body, objects and experiences.

For example, when we turn off the lights, one might claim "I no longer see!" But that statement is made because one has misidentified oneself with the object of sight, in which case darkness implies 'no seeing' and light implies 'seeing'.

But in actual fact, your true identity as the all-perceiving Awareness is still present, only that you have misidentified yourself with objects (e.g. light or dark), that one experience implies the presence of seeing and the other implies the absence of seeing. In actual fact, 'seeing'/'awareness' is equally present to perceive the darkness! You have utterly confused the ever-present luminosity which is your true essence, with the comings and goings of objects, light or darkness. In actual fact, luminosity is never lost, never comes, never goes. But sentient beings are utterly confused and have become totally fixated on objects and experiences, falling into a dream of being a separate self, and thus lost sight of their essence.

That is why effort is required, to turn the light around and investigate the Source of everything... the source of radiance... the source of all seeing, all hearing, etc.

Who am I? What hears? Then... eventually you realize your true identity and realize that Awareness never ceases even after sounds and sights and thoughts have gone... the position of your true identity as Pure Awareness is then 'restored' (or rather, 'realized'), and you no longer confuse or misidentify yourself in the face of experiences. You realize you are indestructible, untouched by light or darkness, fire or ice, knife or water... yet the basis of all such illusory experiences.

'Willpower' is important, it is more of an 'intense desire to know the truth of who I really am'. And this is absolutely important in Self Inquiry and determines the success of your practice... why? Because if you do not give rise to this doubt and intense desire to find out who you truly are, then you are simply verbally reciting 'Who am I' like a mantra without true investigation.

The intense desire to resolve the question of who you truly are is that which allows you to challenge and cut through all notions of who you think you are, cut through all conceptual thoughts, to truly touch the essence of your being... without which your notions are not challenged and your true being is not revealed.

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19th February 2011

Had a conversation with an American friend, he was asking me about which practice to do for enlightenment... I told him there is the gradual approach that emphasizes experience, and a direct approach that emphasizes investigation and direct realization, for example the practice of self-inquiry.

So he asked me how to practice self-inquiry. I said, it is to question yourself, Who am I?

Of course like most people, they aren't satisfied with simple answers, and want more details and explanation.. I said to him, there is no how. It is a matter of investigation. I said, don't think, don't conceptualize, don't intellectualize what you are. Just keep questioning yourself, Who am I? What am I, really? Nevertheless, the mind is bound to intellectualize things. Can't help it, the mind simply has a tendency to chatter, a tendency and desire to 'figure things out'.

But if and when they do arise with answers like 'I am so and so', just see it for what it is - a thought story you spun about yourself, but it is not the actuality of what you are. So look directly at what you Actually are. Even without thoughts... what are you? Simply investigate, and look.

There is really nothing much to it... your mind wants a systematic method as it wants to make sure it's 'on the right track', yet self-inquiry just isn't a systematic method that tells you 'here's what you have to do: 1), 2), 3), and in doing so you get 1), 2), 3) etc'... this is not a systematic method of practice. This is just an investigation, and you need to be curious, that's all.

Then, he told me that it's tough with all the concepts and thinking and philosophizing going on in his mind and the tendency to jump to a conclusion.

I said, just see that all concepts are simply labels and words... but the word is not the thing, like the word 'moon' is not the real moon. Same goes for 'presence, awareness, being' etc. So once it is seen, drop the pointer (the word) and look at actuality.

I also told him that along the way, there will be many times he may wonder "is this it"... it has happened to me hundreds of times. This is because through self inquiry you will often experience the sense of presence, spaciousness, awareness, mirror like quality etc. But just know that these are experiences. (See this article: Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives)

He asked, "how do you know when 'that's it'?"

I answered,

Realization comes when you realize the fact of being... and have utter certainty and conviction. Then you will no longer doubt and ask whether "this is it"... you will see that you can't deny it even if you want to.

He said, "oh ok, a non-conceptual knowing rather than an intellectual/logical conclusion".

I agreed and clarified, this is about a non-conceptual realization. It is like those 'try to find the figure in this picture' sort of thing, you simply realize it is so. It's like trying to find the cow in this picture: http://www.thelogician.net/2b_phenome_nology/2b_appendix_3.htm. It's there all along but needs to be realized. It's a non-conceptual realization of an undeniable fact of existence. Like the 'find the figure in this picture' thing, you don't need to figure it out logically - you need to see it. And no amount of intellectualizing helps just as no intellectualizing will help you see the figure in the picture... you just need to keep looking, keep investigating. There is no steps and systematic method to figure it out, no 'how' - just keep looking and investigating and you will get it. And once you see it, you can no longer unsee it.

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11/02/2019

**O.R. wrote:** Great so far.

Why is "before birth, what am I?" being advocated? Why would we assume we were anything "before birth"?

Soh Wei Yu: O.R., before any observable five senses or conceptual phenomena what are you. There is a doubless Presence before senses. But don't intellectualize the question or ponder conceptually while enquiring

Soh Wei Yu: When the Body Disappears.

Remember "con men," "con women" as well. These con men can sell you anything! There's one living in your mind right now, and you believe every word he says! His name is Thinking. When you let go of that inner talk and get silent, you get happy. Then when you let go of the movement of the mind and stay with the breath, you experience even more delight. Then when you let go of the body ,all these five senses disappear and you're really blissing out. This is original Buddhism. Sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch completely vanish. This is like being in a sensory deprivation chamber but much better. But it's not just silence, you just don't hear anything. It's not just blackness, you just don't see anything. It's not just a feeling of comfort in the body, there is no body at all.

When the body disappears that really starts to feel great. You know of all those people who have out of the body experiences? When the body dies, every person has that experience, they float out of the body. And one of the things they always say is it's so

peaceful, so beautiful, so blissful. It's the same in meditation when the body disappears, it's so peaceful, so beautiful, so blissful when you are free from this body. What's left? Here there's no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. This is what the Buddha called the mind in deep meditation. When the body disappears what is left is the mind.

I gave a simile to a monk the other night. Imagine an Emperor who is wearing a long pair of trousers and a big tunic. He's got shoes on his feet, a scarf around the bottom half of his head and a hat on the top half of his head. You can't see him at all because he's completely covered in five garments. It's the same with the mind. It's completely covered with sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. So people don't know it. They just know the garments. When they see the Emperor, they just see the robes and the garments. They don't know who lives inside them. And so it is no wonder they're confused about what is life, what is mind, who is this inside of here, were did I come from? Why? What am I supposed to be doing with this life? When the five senses disappear, it's like unclothing the Emperor and seeing what is actually in here, what's actually running the show, who's listening to these words, who's seeing, who's feeling life, who this is. When the five senses disappear, you're coming close to the answer to those questions.

What you're seeing in such deep meditation is that which we call "mind," (in Pali it's called Citta). The Buddha used this beautiful simile. When there is a full moon on a cloudy night, even though it's a full moon, you can hardly see it. Sometimes when the clouds are thin, you can see this hazy shape shining though. You know there is something there. This is like the meditation just before you've entered into these profound states. You know there is something there, but you can't quite make it out. There's still some "clothes" left. You're still thinking and doing, feeling the body or hearing sounds. But there does come a time, and this is the Buddha's simile, when the moon is released from the clouds and there in the clear night sky you can see the beautiful full disc of the moon shining brilliantly, and you know that's the moon. The moon is there; the moon is real, and it's not just some sort of side effect of the clouds. This is what happens in meditation when you see the mind. You see clearly that the mind is not some side effect of the brain. You see the mind, and you know the mind. The Buddha said that the mind released is beautiful, is brilliant, is radiant. So not only are these blissful experiences, they're meaningful experiences as well.

How many people may have heard about rebirth but still don't really believe it? How can rebirth happen? Certainly the body doesn't get reborn. That's why when people ask me where do you go when you die, "one of two places" I say "Fremantle or Karrakatta" that's where the body goes! [3] But is that where the mind goes? Sometimes people are so stupid in this world, they think the body is all there is, that there is no mind. So when you get cremated or buried that's it, that's done with, all has ended. The only way you

can argue with this view is by developing the meditation that the Buddha achieved under the Bodhi tree. Then you can see the mind for yourself in clear awareness - not in some hypnotic trance, not in dullness - but in the clear awareness. This is knowing the mind

Knowing the Mind.

When you know that mind, when you see it for yourself, one of the results will be an insight that the mind is independent of this body. Independence means that when this body breaks up and dies, when it's cremated or when it's buried, or however it's destroyed after death, it will not affect the mind. You know this because you see the nature of the mind. That mind which you see will transcend bodily death. The first thing which you will see for yourself, the insight which is as clear as the nose on your face, is that there is something more to life than this physical body that we take to be me. Secondly you can recognise that that mind, essentially, is no different than that process of consciousness which is in all beings. Whether it's human beings or animals or even insects, of any gender, age or race, you see that that which is in common to all life is this mind, this consciousness, the source of doing.

Once you see that, you have much more respect for your fellow beings. Not just respect for your own race, your own tribe or your own religion, not just for human beings, but for all beings. It's a wonderfully high-minded idea. "May all beings be happy and well and may we respect all nations, all peoples, even all beings." However this is how you achieve that! You truly get compassion only when we see that others are fundamentally just as ourselves. If you think that a cow is completely different from you, that cows don't think like human beings, then it's easy to eat one. But can you eat your grandmother? She's too much like you. Can you eat an ant? Maybe you'd kill an ant because you think that ants aren't like you. But if you look carefully at ants, they are no different. In a forest monastery living out in the bush, close to nature, one of the things you become so convinced of is that animals have emotions and , especially, feel pain. You begin to recognise the personality of the animals, of the Kookaburras,(Australian bird) of the mice, the ants, and the spiders. Each one of those spiders has a mind just like you have. Once you see that you can understand the Buddha's compassion for all beings. You can also understand how rebirth can occur between all species - not just human beings to human beings, but animals to humans, humans to animals. You can understand also how the mind is the source of all this.

- http://www.abuddhistlibrary.com/.../Meditation%20The...

**O.R.:** Do you guys recommend self inquiry over mahasi-style noting? If so, why?

Soh Wei Yu: O.R.,

There is something sweet, beautiful and attractive in Awareness teachings even back when I was beginning to explore spirituality in 2004-2006. I was naturally drawn to it. I was also brought to dharma by my mother and took refuge in Venerable Shen Kai whose lineage is the Ch'an tradition. His teachings is heavily Awareness-centered and it resonated with me then. That was also when I first met Thusness and he told me about his insights. I was very happy when I discovered The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle in 2006, which I felt to be a potent book at bringing readers to a direct glimpse and state of Presence.

Pure noting would not suit me or my character because it would have felt dry and barren to me. That taste of Presence, a direct taste of Spirit or the Heart seems missing in those practices. Which I was already having glimpses of, as early as 2006-2007 (a few years before doubtless Self-Realization arose)

But through awareness teachings and the practice of self-enquiry when I AM realization arose, all further progressions are based on the maturing of insight in relation to that nondual luminous taste of presence.

However if you are drawn to MCTB approach there is nothing wrong pursuing noting and the path as outlined there. The luminosity aspect is eventually brought forth at the 3rd path of MCTB and matures at 4th and post-4th (Daniel's exploration of AF practices).

You have to gauge and see for yourself which approach you felt more resonance with.

# NON DUALITY

22th August 2010

Yesterday I was dancing and just letting the seen be the seen, the heard be the heard, and suddenly my perspective changed... suddenly all there is is the shapes and sounds and colours... everything presenting/experiencing by itself... there is only THAT.. there is no self...and its seen that these shapes and sounds and colours are the only actuality there is... there is nothing else... everywhere I look, there is only that - shapes, sounds, colours... in the seen only the seen, in the heard only the heard..... no distance... only IS.... even the notion 'there is no seer just scenery' is more mental stories... in actuality there is only THAT... an inescapable reality and that alone is extremely blissful even though totally ordinary.

Somehow the experience was not as dramatic as some of my previous nondual experience, but its full of vividness and a sense of 'inescapability', like whatever I experience, there it is, complete, nondual as it is. And it's like I don't even know who I am anymore... now I know why when Bodhidharma was asked by the emperor who he was, he simply answered 'I don't know'. Existence is undeniably present everywhere and yet all mental proclamations of self are an illusion.. A separate self is unfindable. Actuality: sceneries, sounds, taste, touch, smell, thoughts..... so obvious I wonder why it wasn't noticed from the beginning!

Even when I woke up the physical/sensate actuality is pretty obvious to me even though not as intense as yesterday. More involvement in contents thoughts today, whereas yesterday all contents of thoughts are just dropped immediately in favour of just pure delighting in the sensuous actualities.

Thusness said that experience I described was 'not bad' but told me not to drink (it is my experience that alcohol doesn't affect my luminous clarity but is detrimental to samadhi) and have proper practice. Incidentally, while I told him about this, he has just finished writing a related article for me which I will post next.

p.s. somehow my experience yesterday was different from the other times. It's like less dramatic and much more continuous... and in the previous non-dual experiences, I do not know how to 'repeat' them... but this time it's like whatever I experience, there it is - even now.

Thusness informed me that it is a good sign, however, that sense of self still hovers. The access is not so much of a problem now... as the 'how' is seen clearly. And that I might think I have already directly gained accessed to it...as in here and now the experience IS, but it will be gone in few months' time.

22th August 2010

Bringing Non-Dual to Foreground (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/08/bringing-non-dual-to-foreground.html)

Posted by: PasserBy (Thusness)

Hi AEN,

Saw your enlistment date in your facebook, good luck to you! 3 weeks is a short period so start working on your physical fitness before the enlistment. There are certain fitness expectations for basic combat training, for guys they must at least able to perform 13 push-ups and 17 sit-ups in a minute and run one mile within 8:30 minutes. You are, of course, expected to do much better than that.

It is also appropriate at this juncture to talk about your recent realization of the 'Eternal Witness'. I am glad that you are clear on the part about experience and realization through direct experiential insight, it is an invaluable insight. After this, you are very much on your own and the 'taste' of a pure, original, primordial, non-conceptual and non-dual luminous state of existence will serve as an internal compass for you. Treasure it!

After the initial realization, there is a strong desire to 'relive' the experience --this pure sense of existence; in fact the mind wishes the experience be made permanent and it is not uncommon that practitioners perceive the permanent, natural and effortless abiding of this state as 'Nirvana'. Therefore it is a natural progression for you to seek permanent abiding in the Self as a background at this point in time. If you intensify your meditation and abide in the Self, an oceanic blissful experience may arise as a result of deep absorption but it is still a contrived effort, it is not the 'key' towards effortlessness. Nonetheless having a 'taste' of deep Samadhi bliss and understanding the relationship between deep concentration and this oceanic bliss is still crucial.

Having said that, since none of your recent posts are about the absorptive state but are experiences relating to non-dual in transience, it is appropriate to practice bringing this 'taste' of pure luminous brilliance to the foreground. By 'foreground', I am referring to all your six entries and exits (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind) and experience vivid luminous aliveness in colors, forms, shape, sound, scent, taste and thoughts. It is essential for Phase 4 and 5 insights, that is, experiencing directly the 18 dhatus and aggregates and realize that the entire idea of 'I and Mine' is learnt. Also, I do not think you have the time to practice deep absorptive meditation in army. You can re-visit this 'Oceanic Samadhi Bliss' later when there is thoroughness and fearlessness in forgoing the sense of self/Self.

> The universe is this arising thought.
>
> The universe is this arising sound.

Just this magnificent arising!

Is Tao.

Homage to all arising.

Doing this foreground practice, **you are effectively refining your realization from "You as pure Existence" to "Existence is the very stuff of whatever arises".** The actual stuff - the screen, the keyboard, the clicking sound, the cool air, the taste, the vibration…is the actuality of Universe itself, there is no other. Nevertheless do take note that these are still experiences, they are not realizations. You will have to go through what you have gone through in the phase of 'I AM' from intermittent experiences to realizations.

I have read some of the articles written by Richard, they are very well written and will be of great help in this 'foreground' practice. There are values in the teachings of Actual Freedom but there is no need to over-claim anything. In my opinion, saying what that is more than necessary does not make one superior.

Also do not get overwhelmed by the vivid luminous brilliance that manifests as the background source or foreground phenomena, let go of all; much like lamas building a sand mandala that is so vivid, colorful and beautiful, is destroyed immediately after it is completed (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSLU9PiXgRk&feature=related). It is not just about the 'brilliant luminosity', it is also about the 'Gone'; therefore vividly present and instantly gone -- **GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA**.

Lastly be sincere to the deeper dispositions, they reveal more about us more than the 'surface' achievements', not to take it lightly. You are a sincere guy so allow your sincerity and your realizations be your inner guides -- they are your only 'true teachers', I am not. :-)

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27th August 2010

Quote:

Originally Posted by **p3d3r**

*Hi everyone, my name is Peder and I am 19 year old boy from Norway.*

Great to know more people around my age who's interested in these stuff! I'm 20 from Singapore.

*Quote:*

*I have some questions though.*

*...*

*Do you guys believe some people just are meant to wake up and become conscious and aware in life, and some just aren´t/can´t?*

My opinion and observation is that some people are simply not inclined towards the spiritual. This does not mean they do not have a potential to awaken because everyone have Buddha Nature, the potential to awaken. We are all equal in that sense. However... many may not be at that level of 'evolution' (which spans many lifetimes!) to truly be interested in spiritual things.

*Quote:*

*It seems to me it is like that, because all of my life I have been asking questions about many aspects of life and wondering about stuff, always curious and ready to learn something new from others about life. Some people on the other hand just do not care about things like that, or not some people but most people. That is something I think is so strange... they are just robots at times.*

It's like they are so obsessed with outward seeking that they have overlooked something fundamental, something that is what they are in their very essence... It's like looking all over the world for riches whereas they've forgotten and overlooked the diamond that is right there all along in his/her pocket.

This is the case for most people in the world... having lost sight of their pure luminous essence, they've looked for peace, happiness, fulfillment, contentment, love, etc... on the 'outside'. They have forgotten that true happiness, peace, etc, is to be found in your very true nature and by overlooking it.. finding peace, happiness, love, in temporary things that are ultimately unsatisfactory (what satisfaction can be found in something that comes and goes?) For as the Buddha said, all transient phenomena are characterized by unsatisfactoriness (dukkha)! And the sooner they found this out, the sooner they awaken... (think about many people who have had spontaneous awakenings after a period of depression and suffering: Eckhart Tolle, Byron Katie, etc) For some people, like us... who are beginning to awaken even without necessarily going through such awful experiences... it's probably because we don't totally believe in/give in to the notions of self and reality and be willing to inquire, question, and find out things for ourselves... unfortunately not many find value or interest in them because they have very fixed ideas and notions about what their reality and identity and life is and what they want from life and how to get them. They'd rather spend their time finding happiness in other things, than to investigate their notions and experience of reality. But we know better... because we have glimpses of the bliss and clarity, i.e. what's possible, if we truly live life awakened.

Most of all, they are totally identified with the world of experiences... they have identified themselves to be their own body and mind, and their own concepts and images of who they are over the years 'I am a successful businessman', 'I am ...'. Totally identified unconsciously with their conceptual images, thoughts, stories... and they seek to 'find themselves' through the world of experiences, by becoming richer, more famous, more successful, etc, so that they can make a nicer story of themselves to feel good about it. In this way they seek to find their identity through stories, through past

and future... and through this, lose sight of themselves completely. As Eckhart Tolle says, *"You cannot find yourself by going into the past. You can find yourself by coming into the present." ~Eckhart Tolle* - I would also include "You cannot find yourself in the future".

So as you can see... whether it is spiritual or non-spiritual persons, we all seek happiness. We all have the same goals... it's just that spiritual seekers don't completely seek/grasp after happiness and peace in what is inherently transient and unsatisfactory. We realise that true Bliss, Happiness, Peace, is in our very Essence itself. Doesn't mean spiritual people all retreat into the mountains with no aims in life... just that they abide in/as their true essence and source as Pure Consciousness even as they live their ordinary lives, free of the suffering and unhappiness due to their false identifications and grasping. Non-spiritual seekers, unaware of their spiritual nature... continue searching and identifying unconsciously in the world confused... not knowing the great importance of learning to 'take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward'. But it does not become apparent to them that the spiritual path is what they (everyone) really wanted... it may appear contrary to their life aims (they have many ideas and desires in life, everything except to have more spiritual awareness), until eventually of course they find out how relevant and essential it is to live spiritually/with spiritual awareness or rather to discover their spiritual essence. If they knew better... they would find spiritual practice appealing.

'Robots' is a very good way of describing such people... totally lost sight of themselves and directions, simply following their own programming of doing whatever they want to/have been doing without any deeper awareness of their own minds and nature.

> *Quote:*
>
> *Anyway, what do you think enlightenment is or represents in a dream world? Is enlightenment the ultimate state you can reach and what everyone should strive for? What is enlightenment like...?*

A common notion is that enlightenment is a one final event thingy... however this is far from truth, as many can attest that there are in fact many stages of enlightenment/awakening. For example, my friend 'Thusness' writes about his experience of enlightenment in the article Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment - there are also other maps of enlightenment that are related. It has been 25 years since his first awakening at the age of 17... and he spoke of many stages of unfoldment in realizations, many of which are still beyond my experience.

I have my own experiences of awakening (particularly since 9th February this year, but it is not exactly a 'one-time-event' but an on-going thing). Enlightenment, at my current level of awareness, is a pure certainty of being-existence-consciousness, a realization of Who I Truly Am... beyond any doubts.

> *Quote:*
>
> *Is it perhaps something we all will reach someday, given enough time (yes I believe we will always be). And what are the levels of consciousness, what does it*

*all mean if we are in a dream world? Do you guys know a better way to view life through than SR?*

It's not exactly a dream world, it is only a dream mind! The mind (thoughts/concepts) that mis-identifies with thoughts, mind, body, and losing sight of your true Essence...

As I wrote in my self-inquiry journal 'Who am I', *In that moment of awakening, Consciousness awakens/withdraws its identification from the dream of being a separate person, to its true identity as ItSelf*

*Quote:*

*Do you think that there are many different roads to enlightenment? That both being a Buddhist monk in tempple far away and PD both lead to enlightenment?*

I can certainly attest both personally and observations of lay-men friends and teachers... that awakening does not require renouncing as a Buddhist monk. I know of enlightened (as well as unenlightened) monks and lay-men.

*Quote:*

*Btw, when i read the book by Jon Kabat-Zinn I started meditating a lot (well, not more than an hour a day, that´s was a lot for me though)*

Sounds good, read good reviews about JKZ but haven't read his books.

*Quote:*

*and thinking about all the things in life so on, and I really concentrated on being in the present moment. I also read the Tao Te Ching which I believe has very deep insights written in it.*

TTC is definitely full of deep insights and written from a very awakened state!

*Quote:*

*At times I was on the level joy ( referring to steve´s article "levels of consciousness"), but i think my natural state was reason/love. At that time I was walking the "buddha path", I was trying to get rid of my ego and just let everything flow in the moment.*

The Buddha path isn't about getting rid of your ego. Yes, you may have moments of 'egolessness', but those experiences (which are all impermanent) are not ultimately what the Buddha wants us to experience: rather, he wants us to have **realizations**, which are permanent.

It's about investigating and finding whether the "ego" truly even exists in the first place! This separate individual self that I think I am, can I find it right now in my experience? Where is it? Or is it just a figment of my imagination without any substance? If it cannot be located to begin, what is there to relinquish? To say I want to 'get rid of my ego' is giving your ego too much reality/solidity than it deserves, because it doesn't truly exist!

It's all about a deeper insight and wisdom of the nature of your experience... First realize (a direct and time-tested way would be via self-inquiry) your true essence as Pure Consciousness, then investigate to dissolve any remaining notions of an individual person, doer, or experiencer of life... what remains is impersonal, universal, all-pervasive Awareness itself, expressing in the myriads of life and experiences...

> *Quote:*
>
> *How do you see people in SR? Are they just projections of your own thoughts, or do you believe that all people are conscious (well most are going on auto-pilot...) like you, but you all still come from the same consciousness? I can never know if any one else is conscious but myself, but one way to see it is that maybe everyone is experiencing their own reality, but we still come from the same consciousness. And since most people are on automatic pilot, they seem to be just projections of your own thoughts since they walk around like robots (no offense), and therefore you also have a lot of power to make your own reality, since there are so few others who use it...?*

Before you think 'are they projections of your own thoughts', why don't you find out 'am I a projection of my own thought?' If you drop all thoughts right now... in that gap of no-thought, can you deny your own Existence, Presence, Consciousness? The answer is definitely no - your Existence-Consciousness is vividly self-shining, self-knowing, and self-evident even in that absence of thoughts! It is the most undeniable and irrefutible fact of Existence Itself. By asking yourself 'Who am I' and tracing all perceptions to the Source... you will touch the innermost reality of our own core being where thoughts play absolutely no role in that moment of experience and have a powerful conviction of Who You Truly Are in Essence.

If you figure this one out, you'll discover the true essence of Consciousness, then you'll realize you're nothing like a machine, and you'll realize that nobody is like a machine. You are not a mere body/lifeless corpse. The body is simply an instrument, it is run by the One Consciousness... like various electrical instruments in your room are run by the same electrical power source. You (and everybody) are Life, utterly real and undeniable!

As Buddhist monk/teacher Ajahn Brahmavamso says (note: in this excerpt, his term 'mind' means 'consciousness' and not thoughts),

Meditation: The Heart of Buddhism- Ajahn Brahm

*When you know that mind, when you see it for yourself, one of the results will be an insight that the mind is independent of this body. Independence means that when this body breaks up and dies, when it's cremated or when it's buried, or however it's destroyed after death, it will not affect the mind. You know this because you see the nature of the mind. That mind which you see will transcend bodily death. The first thing which you will see for yourself, the insight which is as clear as the nose on your face, is that there is something more to life than this physical body that we take to be me.* ***Secondly you can recognise that that mind, essentially, is no different than that***

***process of consciousness which is in all beings. Whether it's human beings or animals or even insects, of any gender, age or race, you see that that which is in common to all life is this mind, this consciousness, the source of doing.***

> *Quote:*
>
> *I just want to make one thing clear: I am definitely not a projection of your thoughts, I am alive and conscious, experiencing my own reality. But then again, I have no real way to prove that to you. If you could just step into my consciousness and body for awhile I could show you... Perhaps that is something we just have to accept, that we can never be 100% sure of anything, that we cannot truly know anything... Somehow, i have the feeling I will get my answers one day though.*

Yes! Our feeling (of Being) is mutual and certainly is the same throughout the entire universe! We are all manifestations/lived expressions of One Universal Life...

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28th August 2010

Abiding as what you already are... whatever transformations that appear are simply appearances... doesn't change Being itself. Don't seek after experiences, simply rest in the already completeness and perfection of your nature. There is no development, only realization and (natural) abidance.

The bubble-like thought of 'I' pops... the 'I' is seen to be just that: an arising thought, nothing substantial. The whole notion of 'me' as a separate self is just this bubble like thought. There is no entity called 'me'.

In the absence of that, is simply the pure space of wakefulness, with no particular location but pervading all spaces, reflecting everything as it is.It is the natural, effortless, ever-present activity of knowing that is present independent of contrived attention: it just IS.

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28th August 2010

Instead of being fully identified with or engaging in the contents of thoughts... if you simply step back and witness the arising of thoughts and the body and everything... you will see how thoughts arise totally spontaneously of their own according to imprints and habits. There is absolutely no thinker involved! Thoughts simply arise, they just happen, and you are simply this non-interfering witness. You are not a thinker, or a doer, or a controller, but the witness. Even apparent choices are simply thoughts spontaneously happening due to conditioning and imprints. Just notice next time how thoughts arise! Watch!

This is an absolutely essential element to your daily practice or your meditation (without which your practice/meditation will utterly fail): because otherwise you will either be 1)

lost in your thinking (the contents/stories of your thoughts), or 2) lost in trying to get rid of thinking (because you think you're the controller/thinker) which is just more false thinking and thus never works. The third alternative here is to realize your true identity not as a thinker or controller of thoughts, but as this Awareness that witnesses and allows thoughts but never grasps on them. Same goes for bodily movements... from the position of Witnessing Awareness, they simply arise due to certain mental and bodily programming, habits, and subtle intentions. They just happen of their own accord... there is no doer.

Simply resting as Awareness, allow everything to unfold on its own and eventually this stuff subside into the background while Pure Consciousness-Existence 'comes' into the foreground of your experience. Simply abiding in just This.

But notice that the stuff arising in awareness is really nothing but the manifestation of awareness... there is no separation or division anywhere whatsoever. If Awareness is limitless and borderless, how can you say that Awareness is here, and the sound is over there? Isn't the 'over there' also 'here', as Awareness? Where does Awareness end and manifestation begin? There are no borders, no boundaries, no divisions, no limits, no center and no circumference...

Baby crying vividly heard. Just this, is Awareness. Why even call it Awareness then if there is nothing *other* than Awareness?

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3rd September 2010

Are you dead right now? Are you just a machine, or a corpse? Obviously not. Aliveness, awareness, consciousness, whatever you want to call it... is utterly undeniable. You can't say you are unconscious, or you are dead, because you are not 6 feet under in the cemetery, but you are in front of your computer reading these words right now. Yet this is just logic, just inference.... check your experience. Can you deny your own livingness and awareness? The answer from your direct experience is a definite no! Pause your thoughts for a moment, aren't you still aware, perceiving, hearing, seeing, etc? Isn't consciousness instantly obvious without a second-thought, or without even a moment of pondering necessary? Imagine if you were a baby without a single word or idea in your head, wouldn't aliveness still be obvious and present? Isn't this what babies 'do': simply living in a state of wonder of aliveness?

Aliveness is seamless presence awareness without subject object division. Right now, you are alive and present. But is aliveness confined anywhere? Is it only located in the body? This is an assumption, an assumption that aliveness is confined only to 'my' body, in contrast to other experiences or objects. Yes, undeniably, your body is a field of aliveness, and the skin covering the body is a sensitive organ capable of allowing the perception and feeling (not that it is in and of itself a 'feeler') of the air, the wind blowing on the skin, the warmth and heat, the sensations on the fingertips now touching the keyboard, the sensation of your back leaning against the chair, the feet on the floor, etc... but ultimately it is not the body that feels, the eyes that sees, the ears that hears. Why? A corpse cannot feel even though it has skin, a corpse cannot see though it has

eyes, a corpse cannot hear though it has ears. What is lacking in the corpse? Aliveness! Consciousness!

But it is not that 'aliveness' is 'located in my body'... rather, it is that 'aliveness' is currently expressing through and as this body-mind, while this body is still alive. When the body goes through death, consciousness gradually stops expressing through and as this body-mind. And according to Buddhism, rebirth takes place (if you are not liberated): which means dependent on the wholesome and unwholesome karma of the 'individual', a new birth of consciousness takes place in and as another body-mind. But not so much on this now... my point of this paragraph is this: The body is not the feeler, the eyes are not the seer, the ears are not the hearer. You are not the eyes looking outwards, the ears hearing outwards, etc... rather, sights and sounds manifest through consciousness, and not only 'through' consciousness but those sights and sounds precisely IS aliveness, awareness, consciousness... there is no duality. The bodily organ is simply one of the conditions for a particular manifestation of aliveness, but there is no separate feeler located behind the sense organ, rather, there is only direct experience/consciousness, there is only aliveness vividly manifesting everywhere without a subject/object dichotomy present! (more on that later) Our entire field of experience is just one seamless field of consciousness with no divisions whatsoever.

As I was saying, the body is a field of aliveness. However, aliveness is not just confined to bodily sensations. And it is not just a sense of aliveness or existence confined to a space behind everything. Initially, aliveness may appear to be this background sense of existence, livingness, knowing... but notice when a sound suddenly arises in the field of consciousness... what is it? Pure consciousness, pure aliveness too! Utterly present and undeniable and vivid. There is no other. There is this sense that aliveness/consciousness/awareness has infinite potentiality and has no fixed forms/formlessness - whatever arises is another form and expression of aliveness. Aliveness is this dynamic manifestation.... and there is no center, no boundary, no circumference to aliveness... whatever arises IS aliveness. Consciousness is without any (fixed, inherent) traits, essence, attributes... but precisely because there is no fixed traits and attributes, aliveness manifests as literally everything - in all kinds of manifestations with all kinds of (apparent) traits. What I'm getting to is this: aliveness is nothing static at all - it is dynamic and ungraspable: luminosity is ever-present and can never be lost, and yet is unique and fresh in expression every single moment.And being dynamic, there is no place to abide in - there is no static place of consciousness for you to abide in, for consciousness is this momentary, flowing luminous reflection. This is why the Buddha taught mindfulness instead of sustaining any particular meditative state of absorption – mindfulness being an ingenious way of being intimate with our moment-to-moment experience, to experience the mirror-like clarity in all manifestation. Any sense of a self, a centerpoint, simply dissolves into the luminous mirror bright clarity shining in all directions without a border.

But don't take my word for it! My words if taken for granted as 'the truth' will ultimately become utterly useless and fail to deliver its intended purpose. Instead, you must make a perceptual shift in your direct experience via contemplation. To challenge the subject-object division, the sense of a center, border and circumference to awareness, always ask yourself these questions with regards to whatever you are experiencing, and

contemplate, 'Is there anything other [than awareness/being the forms of awareness]?', 'What is this?', 'Where does Awareness end and manifestation begin?' And always go by direct experience, not some insignificant thought or concept (no matter how clever or convincing the theory may sound - they are ultimately a bunch of words without any substance) that pops up in your head! Having a contemplation practice is very important. But more on that later on.*

Sound arising, sight, sensations on the skin, the smells perceived through the nose, the taste of ice cream, thoughts manifesting, isn't it a whole seamless field of aliveness not separable in terms of subject and object? Are you something in your body, in your head, looking outwards through your eyes, or is everything simply self-present as consciousness not dividable in terms of inside and outside? Doesn't everything have a single taste of pure luminosity and emptiness? Yet aren't they also the various variety of 'forms' of aliveness, a sound being radically different from say, a smell? Aren't these various forms of aliveness different in variations and forms, and yet having the same intensity and quality of livingness and perceivingness?

Isn't it all Pure Consciousness itself? The pure sense of a background presence and pure beingness, apparently solidifying the position of a Subject... now collapses into seamlessness without a subject and object. It is not Aliveness or Presence (I use these words synonymously, some may have distinguished meanings for each) that is denied, it is the denial of a border, a center, a confinement, a location, an inside or an outside/subject-object separation to Consciousness... what remains is a field of seamless consciousness manifesting in various forms.

Lastly... isn't the full intensity of Consciousness already shining in plain sight effortlessly, with the only apparent obscuration being our constant 'ignoring' and blocking out Wholeness by dualizing and attaching (to a particular point of view, including the attachment to a sense of self) and rejecting (the other points of views*)?

*Points of view: any particular sensation, thought, feeling, etc. Any particular constituents of the field of experience.

*On contemplation practices: Some neo-advaitin teachers emphasize on 'description' instead of 'prescription', but I say, this is useless and will be incapable of bringing about a real shift in perception in the seeker, because the descriptions simply become more concepts that the seeker collects and stores it somewhere, without any real direct experiential insight of what the pointers point to. It's like giving verbal descriptions of the moon to a person without curing the person's blindness, even if that person can memorize the description, it is utterly useless. What's the use of saying things like 'all there is is consciousness' when that person doesn't even know with direct realization what 'Consciousness' is? Both 'description' and 'prescription' are necessary, in particular the 'prescription' (the contemplation on your part). The 'prescription', the type of contemplation, also differs depending on what insight you want to arise: for example for an initial glimpse and realization of I AMness, I recommend investigating 'Who am I?' instead. As Thusness wrote before: *Therefore we must understand in Zen tradition, different koans were meant for different purposes. The experience derived from the koan "before birth who are you?" only allows an initial glimpse of our nature. It is not the*

*same as the Hakuin's koan of "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" The five categories of koan in Zen ranges from hosshin that give practitioner the first glimpse of ultimate reality to five-ranks that aims to awaken practitioner the spontaneous unity of relative and absolute (non-duality).* The 'description' is also necessary as a guide which otherwise you will be totally blind to what you'll be looking for, the 'description' being what I call the 'view'.

On View ('description') and Meditation ('prescription', aka contemplation, investigation):

*When one meditates with this view*

*It is like a garuda soaring through space*

*Untroubled by fear or doubt.*

*One who meditates without this view*

*Is like a blind man wandering the plains.*

*One who holds this view but does not meditate*

*Is like a rich man tethered by stinginess*

*Who cannot bring fruition to himself or others.*

*Joining the view with meditation is the holy tradition.*

~ Lodro Thaye, a great Mahamudra master of the eighteenth century

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11th September 2010

Aliveness is bliss. Or rather, being absorbed in aliveness, in reality, is bliss. The falling away of the sense of subject-object dichotomy is bliss.

I'm laughing... blissing out... tears rolling down my face for no apparent reasons (in bliss and laughter, not sadness)... I'm totally lost! I don't know what all these means. It doesn't mean anything. LOL!Anyway, I just heard a word 'personal consciousness' and broke out into laughter. Sometimes one just has to laugh at the ridiculousness of some of the human concepts.

Nothing ever means anything. Just forms of aliveness. Dynamic... never stays... never graspable... yet always Just This. Humans like to find meaning and concepts and overlook direct perception... This actuality... the Only Isness there IS... and every word it comes up is from this perspective so silly, so funny. Just stay with This. Bliss comes, bliss goes, still, THIS thought-free wakefulness IS.

---

12th September 2010

Simpo:

Thanks for sharing :)

Understand how you feel and why you laugh. Sometimes, the bliss come and i laugh, my wife will then say 'what are you doing.. that is so funny.'

She doesn't understand. But she is taking Vipassana class now. Hope she can understand eventually too:)

Sometimes, there are no laughter, but just an expressionless stone-face ;)

---

12th September 2010

Thusness:

Hi Simpo and AEN,

Yet we cannot get carried away by all these blissful experiences. Blissfulness is the result of luminosity whereas liberation is due to prajna wisdom. :)

To AEN,

For intense luminosity in the foreground, you will not only have vivid experience of 'brilliant aliveness', 'you' must also completely disappear. It is an experience of being totally 'transparent' and without boundaries. These experiences are quite obvious, you will not miss it. However the body-mind will not rest in great content due to an experience of intense luminosity. Contrary it can make a practitioner more attach to a non-dual ultimate luminous state.

For the mind to rest, it must have an experience of 'great dissolve' that whatever arises perpetually self liberates. It is not about phenomena dissolving into some great void but it is the empty nature of whatever arises that self-liberates. It is the direct experience of groundlessness and non–abiding due to direct insight of the empty nature of phenomena and that includes the non-dual luminous essence.

Therefore In addition to bringing this 'taste' to the foreground, you must also 'realize' the difference between wrong and right view. There is also a difference in saying "Different forms of Aliveness" and "There is just breath, sound, scenery...magical display that is utterly unfindable, ungraspable and without essence- empty."

In the former case, realize how the mind is manifesting a subtle tendency of attempting to 'pin' and locate something that inherently exists. The mind feels uneasy and needs to seek for something due to its existing paradigm. It is not simply a matter of expression for communication sake but a habit that runs deep because it lacks a 'view' that is able to cater for reality that is dynamic, ungraspable, non-local , center-less and interdependent.

After direct realization of the non-dual essence and empty nature, the mind can then have a direct glimpse of what is meant by being 'natural', otherwise there will always be a 'sense of contrivance'.

My 2 cents and have fun with your army life. :-)

---

12th September 2010

Thusness:

Hi Simpo,

How have you been getting on? I am planning for my retirement. :)

I think after stabilizing non-dual experience and maturing the insight of anatta, practice must turn towards 'self-releasing' and 'dispassion' rather than intensifying'non-dual' luminosity. Although being bare in attention or naked in awareness will help in dissolving the sense of 'I' and division, we must also look into dissolving the sense of 'mine'. In my opinion, dissolving of the sense of 'I' does not equate to dissolving the sense of 'mine' and attachment to possessions can still be strong even after very stable non-dual experience. This is because the former realization only manage to eliminate the dualistic tendency while the latter requires us to embody and actualize the right view of 'emptiness'. Very seldom do we realize it has a lot to do with our 'view' that we hold in our deep most consciousness. We must allow our luminous essence to meet differing conditions to realise the latent deep. All our body cells are imprinted and hardwired to 'hold'. Not to under-estimate it. :-)

---

1st October 2010

This message is not about having a better experience or a more spiritual experience. It's not about escape. It's not about self-improvement. It's only about What Is. By the acknowledgement of our essence as non-dual awareness, the sense of bliss, of being 'home', a deep sense of contentment and peace is present wherever you are, with whatever you are experiencing. You will not think of trying to escape your present experience. You will see how futile it is for What Is, is inescapable, beyond acceptance and rejection.

For example, standing under the hot sun can be quite an unpleasant experience if you are giving rise to aversion to that moment of experience, mentally at war or complaining about the experience simply makes you suffer. But if you simply let go of that sense of self, a self being in aversion of an external hostile environment, you dissolve your desires and expectations and you feel totally complete, satisfied with things exactly as they are, unaltered, unmodified, uncorrected. And then even the sunrays and the heat are the bliss of Awareness, and I mean this quite literally in experience.

When you are trying to get away from that experience to some other experience which is perceived as being more pleasant, the sense of trying to escape present experience is due to a subject-object dichotomy, of being a 'someone' experiencing an 'unpleasant external situation'. In various situations, challenges, interactions with others, when the sense of a personal self arise, we lose sight of vivid nondual awareness. This is why clarity and the sense of self has an 'inverse relationship' - clarity is not apparent if sense of self is being believed in, even though awareness is ever-present, because you are overlaying/superimposing reality with a *belief* in something which is not reality, say, the belief in duality, the belief in a separate self, superimposing names and forms on experience and thereby believing that there exists innumerous independently existing objects in an external universe, existing in space and time.

And the question may arise, why does Awareness apparently becomes obscured when the sense of self arises? A sense of self is a sense of a reference point and it also comes with a sense of division. Nondual awareness is awareness without any reference points and without any divisions, whereas the sense of self is a conceptual image/identification of being someone located somewhere, separated from others. This identification with a false conceptual center and the arising opposites of a false 'hostile environment apart from us' obscures us from our original essence; we lose our direct perception of what IS. We overlay 'what IS' with our conceptual bifurcation of inside and outside, subject and object, me and others... we divide the One Indivisible Wholeness/Essence into a multiplicity of subjects and objects interacting with each other through naming and compartmentalizing conceptually. By dividing our experience we separate ourselves from the totality and no longer perceive the fundamental oneness underlying all appearances. And instead of seeing a thought as simply a thought passing by, we identify with an image of a personal 'me' and get stuck with a mental narrative and story and suffering. In the absence of all reference points is our original essence, an all pervasive awareness in which nothing is excluded or separate and nothing is personal. And there is no reference point whatsoever, a thought is simply a thought like a sound is simply a sound, a manifestation of universal awareness. Activities, challenges, interaction and experiences continues to happen in and as pristine awareness without a sense of a center or a sense of an other. Talking with others happen without a sense of 'me' and 'other'. Walking happens without a 'me' that is doing that. It's all happening like rain is happening without there being a controller of how the rain falls. Thoughts happen the same way as well, they just happen of their own accord like rain falls.

Seeing through and letting go of all reference points is all that is required. No effort to sustain a state of awareness is necessary - awareness already always is the case! You already ARE the Whole, Awareness, Totality, whatever you want to call it. IT is observing and appearing as This, whatever is appearing, right now. Awareness is complete as it is in this moment, spontaneously perfected. So what is happening is not that you are becoming more aware, but you are resting your dualizing mind, like the rippling pond settles down and the entire sky and the moon are then clearly reflected in it in full clarity.

It's not that the sky and the moon weren’t reflected in full clarity before, but that the ripples on the pond *apparently* obscureits full clarity. In the same way, our dualizing

thoughts, attachments and sense of self obscures the direct perception and clarity of non-dual awareness. It is the identification with a separate self (a sense of being alienated from Totality) that is clouding the waters, the sense of a reference point, a self-center, and a boundary, that is clouding direct perception of non-dual Reality.

So what is the remedy? Guru Padmasambhava said, "the unmodified uncorrected nature of the mind is liberated by its being allowed simply to remain in its own (original) natural condition." Full clarity is returned by not-doing, by simply letting the natural condition be as it is, by no longer clouding the waters with our dualistic vision and self-sense.

Zen Master Huang Po:

*"The one essence is Mind. The six sense-organs with their six sense-objects and resultant six sense-consciousnesses are, altogether, called the eighteen realms. If one perceives these eighteen realms as empty and reduces them to one essence, that essence is Mind. All Dharma students know this theoretically, but cannot divest themselves of views based on the duality and analysis of this essence and the grasping of the six senses. Being bound by these dharmas, they cannot silently understand Original Mind"*

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7th October 2010

> *Originally posted by simpo_:*
>
> *Hi Beautiful951,*
>
> *IMO, just follow as per instruction for the meditation.*
>
> *Last time, i have a non-buddhist teacher who taught me how to intepret the images from dreams and meditation. But i don't do these kind of practice anymore. The meditation dreams are similar to the dreams of sleep. They usually are karmics and subconscious materials represented in a symbolic format.*

Thanks for sharing.. on a sidenote, I think some dreams contain spiritual messages or lessons or reminders.

I had this strange dream yesterday where I found some of my bunk mates (lol) had realized no-self. Their bodies were sort of transparent.... Very cool. I think its the minds symbolic way of telling me to live in total transparency without self though I didnt consciously know what it meant in the dream.

Then I interviewed one of them and he said... Its not that you don't exist but what you are is the stuff of the universe (not exact words). I also asked another, what are you? And he simply replied with a simple physical gesture... Cant exactly remember what but I intuitively understood it to mean something like "just this, this sensate body mind". The dream was a good reminder and inspiration for me.

If you have another interpretation I'm interested to hear..

---

7th October 2010

> *Originally posted by Fugazzi:*
>
> *Certainty of Being? How can being be certain unless it is assumed it is a dead thing or entity. E.g. Being kind, being wise, being jealous - all present continuous tenses lah. It is a here-now phenomena of one's being.*

Your Being or Essence is nothing dead.... it is pure aliveness, consciousness, intelligence.

Being, Presence, Awareness/Knowing IS, regardless of your feelings and thoughts at the moment.... it is fundamental and ever-present.

If you pause all your thoughts, feelings, and concepts for a moment and just ask or inquire, Who am I? And you turn the light of knowing around, you'll notice an undeniable presence, knowing, awareness, existence, being. And this is an absolute fact that once directly realized there must be 100 percent certainty as it is a direct, non-conceptual encounter of your most fundamental essence.

Pause all conceptualizing thoughts for a moment. Are you still present and aware even without thinking about anything? Yes! The fact of being and knowing is still irrefutably present. You are undeniably Present and Aware as pure existence... it is a self-evident fact.

And the activity of knowing which is also the same as being is present... it is present throughout all activities, like activity of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, and even thinking, all that is happening right now, is the activity of knowing. This is the certainty of existence and being.

---

8th October 2010

> *Originally posted by simpo_:*
>
> *Yah... i think the dream is a reminder to practice. :) Additionally, it may also be a reminder to see beyond the surface appearance of other people in the army life. Sometimes, we may meet people in the army life that we have some reaction to...The dream may serve to inform that these people are pure awareness as well.*
>
> *There was one time that i slacken and did not practice. I had a dream of a bug that goes into my ear. When i woke up, i went to the internet to find out the meaning and discovered that 'bug in the ear' is a French term for hint or warning. Consciously, i have never heard of this proverb.. although I might be French in the previous life ;) The next day after the dream, there was a follow-up dream where a rainbow-coloured luminous leopard-catlike being tell me that I*

*need to proceed with my practice/training and he specifically said that ' this is the hint'. .. and proceed to show me what is happening in the planet and the future ...*

*Regards*

I think your assessment is spot on... Few days before that dream my practice slackened and I wasn't feeling too good, feeling sick (physically ill) and tired (physically and mentally). And then I noticed my samadhi is gone, sort of. The dream sort of inspired me to be back on track in my practice.

---

8th October 2010

*Originally posted by Fugazzi:*

*Existence and being is only reality and only real when it and if is in action. How can one pause thoughts. thinking can never be stopped. When one is indifferent to the mind (thinking process as well as feelings, emotions = clouds/movie) one is Being existential (the sky, inner sky/screen). What one is being now is all that is. Herenow is the only phenomena that allow one to partake of what is. An what is transcends polarities of good/bad,hot/cold dichotomies of what ought to be what should be or what it was. Consciousness simply mirrors what is. No past no future. Mind is a photocopier - accumulating images!*

*My holding a book cannot be equated as reading. My thinking that i am peaceful is still thinking. The actual reading process (action) is the isness. My presence radiating peace (being peaceful) is what is. My radiating anger is what is.*

*Of course, this is my experience and you are free to be you.*

I agree with much you write... though I should also note that pausing the conceptual thoughts is definitely possible and has been my own experience. This pause is in my understanding, necessary for an initial direct glimpse/realization of our true essence. The pausing of the conceptualizing process is necessary for a direct touch of our essence without intermediary... it is also what allows the transcendance of dichotomies to touch/realize 'What Is'.

In fact in the very first post of this thread, I wrote about how the realization of Being arose through a cessation of conceptual thoughts and in that moment of thoughtlessness there remains only a Certainty of Being, Existence... this is the end and answer to my self-inquiry of 'Who am I', the realization beyond doubt of my true essence, what I truly am.

But what you wrote about the knowing and presence in action is also true... as the activity of knowing is always manifesting in and as all sensations, thoughts, feelings and actions. They are all the activities of Awareness.

Would appreciate if Thusness and Simpo could add in their comments.

8th October 2010

**Simpo:**

Hi Fugazzi,

It is possible to have no thought arising at all. What is left is an infinite/borderless Presence.

---

8th October 2010

> *Originally posted by Fugazzi:*
>
> *One never can step into the same river twice - I wonder how certain can being be? The tree (cos of the inadequacy of lang constraint) is actually treeing. It is changing every second.*
>
> *Talking about love is not love, the <u>being</u> loving the act of loving is the reality. Existence precedes essence lah not the other way round.*

**Simpo:**

Hello,

There is an unborn, the deathless. The Presence that we talk about is 'this' and it is not separated from the change.

When we share the same experience, then we can talk meaningfully. As of this writing, it is not something that you have experienced as typically the mind is 100% flowing with mental formations.

---

8th October 2010

> *Originally posted by Fugazzi:*
>
> *One never can step into the same river twice - I wonder how certain can being be? The tree (cos of the inadequacy of lang constraint) is actually treeing. It is changing every second.*
>
> *Talking about love is not love, the <u>being</u> loving the act of loving is the reality. Existence precedes essence lah not the other way round.*

**Thusness:**

Hi Fugazzi,

If what is real is always in action, is there certainty in 'becoming'?

---

9th October 2010

**Fugazzi:**

There is no certainty in becoming and if one is certain - then know this that it has conditions fulfilled or yet to be fulfilled. It is goal-oriented. If that is the case, one is already no longer herenow but psychologically in the future. What is, is missed or an adulterated expereince. Hence the necessity to become comes into play.

If one is an end unto oneself now the need to become is no longer there - one simply allows whatever that comes or manifests to be. If one is angry one is totally in it, if one is loving one is totally in it. It is a peak, it is intense but once it is over, one is no longer looking for the same experience. Also, one remains choiceless and yet aware of the everchanging ... Also, there is no rite/wrong, hot/cold/nite/day .... duality is transcended. Where thinking is duality is!

Lest it is misconstrued, my meaning is that of being ... eg being kind, being jealous, being .... however, one has to understand that existence knows no certainty and life is never certain. When one expereines each moment in and of itself as it is one is no longer being certain and yet one is amenable to the certainty of change. Only change is certain. Eg the chair in one's room is the same after 5 days of unuse. However, can one assume that one's spouse is the same? If one assumes that - then that person is no longer perceived or partaken of as a living, breathing and evolving ... but as an entity to be used and put aside and used again. When one can relate that suffices but relationship is different. Relationship is a thing. But people cannot deal with uncertainty hence the want, the need to make it into a relationship. Relating is difficult cos one is one the inside matters!

Though I digressed , it was merely to exemplify and simplify wherever possible.

---

9th October 2010

**Thusness:**

Hi Fugazzi,

I do not want to dwell into philosophy but just to point out the differences between Reality, Truth and Existence. Reality is ontological (metaphysics), Truth is proportional (logic and reason) and existence is phenomenological (human life as they are lived). AEN's narration is strictly ontological while Buddhism is more phenomenological.

This thread is AEN's diary of his direct experience of 'beingness' that is non-conceptual. He is narrating this particular experience of 'certainty of being' that resulted from his realization of "I AM". Although the experience is more Advaita Vedanta than Buddhism, it is still an important phase of a sincere practitioner during his spiritual journey.

As Simpo pointed out, it will be difficult to comment meaningfully if you do not share the same experience and direct realization. Buddha is clear about this experience and has warned us not to mistake a 'state of experience' as ultimate and reify 'a transcendent experience' into an 'Absolute Reality'. The doctrines of anatta and

emptiness are the antidote to relinquish practitioners from the ultimate attachment of "I AM".

---

**9th October 2010**

> *Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*
>
> *Thanks for sharing.. on a sidenote, I think some dreams contain spiritual messages or lessons or reminders.*
>
> *I had this strange dream yesterday where I found some of my bunk mates (lol) had realized no-self. Their bodies were sort of transparent.... Very cool. I think its the minds symbolic way of telling me to live in total transparency without self though I didnt consciously know what it meant in the dream.*
>
> *Then I interviewed one of them and he said... Its not that you don't exist but what you are is the stuff of the universe (not exact words). I also asked another, what are you? And he simply replied with a simple physical gesture... Cant exactly remember what but I intuitively understood it to mean something like "just this, this sensate body mind". The dream was a good reminder and inspiration for me.*
>
> *If you have another interpretation I'm interested to hear..*

**Thusness:**

Someone wanted you to deepen your insight of non-dual experience on these 2 aspects. Treasure it.

---

9th October 2010

> *Originally posted by Fugazzi:*
>
> *@Thusness,*
>
> *Thanks for the insights and pointers. Well, even when it is shared, different planes of ... and perceptions as well as the psychological make-up of each individual is bound to encroach ..... Whatever the case, it is my predicament and for me to ''work'' on myself.*

**Thusness:**

Hi Fugazzi,

What you have shared are equally precious and indeed the essence of Buddhism is to realize and have direct experiential insight of 'what is' as a process rather than entity. AEN's diary is a sincere documentation of his journey of how he progresses from "I AM" to non-dual to the arising insight of anatta. His conditions differ from yours

and some others and therefore his sharing can help to shed some valuable insights for some of us.

Happy journey.

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11th October 2010

In the gap between two thoughts, turning the light of knowing within, we touch our innermost essence, the pure sense of presence-existence-knowing. It is certain, still, complete, non-dual, formless. There is no doubts about it. It's utterly still in that direct authentication... this gives rise to an impression of being the Eternal Witness beyond and observing transient thoughts and phenomena. It becomes a pure identity, a center and core behind all experiences.

But further contemplation will lead to the seeing that all forms and transient phenomena and manifestation are equally certain, still, complete, non-dual. It is just as intimately 'you' as the pure sense of existence and being, and yet there is no 'you' there at all - just the mountains, the scenery, the wind, the sky, the bird chirping. In the absence of an identity, you are whatever arises. In place of the absence of a separate self is the presence of the entire world standing/shining on its own (without a separate perceiver) in its brilliant luminosity, purity, magical-ness, aliveness, blissfullness, centrelessness, infinitude and borderlessness and stillness (not a dead stillness but stillness of the transience).

We realize that all phenomena and experiences have the same taste as the initial glimpse of pure awareness as pure presence-existence or I AM. That experience, it's certainty, non-duality, completeness and perfection, etc... are all equal characteristics of all experience, manifestation and forms. All forms and formless states are of one taste.

Prior to this deeper seeing, there is the tendency to cling to a center, a formless background observer, a space-like awareness that is behind and contains all passing thoughts, feelings, sensations. There is a tendency to cling to that formless I AM as our purest identity. Why? When all thoughts subside, we experience the formless pure sense of presence, and with its certainty, completeness, intimacy/non-duality, it is easy to take that as our purest identity. Its non-duality implies there is no separation between 'you' and 'that'. There is absolutely no distance, only pure intimacy. But later, we see that this applies not only to Presence experienced in the formless state, but as all manifestations. Yes, there is just the sun, the mountain, the river, all are without distance because there is no 'you' at the center separate from 'that'... The framework of a subject operating in an objective world of space and time collapses into a pure intimacy and nakedness of experiencing.

This seeing leads to lessening the tendency to cling to a 'purest state of presence' or a formless background. There is also no more tendency to dissociate yourself from manifestation, for whatever manifest is pure consciousness itself.

Well... almost. As the tendencies are deep, they will resurface - the fear and tendency to cling to and re-confirm a 'familiar state of presence', the fear of letting go a previous

experience of pure consciousness (which leads to overlooking This arising non-dual experience), the fear of letting go of the self/Self and simply let hearing be hearing without hearer, let seeing be seeing without seer, let the universe reveal itself freshly in each moment as a complete pure consciousness 'event' of itself. And if all manifestation is equally pure, pristine and complete, why the need to cling to a purest identity?

You are not just the formless presence/knower/consciousness... you are all forms, you are the universe univers-ing, you are whatever is arising moment to moment as a complete non-dual experience in itself... There is no background awareness and foreground phenomena happening in awareness... there is simply foreground pure consciousness always, be it the pure existence experienced in a formless mode (i.e. I AM, aka the 'thought realm' as Thusness puts it), or in all forms... the making of a non-dual experience into a background is simply trying to capture and reify a moment of pure consciousness.

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12th October 2010

I have always been interested to know what throws me out of pure non-dual perception...

And in the past few days, it is becoming clearer to me.

It is the sense of self, latent or imprinted in consciousness as a form of deep conditioning, that becomes temporarily in abeyance when one is experiencing pure consciousness... (well to be more precise, each moment IS pure consciousness, though the sense of self apparently obscures the direct perception of it)

However challenging circumstances or for whatever reasons, the sense of self will arise in the form of feelings and emotions due to the karmic propensities/deep conditioning and tendencies. Any kind of feelings, good, bad, or somewhat neutral... whatever feelings that arise is linked with the sense of self. Fear, anxiety, desire, anger, or any form of subtle aversion or even boredom. All forms of mental and emotional stresses... whenever they manifest, luminosity is 'dulled', or rather, obscured. This concurred with Thusness telling me before that stress will throw one out of non-dual, and also Longchen saying how stress can make one lose obvious sight of non-duality.

And the antidote? To remember the pure sensate happiness/bliss when you experience pure non-dual luminosity... I have described this bliss previously. When you remember and 'activate' this... the good/bad/neutral feelings and emotions all subside and in place of feelings and the ensuing sense of self related to the feelings, there is simply a pure appreciation and wonder at the aliveness and richness and texture of this very moment of experiencing, the pure wonder and magical aliveness of typing on the keyboard, the screen and the words appearing on the screen... the entire sensate universe expressing in pure luminosity right now without dualistic (subject/object) separation.

This became clearer to me over the days as I observe how the luminosity appears intense to being 'dulled'...

And then today, I realised something from the Actual Freedom site that talked about the same thing* (it didn't occur to me about this before, but it confirmed my experience and understanding). And as I was reading Daniel M. Ingram's description and comparison between the classic Vipassana system versus Actual Freedom practice... it suddenly occurred how similar my personal practice is with AF compared to other systems of practice. I think I will look into AF materials more when I have time.

*[Richard]: 'If one deactivates the 'good' and 'bad' feelings and activates the felicitous feelings (happiness, delight, joie de vivre, bonhomie and so on) with this freed-up affective energy, in conjunction with sensuousness (delectation, enjoyment, appreciation, relish, zest, gusto and so on), then the ensuing sense of amazement, marvel and wonder can result in apperceptiveness (unmediated perception).' Richard, Selected Correspondence, Self-immolation 2

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12th October 2010

Thusness:

Yes you should look into it. It is quite well written. It is also time you bring your experience of Presence to the foreground by way of Self-immolation. Just be sincere and move on.

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15th October 2010

I see.. thanks for your advice.

You reminded me of the question 'What does it feel like to be dead?' which resulted in a (or two) rather intense PCEs back in 2008. Though I understand that to be just glimpses of what remains (the 'actual stuff of the universe') when the identity goes into temporary abeyance, and not the final eradication of identity-clinging...

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# ANATTA

# (NO-SELF/FIRST-FOLD EMPTINESS)

16th October 2010

> *Originally posted by simpo_:*
>
> *Hi Beautiful951,*
>
> *Firstly, I will like to state that I am still learning so can only share from my own opinion. Please read with a pint of salt.*
>
> *Emptiness is not a belief but an insight that can be borne from experience. It is better to experience it for oneself as before and after the insight, it can still be 'unbelievable' for the mind. Emptiness is quite hard to experience and usually the realisation of no-self comes before emptiness.*
>
> *As mentioned, no-self will be easier to realise. I will describe the insight of no-self/egolessness generally here. When doing insight meditation one may realise that the sensory experiences (including mental formation/thinking) are arising and passing away independently of one another. That is, seeing is seeing, hearing is hearing, thinking is thinking and they are all flowing independently. With that observation, one will realise that there is no self holding all these sensory experiences together. Self that we originally assumed, is just these sensory experiences arising and passing away and the attention focusing on them.*
>
> *As for emptiness, it requires a deeper penetration into consciousness. Emptiness reveals that everything is not physical and solid at all... but are 'holographically united'. There is no way to accurately describe it as it is not the way a mind unaware to it will think. Like the first insight of no-self, emptiness is a paradigm shift... towards ever clearer seeing of the truth of Reality.*
>
> *Please understand that seeing emptiness is not end of story. At least, not for my case. I am currently working on the remaining defilements. This doesn't meant that i will need to forcefully remove them. Forceful willing will only result in suppression. Rather, the 'method' is to be* **aware of** *and* **be equanimous** *to whatever that is arising in order for them to pass away naturally. This 'aware of' is not as easy as it sounds.*
>
> *Regards*

Thanks for the sharing...

I was reminded of Bahiya Sutta while you said 'seeing is seeing'...

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html

*In the seen, there is only the seen,*
*in the heard, there is only the heard,*
*in the sensed, there is only the sensed,*
*in the cognized, there is only the cognized.*
*Thus you should see that*
*indeed there is no thing here;*
*this, Bahiya, is how you should train yourself.*
*Since, Bahiya, there is for you*
*in the seen, only the seen,*
*in the heard, only the heard,*
*in the sensed, only the sensed,*
*in the cognized, only the cognized,*
*and you see that there is no thing here,*
*you will therefore see that*
*indeed there is no thing there.*
*As you see that there is no thing there,*
*you will see that*
*you are therefore located neither in the world of this,*
*nor in the world of that,*
*nor in any place*
*betwixt the two.*
*This alone is the end of suffering." (ud. 1.10)*

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My own comments:

Non-duality is very simple and obvious and direct... and yet always missed! Due to a very fundamental flaw in our ordinary dualistic framework of things... and our deep rooted belief in duality.

In the seen, there is just the seen! It is completely non-dual... there is no 'the seen + a perceiver here seeing the seen'.... The seen is precisely the seeing! There is not two or three things: seer, seeing, and the seen. That split is entirely conceptual (though taken to be reality)... it is a conclusion due to a referencing back of a direct experience (like a sight or a sound) to a centerpoint. This centerpoint could be a vague identification and contraction to one's mind and body (and this 'center of identification within the body' could be like two inches behind your eyes or on the lower body or elsewhere), or the centerpoint could be an identification with a previous nondual recognition or authentication like the I AM or Eternal Witness experience/realization. It could even be that one has gained sufficient stability to simply rest in the state of formless Beingness throughout all experiences, but if they cling to their formless samadhi or a 'purest state of Presence', they will miss the fact that they are not just the formless pure existence but that they are/existence is also all the stuff of the universe arising moment to

moment... And when one identifies oneself as this entity that is behind and separated from the seen, this prevents the direct experience of what manifestation and no-self is.

But in direct experience it is simply not like that: there is nothing like subject-object duality in direct experience.... only This - seen, heard, sensed, cognized. Prior to self-referencing, this is what exists in its primordial purity.

So, in the seen, there's just That! Scenery, trees, road, etc... but when I label these as such, instead of putting a more subjective term such as 'experiencing'.... they tend to conjure images of an objective world that is 'out there' made of multiple different objects existing in time and space separated by distances.

But no, the Buddha says: in the seen, just the seen! There is no thing 'here' (apart from the seen).... nor something 'there' (as if the seen is an objective reality out there). From the perspective of the logical framework of things, the world is made of distance, depth, entities, objects, time, space, and so on, but if you take away the reference point of a self... there is simply Pure Consciousness of What Is (whatever manifests) without distance or fragmentation. You need at least two reference points to measure distance... but all reference points (be it of an apparent subjective self or an apparent external object) are entirely illusory and conceptual. If there is no 'self' here, and that you are equally everything... what distance is there? Without a self, there is no 'out there'...

The seen is neither subjective nor objective.... it just IS....

There is pure seeing, pure hearing, everything arising without an external reference other than the scenery being the seeing without seer, the sound being the hearing without hearer (and vice versa: the hearing being just the sound, the manifestation).

But even the word 'hearing', 'seeing', 'awareness' can conjure an image of what Awareness is.... As if there is really an entity called 'hearing' or 'seeing' or 'awareness' that remains and stays constant and unchanged.

But.... if you contemplate on "How am I experiencing the moment of being alive?", or, "How am I experiencing the moment of hearing?", or "How am I experiencing the moment of seeing?" or "How am I experiencing the moment of being aware?"

All the bullshit concepts, constructs and images of an 'aliveness', a 'hearing', a 'seeing', an 'awareness' simply dissolves in the direct experiencing of whatever arises... just 'seeing is seeing, hearing is hearing, thinking is thinking and they are all flowing independently', with 'no self holding all these sensory experiences together'.

If readers find my explanation a bit too hard to grasp, please read Ajahn Amaro's link because he explains it much better than me.

*Update: I guess I should include a bit of background information. I was marching (at this time I was doing my basic military training) and contemplating on the Bahiya Sutta when the realization of anatta arose. This article attempts to summarize the 'moment of vision' in written words.*

16th October 2010

*AEN,*

*I remember you said without practicing self-inquiry, it is impossible to attain I AM stage. If this is true, how do you explain Michael Langford's AWA method?*

*J*

My reply:

It will lead to the I AM realization but will be a gradual path. Self inquiry is the direct path. Not long ago I had a conversation with Thusness about this:

**AEN**: btw what you think about what i said about kundalini?

**Thusness**: what did you say about kundalini?

**AEN**: i said kundalini related practices may lead to experience but for realization you need to do some kind of investigation like self inquiry or koan. i mean i told mikael that
**Thusness**: no, both can lead to realization, koan is just an instrument. imo when you practice into a state of total openness, purity and clarity, you will realize your non-dual luminous essence

**AEN**: oic.. but you also said experience and realization arent the same right

**Thusness**: it isn't the same, but you are not talking about that

**AEN**: what do you mean

**Thusness**: you are talking about kundalini and koan. you are not talking about experience and realization. koan leads you to direct realization

**AEN**: hmm but then you said practicing into a state of total openness, purity, clarity (state = experience?) you then realize nondual luminous essence
u mean the experience leads to realization?

**AEN**: oic

**Thusness**: kundalini leads you differently... you would have to go through the path. they too lead to realization of Self ultimately, however the path is different. it is like (the difference between) gradual path and direct path

**AEN**: oic..

**AEN**: when you said 'practicing into a state of total openness, purity and clarity' you're refering to kundalini practice?

**Thusness**: yeah...all aim to reach such a state, where the Self is realized by kundalini, opening of charkas, by micro and macroscopic orbit of chi

**AEN**: ic..

**Thusness**: when you practice bringing to the foreground, you will also experienced complete and full integration of energy. you may then focus on energy...

**AEN**: oic.. the energy is the same as chi?

**Thusness**: i do not know. i am not a chi gong master. go step by step...bring your experience to the foreground first... do not think you can fully understand no-self or have experienced the breadth and depth of no-self. it is not like what the AF ppl think, it is not in logic. When you are able to experienced fully and opening whatever arises without the sense of Self/self, it is different.

**AEN**: icic.. btw you said by practicing openness, purity, clarity, it will lead to the realization... does that mean prolonged experience will eventually result in realization?

**Thusness**: it is not that... your question is too naïve. you are disregarding the entire path of practice. you are not knowing the purpose of that particular path of practice, what is the purpose of awakening the kundalini. have you gone into it before you asked?

**AEN**: im not sure... jax said it's very effective in bringing one to the experience of ego dissolution quickly so that you can know your luminous nature

**Thusness**: what are you asking now? are you asking about koan or kundalini or what?

**AEN**: kundalini

**Thusness**: so you must study kundalini, how does awakening of kundalini lead to Self-Realization? it is the same as koan, except that it is by way of awakening the magic serpent in this case. you do not need to penetrate by way of koan, koan might not suit everyone. if you ask your mum, it might be more suitable to do chanting or even kundalini practice, but she would have to know the purpose of practice

**AEN**: icic..

**Thusness**: much like your grandmaster teach you 觉照 (awareness illuminates), same like teaching awareness of awareness. if you practice until there is total practice openness, pure like a mirror, spaciousness and luminous...if you stabilized these experiences, you will realized. but your experience and realization will be very stable, not like direct path of realization, the strength is not there.

**AEN**: oic..

**AEN**: same for kundalini? will the experience be stable?

**Thusness**: yeah...because they start from there opening gate by gate

**AEN**: ic.. ya i remember, the one who taught awareness watching awareness practice, michael langford, he practice 2 to 12 hours of AWA practice everyday for almost 2

years... and then he achieved something like eternal bliss or liberation or something but it sounded like he has a very very stable experience plus realization through that practice alone

**Thusness**: yes. i have told you once you realized, you are guided by what?

**AEN**: realization?

**Thusness**: you have not read what i told u

**AEN**: you said sincerity and realization

**Thusness**: the top part

**AEN**: oh the taste of a pure, original, primordial, non-conceptual and non-dual luminous state of existence

**Thusness**: yes. isn't that an experience? i have said i do not like to differentiate but it is just to bring out this point, so you might stablize your experience of mirror like clarity, you practice non-conceptuality and stabilized it. you practice purity of intention till you deconstruct personality

**AEN**: oic..means after realization, one must work to stabilize those experiences?

**Thusness**: you can, and indirectly yes. but you can also do by further refining your realizations. like bringing this experience to the foreground, and then you realized anatta, and then emptiness and self-liberation

**AEN**: oic..

**Thusness**: foreground practice becomes very important to you now. Now if you were to practice bringing this experience to the foreground, what will you realized?

**AEN**: non dual?

**Thusness**: how come?

**AEN**: bcos one experiences one taste in all experiences

**Thusness**: no good

**AEN**: there is no subject-object division in all experiences?

**Thusness**: i want you to experience directly. whatever i tell you will only prevent you from experiencing directly

**AEN**: there is no inside and outside, subject and object division in direct experience of sound, seeing, taste, etc

**Thusness**: yes. You challenge 'inside/outside', boundaries, arising and ceasing... one by one. you must come to several important direct realization. what did richard teach the AF practitioners? what is the question he told all to focus?
**AEN**: how am i experiencing this moment of being alive?

**Thusness**: yes. how is this different from bringing the experience to the foreground?anything special?

**AEN**: i think 'being alive' can mean background or foreground depending on context of it being said

**Thusness**: you have already experienced the background, the AF are not interested in the background. if i ask 2 +3 = ?, then i ask 3 + 2 = ? and you can answer the first question but not the second, what does it prove?

**AEN**: that i dunnu maths? lol

**Thusness**: means you are not clear, you merely memorized

**AEN**: ic.. ya

**Thusness**: you do not realize. if you realized, then do you think 2 + 3 is very different from 3 + 2?

**AEN**: no

**Thusness**: same applies to the what I asked you above.

**AEN**: oic..

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17th October 2010

Thusness:

Hi AEN,

Just managed to scan through the past few posts you wrote. They are quite insightful. In summary you are beginning to experience the 'taste' you described in the "certainty of being" of the formless presence in transient phenomena. That is what I meant by bringing 'this' from the background (formlessness) to the foreground (forms). It is also what I meant by the 'fabric and texture of Awareness' in forms. Below are some of the points that came to mind after reading them. I will just jot down some of them for sharing purposes.

**1. One Taste**

You mentioned about 'one taste' but do take note that what you are experiencing is just the 'same taste' of luminous essence, not the 'same taste' in Emptiness nature. I use the term 'essence' differently from Dzogchen. In Dzogchen, luminosity is the 'nature' and Emptiness is the 'essence'. As I see Emptiness as the absence of an essence in whatever arises, I do not feel appropriate expressing the Dzogchen way.

**2. "Obvious and direct…yet always missed!"**

I like how you expressed it, it is quite apt. However I sense that you may have underestimated the power and full meaning of ‘deeply rooted in consciousness’. If we are unaware of the impact, we will not realize what is meant by ‘latent tendencies’. Try imagining ‘someone’ standing right in front of you yet you are unable to see him because you are under a magical spell that is planted in the deep most of your consciousness. If you are unaware of the latent deep, whatever realized is merely a surface understanding. Day in day out, these tendencies are always in action. You may want to ask yourself will the latent deep find its way up even in a PCE mode?

**3. Feels Universe, Pure Consciousness, Pure Aggregates**

“You are not just the formless presence/knower/consciousness... you are all forms, you are the universe univers-ing, you are whatever is arising moment to moment as a complete non-dual experience in itself... **There is no background awareness and foreground phenomena happening in awareness... there is simply foreground pure consciousness always, be it the pure existence experienced in a formless mode (e.g. I AM, aka the 'thought realm' as Thusness puts it), or in all forms**... the making of a non-dual experience into a background is simply trying to capture and reify a moment of pure consciousness.”

I remember writing this to Simpo few years ago in his forum. It is related to his experience of ‘feeling light and weightless’. This also relates to mind-body drop and your dream about ‘transparency’. Being ‘light, weightless and transparent’ is the result of dissolving the body-construct. It is quite an obvious contrast moving from ‘Self/self’ to no-self. Prior to what you have written you should also experience this, otherwise you are being too focused on being ‘brilliance and luminous’ of the 'actuality'.

On the other hand, feeling ‘universe’ has to do with the deconstruction of ‘identity’ and ‘personality’. You have to have clearer insight of what ‘deconstructions’ leads to what experience.

The text in bold is quite well expressed but know the dependent originated nature of consciousness. There is the experience of primordial purity of the aggregates and 18 dhatus but there is no 'a substratum background' that is called 'pure consciousness'. The sense of self is dissolved and is replaced by a sense of inter-penetration.

**4. No agent and the intensity of luminosity**

In the seen, there is just the seen! It is completely non-dual... there is no 'the seen + a perceiver here seeing the seen'.... The seen is precisely the seeing! There is not two or three things: seer, seeing, and the seen. That split is entirely conceptual (though taken to be reality)...

Well expressed! But in the subsequent paragraph, you said,

“All the bullshit concepts, constructs and images of an 'aliveness', a 'hearing', a 'seeing', an 'awareness' simply dissolves in the direct experiencing of whatever arises... just 'seeing is seeing, hearing is hearing, thinking is thinking and **they are all flowing independently**', with 'no self holding all these sensory experiences together'”

In the article on http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html, I mentioned about the 2 stanza. There is the no-agent aspect and there is the intensity of luminosity aspect. I find that your present experience is still centered on the luminosity aspect. You are directly experiencing seamlessness of any happening where no clear line of demarcation can be drawn between the subject-object split. You realized the boundary is purely illusionary and is clear about the cause that resulted in such division but still, that is not the 'essence' of an experiential insight of anatta in my opinion. There is a difference in saying "there is no split between thinking and thinker, the thinking itself is 'me'" and "there is thinking, no thinker". You must be aware that having immediate and direct experience but with dualistic framework intact and complete replacement of the dualistic framework entirely with DO (dependent origination) yields very different experiential insight; you may want to investigate further and move from "they are all flowing independently" to "manifesting in seamless inter-dependencies."

**5. "How am I experiencing the moment of being alive?" (HAIETMOBA)**

But.... if you contemplate on "How am I experiencing the moment of being alive?", or, "How am I experiencing the moment of hearing?", or "How am I experiencing the moment of seeing?" or "How am I experiencing the moment of being aware?"

"How am I experiencing the moment of being alive?" (HAIETMOBA) is the key question of the AF. I will not comment on it but how does it differ from the question "Without using any symbols of 'I', how is 'I' experienced?" Also how it differs from the question "Who am I?" -- the question that led you to the realization of "I AM".

As you get clearer and clearer where exactly are all these questions leading you and the mode of perception that are involved in I AM realization and PCEs, you will have to ask yourself sincerely, is this the ultimate mode of perception that will lead you towards genuine freedom? Is being locked up permanently in PCE the way towards liberation and how does it differ from seeking permanent uninterrupted abiding in "I AMness"?

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17th October 2010

Hi, thanks a lot for the very detailed comment... I believe the latent tendencies surface even in PCE mode or might bring one out of a PCE mode.

As for the body construct... I was just contemplating on it this morning... and coincidentally I listened to a new interview with Joan Tollifson yesterday that talked about the same thing: 94. Joan Tollifson – The world goes on the same. (http://urbangurucafe.com/2010/10/12/94-joan-tollifson-the-world-goes-on-the-same/)

And this morning before you posted your comment, I was just telling Michael (emphasis in bold):

**michael**: the talk on anatta is interesting. the no agent. the sense of 'I' is still very strong here. it's like a strong feeling that continues from moment to moment. hard to get rid of.

you bring the sense of self into the foreground and sort of flatten experience and remain as witness? is that what leads to nondual

**AEN**: but notice that that sensation is simply another sensation... it may feel like a contraction to a region behind the head or behind the chest or somewhere... but it is merely that, a bundle of sensations and attention focusing on it. but in the direct experience of seeing and hearing, there is just that - sounds, sights, sensations without a feeler.... only on hindsight do you reference that direct experience to an experiencer so simply stay with the direct experiencing. that means, in the seen just the seen, in the heard just the heard... like what buddha taught

**michael**: it seems like a contract.. yeah. but it's also a sense of locality
a center. sounds seem like they're over there. not here

**AEN**: thats because you are not directly experiencing sound... you are referencing back the experience of sound to a conceptual feeler. the holding and attachment is a deeply rooted conditioning... it keeps surfacing and obscures obvious non-duality. Actually every experience is already nondual, just that the sense of self keeps surfacing and obscures it. Thats why contemplative practice is necessary, like 'how am i experiencing the moment of being alive?'

**michael**: what's the being alive part for. if there's experience then isn't being alive sort of a given. anyway, i don't see how that's any different then mindfulness, isn't it just the same? just being aware and present in the moment of everything that's occurring

**AEN**: It's pretty much the same... just that there is a stressing on luminosity as forms, and the AF teachings stresses on self-immolation, which is the complete dissolution of self/Self. This actually is very similar to Buddhism as well. Mindfulness wld depend on who is teaching. Even Eckhart Tolle teaches mindfulness, though the anatta experience or insight wasn't expressed. You're right that experience and aliveness is synonymous...aliveness is just a word.... its simply the direct experiencing which is actual. aliveness is the intensity of luminosity. its about experiencing the vividness, liveliness, wonder of sights, sounds, etc. thusness said he'll comment on my posts in certainty of being... so you might want to keep a lookout there. you mentioned about a sense of locality which feels like a person looking out from a location behind the eyes... that's the bond of/identification with the body... like greg goode said, 'Yes, based on a few habitual things, such as the prominence of the visual sense over hearing, taste and smell. Also based on the association that arises over time between thinking of one's self and the subtle muscular contractions in the forehead region. It makes us think that this is where we are.' thats also why in nondual the 'body/mind drop-off' experience is important.  i mentioned that in the dream i see those realized ppl are semi transparent... i think its a symbolic reminder to me even tho i didnt consciously understand what it meant during the dream

**michael**: interesting**.** yeah there is a connection between the physical contraction and the sense of self**,** as well as the visual sense

**AEN**: yea... if you have an intense non dual experience, the shift from behind your eyes or inside your head to 'being the world' is very obvious... like ken wilber said, "You

disappear from merely being behind your eyes, and you become the All, you directly and actually feel that your basic identity is everything that is arising moment to moment (just as previously you felt that your identity was with this finite, partial, separate, mortal coil of flesh you call a body)."

**michael**: how do you feel about desire? because lately it's been hard for me lol. i've experienced a somewhat obsession with tech, even though i've always had it.. for some reason it's been more amplified, like recently i developed an obsession over finding a network media player and a plasma tv, i'd spend hours just researching about them and obsessing over it. i know that balance is important and maybe asceticism is an extreme. i guess i'm just going the other extreme. Aha. have you ever had issues balancing desire with equanimity?it's so hard in this society..

**AEN**: yeah. sometimes i also have that obsession... but in the end i realise actually it is unnecessary.... anyway personally obsessions and attachments are still pretty hard to overcome for me... it may or may not be an obsession to 'get something'. but when they arise, there is a contraction... like what i wrote about how emotions and stress prevents vivid nondual experience. you have to gradually let go of them... practicing HAIETMOBA also helps. this will bring you back to the moment instead of attaching to an imaginary future where you 'get' something. if you experience aliveness, then you feel complete in this moment. desire arise due to a subject-object split. then you can still do your research but the desire or obsession element isnt there... you are much more interested in the here and now. the vividness, richness and aliveness of this moment

**michael**: hmm i see. Thanks. so it's about focusing on the quality of experience rather than the content. and not being partial to a particular area of experience, sort of being in unbiased. the quality of aliveness and how all areas of experience have that. things are only different when the mind thinks

**AEN**: its being nondual, luminous, actual... and there is a sense of completeness and perfection of the moment. just the vividness of actuality, what is present as the universe right now... there is no more sense of self and no more object of desire, only pure present moment of aliveness. an object of desire which you will have 'in the future' are not actual... are not what is present right now. it only lies in imagination.... and you are too interested and captivated by what is actual to be obsessed with an imagination or idea or desire for a currently-non-existing-object in your head

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If there is anything I said that is inapt feel free to comment...

Also I think the interdependent seamlessness is still beyond me at the moment but thanks for pointing out.

IMO... "How am I experiencing the moment of being alive?" leads to the direct experiencing of the luminosity of foreground phenomena... 'Who am I' leads to dissociation from foreground phenomena into the formless pure sense of existence and leads to a powerful conviction of having found one's pure identity. The question

"Without using any symbols of 'I', how is 'I' experienced?" likewise leads to the experience of Self, with the emphasis on going beyond concepts.

As to your question 'Is being lockup permanently in PCE the way towards liberation and how it differs from seeking permanent uninterrupted abiding in "I AMness".': currently I might be inclined towards the PCE mode... though I also understand that, Whatever IS, IS... be it formless presence... waking state pce... dream... etc. Whatever manifest is simply the undeniable actual manifestation of the moment. However I have no experience of non dual in dream, dream is still pretty much an unconscious experience for me apart from occasional lucid dreaming episodes.

However, understanding that whatever manifest is simply the natural manifestation of the moment... I do not try to sustain formless presence, or sustain waking PCE into dream, or any other modes of experience (which would be 'unnatural')... When I sleep, I simply sleep and be like a dead log.

*"Since everything is but an apparition, perfect in being what it is, having nothing to do with good or bad, acceptance or rejection, one may well burst out in laughter." - Longchenpa*

Update: Oh and regarding *'On the other hand, feeling 'universe' has to do with the deconstruction of 'identity' and 'personality'. You have to have clearer insight of what 'deconstructions' leads to what experience.'* - it's my experience that dropping personality leads to experiencing Awareness as not an individual or personal presence but a Universal Awareness sustaining and containing all lives and forms... There is a sense of an all pervading Awareness that does not belong to any particular person or object but sustains them. At this point, Awareness is still treated as a background, but it is now seen as the Source and Ground of all beings and things... not a personal presence.

However... the non-dual aspect is different as it is no longer 'Universal Awareness' but 'Awareness is the Universe'. There is simply the universe manifesting this moment as a pure nondual consciousness experience... Consciousness/Awareness is this arising sound, sight, thought, etc. Awareness AS Universe... no longer Universal Awareness. This part requires dissolving the sense of an ultimate background identity, the Big Self of Universal Awareness...

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17th October 2010

*Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*

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**Thusness**:

Great insight!

However you are still not clear about where exactly the questions are leading you. Think deeper and understand what I told you in msn. I got to go now. :)

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17th October 2010

I'll try again but a short one as I have to go back to camp...

All the questions are leading to the direct, immediate, non-conceptual perception of reality. However each question may be focused and directed to a particular aspect of reality... the 'Who am I' question is asked to directly experience the 'I AM', the 'I', as the formless pure sense of existence, while the question of 'How am I experiencing the moment of being alive?' is directed at the experience of Aliveness in the foreground. This leads to the insight of non dual in the foreground.

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17 October 2010

Thusness:

Yes.

"How am I experiencing the moment of being alive?" -- aliveness
"How am I experiencing the moment of hearing?" -- sound
"How am I experiencing the moment of seeing?" -- scenery
"Who am I?" – I AM

Non-dual, non-conceptual, direct and immediate mode of perception (acronym NDNCDIMOP) and the experience is PCEs. Actually the perception is the experience.

Now even though it is the same NDNCDIMOP, if you were to start with the AF question of "how am I experiencing this moment of being alive" and have NDNCDIMOP in the foreground and later contemplate on "Who am I", you will still not have an immediate realization of "I AM".

Why despite all the pointing out over the years, the vivid powerful experience of "certainty of being", glimpses after glimpses of NDNCDIMOP and even after the clear

realization of the cause of the split, there is no on-going thorough NDNCDIMOP? Even though you have quite clear insight of bringing this NDNCDIMOP to the foreground, it will only last not more than a few months. You will have to cycle through again.

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18th October 2010

Hi thanks again for the pointers... Why is it that you said by having NDNCDIMOP in the foreground and later contemplating 'Who am I' wouldn't lead to the realization of I AM?

I believe the clear NDNCDIMOP is disrupted by latent tendencies, attachments and self grasping... it's a strong conditioning that surfaces often... like what I said earlier about how emotions and attachments seemingly obscures the luminosity and leads to self-contraction.

---

18th October 2010

*Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*

*Hi thanks again for the pointers... Why is it that you said by having NDNCDIMOP in the foreground and later contemplating 'Who am I' wouldn't lead to the realization of I AM?*

**Thusness:**

Not that it wouldn't but it can take even longer time for a practitioner that has foreground NDNCDIMOP to have the realization of "I AMness".

Why so and What is Self? Now the foreground NDNCDIMOP has in a very subtle way become the new 'Self' view. They have treated this very foreground NDNCDIMOP to be ultimate. It becomes the condition that prevents them from liberation and the practitioners don't even realize it.

Therefore no matter how vivid, how luminous, how blissful or how logical it seems to be, let go of all experiences. You can then have a deeper understanding of the formation of 'Self/self' by letting go. :)

*Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*

*I believe the clear NDNCDIMOP is distrupted by latent tendencies, attachments and self grasping... it's a strong conditioning that surfaces often... like what I said earlier about how emotions and attachments seemingly obscures the luminosity and leads to self-contraction.*

Thusness:

Don't believe, directly experience it.

Also examine whether the latent deep manifests in other states.

If after investigation you realized that the deeper dispositions surface in the conscious state, in dualistic state, in trance state, in meditative state, in NDNCDIMOP state, in dream state, in deep sleep, then ask yourself, is being lock-up permanently in PCEs (waking state) the way to eliminate emotions and attachments?

We can understand self-immolation the 'inherent' way and it seems very logical that residing in a permanent state of NDNCDIMOP (background or foreground) as the way when the mind still orientate itself within the 'inherent framework'.

or

We understand it by adopting the view of DO and realize the empty nature of all arising.

There is the experience, the view and the realization. Without Buddha pointing out the view, it will be difficult to see. Like I told you before,

"...When one is unable to see the truth of our (empty) nature, all letting go is nothing more than another from of holding in disguise. Therefore without the 'insight', there is no releasing.... it is a gradual process of deeper seeing. When it is seen, the letting go is natural. You cannot force yourself into giving up the self... purification to me is always these insights... non-dual and emptiness nature...."

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19th October 2010

Thanks.... My understanding so far is that emotions can arise while you are having PCE due to the latent tendencies and self grasping, but when they arise, I will get out of the PCE state... the emotions and attachments will obscure the full clarity and luminosity. I am far from experiencing stably NDNCDIMOP...

So are you saying it is the insight into non inherency that removes those latent tendencies of grasping?

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19th October 2010

Thusness:

You may refer to the first 2 posts of
http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/390582?page=8

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20th October 2010

To have a deep recognition of non-duality is not merely a matter of suspending gross concepts. There are subtler levels of attachments at play, unconsciously/undetected most of the time...

For example, in my previous post I wrote about how there seems to be this persistent clinging to a locality, a sense of being 'over at this side', centered in my head, or the chest for some others, looking out through my eyes at the object out there.

Why does this occur? It is a strong identification with the body as 'me' or 'mine'.

However, to dissolve this identification is not merely a matter of disassociating/disidentify the 'body' from awareness via the neti-neti (not this, not that) approach to experience that pure formless presence. That leads to the Eternal Witness or I AM sort of experience. Neither is it a matter of entering into a state of trance, or a state of samadhi where one becomes oblivious to the body - it is true that in such a state, the attachment and identification with the body may temporarily go into oblivion, but no insight will arise out of this. It remains a state that is temporarily entered and then left.

A deeper level of disidentification has to be done through an investigation with direct meditative awareness of our experience right here. When we observe our experience, we notice that the tendency to grasp after a location inside a 'body' is due to taking the 'body' to be an entity with shape, with edges, with location, and separated from the rest of the universe... and we take it to be a 'thing' that 'belongs to me' and a 'place' where 'I reside in'.

However if we suspend all assumptions and simply go by experience... we notice that there is no such thing as a 'body'. We experience tactile sensations arising one after another... each one distinct from another. They do not make up anything like an entity with a shape, edge, and location, apart from our assuming it to be so... However, we grasp after these sensations and by habitual tendencies, take these sensations to 'imply' a solid entity called the 'body', largely due to habit of objectifying visual perceptions and then linking all other perceptions (including bodily sensations) with our mental construct of a 'body' being a solid object made of shape, edges, location, etc. If we deconstruct the construct 'body', all we see are simply a bunch of sensations arising and fading moment by moment... including visual, bodily, and other perceptions.

The construct of a 'body' causes a sensation of being in the 'background' watching things 'in front'... if we dissolve the construct of a 'body', we see that everything, including the tactile sensations that we ordinarily take to be 'our body', are actually sensations happening in the foreground like everything else in the universe, all occurring seamlessly without any separation whatsoever. Which means, in the seeing, there is just the seen (without internal seer and without an external object), and likewise in bodily sensations there is just the sensation, without a feeler or object sensed. I think what Simpo/Longchen said in the past sums up best.

*For one who realises non-duality (no subject-object split) there is no division of body and spirit. At non-duality realisation, body is not seen as entity but as perceptions and*

*sensations that are 'not separated from environment'. In fact perception and sensation is the 'environment'.*

An importance imo is contemplative practice... which means to investigate direct experience. This is not about trying to disassociate from the body... or trying to enter into a state of absorption where awareness of body fades away. It is about a deeper seeing into the 'empty' nature of 'body' which leads to a spontaneous letting go of any binding constructs and attachments... the result is a freedom from self-contraction, limits, borders/boundaries, location and a sense of lightness and freedom, and you truly feel you are everything (and there is no 'you') and 'you' are not just a 'thing' 'residing' inside a 'body'.

As Thusness says:

*"...When one is unable to see the truth of our (empty) nature, all letting go is nothing more than another from of holding in disguise. Therefore without the 'insight', there is no releasing.... it is a gradual process of deeper seeing. when it is seen, the letting go is natural. You cannot force urself into giving up the self... purification to me is always these insights... non-dual and emptiness nature...."*

On this matter, I highly recommend the talk 94. Joan Tollifson – The world goes on the same

p.s. I was doing push ups this morning in camp and thinking how to induce the 'body mind drop' when I realized that there are just points of sensations and no 'body' to be found at all... the attempt to 'let go of body' is based on a wrong assumption that there is a 'body' to let go... lol

Also, it made me think of the dream I had 2 weeks ago... it must have been a hint. And I just remembered Simpo saying dreams usually play out in 2 weeks... Today, I had another dream. It's nothing new actually... I already knew it somehow as many challenges have 'thrown me out' of NDNCDIMOP over the past week so perhaps this dream serves as an encouragement of some sort... in this dream, a spiritual teacher told me (not in exact words) that having a glimpse or insight is not the same as completely stabilizing the mode of NDNCDIMOP... that will take some time.

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30th October 2010

The Buddha rejected the five skandhas/constituents/heaps, which is matter/form, feelings, perception, mental formations and consciousness, as being not me, not mine.

There is no 'self' to be located apart nor within these constituents of experience.... the experience alone IS... a controller, a doer, a perceiver, an agent in any form whatsoever can never be found.

In observing how experience arises... do you control what you hear? Sometimes you are sound asleep and suddenly a sound wakes you up.

Well, did you choose that sound? Obviously not... if you could choose to not hear that sound you would have chosen not to. If that moment of consciousness, that sound, is not up to your decision, then how can it be 'me' or 'mine'? It is simply the spontaneously occurring manifestation of the universe. That is why feelings, perceptions, consciousness, whatever they are... they arise spontaneously of their own accord without a controller. Whether you want it to or not, the universe manifests in whatever ways it has to manifest (according to dependent origination).

And when I say 'universe manifests'.... the word 'universe' is really referring to Consciousness. But likewise when I say Consciousness, it is also referring to Universe. There is no perceiver anywhere... the direct experience of seeing, hearing, touching, without a perceiver... alone IS. As Steven Norquist wrote the formula: U=C, Universe=Consciousness. They are two words pointing to the same thing... which is, really not a thing at all. There is no such thing as 'A Consciousness' or 'A Universe'.... the word is often misleading as it implies a subject, or an object, that is static and graspable... no such thing however can ever be found in direct experience. Rather, those words, Consciousness, or Universe, points to this intimate, non-dual, dynamic flow of experiencing... that can never be grasped by words or concepts...

Consciousness, or the Universe, is simply this arising sound, this arising sight, this arising thought.... just the ta ta ta of the keyboard... the sound of bird singing... the sensation of coolness on my feet, the words appearing on my screen, the words appearing in my mind... everything manifesting in this moment... is a self-luminous, vivid, alive phenomenon of consciousness. In this vivid aliveness, all words and meanings fail to capture the essence... words like 'aliveness', 'consciousness', 'universe', becomes meaningless... The meaning to Bodhidharma's coming to the west? The cypress tree in the courtyard.

And when we say that U=C, Universe = Consciousness, we are saying that there is no personal self at all in consciousness... if Consciousness IS the universe, consciousness is the spontaneous manifestation of airplane flying, bird singing, feeling of coolness, etc. There is no doer, no feeler, involved... Consciousness/sensation IS.... the 'universal' spontaneous occurring manifestation that occurs inescapably (even if it is unpleasant, there is no existing controller or experiencer that could avoid What IS - there are only sights, sounds, sensations without a feeler or doer).

And then a thought may occur, 'fair enough that I don't have control over sensorial experiences, but how about MY thoughts? Aren't MY thoughts truly mine and under my control?' Well, I'd say take a look. Did you choose your thoughts? Can you know what your next moment of thought is? The direct answer if you truly look is, no... they just come up by themselves! Isn't that amazing? Thought IS, but a thinker is not. What we often think of as 'me' or 'mine' due to our investment and identification in a thought-based story of 'self'... is really in direct observation made up of some spontaneously arising 'stuff' of the universe that has nothing to do with 'me' or 'mine'.

Note that when I say U=C, I don't mean to imply that there is some sort of background, some universal awareness... I've already explained in the previous post. It is not some universal awareness behind and supporting all things, in which all things arise out of and

return to as extensions of that universal Self as in the I AM realization... It is not the case that 'I am you, you are me'... Consciousness is NOT UNIVERSAL... rather, Consciousness IS the unique and ever-fresh expression of the Universe in every moment. In fact it is not expression of 'THE' universe, but 'A' complete universe in a single moment of manifestation.

What I am saying is this: there is no identity, whatsoever. Consciousness/Universe is simply THIS... words appearing on screen, sound of music playing, thoughts appearing, breathing, heart beating.... each experience is a unique and complete expression of reality. There is no 'you', only life... there is no 'you' behind each thought, each sensation, each sound, each sight.. there is only Life living itself as a universal spontaneously occurring phenomenon without a 'liver'. There is no 'others'. There is no 'you' that is 'same as me'. There are only unique, individual, expressions of life that cannot be equated with each other... our thoughts, our experiences are different, even though they share the same taste of luminosity (aliveness) and emptiness (ungraspability).

So much about 'no-self'... yet, after seeing through the illusion of self and having direct glimpses of the non-dual actuality... the habit of 'self' continues to manifest. So... there might be this seeing that 'consciousness is the spontaneously arising manifestation of the universe' and the insight that 'no self can ever be found'... yet it is often the case that self-grasping and other forms of attachment occurs in our daily dealings with things. I believe this takes time to even out... for example while engaging in thoughts, while engaging in actions like talking with others, are you able to drop the sense of 'self' and let spontaneity (or prajna action) take over? Spontaneous manifestation without self is the actuality... yet by habit and karmic propensity, the sense of 'self' and 'others' continue to delude us in challenging experiences.

Another aspect is... can I integrate the seeing of 'no-self' in the engagement of thoughts? Can I fully let go of my self-grasping and simply let the flow of reality take its own course? Can I let thoughts simply arise without falling into the illusion of a self or a thinker?

Oh and about the spiritual dreams I've been having... Thusness told me the reason why I have been having those dreams... amazing...

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4th November 2010

The more 'I' contemplate/look... the clearer it is that there is only phenomena arising and falling. Just the flickering self luminous presence that appears every moment as a unique and complete presence, and yet disappears as soon as it arises. No 'I' is present in the seeing and experiencing... the experiencing is only the experience itself.

Is there something called 'Awareness', 'Aliveness', 'Presence', etc? I actually cannot find such a thing (as something independent and standing apart from experience)... but I cannot deny sounds, sights, breath, thoughts, and its very self luminous quality, the very

quality of aliveness... which isn't a thing but is precisely the very manifestation itself. There is no 'Awareness' other than this arising sight, sound, sensation, etc...

I no longer see something I could cling to, such as 'Pure Presence', 'Awareness', etc... I only see arising and subsiding Dharmas, phenomena, each phenomena unique and yet interdependent and seamlessly interconnected... and yet the words 'presence', 'awareness' also point to the very vivid luminosity of experience. Empty, but luminous...

This is why there is no more tendency to reject or disassociate from experiences to seek a pure state of awareness... the 'I AM'... the 'Eternal Witness'... the 'Source of Experience'. For whatever arises is itself an undeniable presence in itself.

Another important point... Whatever manifests 'liberates' of their own accord... Yesterday I observed a drop of rain fell on the floor, and evaporated as soon as it fell due to sunshine. No traces left. And this is actually a perfect metaphor of what all happening is... they arise, and then they subside.

But then there is always this tendency to cling... why? Due to not perceiving our nature. Due to not perceiving 'emptiness'... we grasp onto objects as if they are solid entities. We grasp, due to not perceiving 'no self'... If there is no self, then all there is is phenomena arising and subsiding on its own. But if there is a sense of a self, an agent, then there is always a sense of being in conflict with phenomena, there is always grasping onto phenomena, seeking after phenomena, controlling phenomena, getting rid of phenomena, etc...

If we attempt to 'let go of attachments' through the dualistic/inherent way (through a sense of self), that is another reaction arising due to a sense of self/controller... it is more grasping in disguise of letting go. But if we perceive experience as it is (self-luminous, arising and subsiding momentarily), and the absence of self, there is not even an attempt to 'let go', there is only phenomena arising and subsiding. Which is what Actuality is...

I notice in me the tendency of clinging to thoughts, perpetuating them into a story, creating a momentum and chain that goes on and on... due to the clinging of 'self' and 'inherency', which fails to perceive the actuality of thought and experience itself as happening without a self/agent, and its arising and subsiding nature. That is why we have to practice 'dropping'... the advice of Thusness to me seems very apt: 'Just cultivate a sense of perpetually letting go. Scan tightness in body and let go. Don't dwell on thoughts and let go'.

One more thing... there is no agent, no source, no self. In hearing, there is only sound... In Seeing, only scenery. In thinking, just thoughts.

The sense of a 'Source', an 'Awareness' in which these phenomena come from, a 'Self', a 'Hearer', a 'Witness'... etc, this is seen through when it is seen that whatever that is... the Source, the Witness, the Awareness, the Hearing, Seeing, etc, is precisely just that - scenery, sight, sounds, touch, taste, thoughts... only just the appearances.

In seeing this, there is no more referencing back to a Self/Source/Center... an Agent that is the 'cause' of hearing, seeing, experiencing, etc.

But there is a further teaching to contemplate... the teaching of dependent origination, which further breaks down the sense of agency. The sense of arisings being 'caused'... it is seeing that sound arise due to many conditions supporting the arising... the sense of pain arising due to hand touching the wound, and yet the pain isn't coming from a 'feeler', or from the fingers, or from the wound... there is no 'feeler of pain' - there is only just this manifestation arising... and yet the manifestation isn't coming from the wound or the fingers. It is all the conditions coming together... a new, complete, fresh manifestation of pain arises... There is no center, no location to which they reference.

That pain has no source, no agency, no self... it just IS... interdependently originated without an inherent existence, it arises and passes according to conditions. This is how we should contemplate all our experiences... the sense of agency and causality collapses leaving only a seamlessly interdependent world. There is no sense of 'pain', 'sensation', 'sight' coming from somewhere... from 'Self'... from 'eyes'... 'body'... etc.

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4th November 2010

One more thing about intensity of luminosity... intensity of luminosity depends very much on how much we are able to let go of thoughts and remain unfixated, non-conceptual, etc. Not being lost in thoughts in short. This can be pretty simple when taking a stroll down the park, but can be hard when there are challenges, interactions, things to be done, etc.

Getting lost and fixated in thought blocks us from the totality of experience and prevents us from the direct, intuitive mode of experiencing... the NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception).

Found a very good quote from Sailor Bob Adamson's book:

'...And see what happens if we're not actually living totally: we're living in the head as most of us do, in an imagined yesterday and tomorrow. We're missing out on a lot in life really, because while that total head stuff is going on, we're ignoring the seeing, the hearing, the tasting, touching and smelling. These other functions are going on in the body, and you vaguely know or hear something else in the background, or see something else in the background, but it's not the focus of attention. The main focus is in that thinking, and so we're not really living fully.

That's why they say in one of the Buddhist texts, "Be utterly awake with the five senses wide open. Be right with what is now with the five sense wide open; the hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, smelling, thinking - all equally." And it goes on to say, "Be utterly open with un-fixated awareness, where there is no fixating or clinging to some particular thought, idea or concept to the exclusion of the livingness." See what a difference that makes in living."'

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5th November 2010

*....Another important point... Whatever manifests 'liberates' of their own accord... Yesterday I observed a drop of rain fell on the floor, and evaporated as*

*soon as it falls due to sunshine. No traces left. And this is actually a perfect metaphor of what all happening is... they arise, and then they subside.*

**Thusness**:

Hi AEN,

Penetrating from non duality to anatta gets very subtle and more difficult to articulate as we progress. There are numerous intermingled glimpses and interweaved experience so in order not to miss the 'essence' of these insights, it is advisable not to jump too quickly into other phases of insights before stabilization.

> *Originally posted by An Eternal Now:*
>
> *The more 'I' contemplate/look... the clearer it is that there is only phenomena arising and falling. Just the flickering self luminous presence that appears every moment as a unique and complete presence, and yet disappears as soon as it arises. No 'I' is present in the seeing and experiencing... the experiencing is only the experience itself.*
>
> *Is there something called 'Awareness', 'Aliveness', 'Presence', etc? I actually cannot find such a thing (as something independent and standing apart from experience)... but I cannot deny sounds, sights, breath, thoughts, and its very self luminous quality, the very quality of aliveness... which isn't a thing but is precisely the very manifestation itself. There is no 'Awareness' other than this arising sight, sound, sensation, etc...*
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> *I no longer see something I could cling to, such as 'Pure Presence', 'Awareness', etc... I only see arising and subsiding Dharmas, phenomena, each phenomena unique and yet interdependent and seamless interconnected... and yet the words 'presence', 'awareness' also point to the very vivid luminosity of experience. Empty, but luminous..*
>
> *....*
>
> *This is why there is no more tendency to reject or disassociate from experiences to seek a pure state of awareness... the 'I AM'... the 'Eternal Witness'... the 'Source of Experience'. For whatever arises is itself an undeniable presence in itself.*
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*In seeing this, there is no more referencing back to a Self/Source/Center... an Agent that is the 'cause' of hearing, seeing, experiencing, etc.*

**Thusness**:

After gaining experiential insight of what you expressed above, there is a natural tendency to let Presence manifests spontaneously in the flow of phenomenality. Depending on your condition, you will eventually realize that your 'letting Presence manfests spontaneously' turns out to be a contrived effort of sustaining a pure consciousness experience in the foreground.

There are 2 aspects of anatta as I have written to you in the article On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection.

Your tendency now will still be centered on the 'brilliant and pristine presence', the direct vivid experience of 'aliveness' in the foreground (The essence instead of the empty nature). So not to talk about spontaneous perfection of whatever arises for now. :-)

Rather focus on the essence of the first stanza of the article:

The impermanent nature...

The stream of arising and passing away...

The stream of continual releasing...

Perpetually letting go...

*...That is why we have to practice 'dropping'... the advice of Thusness to me seems very apt: 'Just cultivate a sense of perpetually letting go. Scan tightness in body and let go. Don't dwell on thoughts and let go'.*

The paragraph above must not be understood from a 'disassociation' perspective but rather a direct realization of the 'nature' of experience as part of anatta insight.

Therefore in addition to what you realized, allow your understanding of liberation to focus on this 'aspect' -- the impermanence, the stream of continual passing away. Allow this understanding of perpetual passing away to refine your understanding of anatta; allow this 'seeing of process' to wash away the sense of self as a refinement of your insight into anatta.

Do not worry about the non-dual presence for now…it has already sunk sufficiently deep in your consciousness. It will be seamlessly integrated.

Lastly practice sitting meditation when you have time especially for the 'dropping'. For non-dual presence, Sailor Bob's advice is quite good. :)

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6th November 2010

*Originally posted by simpo_:*

*Hi AEN,*

*Thanks for sharing.*

*I will like to add some opinion here.*

*IMO, there is a difference between non-duality and no-self insight. Both experiences are quite similar, but the insight/understanding is different.*

*In non-duality, the realisation is that there is no subject-object division. In no-self, well... the realisation is that there is no medium agent of a self.*

*IMO, the arising and passing away experience stems from the insight of no-self. It do not result from the non-dual realisation.*

*This is just my understanding... certainly open to further discussion :)*

*Regards*

Thanks for the sharing... I do agree with you on this and there is a crucial difference... do add on or correct me if necessary -

In non dual, there is no inner and outer, subject and object division. As such all manifestation are experienced vividly, and it is seen 'Awareness is everything'. Yet there can still be clinging to 'Awareness', to a Source/Agent which is nevertheless non-dual with all things. 'Awareness' still seems solid and inherent even though non-dual.

In Anatta, there is really no hearer, no seer, no agent, no 'Ultimate Non-dual Awareness'... there is just constituents of sensations, perceptions, thoughts, arising and subsiding momentarily... There is nothing solid and graspable there.

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5th November 2010

Simpo:

Yah...

Non-duality is more obvious when it is experienced.

No-self is a more subtle insight. There is a subtle 'switch'. It is this subtle switch that allows for the arising and passing away as the 'self' is not blocking the arising from passing away.

I hope I am getting it right... :) Hope for Thusness' input and advice.

6th November 2010

Thusness:

Yes Simpo,

That is what I understand too. There are subtle differences between Advaita non-duality and Buddhist's anatta both in terms of realization and experience.

When contemplating on the subject of 'no-self', the mind of the practitioner is directed towards the transient phenomena and upon the ripening of conditions, the mind suddenly sees the illusionary division of subject-object duality; with the maturing of this realization, experience becomes seamlessly whole. There is no hearer in hearing or perceiver in perceiving, just simply a sense of perception. In terms of this experience, they are similar.

However although the blinding bond of 'duality' is dissolved, the tendency to see things 'inherently' isn't. The practitioners continue to resort back to a Self despite after the clear seeing of this truth and rest their understanding of 'no-self based on Self'. This is substantialist non-duality. There is an ultimate essence and abiding in Self is still the way towards liberation and there is also the temptation to treat this experience as a sort of pseudo finality.

Buddhism on the other hand sees this experience and realization as the first step in the 8 fold path -- right view. It means right view of anatta is fully authenticated with this non-dual experience but Buddhist's non-dual is non-abiding, groundless and essence-less. There is no resorting back to an ultimate essence and the entire idea of liberation is based on seeing clearly the anatta, non-substantiality, essence-less empty nature of whatever arises, including Awareness or Self. Experience is luminously non-dual yet empty.

Therefore in Buddhism, besides the experience, right view is very important. Upon the clear seeing of 'no division', it is advisable to penetrate further into the impermanent nature of phenomena both at the micro and macro level of experience. In terms of practice, there is no letting go to an ultimate ground or great void but the letting go is due to the thorough insight of the 'empty nature' of all arising -- Reality is perpetually 'letting go'.

So in addition to the non-dual seamless experience, there must also be the clear experience of perpetual letting go ornon-holding to whatever arises. Therefore when AEN told me non-dual presence, the NDNCDIMOP or being lock up permanently in PCEs of the AF as the key solution to eliminate emotion, pride and anger…the 10 fetters, I told him not yet, not because I am stubbornly attached to Buddha's teaching but because that is my realization and experience. :-)

The journey towards 'no-self' is like peeling the onion metaphor. The practitioner goes through the process of peeling from dissolving of personality, identity to non-conceptuality to non-duality to non-inherency. Deeper clinging to a Self is not washed away with the non-dual insight. There must be further integration of the 'non-dual' experience into this arising and passing away, this impermanent nature, to wash away

the illusionary sense of self, anger, emotion, pride even the non-dual presence that we treasure so much; let whatever arises go, be it during the waking, dreaming or deep sleep state. There will then come a time where a practitioner realizes the same 'taste' of the 3 states as there is no holding of the non-dual presence and all experiences turn natural, effortless and self-liberating.

Just my 2 cents. :)

---

7th November 2010

> *Originally posted by Pure Emptiness:*
>
> *Because I read Lama Rinpoche's pdf file.*
>
> *He asked us to read sutra to plant wisdom imprints like emptiness.*
>
> *So in the future easier to get enlightened.*
>
> *Heart sutra n Badarenjuejing shortest and can palnt such imprints.*

Yes good. Plant the seeds... but also start contemplating... start discovering. Don't walk into the treasure cave and come out with nothing. Don't read but not take them away (realize them in your life).

Prajnaparamita sutras teaches emptiness and no-self. Don't just read them... but also contemplate. See that there is no you. There is hearing, experiencing, seeing, thinking. But no you, no thinker, no perceiver. No being. No self. No others. Just experiences... arising... falling... traceless... gone. Vivid, lumious, clear, but empty. Sounds arising, vivid, clear, luminous, empty, without self/hearer. Sight/vision arising... vivid, clear, luminous, empty, without self/seer. Don't just keep thinking about the future... the truth is already shining Right Now... what are you waiting for. Don't think enlightenment is distant, because I can assure you, it is not. From my experience and the experience of countless others.... even though there is no 'my' or 'others', just experiencing.

---

7th November 2010

> ***Xaviered wrote:****Alright. Booked out again for the weekend. While I'm in camp I have been poking around with this whole 'there is no self' thing. While doing my runs, feeling my body hurt, even when I'm nearly out of breath and my body feels like its dying from exertion with a 15kg load on my back, I ask myself, 'Who is this 'I' that is feeling the pain?'. Is pain just a sensation that comes from my body and not happening to any 'self?'*

'Who is this I that is feeling' is not a question that leads to No Self realization. You need to be questioning 'Is there an 'I' that is feeling the pain?' The answer would be no, but don't just accept my answer... look.

Pain is not even a sensation that comes from your body... it is a sensation, yes, but it does not come from anywhere, even though it appears that way. 'Locality' is just an illusion as 'self'. And... sensations definitely do not come from a self.

For example, sound of bird chirping... does it come from bird, air, ear, etc? No, the sound does not exist in the bird, the air, the ear, or anywhere in between. Even though sound of chirping occurs when bird sings, the sound does not originate from the bird, or the air, or the ears... but with these stuff as supporting conditions, a new, unique and complete, phenomenon of hearing sound happens, without an 'I', hearer or maker of that experience.

The pain seems to be originating from a particular part of the body... however, pain is actually a new, unique, complete experience arising as it is with supporting conditions but without an external agent (be it an external location or an internal self).

> *And along these lines and so on and so forth. Even when I am waiting, in the way you only wait when you are in the military, for shit to happen and for the train of planned activities to move on till the end of the day/night, I ask myself why is it 'I' still feel bored, still feel lethargic, these memories, these impressions that rise up within me in moments of nonactivity, where do they come from?*

They arise due to habitual tendencies of the mind. They don't come from a place... they arise due to a mental momentum and tendency that keeps manifesting. When the supporting conditions are present (the tendencies), such thoughts will arise. There is no thinker from which the thoughts arise.. nor an external source. There is no thinker, controller of thoughts. There is just thoughts arising with supporting conditions for the arising. Everything arises in this way.

Like, with hand, stick, drum, action of hitting, air, ears, etc... with these as conditions, a sound arises. But the sound doesn't come from a location (the ear, or even the hand, the stick, etc) or from a self or a hearer (there isn't a self)... it is a new and complete phenomenon that just arises and is vividly present as it is... with the other stuff as supporting conditions.

What you are saying is just a mental momentum that keeps manifesting as patterns of thoughts... imagine a wheel.. you keep turning... even if you try to calm yourself down, you're no longer trying to turn the wheel, the wheel will continue turning on its own momentum for a while. There is no thinker involved.

Hey btw, check your PM you haven't, I've replied your previous msg.

> *But I can't. I try, and it's frustrating, but I can't seem to fucking find the shatterpoint of this whole thing. It's so confusing. Look? I try to look, but all I see is one strand of thought leading to another.*

There is only moments of thought. Which isn't a problem to seeing the truth... Just look and see there is only thoughts, no thinker.

> *Am I, then, just a passive creature buffeted by my body's conflicting drives and driven by memories and past experiences? What? I can't really think this through. Please. Help. It's bothering me.*

There is no 'you', just conflicting drives, tendencies, thoughts.

I could go on to say there are good resources out there that can help with dissolving these momentum, meditation, etc, such as http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/10/quietening-inner-chatter.html- but then to go into this would be to go off-topic as this forum (Ruthless Truth) is focused only on the 'no you' truth.

> *And when I book out of camp and get to use the computer (at last), I check this site, and I saw the one with Ellen being all extremist about peace and shit, and I think, 'Oh God, that's me. I'm a selfish prick. I'm not a Gandhi or anything, but I'll be damned if I lie about not having days (in fact I'm in one of those phases right now), stretches where I just tune out everything, convince myself that the world is fucked up but if I work hard at myself and stuff I can hollow out a place in this flux of existence where I can thrive and prosper and fuck the rest of the world until then day i die. I feel I've lost a part of myself over the..years? months? I don't feel outraged, I don't feel as intensely. Something's shifted as time went by. What the hell is wrong with me? Why am I so apathetic? Will seeing the truth free me from this? But I can't get that click, still. Oh fuck this is frustrating. I'll sleep on it. I will. But some tough love, or maybe a guiding hand (light) will help. See you guys tomorrow.*

Just look, see the truth, and you'll know what changes and what doesn't change by your own experience. I cannot say what will happen for you as I believe it differs for people.

But after seeing 'no you'... there will be a shift from self-centered stories, to simply letting seen be seen (without seer), heard be heard (without hearer), thought be thought (without thinker)... letting them shine in its vivid clarity, and then subsiding.

Yet for me after the seeing... habits, tendencies, grasping still happens sometimes. I believe as this seeing deepens in all areas of my life the habits and tendencies to cling will be slowly dissolved.

Clarification:

*"But after seeing 'no you'... there will be a shift from self-centered stories, to simply letting seen be seen (without seer), heard be heard (without hearer), thought be thought (without thinker)... letting them shine in its vivid clarity, and then subsiding."*

There isn't even a 'letting be'... everything already is happening without a self. What I meant is that there is less obsession and focus with self-centered thoughts, and without fixation on these thoughts, there is an opening to all the senses in its vivid clarity without self, no longer ignoring/blocking out the totality and vivid clarity of experience. There is a natural tendency to feel everything directly instead of skewing focus to

thoughts.

But first... just contemplate on the 'no you'. The rest follows by itself.

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13th November 2010

About 4 years ago, I asked Thusness, is paying attention to details the same as awareness? For example, is paying attention to what the teacher is saying... the same as awareness? And how do I know if I am 'merely sensing' (like Vipassana) or am I simply focusing?

His reply was 'clarity and luminosity is a measurement', 'the degree of clarity and luminosity will tell you' and '(in the) complete abeyance of self, you will experience luminosity, everything becomes a flow of clarity, it is non-dual, without object and subject, without self'.

And yes, indeed, attention is not the same as luminosity. Attention is simply a mental phenomena... a particular focus on the details and contents of an experience. It is the focusing on a particular phenomena... for example the sound of teacher speaking. Attention works by focusing on a particular phenomena to the exclusion of other phenomena. Attention itself IS a mental phenomenon.

However, attention can be mistaken to be a part of a self... in other words, we may have the notion that attention is being controlled by the self... that there is a self directing attention from one object to another.

But if we look, we see that there is simply that mental phenomenon of attention. In every experience... this is it. Whether or not you are paying attention to me, this is it. There is just this phenomenon arising... be it an 'unfocused' experience or a 'focused' experience... there is only that experience arising without an experiencer or controller.

There is attending, there is focusing (or not-focusing and not-attending)... there is no attender.

There is no 'me' 'attending to' 'object'... just as there is no 'me' 'hearing' 'sound'... there is just THIS experience, whatever it is, be it with attention or not... That phenomenon of attending-object is also part of the flow of experience spontaneously arising without an agent... Attention is not tied to a subject, object of attention is not tied to an external object, there is just a seamless stream of mental and physical activities happening without a self.

**Enlightenment is not any particular state of attention or experience, but an insight into the nature of all experiences.** And after these insights, it doesn't mean you become very alert every moment in the sense that you attend to all the details and notice what others are telling you and so on. Luminosity and attention are different things... there can be vivid luminosity without engagement in the contents/details of the arising, which requires thought-focus/attention. If I am attending a class, I can definitely still lose focus or tune out totally sometimes (oh and I never was good in concentrating to a speaker,

and my primary school teacher used to tell me to go seek medical help for attention deficit disorder though I didn't... lol). The fact remains however that there is just that phenomenon arising without a controller or experiencer.

And that phenomenon... be it an unfocused or focused phenomenon... is a luminous arising. Luminosity does not depend on attention or focus, so do not make it contrived... luminosity is effortless, ever-present, never lost... for luminosity is the essence of ALL arisings... in whatever forms it takes... in the mental phenomenon of attention... or in the engagement of thoughts... or in sounds... or sight... or whatever. In seeing, just shapes and forms... In hearing, just the da-da-da of the keyboard... just appearances alone is the luminosity. Luminosity is the effortless and spontaneous flow of manifestation happening without a director or perceiver. Hearing does not require focused attention, it just happens... seeing does not require focused attention, it just happens… focused-attention does not require or have an attender, it just happens. But whatever IS, IS luminosity.

It does not depend on whether you are paying attention to something particular.. or listening to the contents of what someone else is saying... or whatever ways the mental phenomenon of attention is taking shape. Sounds spontaneously arise without hearer (it does not take effort or focus to hear the airplane - it just happens), sights spontaneously arise without seer (it does not take effort or focus for scenery to be seen - it just happens), thoughts spontaneously arise without thinker (it does not take effort or focus for thoughts to arise - it just happens), that alone is luminosity. Focusing and interpreting what another person is saying, is just one kind of mental phenomenon.

When this is seen, 'efforting' due to grasping onto an agent/controller/perceiver shifts into effortless seeing - and in the seeing there is simply effortless spontaneous manifestation. There is no "me" trying to "do something" to get into a special "state". As Toni Packer used to say,

*[An airplane is flying overhead.] The sound of a plane! Both the thought/word plane, and, maybe, a mental image of it are right here - aren't they? There is no one doing any attending. Just the sound, the image! [silence] But you were asking, "Isn't the attention turning toward something?" Is it? Let's look and listen! [silence] Can't discern any turning, can you? There is no need for awareness to turn anywhere. It's here! Everything is here in awareness! When there is a waking up from fantasy, there is no one who does it. Awareness and the sound of a plane are here with no one in the middle trying to "do" them or bring them together. They are here together! The only thing that keeps things (and people) apart is the "me"-circuit with its separative thinking. When that is quiet, divisions do not exist.*

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13th November 2010

Dawnfirstlight:

I've come across this profound question but do not know how to translate into English.

Can someone help to answer:万法归一，一归何处？*("All dharmas are resolved in One Mind. One Mind resolves into....?")*

---

13th November 2010

Dropped my cup, loud smashing sound.

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13th November 2010

> *Originally posted by Dawnfirstlight:*
>
> *Not enlightened, is it 空？*

空 is always the nature of all arisings.

明 is always the essence of all arisings.

Enlightenment is seeing this as **already so from the beginning**.

---

13th November 2010

> *Originally posted by Dawnfirstlight:*
>
> *I've come across this profound question but do not know how to translate into English.*
>
> *Can someone help to answer : 万法归一，一归何处？**("All dharmas are resolved in One Mind. One Mind resolves into....?")***

First you reduce all multiplicities into a Single Awareness without any subject/object division... all experiences are simply the manifestation of Awareness. This is the non dual stage.

Then you realise there is no agent, no inherency to Awareness... you see that 'Awareness' is merely a label pointing only to insubstantial but vivid arisings. This is the insight into anatta.

This is the transition from Stage 4 (One Mind) into Stage 5 (Anatta) of Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment

Richard Herman:

*Yes, it is the absolute "elimination of the background" without remainder. It is the affirmation of multiplicity, not dispersion, but multiplicity. The world references nothing but the world. Each thing is radiant expression of itself. There is no support, no ground. No awareness. No awareness.*

***"All dharmas are resolved in One Mind. One Mind resolves into...."***

*There is the radiant world. just the radiant world.* ***No awareness.***

*That is the Abbott slapping floor with his hand. The red floor is red. Spontaneous function.*

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13th November 2010

> *Originally posted by Dawnfirstlight:*
>
> *Ha ha..... so I'm right. Thanks. When my Zen master asked this question, my friends said was our heart, some said didn't know the answer, too profound and some said didn't know what he was asking. Just twist a bit and we were all confused and have forgotten Buddhism is about emptiness. My Zen master did not give us the answer, he asked us to think.*

Not think... if you use your intellect to understand koans, you will never hope to attain what the zen masters attain.

Koans are designed to induce a non conceptual, direct awakening into the true nature of reality. It cannot be approached by the intellect or conceptual mind. It can only be realized through an intuitive, non-dual, direct, non-conceptual, immediate, mode of perception and a direct form of investigation like contemplating koan.

Also, I recommend you to start from the koan 'Who am I' because this is what led to my initial Satori/awakening experience, it is the direct path to realization and is also taught by modern masters like Ch'an Master Hsu Yun and others. From there you continue to further insights... As I wrote in detail the method and my insights in [this book].

As Thusness wrote before, Zen is very good at pointing to this 'termination of linguistic description' by way of koan. There are different categories of koan triggering different level of insights -- From direct realization of the Absolute to the full integration of the Absolute and Relative. The experience derived from the koan “before birth who are you?” only allows the initial realization of our nature. It is also not the same as the Hakuin’s koan of “what is the sound of one hand clapping?”, and others. The five categories of koan in Zen ranges from hosshin that give practitioner the first glimpse of ultimate reality to five-ranks that aims to awaken practitioner the spontaneous unity of relative and absolute.

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13th November 2010

> *Originally posted by Dawnfirstlight:*
>
> *I find Zen is very difficult to understand. I have difficulties in understanding but find it interesting at the same time. Just like my Zen master also asked ：托着*

> *死尸的是谁？死尸 is referring to our body. Who ? Is it nobody because we arise from emptiness ?*

It's not difficult to understand...

It seems difficult because you are approaching it from an intellectual/conceptual viewpoint. But the answer to 'Who am I' can only be realized **in the absence of conceptual thinking**.

'Who am I', 'Who is dragging this corpse'... is simply a pointer back to the Pure Presence/Beingness. It can be discovered in the gap between two thoughts, where you turn the light inwards and rest in the Source, the Beingness that shines... it is not a void, an inert nothingness, because it is pure awareness by essence. A certainty/undeniability of Being will arise, and you will realize your true essence.

This is basically what I realized and wrote in the very first post in Certainty of Being (but edited and made clearer in http://www.box.net/shared/3verpiao63)

Keep contemplating on 'Who'... and do not follow your intellectual/conceptual answers which are susceptible to doubts - only the true essence of Being cannot be doubted.

---

13th November 2010

> *Originally posted by Dawnfirstlight:*
>
> *I practice Pureland, do you think I should give up the course because I think I'm not up to that level but I've heard many masters (even Pureland masters) adivsed us to 禅净双修。I'm into my 4th lesson and thought of giving up.*
>
> *Is it Zen master normally won't give answers to his questions, we have to realise it ourselves. If cannot realise, how ?*

No, I would not recommend giving up... If you feel that you have an affinity with pure land, you should keep your practice.

Yes, I believe it is alright to contemplate koans along with chanting. There should be no contradictions at all.

The essence of Mind is your birthright... everyone can realize it - it is not confined to Zen school or Pure Land or Tibetan or even Buddhist...

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13th November 2010

> *Originally posted by Dawnfirstlight:*
>
> *Yeah yeah, my Zen master told me this story too but he did not say why Mahakashyapa smiled. Do you know why ? Sorry if I'm asking you a stupid question.*

There is no theoretical answer for this...

I'd say smiling is a natural reaction due to having penetrated the essence of the twirling flower. The twirling flower itself is pure luminosity, your Buddha-Nature shining.

It can be so intense and blissful that you will smile... this has been my experience. The bliss just arises and you smile. That is what I wrote when the bliss arose months ago - I wrote on the forum that this is why Mahakasyapa smiled.

"青青翠竹尽是法身,郁郁黄花无非般若"

Green bamboos are the Dharma Body, luxuriant chrysanthemums are all Prajñā.

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17th November 2010

All experiences, even the most beautiful NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception) are more experiences that arises and subsides.

Which isn't a problem... In fact I am not suggesting transcendence of experience to reach something that doesn't arise and subside. The notion of an Awareness that doesn't arise and subside has been seen through... now it is seen that Awareness is precisely the arising and subsiding, even though each luminous arising is timeless and without coming and going (sounds confusing but isn't so in direct experience).

I am also not suggesting you to detach from such experiences... let them come, let the bliss and clarity come and go (which they will, it is the nature of all experiences to arise and subside), and 'who' is there to detach from experience anyway? No one! Only experiences without experiencer.

What I am suggesting however... is that grasping on any experiences, even what appears 'ultimate' like the NDNCDIMOP is going to result in suffering. Why? Because the nature of all experiences is that they arise and subside instantaneously. They are ungraspable and empty and as such they are unsatisfactory. The nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self marks every single experience/dharma, even those that appears 'ultimate'. But actually there is no 'ultimate experience'.

Ordinary perceptions, ordinary seeing, hearing, smelling, are all marked by these characteristics. Each experience arises without an observer or experiencer or agent, they are simply as they are... scenery sees, noise hears.... and they arise and subside simultaneously leaving no traces. By the way... non-dual is the nature of all experience, it is not that there is a Presence non-dual with arisings... but rather there is only arising, and each arising does not have a separate perceiver and hence each perception as it is is free from duality. Just hearing, seeing, touching, thinking, etc is Truth. Truth is found in the most ordinary experiences and perceptions... to chase after some better experience is to overlook what is present right in front of... well... experience. If we fail to see that This ordinary arising is already the non-dual actuality, then we'll forever chase after some future experience that never exists. Actuality is... just hearing, just seeing, just

smelling, just touching, just tasting, just thinking, everything happening as it is is already non-dual, complete, self-luminous, without self, impermanent, ungraspable, empty.

Seeing that everything arises and subsides by nature... we no longer form views of self and world as having any sort of inherency. We no longer perceive a world consisting of things located in fixed places. What we call 'places' are really more perceptions that arise and subside... there is nothing truly 'there'. What we call 'there' is not truly a 'there' but is more arisings that subside as soon as it manifest. Likewise what we call 'self', 'here', anything that implies 'location' and so on are also in actuality nothing inherent - only perceptions arising and subsiding.

**Everything thought to be inherent (world, locations, self, body, mind, etc) is upon investigationnot a solid 'thing' but simply an Arising... and as an Arising, its cessation follows. Existence/inherency, Non-existence/nihilism does not apply to reality.**

As Buddha taught,

*Dwelling at Savatthi... Then Ven. Kaccayana Gotta approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Lord, 'Right view, right view,' it is said. To what extent is there right view?"*

*"By & large, Kaccayana, this world is supported by (takes as its object) a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one.*

The entire world as we know it... is not a fixed solid something out there... neither is there a self that is a fixed solid thing in here.

There is really just sensations and perceptions arising and subsiding each moment... its arising is the manifestation of undeniable Presence... its immediate subsidence proves there is no solid substance to anything perceived. There is no world, self, location, etc... but neither can you deny the presenc-ing (and subsidence) of the world.

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17th November 2010

Simpo:

Thanks for the sharing. You realised emptiness ?

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17th November 2010

No... can't say so. Just starting to see the arising and subsiding of things more clearly... this breaks the perception of solidity. It's deconstructing what we feel to be solid to be more arisings... as I just updated:

***Everything thought to be inherent (world, locations, self, body, mind, etc) is upon investigationnot a solid 'thing' but simply an Arising... and as an Arising, its cessation follows. Existence/inherency, Non-existence/nihilism does not apply to reality.***

However I think Emptiness has to do with interdependent origination... some deeper aspects which is a little beyond me at the moment.

---

17th November 2010

Thusness:

Yes, all PCEs, all NDNCDIMOP, all these will pass (not into some great void).

The article **Death, Reincarnation, Nonduality, and other dreams** in your blog by Jeff Foster talks about deep dreamless sleep as a form of pseudo death. He is talking about this 'pseudo death' that is a direct opposite of the NDNCDIMOP much like an absolute 'no experience' black-hole that even non-dual presence cannot escape. He urges practitioners to see it with an unbiased mind and not be overly attached to non-dual presence.

Yet this 'pseudo death' too will pass.

Similarly if we were to turn micro and practice vipassana, there are body sensations, fluctuating thoughts, beliefs, heart beats, sound, scent… no permanent agent that is owner of these arising and passing phenomena can be found. A 'permanent unchanging witness' is just simply 'a thought that claims ownership along this arising and passing stream. :-)

The insight of no-self must not only realize the illusionary division of subject-object duality and turns non-dual experience implicit; it must also allow practitioner to clearly see the stream of ever becoming. When there is no permanent agent,there is just seeing, thinking, hearing; there is simply scenery, thoughts, sounds; there are still fear, emotion, anger…there is action, there is karma…just no self.

What is the implication?

The mind upon seeing anatta must not continue to live in a fantasy land and clearly see the workings of these arising and passing phenomena. There is no escape for there is just this and practitioners are always dealing with attachments, deeper dispositions, latent tendencies, supporting conditions, action, karma.

Can you stop an arising thought from subsiding?

Is the present moment of thought the same as the previous moment of thought?

Can this moment of thought not affect the next moment of thought?

Stabilizing the insight of anatta requires the realization of dependent origination.

With the absence of 'dualistic and inherent' tendencies as the supporting conditions, experience turns non-dual and liberating; so do not mistake the 'effect' for 'cause' and focus too much on PCEs. :-)

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17th November 2010

I see.. Thanks Thusness!

Great questions btw... Yes indeed, without a self or agent, there is no escape from karmic tendencies and arisings (no sinking back into a 'great void' to escape from manifestation)... rather it is just seen that karmic tendencies is what affects our every moment of action, thinking, behavior and experiential reality.

I have seen that after all those insights... the tendencies (personality, behaviour, habits, feelings, emotions) continue in a very similar way. However perhaps what is different now is that there is not so much of self-referencing... that is what has fallen away because the insight is that there is simply phenomena arising and subsiding, hearing, seeing, thinking (which is really just sound, sights, thoughts, etc) arising and subsiding without a self (that said it doesn't mean self contraction stops arising... but even when they arise it can be seen as simply more sensations and dropped). Other than that... tendencies continue to arise and affect every moment of experience and it takes practice to let go of some of these manifesting tendencies. Experiences, hearing, seeing, thinking, etc... all happen *exactly the same way as before*... just this ordinary experiential reality is truth... only that now, ordinary experiences are no longer seen with delusion - i.e. seen as made out of objects happening 'at a distance out there' to a subject/self... or seen as 'me', 'mine', or happening to an experiencing/controlling agent.

Can I stop an arising thought from arising? No, whatever arises does so due to conditions. There is no thinker or controller or agent behind an arising... an arising arises spontaneously due to interdependent origination... the entire universe interacting and manifesting in this moment of experience.

Can I stop an arising thought from subsiding? No, whatever subsides also does so due to conditions (or the lack thereof). Due to the lack of insight into 'no agent', we may think that there is a thinker or controller that can create or stop a thought... but thought arises and subsides without an agent, thought arises and subsides due to dependent origination.

Can a moment of thought not affect the next moment of thought? A moment of thought doesn't 'touch' or 'cause' another moment of thought... each thought is a complete, whole, unconditioned reality of itself. And yet each thought does inevitably serve as a supporting condition for another manifestation (of thought, action, etc)...

Our entire experiential reality is really only sensations, sights, sounds, and so on... popping in and out according to dependent origination. There is no perceiver or even a thing called 'awareness' apart from these arising and subsiding...

p.s. As you mentioned about D.O... I thought I might also include the entire sutta which I quoted from as I felt it to be quite clear about the topic of 'Right View'.

Kaccayanagotta Sutta: To Kaccayana Gotta (on Right View)

Dwelling at Savatthi... Then Ven. Kaccayana Gotta approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Lord, 'Right view, right view,' it is said. To what extent is there right view?"

"By & large, Kaccayana, this world is supported by (takes as its object) a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one.

"By & large, Kaccayana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings (sustenances), & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor is he resolved on 'my self.' He has no uncertainty or doubt that just stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, his knowledge is independent of others. It's to this extent, Kaccayana, that there is right view.

"'Everything exists': That is one extreme. 'Everything doesn't exist': That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness. From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form. From name-&-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media. From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact. From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling. From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance. From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming. From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth. From birth as a requisite condition, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

"Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering."

> *Marblehead, on 19 November 2010 - 07:30 AM, said:*
>
> *Very nicely written and explained. (Referring to my article One Taste)*
>
> *In my mind, this is speaking to the experience of the full (100%) 'wu' state.*
>
> *I have no problem with what was said.*
>
> *I only ask: "How many of us can remain in this state for an extended period of time?"*
>
> *I ask this because I believe that 'reality' always slaps us aside the head and demands our attention. While we are in this state there are 'things' going on all around us. Many of these 'things' demand our attention. As soon as we define 'our attention' we have left the full state of 'wu'. At this point we intend to do something in response to the demands. "I" is who is having thoughts of intent. "I" is who will be taking action based upon the intent.*
>
> *That is why many Taoists suggest that we maintain a balance (harmony) between "I" and "not-I".*
>
> *"I" can never be the flower, the mountain, etc. But we can be a part of it and all else. If we think we are "I". Thought requires a thought thinker, an "I". Even when we are viewing our environment from a non-dualistic state it is still "I" who is doing the viewing.*
>
> *But again, nice presentation. Thanks for sharing.*

It is not possible if one simply has glimpses or experiences of non-duality without the arising of insights, because all experiences are by nature transient. It is not uncommon - many people in fact do have such peak experiences (perhaps when viewing a beautiful sunset, or a mesmerizing scenery - for me the first non-dual peak experience was with a tree - it was so mesmerizing that it completely absorbed away my self-contraction), but few have the realization.

However, it is different when one realizes that the nature of reality is already non-dual.

It is not about sustaining an experience or a state... it is about having a quantum shift in perception, a realization of the way things truly are. There is a vast difference between temporarily experiencing a non-dual state, and realizing the nature of reality as non-dual.

That is - in thinking, always just thoughts, no thinker - always already so. (it is not about 'dissolving the thinker' or 'merging with thoughts')

In seeing, only just scenery, no seer - always already so. (it is not about 'dissolving the

seer' or 'merging with scenery')

In hearing, only just sounds, no hearer - always already so. (it is not about 'dissolving the hearer' or 'merging with sounds')

In action, only just doing/action, no doer/controller - always been so. Just spontaneous happening one after another. (it is not about 'dissolving the doer' or 'merging with action')

It is a fact of reality, which can only be 'realized'.

There is no 'viewing non-duality' - there is just pure viewing without viewer, and the view is simply the arising phenomena - thoughts, sounds, scenery, etc... whatever is arising moment to moment. There is no separate object called 'non-duality' other than This... da da da on the keyboard, words appearing on screen. If there is something separate from this arising manifestation called 'non-duality', it could not qualify as 'non-duality'.

This is the nature of reality.

When you say 'I hear bird singing', in actuality there is no 'I' hearing the 'bird'... there is just the sound of chirping without hearer.

The scenery... the heart beating... the sensation of wind... the thoughts arising.

All happening without a self or agent.

Yes, even thoughts arise without 'I'... even if thoughts refer to a sense of 'I', the 'I' is baseless: it is not referring to an actual entity, even if it was believed to be so.

After enlightenment, you continue to use words like 'I' and 'mine' as mere conventions. It is no longer believed to be referring to an actual entity. Further, thoughts of 'I' are also happening without a thinker/experiencer/agent.

Much like the word 'weather' does not actually refer to an inherently existing entity located somewhere... the label 'I' is merely a convention, a convenient label on the conglomerate of everchanging weatherly patterns - rain, lightning, clouds, wind, etc.

Also, on another note: you think that thoughts and action imply an "I", but this is not so. Have you ever known what your next moment of thought will be? No, you will never, and can never know what the next moment of thought will be. It simply appears spontaneously as a new, complete thought without a thinker/doer. Same applies to all actions, intentions, and so on. They arise with supporting conditions - the entire interconnected universe (including our latent tendencies, intentions, and so on) working together for this moment of arising to appear. (Dependent Origination) There is no agency (controller, doer, experiencer, perceiver, etc)

20th November 2010

> *Marblehead, on 19 November 2010 - 01:14 PM, said:*
>
> *WoW! I got more than I bargained for. Hehehe.*
>
> *Yes, we have had this discussion before. I am, therefore I think.*

I did want to highlight this because I think it is important. But our brain functions according to dualistic concepts. However, yes, it is true that we can go beyond these dualistic concepts and see everything in its own truth and beauty.

As Vajrahridaya says - even dualistic concepts (like 'me' and 'you') are non-dual. When this is seen, all thoughts arise and subside according to conditions, but the contents are no longer believed or held tightly. It is like seeing the word 'weather' for what it is - nothing substantial, it is not pointing to something inherently existing. Yet we are free to use the word 'weather' for convenience.

> *Quote*
>
> *This is true only because we cannot see the future. Hey, it (the future) hasn't happened yet. How could we possibly see it?*
>
> *But then I will argue that I can control my next thoughts. I can concentrate on a concept and all following thoughts, or at least the greatest majority, will be consistent with the thought pattern.*
>
> *But it is true, the past is written, the future hasn't happened yet, therefore all we have is the present moment. But even that is in the past by the time we recognize it. All we can do is react to what has happened - but we can't change it.*

How can you control your next thought when you cannot even know what your next thought will be?

There is just this arising intention, of say, 'I think this needs to be done'. Followed by the subsequent thoughts 'I should...' blah blah blah. Thought arisings... they are interconnected but each thought is simply arising without a thinker and serves as a supporting condition for the next thought. Each thought is not able to touch, control, or even predict what happens next. Concentration is simply a focused thought arising... also without a thinker. Concentration itself is an arising mental phenomenon.

It is thought after thought... but no controller or thinker can be found. There is just this arising universe without an agent. And it is the entire experiential universe interacting in interdependence... no agent could be found controlling things.

20th November 2010

> *Marblehead, on 20 November 2010 - 02:08 AM, said:*
>
> *Hi Xabir,*
>
> *Nice to see you back with this discussion.*
>
> *Okay. I will agree that this does happen. But I also state that "I" can control my thoughts. That is one of the primary reason I meditate - to get control of my thoughts. Actually, to eliminate all thoughts for a short while.*
>
> *So you are speaking of cause and effect. One thought causing the next thought, a string of thoughts. And yes, this can go on for a long time if we take no action. But we can stop this train any time we wish to do so (if we know how to do it).*

While we are on this topic... I would like to point out a really good article. Called *Quietening the Inner Chatter*
(http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2010/10/quietening-inner-chatter.html)

It deals with this topic very well. In it, it says:

(a short excerpt, refer to link for whole article)

*...So when approaching meditation we do the same "I want to stop these thoughts that are driving me nuts", so we sit down but we can't get the thoughts to stop. Why is this? It's because life does not work like this. Just look at the clouds, can more wind make the clouds go away? No, its just makes more clouds. This isn't a metaphor, I'm talking directly and literally about the very nature that drives the existence of things like wind and clouds and rain are the same forces that drive our minds and thoughts and pain. To break through the clouds the sun has to come out. Why is this? Let us go back to the house building metaphor for the answer.*

***The Laws behind Inner Chatter***

*Going back to our house building metaphor the answer isn't to move into another house, the answer is to deconstruct the current house we live in .... completely. We need to stop building and let the current house get old and collapse. If we stop building and improving on a house what happens? It slowly cracks, the wood rots, it gets weathered, things fall off and eventually it falls down. So, asking again, why is this? This is very important and the heart of this entire article. It is because the conditions that support the survival of the house are removed, so eventually it dies. All things in life are exactly like this.*

*Clouds require a certain condition. Certain moisture content in the air and certain temperature creates the conditions for them to exist. When the sun comes out the conditions that supports the existence of the clouds passes and so too do the clouds.*

*When a flower doesn't get enough water, or gets too much sun, or gets uprooted from the soil it too dies. Its conditions cease, so it ceases. If our body doesn't get food or water eventually it will die. Look around you, everything, absolutely everything you can see or experience or think are exactly like this and all exist due to the dependent conditions that support their existence. There is not a single thing in the universe that does not obey this law. Not one! I'm not asking you to believe me, investigate yourself, look around. Is there anything you can find that doesn't obey this law?*

*Your mind and thoughts are exactly the same. They require a certain conditions to exist and certain conditions to keep them going. The cycle of inner chatter requires certain conditions too. Through repeating the same process we just perpetuate their existence and in fact make them stronger. This is why when we approach meditation and want to stop the inner chatter it doesn't work. We don't realise, by approaching it in this way, that we are just running the same old patterns that creates and supports the very existence of the inner chatter.*

***Slowing Down Takes Time***

*The other thing to consider, like the momentum of the heavy freight train, is that it is going to take time to stop. If you're 20, 30, 40 or 50 years old, then you've been supporting and building a world of inner chatter over all those years.* ***You can't just sit down to try meditation and expect it to stop right away.*** *Again, life just doesn't work like this. For example, think of the flower again. If we stop watering a flower it doesn't die straight away, it will take a week or two. All things are like this, they take time to cease. We are the same with our inner chatter.*

*So typically we approach meditation with the same incorrect assumption we hold about life, that things will just stop instantly. We want instant results and so we expect life to be the way we want it to be. In doing this we ignore and don't respect these laws that all things are bound by, and in doing so we create conditions that support the perpetuation of inner noise. The process is so obvious, so inherent in our nature, that we simply just don't notice it. In reality you could say it is so obvious that in growing up with it since a baby we don't notice the obviousness of it any more. However, all it requires is for us to look around and observe the way everything works. You can see this truth right there in everything around you.So in Part 1 I explained how inner chatter is a problem and what the effects are like. In Part 2 we talked how that problem functions and in Part 3 I'll discuss what we can do to quiet the inner chatter, how that healing process works, a common trap to look our for and how to apply this. Check back tomorrow for Part 3.*

So as you can see, D.O. replaces the notion of a 'controller'.

If you try to suppress thoughts, it will not make them go away - it makes things worse, lets those thoughts remain in the subconscious and later strike back harder.

There's another article.. an older one, by my friend Longchen (Simpo), a few years ago:

*Are we supposed to get rid of unwholesome thoughts?*

*This article is related to a common misconception with regards to spiritual practice. Many spiritual teachings say that one must get rid of unwholesome stuffs in one's life. So does that include getting rid of unwholesome thoughts that one is having?*

*Are we supposed to get rid of unwholesome thoughts? Before we can answer this question, we must first ask..."Can the self or 'I' get rid of thoughts that are deemed as unwholesome?" The answer to the latter question is a NO.*

*As already mentioned and explained here, the sense of self or 'I' is not the doer of action. As much as this 'sense of self' desires, it simply has no power over the arising and ceasing of thoughts. Thoughts, are for most part, related to the functioning of memory. Because of that, thoughts and memory cannot be removed by will.*

*So, if thoughts cannot be stopped from arising using volition, are we powerless with regards to its influences. No.*

*While thoughts cannot be stopped, the attachment or aversion to them can be diminished with training. Both attachments and aversions are types of grasping.*

*So to be precise, during spiritual practice, we are not supposed to try to stop unwholesome thoughts from arising. This will prove to be ineffective and all we get will be more frustrations. What we can do, is to let go of the grasping to the thoughts. There is an energetic difference between the two.*

*About this letting go, it is really a gentle process and cannot be forced. Excessive forcing re-enforces the arising of 'sense of self' and ineffective grasping kicks into action again.*

*Often, the thoughts that arise are in conditioned response to what is being perceived by the senses. The speed of the arising of the thought often is very fast. Because there is a perception, which is followed rapidly by the conditioned thought, the conditioned reaction (grasping) to the thought often is almost immediate. The rapid change that occur within this short span of duration is what makes 'recognising' the grasping from the perception and thoughts difficult.*

*OK, that all I can think of and write about this topic. I will revise and improve this article where the need arises.*

*For your necessary pondering. Thank you for reading.*

*These articles are parts of a series of spiritual realisation articles.*

> *Quote*
>
> *I can' agree with you here. I love myself too much to be able to go there with you. I don't want to do away with the Agent (me). I agree, there are processes, and "I" live within these processes and act and react to and with the processes. At least, "I think" that's the way "I" do it.*

*Once again, I am a Taoist therefore I am therefore I think.*

*Surely you can see how much "I" love "me".*

You can't do away with something that never was. Just look and see that in direct experience no agent can be found. It is not a matter of whether you want to 'go there'... It is a matter of what is true. There is no you. Look and see if that is true. Don't blindly believe in dogmas - especially the primary dogma/unexamined belief of a 'self'. And I can assure you there is nothing to be fearful about, instead you will feel an immense liberation and weight being lifted. 'You' will feel boundless, free, blissful when it is realised there is no 'you'.

Experiences arise. Sounds are heard. Scenery seen.

Only after that experience do you think "I saw that sight" "I heard that sound". There is this reference to an 'I' that did that.

But in that actual seeing, hearing, was there an 'I' responsible for that? No. It was an afterthought of the actual experience, it was an inference. And can the thought 'I hear' hear? Can the thought 'I see' see? Obviously not. The actual seeing is without 'I' - 'I' is merely an inferred reference point as an afterthought of an arising experience. There is ever just this process of seeing, hearing, thinking, etc, that is the sights, sounds, thoughts... arising and subsiding moment by moment according to interdependent origination.

And 'I' is that all along - an inferred thing. Never actual. Never found. Never located. Because it never is.

But this arising sound, sight, thought, is what is actual and is simply arising as this process according to dependent origination... without an agency.

When insight of Anatta arises, one enters the stream and is assured a straight path to Nirvana without ever the chance of falling back into the lower realms. And the Buddha has even said that if you have the right view (without experiential realization), that alone ensures you will attain stream entry in this very life. If you love yourself... consider this a worthy contemplation of the highest kind.

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20th November 2010

*Quote:*

*Okay, with intent, I placed my hand on my head and there I was. I exist!!! WoW!!!!! I am sitting in (on) my chair. It Exists!!!! More Wows!!!*

*Am I eternal and will last forever? NO. Will the chair? No. But for now both*

*exist.*

*Oh My Goodness!!! How many times do I need to tell you folks that I am not in prison and I do not need to be liberated? You folks sure do love to use that word!*

*But I am already boundless, free, and blissful. I even have peace and contentment in my life.*

*No, "I" did not create the sounds, smells, sights that I experience of other things. They produced them in their own manner. I percieved them in my own manner.*

*When I turn on my stereo you cannot hear the music but I can. The sound does not exist for you but it does exist for me. If I told you what song was playing and you knew the song then you would be able to hear the song as well but it would be generated by your thoughts and not by my speakers.*

*Now you know that I do not accept the concept of reincarnation into my life so what you said about it does not apply to me.*

*I was born, I have lived and I plan to live for many years still and one day I will die. Once I die I will no longer have all these experiences I have had and will have in my life. What is me will become something else. NO, I have no idea what that might be and I'm not a bit concerned about it.*

*But if I did believe in reincarnation I would enjoy doing this whole thing all over again. There were a lot of women I didn't have the chance to give a hug and kiss so maybe I can catch them the next go-round.*

*I really do exist even though my existence is only temporary. I am today of the Manifest and one day parts of me will return to the Mystery. Beyond that I have no thoughts or words.*

---

Hi Marble,

I'm not suggesting you are an unhappy man. But the 'I am already boundless, free, and blissful. I even have peace and contentment in my life.' can be taken to a whole new level with true realization of Anatta.

Sound arise without hearer, they arise and subside according to conditions. They are vivid, clear, pristine, undeniable. Sound does not arise in my mindstream because there is no such causes and conditions. But the fact remains that there is no hearer apart from sound/perception. It just so happens that a particular sound is arising within/as one mindstream and not another. But arisings happen without agent. Individual mindstreams are not denied in Anatta... a perceiving/controlling agent is denied. The

word 'I' is simply a label for a conglomerate of arising and subsiding experiences, not a fixed locatable essence... much like the word 'weather' refers to a conglomerate of arising and passing phenomena but not to a fixed findable essence.

Place your hand on your head... sensation arises, clear, vivid, undeniable! But the thought 'I felt it' is an after thought... an inference.

I live in the undeniable vividness of manifestation... without the belief in self-hood. Self-hood is just that - a belief, an inference... nothing actual.

What is actual is Life... in its wonderful diversity and manifestation... It is not a dead emptiness, it is Fullness itself.

It is fullness shining and presenting itself (and vanishing) every moment without an agent, an experiencer.

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20th November 2010

> *Marblehead, on 20 November 2010 - 04:15 AM, said:*
>
> *Yea!!!! I am at peace with you!!!!! I knew we would get close enough together for you to shut me up!!!!!*
>
> *Well, except for this:*
>
> > *But the 'I am already boundless, free, and blissful. I even have peace and contentment in my life.' can be taken to a whole new level with true realization of Anatta.*
>
> *I just knew you wouldn't be able to resist suggesting a higher plane. Hey, I am afraid of heights (not really, hehehe). Where I am is high enough for me. At the moment I have no complications in my life and no problems (except I should get a little sleep) so why would I want to screw that up by adding confusion to my philosophy and thereby to my life?*
>
> *No, I am exactly where I am supposed to be. No doubt in my mind.*

Why grasp on something false, when there is a more accurate, clearer view of life? How does doing some contemplation screw up your life? I cannot see anything but benefits arising out of this. From contemplation, direct non-conceptual realization occurs that leaves no room for doubt and confusion. It is seriously much more direct and simple than our theorizing.

That is why Buddha said:

*The Perfect One is free from any theory, for the Perfect One has understood what the body is, and how it arises, and passes away. He has understood what feeling is, and how it arises, and passes away. He has understood what perception is, and how it arises, and passes away. He has understood what the mental formations are, and how they arise, and pass away. He has understood what consciousness is, and how it arises, and passes away.*

*Therefore, I say, the Perfect One has won complete deliverance through the extinction, fading away, disappearance, rejection, and getting rid of all opinions and conjectures, of all inclination to the vainglory of I and mine.*

*- Majjhima Nikaya, 72*

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20th November 2010

MH, forgive me for my ramblings. Haha... the joy springs naturally from this arising insight of anatta.

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20th November 2010

Next time a Christian asks you whether you have assurance to Nirvana... tell them this:

*Assurance? Yes, Nirvana is assurable. This is Buddha's good news. Just believe (have right view of reality) and be saved.*

(but of course, don't stop at belief, go and actually see it for yourself!!)

To stress the importance of right view... I would like to quote what the Buddha said.

http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/study/stream2.html#arising

*...."Form... Feeling... Perception... Fabrications... Consciousness is inconstant, changeable, alterable.*

*"One who has conviction & belief that these phenomena are this way is called a faith-follower: one who has entered the orderliness of rightness, entered the plane of people of integrity, transcended the plane of the run-of-the-mill. He is incapable of doing any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry shades. He is incapable of passing away until he has realized the fruit of stream-entry.*

*"One who, after pondering with a modicum of discernment, has accepted that these phenomena are this way is called a Dhamma-follower: one who has entered the orderliness of rightness, entered the plane of people of integrity, transcended the plane of the run-of-the-mill. He is incapable of doing any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry shades. He is incapable of passing away until he has realized the fruit of stream-entry.*

*"One who knows and sees that these phenomena are this way is called a stream-winner, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening."...*

On the topic of Right View, it is said that one who realizes the nature of dharma is said to enter the stream, become a stream enterer, destined to attain Nirvana/Arhatship in no more than 7 lifetimes (or in this lifetime if he works hard for it). He will never again enter into the lower realms. He no longer has self-view (he realizes Anatta), he no longer has doubts about Dharma, he no longer pays attention to meaningless rituals.

**However, much is also said about someone who has not attained stream entry, but simply a 'faith-follower' having the Right View of the nature of dharmas - as being Anicca, Dukkha, and Anatta - Impermanent, Unsatisfactory, and Non-self.And having the right view of Dependent Origination/Emptiness.**

That is, if you understand, have conviction and belief that the nature of dharma is so... **You will not die until you attain stream entry.**

**Therefore, by simply having the right view you have already gone half the way of your path. This is why Right View is the 1st of the Noble 8 Fold Path.**

By having the Right View, your stream entry, your awakening into the nature of dharma is assured this lifetime and thereby your Nirvana is assured to happen in no more than 7 lives.

This is the importance of having the right view.

On another note... I have seen many (really, a lot) of very sincere practitioners who practice very hard... much harder than me. Unfortunately, because they do not have the right view, they get stuck at a certain stage of experience or realization.

For example, they may get stuck at the 'I AM' level of realization. Why? Because there is no one to point them out the right view... So no matter how hard they practice, they cannot go pass that stage... even if they practice for decades or even after they pass away. Thusness got stuck in the I AM phase for about 13 years. Longchen/Simpo got stuck in the I AM phase for almost 20 years. Until they encountered the right view through knowing Buddhism, after which they very quickly progressed to the non-dual and anatta phases of insight. Many unfortunately continue to get stuck in those phases for more decades due to not having met the right view.

Whereas, for me, and many others... who are not very diligent practitioners, but somehow due to having been instilled the right view, certain conditions arise and the nature of Dharma is seen very quickly. In a matter of few years, it can be done. By the way, both Thusness and Simpo has given me the prediction on separate occasions years ago that my progress will be faster than them and others (i.e. not getting stuck decades in certain phase) due to having been instilled with the right understanding.

**Never think you can skip 'right view' and just practice and hope that one day you will simply realize things by yourself (a very common mistake, I believe)... because no matter how hard you practice, you still probably won't realize the right view by yourself. You need to understand and have conviction in the Buddha's teachings.**

So please... if there is any doubts or things you don't understand about the view of Dharma, please get it sorted out, please have the right view.

If you don't understand Anatta (no-self), or Emptiness, please ask.

There are experienced moderators... like Thusness and Simpo who can point them out to you..

It is really not difficult to grasp this... so make the effort, it is definitely worthwhile.

Don't you want to be assured enlightenment in this life? Yes, this assurance is possible. You just need to have the right view. (Of course, right practice, i.e. direct contemplation, is also important as a follow up to attain enlightenment, but even right view alone ensures your enlightenment within this life)

I am especially indebted to Thusness who pointed out to me the 'right view'... otherwise I will probably get lost in certain phase in my practice like I mentioned earlier.

In the Suttas, many people attain stream entry after listening to a single discourse by the Buddha (and often happens to be their FIRST discourse they hear from Buddha). This is how powerful 'right view' is... once it gets into you, a shift starts to happen. It can happen immediately... or maybe gradual... but by the end of this life, you will certainly realize the nature of dharma.

Thought I might also share my thoughts on 'why' right view assures enlightenment...

**MT** says
I heard even theory knowelege will lead to direct experience

**AEN** says
it doesnt 'lead' but it serves as a very important condition...
and once you understand dharma, you will be propelled and inclined towards contemplating them
which leads to insight

**MT** says
comtemplate means think n analyse about it like four noble truths?
**AEN** says
not just think and analyse
observe, look at these facts in your direct experience
like the way its taught in mindfulness in plain english
(http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma4/mpe13.html )
**MT** says
oh
**AEN** says
yeah
some thoughts are also needed... but the thoughts are just reminders to look at the bare fact of reality
like 'there is no you'... look... is this so?

20th November 2010

> *Originally posted by knightlll:*
>
> *Happy for you as well.*

Be happy for yourself as well.

Let me ask you this.

Are you confident (not asking if you're enlightened - asking if you have this view) that all phenomena in your experiential universe is arising and passing away every moment?

Are you confident that all phenomena arising is without self, arising without an agent, experiencer, doer?

Are you confident that all phenomena arising is inconstant and hence, unsatisfactory?

Are you confident that all phenomena arise due to causes and conditions?

If you answer 'Yes' to all, then congratulations, your enlightenment is assured this life and you will not fall into the lower realms. Start contemplating (look at) these facts in your own experience, and I can assure you your enlightenment is very near... it's not a matter of many decades spent meditating in caves, it's much closer than that. Months? A few years at most? Many people think enlightenment is distant but I can assure you, it is never this way, it is not as what most Buddhists and even masters and teachers made it to be, perhaps due to their failure and inability to transmit their enlightenment.

It is not difficult and distant. The original suttas are a more accurate representation of how possible and common it is to be enlightened (that said, there are different degrees of enlightenment like stream entry to arhantship as well as bodhisattva bhumis)

However, if you answer 'No' to any of the above, then tell us what doubts you have and get this clarified. :)

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20th November 2010

> *Originally posted by simpo_:*
>
> *Haha AEN... I really like you 'sale pitch' style.*
>
> *But, 'sale pitch' or not, what you said is really true !!!*
>
> *Get the 'Right View' and one will not turn back anymore...*
>
> *Why? This is because once the Truth is seen, it cannot be unseened or pretend to be false anymore. One's way of being then gradually realigns towards the truth orientation.*

Yes... the view is transformative. That's why someone with right view will be incapable of doing something that leads to rebirth in lower realm...

20th November 2010

> *manitou, on 20 November 2010 - 05:52 AM, said:*
>
> *I love the discussion about the 'right view'. I think this equates to the view we're left with after a lot of inner work has been done.*

I think what you're saying transcendent view gained after awakening... but before awakening, one can start developing the right view by right understanding and conviction - and this is also very important prior to realization. However, once awakening (directly seeing the nature of reality) happens... there is no more grasping on conceptual view, it is just directly seen and experienced.

> *Quote*
>
> *A person can't have a right view when they're meditating and then go out and pillage and plunder between meditations. It is a totally different perspective and way of looking at the world, one which involves less judgement and more loving.*

Totally agreed. The view is indeed transformative.

> *Quote*
>
> *But I take a little exception to your minimizing the I AM consciousness.*

I do not minimize this realization as I personally have went through this phase, and took around two years of self-inquiring to get to (and the insight I have documented in the document 'Who am I' at http://www.box.net/shared/3verpiao63 ). In fact, it is a profound insight into the luminous essence of Being/Awareness. This insight is not negated in the later phases...

> *Quote*
>
> *Personally, the I AM consciousness came after many years of cultivating the right view. (It also meshed after repeatedly reading The Impersonal Life, by Anonymous). How can you possibly say that the I AM consciousness is a springboard for a right view consciousness?*

I AM is this Pure Presence/Pure Being/Pure Sense of Existence. It is non-dual and undeniably present when realized. It is touched directly and non-conceptually, without intermediary. It is immediate Presence. This realization gives rise to a certainty of Being.

This is an insight into the Luminous (Aware) essence of Being. However, it is only the luminous essence... not the empty nature. Many have insight into their luminous essence but overlook the empty nature.

So from this I AM insight... one must proceed to further insights. For example... the non-dual insight.

Resting in I AMness, if you then look at, say, a mountain, you might begin to notice that the sensation of the I AM or Pure Being and the sensation of the mountain are the same sensation. When you "feel" your pure Self and you "feel" the mountain, they are absolutely the same feeling. You will realise that everything shares the same luminous essence. There is no observer-observed dichotomy! Everything reveals itself as non-dual Presence. It is equally Presence whether in the formless Beingness or in forms. There is no separation, no Witness apart from arisings.

Then further insight arises... the Presence we are talking about is really just these arising and subsiding phenomena! This breaks the solidity of non-dual Presence... we no longer cling to a metaphysical essence but see the arising and subsiding nature of all dharmas. There is no agent - i.e. a seer, hearer, experiencer behind these arisings.

This is then followed by insight into how all phenomena arises... they arise due to dependent origination without agency.

So each insight is important, but must be complemented by further insights... the view keeps refining, even though the vivid luminous essence/presence is never neglected or denied as the view gets refined.

Right view is primarily the right view of empty nature... and this serves as an important precondition for further insights into emptiness to arise.

> *Quote*
>
> *I AM. What does that really mean? It merely means We Are God.*

The experience remains, but the view of 'We Are God' from the I AM level gradually transforms into 'the entire universe arises due to seamless interdependence without an origin or center'.

> *Quote*
>
> *It is our collective consciousness that is the moving force in the world, perhaps in the universe. There is no Being out there directing traffic. The I AM consciousness is very much the way of the Tao. It presupposes that we have access to the electromagnetics and physical attributes of the earth in order to create and affect the changes we want, whether in healing or situational resolution. In order to achieve use of these forces we must align ourselves with the 'right view'. If you are finding other views in an out-of-body way through your meditations, then perhaps these can be equated to shamanic journeys of the mind which touch on the physical as well.*

I have little experiences with OBEs apart from those occuring in lucid dreaming and sleep paralysis... however whatever view I have is not based on these experiences and my main concern is not with these experiences.

> *Quote*

*Your structural assembly about how It can be reached is valid for your mindset and your background. You may believe you can 'see' how the rest of us are laboring in the lower planes because of your perspective. But please understand that we all believe we are sitting on a perch that is the 'right view'...that's the nature of our egos. Please consider that true enlightment may just be crawling through and transcending all the structure.*

Ultimately, the right view is like a raft... you have to get on the raft, but when you reach the other shore, the raft is left behind. This is the analogy given by Buddha.

What's left?

Vivid manifestation... sounds heard, sights seen, thoughts arising... everything happening but without self-reference. There is great freedom, with no structures, no need for conceptualization. Just This.

I no longer speak from concepts... but a direct experiential seeing of this. I do not rely on any structures for this... What is more direct and simple than just This... sound of 'da da da' due to typing on keyboard, music from speakers, words appearing on screen... an ever-changing reality without a center/self-reference. Just this is truth.

---

20th November 2010

*Originally posted by 2009novice:*

Sorry for the interruption. I paraphrased it to my own understandings...

Are you confident that all phenomena in your experiential universe is arising and passing away every moment?

*Not quite sure what confident means here... Confident means---> do-you-think?*

*After reading this question, I thought of everything is a passing moment. But what we do now will affect the next moment... What we do will "arise" and "pass" at the next continuous moment?*

Are you confident that all phenomena arising is without self, arising without an agent, experiencer, doer?

*I thought of it as like, something that is beyond our control, "arising" or happening, without us the doer.*

Are you confident that all phenomena arising is inconstant and hence, unsatisfactory?

*Very confident! All things stay in flux, unsatisfactory. Things we held on too deeply, believing it will make us happy but sometimes failed. eg. my PC, or whatever things will spoilt one day...*

Are you confident that all phenomena arise due to causes and conditions?

*Yes. Cause n Effect. 心起因*

1) Yes indeed. Everything is instantaneously arising and subsiding... leaving no trace. Each moment becomes a condition for the next moment of arising, and yet all arisings are a fresh and complete reality of itself. In other words... it is not that 'Arising1' caused 'Arising2' or that 'Arising2' originated from 'Arising1' - they are different arisings and don't 'touch each other', but rather, 'Arising2' arises with 'Arising1' as a supporting condition. Arising 1 and Arising 2 are each a complete reality of itself.

For example the thought/intention 'I need to get up now' arises, followed by a bodily action of standing up. The thought 'I need to get up now' serves as a condition for the bodily action... but the thought itself is not a self or doer/controller of action - it is merely an arising that serves as a condition for the action. The volition to stand up is mental, but what actually stands up is the body. Each arising is a complete new reality arising with various supporting conditions.

But what you said is right... each moment of arising becomes a condition for the next moment of arising.

2) Not so clear based on what you said... are you saying is that there are some things beyond our control, and yet there is this notion that there is a 'self' that controls certain things? Is there a 'us the doer' to begin with?

Look thoroughly... are there any things that can be controlled? Are thoughts being controlled? Is there a thinker of thoughts?

If there is a thinker of thoughts, then you will have known what your next moment of thought will be. But do you know what your next moment of thought is? You don't. Thoughts actually spontaneously arise of their own accord (with various supporting conditions like latent imprints and so on).

Look at this more thoroughly.. there is a sutta called Anattalakkhana Sutta - http://www.aimwell.org/Books/Suttas/Anattalakkhana/anattalakkhana.html - Discourse on Not-self. In this discourse, the Buddha go through a list of constituents of experience and rejects them as non-self... look carefully... is there any experience in our control? Are thoughts, sensations, feelings, in our control? If they were in our control, we could have said 'I don't want bad thoughts/feelings to ever arise again', 'I only want good feelings to arise all the time' and they will be controlled in this way, but the fact of the matter is... even these thoughts/feelings arise due to various supporting conditions and there is no controller 'doing' them - bad feelings still occur and we can't stop them.

Also, apart from 'no doership'... another aspect you should look into is 'no agent'. Is there an experiencer, a hearer, a seer?

Look at a tree. In the ordinary unenlightened mode of viewing things, there is always this sense that there is an 'I' inside my body, viewing the 'tree out there' through 'my eyes'. Is this true?

Is direct experience actually broken into 'I' the seer, and the 'seeing', and the 'being seen'? The fact of the matter is this... scenery is being seen, seeing is happening, but no seer is present doing the seeing! There is just pure seeing without seer. And there is no 'seeing and the scenery' - the seeing is precisely just the scenery...

Music being heard, there is no hearer... just music playing vividly and intimately without any inside and outside separation... just sounds arising vividly, then vanishing without traces, all happening by itself without an agent/self.

For the subtleties and different aspects of Anatta, do read the article by Thusness On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

3) Great!

4) Good... all experiences, actions, thoughts arise due to causes and conditions. It is not a 'you' doing or experiencing things... rather, it is that actions, experiences arise with certain supporting conditions.

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21st November 2010

> *Originally posted by simpo_:*
>
> *Haha AEN... I really like your 'sale pitch' style.*
>
> *But, 'sale pitch' or not, what you said is really true !!!*
>
> *Get the 'Right View' and one will not turn back anymore...*
>
> *Why? This is because once the Truth is seen, it cannot be unseened or pretend to be false anymore. One's way of being then gradually realigns towards the truth orientation.*

**Thusness**:

Yeah...He is expressing his overflowing joy from the arising insight of anatta. Unable to contain his excitement; but that too will pass.

The grandeur will be gone in a few months and the joy will re-surface in a more continuous and stable manner if the non-dual luminous essence is seamlessly integrated with the insight of the impermanent and empty nature of our luminous essence. :-)

---

21st November 2010

> *Originally posted by geis:*
>
> *just saw this thread*
>
> *haha agree with simpo, you sound like me and my agents in a roadshow selling products.*

*maybe i can design an enlightenment sales script also :D*

*ok some 3.5 cents worth on this topic.*

*right view is progressively established with all round practice aka the noble eightfold path.*

*sila (right actions, right speech, right livelihood) is the everyday support. with sila, right thoughts can arise and become habitual. this forms new habitual tendencies and, with right effort, become the conditions for old ones to burn out. right concentration, through meditation, provides the momentum and motivation to carry on. we practice this way with right mindfulness and very soon right view will be established.*

*before right view is established, the understanding of the mind on right view is superficial and pointed to the basic understanding of the four noble truths. after right view is established, the nature of reality being anicca, anatta and dukkha is experienced, and will continue to be reinforced with mindfulness.*

Hmm... In my understanding, right view should be established even before one starts practicing the rest of the eightfold path. This is why Buddha put Right View at the top of the list. Right view has many aspects, for example, moral law of karma, the three characteristics, suffering. See
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path#Right_view

If a person is not instilled right view of morality from the beginning, how else would he have properly practiced Sila? If a person is not instilled right view of the three characteristics, for example, how else could he have practiced Right Mindfulness?

That is why right view should be instilled right from the start and serves as a foundation for all the other factors of the noble path.

As the Buddha himself have said:

*Bhikkhus, just as the dawn is the forerunner and first indication of the rising of the sun, so is right view the forerunner and first indication of wholesome states.*

*For one of right view, bhikkhus, right intention springs up. For one of right intention, right speech springs up. For one of right speech, right action springs up. For one of right action, right livelihood springs up. For one of right livelihood, right effort springs up. For one of right effort, right mindfulness springs up. For one of right mindfulness, right concentration springs up. For one of right concentration, right knowledge springs up. For one of right knowledge, right deliverance springs up.*

*Anguttara Nikaya 10:121*

This, btw, also explains why just having the right view alone can assure one's enlightenment. Because having right view will set off a chain effect and lead to the arising of the eightfold path.

That said, it is true that right mindfulness and concentration must be practiced as a follow up for right view to be 'actualized' and realized. As the wiki entry states: *Right view begins with concepts and propositional knowledge, but through the practice of right concentration, it gradually becomes transmuted into wisdom, which can eradicate the fetters of the mind.*

> Quote:
>
> *maybe to add on to AEN's explanation on looking on the arising and passing of phenomena. a good place to start looking is through thoughts. this is where vipassana meditation comes in. the constant redirection of attention from thoughts to the breath (or stomach) again and again will created enough momentum until it hits a tipping point and we can see that thoughts are arising and passing on their own with each moment a condition for the next. however my feel is, though both 'arising 1' and 'arising 2' are separate phenomena, we can still say that 'arising 1 is the cause/condition for arising 2 to occur'.*
>
> *comments?*

Let's say... a sound of bell ringing being heard.

Does the sound originate from the ear? Does it originate from the bell? No! Actually... it is much more complex than that.

The sound of airplane being perceived actually has various supporting conditions... the stick, the bell, the vibration of the air, the ears, the hand hitting the stick, and so on. These supporting conditions all come together and in that instantaneous moment a completely new phenomenon/arising of sound-consciousness has arisen.

Does sound-consciousness have an origin? It cannot be said to have a source, cause, agent, or origin. It does not come from the ears, it does not come from the air, the stick, the bell, and so on.

Rather, it is with the combination of these various supporting conditions, a new and complete phenomenon arises. This is thus called Interdependent Origination.

Oh btw, it's nice if Buddhists do a roadshow in Orchard road or something to promote enlightenment... must learn from Christian evangelists.. hahaha. Guess some are already doing? I've seen some youngsters who are very good promoters of Buddhism... quite surprised... at the Vesak day event in Orchard Road. They have very good 'sales script'.

Though I guess none is more straightforward than saying 'believe and be saved!' 'Your enlightenment in this life is assured if you believe!'

lol... I guess nobody dares to make such claims other than me. Of course, the 'believe'/'have conviction' must come from Right View... simply believing Buddha without right view is not enough.

21st November 2010

Thusness:

Yes the view is very important therefore do not fall into determinism too. There is intention that influences the outcome. Clear seeing that there is no-agent does not lead one into hard determinism; it merely leads one to clearly see the illusionary split of subject/object division, the essencelessness and dependent originated nature of arising. There is no lack of influence of intentionality in the chain of ever becoming. Adopt the middle path so that we will not fall to the extreme.

From a pragmatic perspective, the view is also important because it is difficult to see how the idea of duality (separation) is the direct result of not seeing the anatta and empty nature of Awareness. This is a phase where experience desync with view (dualistic and inherent view) and can lead to quite intense confusion if a practitioner tries to make sense of 'what is'.

Also it is time to re-visit the below two articles in your blog and perhaps refine them with your new found insights:

1. **Right View and Spiritual Practices**

2. **The Link Between Non-Duality and Emptiness**

*Let go of what has passed.*

*Let go of what may come.*

*Let go of what is happening now.*

*Don't try to figure anything out.*

*Don't try to make anything happen.*

*Relax, right now, and rest.*

*-Tilopa*

What is the difference between this and resting in the space of Awareness?

By the way this will also lead to "I AM" without right view. :-)

---

21st November 2010

Thanks..

The difference between what Tilopa said and the I AM is that what Tilopa is saying is to let all arise subside without leaving traces or grasping, including even 'presence' or 'awareness'.

It does not lead towards disassociation.

Whereas in I AM, there is disassociation from everything but clinging to a background space. There is clinging to something inherent and thus is not a complete letting go.

Just a sharing... a conversation I had with someone on Facebook yesterday on the verses by Tilopa:

G: I like the first two sentences...but what about being aware and appreciating what is happening now..

Me: @G: Presence/Awareness is 'letting go' every moment... whatever arises, subsides. Let it pass. Nothing to cling to, even 'awareness'.

G: I'm talking about the joy of being aware, the pure simple, joy of being alive...Isn't that a good thing?

Me: @G: The joy of being alive is also another experience arising and subsiding... To penetrate into the stream of arising and ceasing, do not hold onto any experiences. Let them come, yes, but not to cling on to any states. Eventually it will be seen that awareness is ever this stream of arising and ceasing.

---

21st November 2010

Thusness:

Yes and very well said. :-)

There is always a very fine, subtle and stubborn trace of division despite the clear seeing. This is due to the (dualistic and inherent) tendency that runs deep. The lingering tendency prevents full and complete experience of whatever arises by way of very subtle reification and abstraction. We must clearly 'detect' this trace and see what is its supporting conditions.

Practice will reveal that clear seeing + constant reminding of letting go + lingering dualistic and inherent view cannot lead to thorough letting go. The 'view' will always create a very thin layer of division.

Therefore 'the dualistic and inherent view' needs to be replaced with right view for a practitioner to get over the most 'subtle trace'. Experience will eventually turn fully direct, gapless, coreless and liberating.

Seeing liberation as the direct realization of the 'empty nature' of arising and ceasing is different from seeing liberation as the space that is free from arising and ceasing.

The former is gapless and full embracement of transience while the latter is disassociation from transient.

If 'you' are clear, then welcoming of whatever arises is non-dual and letting go is non-dual; no more holding in disguise as letting go and coming and going turns liberating. all appearances turn spontaneous, stainless, coreless and crystal present. :-)

---

21st November 2010

Thanks... you have said it very beautifully.. in the absence of 'holding'/'self'... all there is is points of clarity arising and disbanding...

Is right view a matter of thoroughly understanding D.O.?

---

21st November 2010

Thusness:

The seals and DO. (Impermanence, suffering, no-self)

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21st November 2010

Beautiful951:

> Originally posted by An Eternal Now:
>
> …Are you confident (not asking if you're enlightened - asking if you have this view) that all phenomena in your experiential universe is arising and passing away every moment?....
>
> However, if you answer 'No' to any of the above, then tell us what doubts you have and get this clarified. :)

Don't we have to attain these realisations with insight rather than being told. I think someone posted about that before.

But I answered no to this one

"Are you confident that all phenomena arising is without self, arising without an agent, experiencer, doer?"

Could you explain?

---

21st November 2010

Simpo_:

Hi,

To the second question *"Are you confident that all phenomena arising is without self, arising without an agent, experiencer, doer?"*

Firstly, one must be open to the possibility that what we think we are is just an assumption that is formed by jumping into conclusion and all other 'sentient beings' jumping onto the same conclusion. This is described as Ignorance in the teaching.

We will next investigate what we really are. This investigation CANNOT be conceptual or it will in the end be what we **think** it should be again with really touching on the raw experience/insight.

Some people will think... we are the soul. No, this is not the answer. The answer goes beyond the concept of a soul which is really a more subtle level of 'self' or sense of indivduality. By the concept of the soul, the world will still be filled with multiple souls and individuals.

By understanding no-self, one will not only understand the nature of yourself, but also the basic fundamental property of the universe.

Questions to ponder:

1. Do you think that all along there are so many things and objects in the world?

What if all the things that are being seen are not really physical objects but are the impressions form by the sense organs datas. What if the environment 'out there' that one see are mere appearance made by dots of colours? What if the sound that one hears are not out there?

2. Do you think your **awareness** of being alive and living is different from that of other beings' ?

What if every seemingly separate Being or individual are just different focus of attentions/awareness, that is all.

The questions needs to be pondered upon slowly if you want to have some kind of further progress leading to the insight... of firstly non-duality, then maturing into the realisation of no-self.

---

28th November 2010

> *Originally posted by 2009novice:*
>
> *Hi AEN,*
>
> *Regarding q2*
>
> *Are you confident that all phenomena arising is without self, arising without an agent, experiencer, doer?*

*I read the link you pasted here...*

*http://www.aimwell.org/Books/Suttas/Anattalakkhana/anattalakkhana.html (Anattalakkhana Sutta)*

*Quite "steep" leh*

*I drew references from Buddha's Four Foundation of Mindfulness... not sure whether is it applicable or not. For example,*

*Material form- that one I know is impermanent, therefore it is not self. The Mindfulness of all Dharma explains that there is no "lasting identities"... everything is formed by many "different parts" to make up that particular "part". Lack of any "part" and this form or "part" will cease... and so there is no self*

*Feelings- understand that feeling is also one of the Foundation of Mindfulness, and its impermance... this one ok... and so there is no self*

*Perception- this one I understands... even social scientists says that perceptions stem from cultures and this world got so many different cultures... different yardstick. But because we are born in particular ethnic groups and therefore we tend to follow and think our ethnic group is "normal" and others is abnormal. Therefore perception is quite warped sometimes... When we are babies, there is no self... OK this one correct*

*Mental formation- this one similar to what we call "thoughts"? Thoughts are always changing too. So there is no self... OK correct...*

*Last one: Consciousness... this one deep leh... I thought we all got consciousness...? if there is no consciousness... how do we function? maybe the Mindfulness of Dharma has already explain this...*

Whatever you said about four foundations of mindfulness is alright... however mindfulness is not a conceptualization process. Mindfulness means bare naked observation of reality... it is also what gives rise to direct experiential insight provided there is right view. Here's an article on mindfulness I consider a 'must-read' for everyone practicing Buddhism: **Chapter 13 - http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma4/mpe13.html** ...(Mindfulness - Sati)

About consciousness: in Buddhism, we do not say there is no consciousness. There is consciousness, but consciousness is not a Self. Consciousness is not an ultimate observer of objects... this is the ordinary being's thinking and even those with transcendental glimpses of the I AM Presence.

So what is consciousness?
In http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.038.than.html - Mahatanhasankhaya Sutta

The Buddha reprimanded a monk who thinks that consciousness is "this knower, lord, that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & evil actions."

Why is this monk reprimanded for holding such a view of consciousness? It is because he thinks that Consciousness is a soul, a Self that experiences and observes things and that this is ultimately that unchanging entity that transmigrates through different lifetimes.

The Buddha furthermore states that

*"And to whom, worthless man, do you understand me to have taught the Dhamma like that? Haven't I, in many ways, said of dependently co-arisen consciousness, 'Apart from a requisite condition, there is no coming-into-play of consciousness'? [2] But you, through your own poor grasp, not only slander us but also dig yourself up [by the root] and produce much demerit for yourself. That will lead to your long-term harm & suffering."*

Note that the Buddha is saying two things here: 1) Consciousness is a manifestation that dependently originates. 2) By holding on to the wrong view, you create much demerits for yourself and prevent your own enlightenment.

So it goes two ways: having right view ensures your enlightenment, while holding on to the wrong view prevents awakening and further to propagate these views as truth or worse as Buddha's words (called slandering) destroys yourself and accumulate a lot of demerits. This is why having this discussion in this forum is very important, it is my wish that everyone can attain Nirvana ASAP.

Now back to the topic of consciousness... now we understand that Consciousness is not a self, but a manifestation that dependently originates. It is an Arising... it is not a Self or a Soul, or an Observer/Experiencer/Feeler.

*What kind of arising is called consciousness? The Buddha further explains:*

***Consciousness Classified by Requisite Condition***

*"Consciousness, monks, is classified simply by the requisite condition in dependence on which it arises. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the eye & forms is classified simply as eye-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the ear & sounds is classified simply as ear-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the nose & aromas is classified simply as nose-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the tongue & flavors is classified simply as tongue-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the body & tactile sensations is classified simply as body-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the intellect & ideas is classified simply as intellect-consciousness.*

*"Just as fire is classified simply by whatever requisite condition in dependence on which it burns — a fire that burns in dependence on wood is classified simply as a wood-fire, a fire that burns in dependence on wood-chips is classified simply as a wood-chip-fire; a fire that burns in dependence on grass is classified simply as a grass-fire; a fire that burns in dependence on cow-dung is classified simply as a cow-dung-fire; a fire that burns in dependence on chaff is classified simply as a chaff-fire; a fire that burns in dependence on rubbish is classified simply as a rubbish-fire — in the same way, consciousness is classified simply by the requisite condition in dependence on which it arises. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the eye & forms is classified simply as eye-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the ear & sounds is classified*

*simply as ear-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the nose & aromas is classified simply as nose-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the tongue & flavors is classified simply as tongue-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the body & tactile sensations is classified simply as body-consciousness. Consciousness that arises in dependence on the intellect & ideas is classified simply as intellect-consciousness.*

### *On Becoming*

*"Monks, do you see, 'This has come to be'?"* [3]

*"Yes, lord."*

*"Monks, do you see, 'It comes into play from that nutriment'?"*

*"Yes, lord."*

*"Monks, do you see, 'From the cessation of that nutriment, what has come to be is subject to cessation'?"*

*"Yes, lord."*

So we can see from here, there is no one single type of consciousness. There is actually six different types of consciousness, which arises due to interdependence and supporting conditions.

The act of hearing music depends on many things: the ears, the air, the speakers, attention, and so on... that act of cognizance is an arising with supporting conditions.

Consciousness is a pure cognizance manifestation. There is no 'self' involved... there is no 'self' hearing, seeing, there is pure seeing, pure hearing, everything happening without an experiencer. This is the nature of consciousness. There is no 'you' in here watching the 'tree out there'... there is just the pure seeing of tree without a seer and external object being seen - there is no distance, only distantless pure visual consciousness.

Lastly, I believe you hear from Heart Sutra that the five skandhas are empty and that forms, feelings, perception, volition and consciousness are all empty. What does 'empty' mean? Doesn't mean they don't exist, but that they interdependently originate, are impermanent, non-self, and thus are without an inherent, permanent essence.

Consciousness is empty because it does not have an inherent, independent, permanent nature: consciousness is an act of cognizance that dependently originates with supporting conditions.

Everything we experience is an act of cognizance that appears to be solid, real, 'out there' but is actually just a dependently originated 'magic show'.

Thus the Buddha says in Phena Sutta that consciousness is like a magic trick:

*Form is like a glob of foam; feeling, a bubble; perception, a*

*mirage; fabrications, a banana tree; consciousness, a magic trick — this has been taught by the Kinsman of the Sun. However you observe them, appropriately examine them, they're empty, void to whoever sees them appropriately.*

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28th November 2010

On a related note: There are many people (even Buddhist masters and teachers) with some level of attainment or realization who continue to think of Consciousness as an ultimate Self/Absolute. They call it 'buddha-nature' but they have not realized Anatta yet... they have certain glimpses of the luminous essence of pure Awareness but they have not realized the empty nature. They will think that there is a permanent Absolute within which all impermanent manifestation of consciousness arise and subside. They do not see that what they have experienced (the I AM Presence/thoughtless beingness) is simply one manifestation of pure awareness relating to the mind-realm, that in actuality all manifestations (including seeing, hearing, etc) are equally a manifestation of pure cognizance arising due to supporting conditions. I have been through this stage before.

They will say things like Buddha-nature is the ultimate and permanent Self beyond all five skandhas including impermanent consciousness. This is similar to the Hindus' view of Atman-Brahman. By propagating this view as Buddha's, they are in fact holding a position that will be put under the same scrutiny as Buddha did to Bhikkhu Sati, in other words these people are themselves 'destroying themselves and creating much demerits' by not teaching the right view and misrepresenting the Buddha's teaching. Even though the intention may be sincere. I beg to differ from the eternalistic/Hindu view that Buddha-nature is the Pure Consciousnes that transcends the five skandhas by putting it this way: Five Skandhas IS the Buddha-Nature. (Just as Zen Master Hui-neng and Dogen puts it: Impermanence IS Buddha-Nature) On this, I would like to quote from Lama Surya Das and Buddha himself:

Lama Surya Das: *http://www.dzogchen.org/teachings/talks/dtalk-95may22.html*

*I think this five skandha scheme is a very interesting one, in the sense that it can begin to raise some very interesting questions and help us dig deeper, rather than just having a vague, amorphous kind of understanding. We are individual. We are each responsible for ourselves and our karma and our relations. Our individuality is comprised of these five aggregates or skandhas. We can work with that. It is actually an expression of the Buddha-nature.*

*Now, doesn't anybody want to say, "I didn't hear anything about Buddha-nature in the five skandhas. Where's the Buddha-nature? Who made that up?" That's the right question. What Buddha-nature? I never said anything about it. Who made that up? What enlightenment? What nirvana? Who made all that stuff up? Is it in us or elsewhere? How to get from "here" to "there"?*

*We're all looking for something to hang our hopes on, but when we really get down to the present moment, to our own experience, to clear seeing, we come to what Buddha said: "In hearing there is only hearing; no one hearing and nothing heard." There is just that moment, that hearing. You might think, "Oh, a beautiful bird." How do you know it's a bird? It might be a tape recorder. It might be bicycle brakes squeaking. In the first moment, there is just hearing, then we get busy, our minds and concepts get involved. The Buddha went through all the five senses. "In seeing there is just seeing; no one seeing and nothing seen." And so on, with tasting, touching, smelling, and thinking. Thoughts without a thinker. In thinking there is just thinking. There is just that momentary process. There is no thinker. The notion of an inner thinker is just a thought. We imagine that there is somebody thinking. It's like the Wizard of Oz. They thought there was this glorious wizard, but it was just a little man back there behind the screen, behind the veil. That's how it is with the ego. We think there's a great big monkey inside working the five windows, the five senses. Or maybe five monkeys, one for each sense; a whole chattering monkey house, which it sometimes feels like. But is there really a concrete individual or permanent soul inside at all? It seems more like that the lights are on, but no one is home!*

Buddha (Shurangama Sutra): *"Ananda, you have not yet understood that all the defiling objects that appear, all the illusory, ephemeral phenomena, spring up in the very spot where they also come to an end. Their phenomena aspects are illusory and false, but their nature is in truth the bright substance of wonderful enlightenment. Thus it is throughout, up to the five skandhas and the six entrances, to the twelve places and the eighteen realms; the union and mixture of various causes and conditions account for their illusory and false existence, and the separation and dispersion of the causes and conditions result in their illusory and false extinction. Who would have thought that production and extinction, coming and going are fundamentally the eternal wonderful light of the Tathagata, the unmoving, all-pervading perfection, the wonderful nature of True Suchness! If within the true and eternal nature one seeks coming and going, confusion and enlightenment, or birth and death, one will never find them."*

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28th November 2010

> Originally posted by SoulDivine:
>
> *Are you confident that all phenomena in your experiential universe is arising and passing away every moment?*
>
> Yes, its confirmed based on personal experience.
>
> *Are you confident that all phenomena arising is without self, arising without an agent, experiencer, doer?*
>
> It is **unlikely** for me to perceive as this as "right view" because all phenonmena arise due to intentions or according to design/laws of creation. If there is no

"doer", then you will not be reading this right now and the universe will be lifeless.

*Are you confident that all phenomena arising is inconstant and hence, unsatisfactory?*

Yes, everyone experience "unsatisfactory" all the time anyway.

Are you confident that all phenomena arise due to causes and conditions?

Yes, by intentions and by design.

There are intentions, but intentions are not the 'doer'.

Intention is part of the 'being done'! Intention arises, which serves as a supporting condition for further arisings. There is no denying the importance of intentions in influencing and affecting our every moment of living. Intentions have an important role in life. But intention itself is not a doer: it is an arising with supporting conditions as well.

If intention is a doer, then who is the doer of intention? You'll need an infinite regress of intentions... which is not the case.

'No Self' does not mean no arisings... it just means all there is is arisings! Whatever you call 'your self' is really just these arisings... no self, no agent, doer, perceiver could be found could be found apart from this arising and passing phenomena.

Reading this is happening right now without a doer and perceiver - it is simply pure perception without a perceiver.

There is no 'you' in here reading the words 'over there'... you are the screen, the computer, the music playing, everything arising so to speak... though there is no 'you'.

The universe is lifeless because it is purely spontaneous emergence (but it is spontaneity with supporting conditions) without 'doers' and 'perceivers' - but on the other hand Universe IS Consciousness and Life itself.

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28th November 2010

Non dual is seeing that everything is mind, a central teaching in Lankavatara Sutra (see **Transcript of the Lankavatara Sutra sharing by Thusness**). By 'mind', I don't mean imagination or fabrication - I mean you, as Buddha-nature, as the undeniable presence of cognizance.

Seeing scenery, there is no mind seeing scenery... scenery is the seeing/mind itself, pure luminous cognizance. Hearing music, there is no mind hearing the music... mind is music itself, pure luminous cognizance.

But if we investigate mind... no such entity can be found, only experiencing, intimate, non-dual, flowing. There is no ultimate mind... only moments of arising that is mind, only moments of mind, process of mind, mind-moments, pure, intimate, non-dual, vivid, yet insubstantial and ungraspable.

This is the difference between substantial and non-substantial non-dualism: whether non-dual moments of mind are reified into an ultimate essence or seen to be simply the process of arisings. This is the One Mind without reifying the 'One'... the one mind that is the diversity itself.

Update (24/12/10):

Found a short and relevant excerpt from the scriptures that captures the essence well.

The Prajñápáramitá Sutra says:

Regarding mind:
Mind does not exist
its expression is luminosity.

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09th December 2010

Seeing, hearing, experiencing, thinking...

That is all that is happening. Look for a 'self' to which these are happening, a separate self cannot be found to exist.

No one is causing experiences to happen... no God, no Self, no controller, no perceiver... there is just what is seen, what is heard... 'in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard'. They do not happen to, or belong to, a self. They are the 'phenomena of the interdependent universe' in which there are no perceivers or controllers.

So the question ought not to be 'who is thinking' or 'who is seeing' or 'who is controlling the thoughts'...

The question ought to be, 'how do these phenomena arise'? And the answer to that is they arise interdependent with all various supporting conditions... Everything interacting with each other to support this moment of manifestation, including our deep latent mental tendencies/propensities/conditionings.

So when there are bad feelings, bad thoughts, and so on... they too are manifested due to conditions. Trying to suppress them is to fall into self-view: the view that there is a controller or doer of things that could do/undo arisings... Don't think you can 'will' your attachments away merely by will power or force - things don't work that way.

This self-view is harmful as it leads to unnatural suppression (in which the symptoms may be temporarily suppressed but return back with greater force later) of experiences.

But does this mean we cannot do a single thing to our thoughts and attachments? No... it just means we need to change the conditions and tendencies in which such experiences/sufferings/attachments occur.

By how? By practicing non-clinging, contemplating the non-self, impermanence, emptiness of things, and so on... which leads to insight and release.

On the relative level, practices like metta (loving kindness) helps resolve certain psychological issues like anger.

Chanting and calm-abiding meditations help develope calmness of mind.

All these are changing the tendencies and conditions of mind in which experiences manifest...

Therefore, practice is important. The nature of reality never changes and is merely discovered... but the way in which our experience manifest can be changed - by transformation, by realization, and so on. But not by suppression, or forcefully controlling our experience, which never works, simply because it is not in accord with the way reality works (via interdependent origination).

For example, we often think that thinking is the problem and we think we need to stop them from arising... but actually there is no problem with thinking at all - thinking is a natural functioning of all human beings and even in animals. They are a required function.

The problem is because of our clinging to our thoughts, our self-contraction, which causes endless suffering for ourselves. So there is a more fundamental underlying condition/cause which serves as a basis for those thoughts, or rather, the clinging to thoughts. They are our ignorance, our tendency to grasp, and this is the condition that needs to be removed. Not the gross manifestation of thoughts per say...

That said, calming the mind (impt: via letting go - not forceful suppression) is still an important part of the practice and must go hand in hand with insight practice - but my point is that suppressing thoughts doesn't cut the root of the problem. It merely suppresses certain 'symptoms' of a more fundamental underlying cause.

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11th December 2010

If you say there is self... zen master's stick hit you 30 times.

If you say there is no self... zen master's stick hit you 30 times.

If you say all is one... zen master's stick hit you 30 times.

In the process of contemplation, the 'dualistic' and 'inherent' framework begins to lose hold. After seeing through and letting go "self" via the teaching of "no self"... so too is "one", "no self", "emptiness" to be let go of in the process.

"Self", "No Self", "One", "Emptiness" cannot be established - just as no "self" can be found, no "no self" can be found either. View and teachings are important but are also rafts to be let go in the end.

And yet still nothing is lost. Sky is blue, grass is green, clear, obvious, undeniable, certain, actual. Drop my spoon, tinggg!

The old pond, A frog jumps in: Plop!

*"Bhikkkhus, this view, so clean and pure, if you covet, fondle, treasure and take pride in it do you know this Teaching comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up and not for the purpose of holding? No, venerable sir. Bhikkhus, this view of yours so clean and pure, do not covet, fondle, treasure and take pride in it. Do you know this Teaching comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up and not for the purpose of holding? Yes, venerable sir."*

*- Mahatanhasankhaya Sutta*

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11th December 2010

We often think that thought is obscuring our 'experience of Nowness' or 'experience of Presence'...

As if the present moment is what is actually present in the absence of thought.

But have we actually look at thought itself... the actuality of thought.

Isn't thought itself an arising happening now? If we look nakedly at the manifestation of thought... we discover it to be of the similar vivid intense presence as that which is experienced in the absence of conceptual thoughts.

Thought too is Presence, is Nowness, is Awareness, whatever you want to call it (they aren't an inherent substance but merely words pointing to the vivid and insubstantial arisings of the moment)... it is vivid, bright, clear, though insubstantial (like anything else). It is non-dual: there is no separation of a thinker and thought... there is just the vivid appearance of thought.

Maintaining awareness, 'living in the now', presence, and so on, therefore does not require getting rid of thought or 'remaining in the gap of no-thought' like what many teachers teach.

Maintaining presence can be done 'within' thought itself... by dropping all striving (to maintain any particular state of presence), resistance and clinging, and simply and mindfully letting all experiences including thoughts to arise and subside in its own luminous and empty nature.

Remember as I said before: thoughts aren't the problem, clinging is.

By being awake 'within' thoughts, we stop ourselves from getting lost in our thought stories... we are present to the entire field of experience rather than narrowing our

focus on our mental chatter. Whatever arises is allowed to unfold and then subside on its own without clinging or rejecting.

Found something relevant:

***View and Meditation of the Great Perfection***
***by the first Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche***

*Homage to the Guru, the teacher.*

*The View and Meditation of Dzogchen can be explained in many, many ways, but simply sustaining the essence of present awareness includes them all.*
*Your mind won't be found elsewhere.*
*It is the very nature of this moment-to-moment thinking.*
*Regard nakedly the essence of this thinking and you find present awareness, right where you are.*

*Why chase after thoughts, which are superficial ripples of present awareness?*
*Rather look directly into the naked, empty nature of thoughts; then there is no duality, no observer, and nothing observed.*
*Simply rest in this transparent, nondual present awareness.*
*Make yourself at home in the natural state of pure presence, just being, not doing anything in particular.*

*Present awareness is empty, open, and luminous; not a concrete substance, yet not nothing.*
*Empty, yet it is perfectly cognizant, lucid, aware.*
*As if magically, not by causing it to be aware, but innately aware, awareness continuously functions.*
*These two sides of present awareness or Rigpa-its emptiness and its cognizance (lucidity)-are inseparable.*
*Emptiness and luminosity (knowing) are inseparable.*
*They are formless, as if nothing whatsoever, ungraspable, unborn, undying; yet spacious, vivid, buoyant.*
*Nothing whatsoever, yet Emaho!, everything is magically experienced.*
*Simply recognize this.*
*Look into the magical mirror of mind and appreciate this infinite magical display.*

*With constant, vigilant mindfulness, sustain this recognition of empty, open, brilliant awareness.*
*Cultivate nothing else.*
*There is nothing else to do, or to undo.*
*Let it remain naturally.*
*Don't spoil it by manipulating, by controlling, by tampering with it, and worrying about whether you are right or wrong, or having a good meditation or a bad meditation.*
*Leave it as it is, and rest your weary heart and mind.*

*The ultimate luminosity of Dharmakaya, absolute truth, is nothing other than the very nature of this uncontrived, ordinary mind.*

*Don't look elsewhere for the Buddha.*
*It is nothing other than the nature of this present awareness.*
*This is the Buddha within.*

*There are innumerable Dharma teachings.*
*There are many antidotes to many different kinds of spiritual diseases.*
*There are many words in the Mahamudra and Dzogchen nondual teachings.*
*But the root, the heart of all practices is included here, in simply sustaining the luminous nature of this present awareness.*
*If you search elsewhere for something better, a Buddha superior to this present awareness, you are deluding yourself.*
*You are chained, entangled in the barbed wire of hope and fear.*
*So give it up! Simply sustain present wakefulness, moment after moment.*
*Devotion, compassion, and perfecting virtue and wisdom are the most important supportive methods for completely fulfilling this naked, nondual teaching about present awareness, the innate Dharmakaya.*
*So always devote yourself to spiritual practice for the benefit of others and apply yourself in body, speech, and mind to what is wholesome and virtuous.*

*Sarva mangalam.*

*May all beings be happy!*

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11th December 2010

> Originally posted by An Eternal Now:
>
> Sky is blue, grass is green, clear, obvious, undeniable, certain, actual. Drop my spoon, tinggg!
>
> The old pond, A frog jumps in: Plop!

**Thusness**:

For this to be thorough, effortless and natural, arise the 'willingness' to let go of Awareness first.

and

*" Sky is blue, grass is green, clear, obvious, undeniable, certain, actual. Drop my spoon, tinggg!*

*The old pond, A frog jumps in: Plop!"*

only expresses the realization and degree of naturalness of non-dual luminosity, it is not sufficient for a practitioner to let go of all views.

---

11th December 2010

I see.. yes, non-dual luminosity though vivid and clear is also empty... arise and vanish momentarily according to conditions without traces. This too must be seen. The slightest clinging and the slightest 'trace' left of anything at all and we miss the "effortless/spontaneous and conditionally arising and passing" nature of self-luminous manifestation...

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12th December 2010

Simpo_:

(On this book)

Nice work :)

Thanks for the sharing.

I think got to emphasize (to the Readers) that realisation is more about discover the incorrect or wrong assumption AND not about discovering a new information or fact.

For example, one cannot really say what is Non-duality. It is not even 'no-subject-object' division . We can only point out what existence has been assumed to be .. and thus break the assumption.. but we cannot define what it really is.

Knowldege like Non-duality, emptiness cannot be grasped at, because they will immediately be defined (by the mind) and be turned into another concept for grasping.

The tendency of the mind is to always find some reference point and unconsciously define it. 'What is' simply cannot be defined, but can only be known by 'what it is not.'

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12th December 2010

Thusness:

Very well said simpo. :)

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12th December 2010

Nicely said... thanks. :) Ultimately there is no 'non-duality' or 'emptiness'... non-duality and emptiness are merely pointers to break the false assumptions we have about reality... but even 'non duality', 'no self', 'emptiness' cannot be established. As they said, even emptiness is empty!

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12th December 2010

> Originally posted by An Eternal Now:
>
> I see.. yes, non-dual luminosity though vivid and clear is also empty... arise and vanish momentarily according to conditions without traces. This too must be seen. The slightest clinging and the slightest 'trace' left of anything at all and we miss the "effortless/spontaneous and conditionally arising and passing" nature of self-luminous manifestation...

**Thusness**:

Yes and "right view" becomes even more important after clear non-dual experience.

Although all are ultimately raft and pointers, unless the quintessence of "Emptiness" of phenomena including "Awareness/Global-Awareness" is thoroughly penetrated, it is still too early to talk about dropping all views.

We may not know how much 'attachment' we have invested in non-dual presence until we go through the painstaking process of twofold Emptiness.

As Greg Goode said:

> In my own interactions with people, when these issues started to come up, I began to suggest looking into the emptiness teachings, which don't mention global awareness. And you know what? Instant resonance!! The way these folks see it, the emptiness teachings don't *reduce* the world, they *liberate* it.
>
> http://nondualityamerica.wordpress.com/emptiness-teachings/

My 2 cents. :)

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12th December 2010

I see... thanks for pointing out :)

Indeed... There is no Awareness... There is no perceiver perceiving perception...

The perceiving is always just conditionally-arising-and-passing self-luminous perceptions, sights, sounds... no agent of them can be found. Therefore to cling to a state of 'awareness' is to fail to see the nature of manifestation/awareness.

Having an experience or insight of non-dual can still result in clinging to 'Awareness' if the 'no agent' aspect is not seen. There could be the notion that 'There is an ultimate Awareness that is one with all it perceives'... the 'view' of anatta and emptiness should therefore step in to dissolve such assumption/deeply held 'view of inherency'. Otherwise the tendency of 'sinking back to a Source' will still keep arising. The tendency to abstract and segregate brilliant luminosity/knowing from the arising and ceasing manifestation (even though they are inseparable) is still strong not just in the 'I AM' but also in the nondual phase.

So in conclusion... We can't do away with the raft.... until the raft has done it's job. Don't throw it away too early otherwise it fails to serve its intended purpose.

---

17th December 2010

When we talk about the nature of reality, many of us think of a Source. What source? An ultimate source, an ultimate awareness that displays or manifests everything.

In our mind, we picture awareness like an eternal sun shining on the passing clouds in the sky... the eternal sun is primordially untainted, pure, unaffected by the passing/transient stuff, yet it is also the source of all the manifestations/transient stuff. We picture a Source 'illuminating' and 'manifesting' things... We think of Awareness as an agent 'perceiving' and 'illuminating' objects... this can certainly appear to be the case even after transcendental experiences of I AM and Non-Dual, with the 'view of inherency' still strong.

However the insight of Anatta removes the notion of an agent or source... why is this so? Anatta means this... in hearing, there is no hearer... there is simply the self-accomplishing process of hearing which is really the experience of sound, music, changing moment to moment, arising according to conditions.

In seeing, there is no seer... it is simply a self-accomplishing process of seeing which is is simply the experience of sight, the shapes and colours, changing moment to moment, arising according to conditions.

In thinking, there is no thinker or controller of thought... there is simply the self-accomplishing process of thinking which is thought, changing moment to moment, arising according to latent tendencies and other supporting conditions.

So if there is no agent, no source, no ultimate Awareness - only awareness/hearing/thinking as a process of manifestation... this is not a denial of awareness, hearing, seeing, perceiving, but a denial of awareness/perceiving/etc as an 'agent' of experience - it is simply a process of experiencing without experiencer.

If this is the case, is there a primordially pure Awareness? The answer is this... Awareness is simply the self-luminous appearance, and this self-luminous appearance is ultimately empty, unborn, and primordially pure.

This arising sound... this arising sight... scent... thought.... This is it. It is not about the transient clouds obscuring or tainting the primordially pure sun and then trying to remove all the clouds to get back to that pure sun... rather, it is that, the passing cloud seen as it is, is primordially pure, empty, self-luminous and spontaneously perfected. And yet... undeniably, ignorance arise and we experience apparent duality and inherency where none can be found... this false view of reality is the cause of all our grasping and sufferings and problems.

Yet the cause of liberation is not found by shunning the transience or sinking back into a Source... it is not about a 'freedom from appearance' or even a 'freedom despite

appearance'... appearance is primordially pure! This appearance (seen rightly) alone is self-liberating! It is about a shift in view/paradigm... a shift from duality and inherency to a non-dual, non-inherent viewless view of transience.

Liberation is thus not about abiding in an unborn ultimate essence... but seeing all appearances as luminous, empty, unborn, primordially pure and spontaneously perfected.

Dzogchen master Longchenpa:

*...All phenomena are primordially pure and enlightened, so it is unborn and unceasing, inconceivable and inexpressible.*

*In the ultimate sphere purity and impurity are naturally pure and phenomena are the great equal perfection, free from conception.*

*Since there is no bondage and liberation, there is no going, coming or dwelling.*

*Appearance and emptiness are conventions, apprehended and apprehender are like maya (a magical apparition).*

*The happiness and suffering of samsara and nirvana are like good and bad dreams.*

*From the very moment of appearing, its nature is free from elaboration.*

*From it (the state of freedom from elaboration), the very interdependent causation of the great arising and cessation appears like a dream, maya, an optical illusion, a city of the gandharvas an echo, and a reflection, having no reality. All the events such as arising, etc., Are in their true nature unborn.*

*So they will never cease nor undergo any changes in the three periods of time.*

*They did not come from anywhere and they did not go anywhere.*

*They will not stay anywhere: they are like a dream and maya.*

*A foolish person is attached to phenomena as true, and apprehends them as gross material phenomena,*

*"i" and "self," whereas they are like a maya-girl who disappears when touched.*

*They are not true because they are deceiving and act only in appearance.*

*The spheres of the six realms of beings and the pure lands of the buddhas, also are not aggregations of atoms, but merely the self-appearances of beings' minds.*

*For example, in a dream buddhas and sentient beings appear as real, endowed with inconceivable properties.*

*However, when one awakens, they were just a momentary object of the mind.*

*In the same way should be understood all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana.*

*There is no separate emptiness apart from apparent phenomena.*

*It is like fire and heat, the qualities of fire.*

*The notion of their distinctness is a division made by mind.*

*Water and the moon's reflection in water are indivisibly one in the pool.*

*Likewise, appearances and emptiness are one in the great dharmata.*

*These appearances are unborn from the beginning, and they are the dharmakaya.*

*They are like reflections, naturally unstained and pure.*

*The mind's fabricating their existence or nonexistence is an illusion,*

*So do not conceptualize whatever appearances arise...*

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17th December 2010

There is no cosmic awareness pervading all beings and universe...

Such a notion presumes the existence of an inherent awareness which pervades the universe and all beings.

At this level, the notion of a personal self is broken down... reality is seen as something impersonal and universal (no sense of a small 'me' or 'mine' therein), but then reified into a Big Self that pervades and subsumes all things and beings.

However, the realization of anatta (which goes beyond impersonality as the view of an agent or a Big Self is also deconstructed) breaks down the notion of an inherent universal awareness that is the source of the universe/all beings... why?

Awareness/Universe is realized to be just This arising sound... this passing scent, this passing sight, this passing thought... each experience is distinct and complete as it is. Each mindstream is also distinct... we don't 'share' an ultimate awareness - awareness is just the diversity of experiences.

The Universe is not an inherently objective thing... Awareness is also not an inherently existing/ultimate Subject... both words 'universe' and 'awareness' are simply labels that point to This experience... both are labels that point to characteristics of each experience... the word 'universe' points to the non-personal nature of each experience, while the word 'awareness' implies the self-luminous, brilliant essence of each arising... but they are convenient labels not refering to an inherent essence.

Luminously and vividly present... the typing sound of the keyboard... the universe/awareness is just This, and yet the moment it appears it vanishes without a trace... and then in deep sleep, everything literally vanishes... all manifestation of consciousness so familiar and dear to us completely vanishes. **No knowing of any sorts survive deep sleep.** And then each morning, consciousness/universe arises again due to conditions... and the cycle begins... a conditioned cycle with nothing (no self/objects) inherent therein.

No solid 'The Awareness' or 'The Universe' can be found after all... neither can non-existence apply (this will be a nihilistic denial of 'our' experience): actuality is just this stream of univer-sing that depends on supporting conditions and is diverse and distinct in every manifestation.

So as I quote again... from the Buddha...

*Dwelling at Savatthi... Then Ven. Kaccayana Gotta approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Lord, 'Right view, right view,' it is said. To what extent is there right view?"*

*"By & large, Kaccayana, this world is supported by (takes as its object) a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one.*

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17th December 2010

> *"Man, if these physical sensations aren't me... if seeing these things visually isn't me... if the thoughts I have aren't me... then what the hell is me?"*

If this becomes a dissociative process, then the sense of duality/a watcher is still strong... i.e. perceived objects are not me, but yet there is still this lingering sense that there is a 'me' that is experiencing, perceiving objects and thus is separate from/not the objects.

You should see in the direction of 'in seeing just the seen', 'in hearing just the heard', 'in thinking just thought'... there is no seer, hearer, thinker behind arisings - only just thoughts, sounds, sight. There is just a self-luminous and self-accomplishing process of knowing/thinking/doing without a behind agent.

See that what you called 'physical sensations' and 'seeing these things visually' are not happening to a someone... they are just happening by themselves (with supporting conditions) and are self-luminous - no observer is observing them, the observing is precisely just the process of observation.

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18th December 2010

Are mind(s) unique or cosmic/universal?

Was discussing with a friend on Facebook... he is of the opinion (based on his insight of no-self) that there are no individual mindstreams.

I told him (slightly edited):

Mindstreams do not imply 'entities'... There is no entity in the mindstream... the word 'mind STREAM' implies it's a stream rolling on with nothing substantially existing.

Of course, each stream doesn't directly affect others (but it does affect others interdependently: they just aren't the same stream).

In other words, the karmic deeds of this mind stream wouldn't ripen in another mindstream...

i.e. if I killed someone, you won't have to suffer for 'my' karma (even though there is no doer, just a process of volition, action and ripening, etc) It is not the case that 'we are one and the same'.

Also, all phenomena are luminous, but luminosity is not a shared essence of all mindstreams (that would be the substantialist non-dual view of 'everything as manifestation of an ultimate Awareness' instead of seeing that Awareness is simply this arising and subsiding sight, sound, thought)... luminosity is the diversity of experience which we do not share (as obviously we all have our unique experiences in life which we do not share), and thus mindstreams remain unique even though non-dual (means in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard, no agent/hearer/experiencer can be found).

There is no one universal or cosmic mind which we share. Instead, there are unique streams of minds (mental experiences), but with no center or self to which the streaming occurs to. There are unique mindstreams/unique experiences which we never share, but no independent self/selves or an independent experiencer of experience. Because there is no experiencer, all there is is experience… but experiences are diverse and unique and cannot be equated with one another. The experience of a dog and the experience of a human and the experience of some other realms are vastly different due to different karmic conditionings. ‘We’ have unique mindstreams and experiences even though there is no ‘self’.

As Loppon Namdrol (Malcolm Smith) pointed out, the notion of a cosmic mind is a non-Buddhist view. Such a view is sustained only when there is lack of insight into Anatta and Emptiness.

Later: Oh btw, it is not the case that ‘we are individual multiple consciousness’, but that ‘there are unique/individual multiple streams of consciousness’. There is no ‘we are ...’. There just are unique minds, and mind is not self. But relatively/conveniently speaking, yeah, ‘we’ are different minds.

Arising and disappearing experiences imply diversity – i.e. different experiences appearing according to different conditions and not something ‘shared’.

Seamless presence is the luminous character of every phenomenon, but each moment of seamless presence is a unique and complete phenomenon that is distinct from the unique and complete phenomena of a different mindstream. We do not, for example, experience a dog’s experience.

e.g. Due to human karma, in seeing, just shapes and colours. But for a dog, due to dog karma, in seeing, just black and white plus shapes.

There are no ‘multiple selves’, or ‘multiple experiencers’, but there are different mindstreams/experiences. Experience is not denied, just the experiencer that is denied/cannot be found.

---

19th December 2010

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 18 December 2010 - 11:03 AM, said:*
>
> *Yes, I think the sense of "stream" is precisely due to the imprints of those memories making it seem like a continuous "thing" but it's really only the impression of continuum we can only be sure of. And I also agree that the moment is unique to itself, which is, at this moment, "me".*

There is causal continuity but not a continuous thing.

For example, I pass down a certain knowledge/skill of mine to you. It is so called 'reborn' in a new instance, in this case, a new mind moment in your mind-stream. My knowledge is not exactly same as yours (though similar it is a unique experience) nor is it different.

Likewise, your karma and my karma is unique: and it is passed down (reborn) moment after moment and life after life (though subject to transformation along the way), but it remains its unique stream. Through 'my' unique karma, a unique mind-moment is reborn which is different from 'your' unique karma which resulted in 'your' unique mind-moment. In this way, there is uniqueness and continuity to mindstreams. Causal continuity cannot be denied, what is denied is simply a substantial continuous self or agent behind experience/perception/action.

In Mil. it is said:

*"Now, Venerable Nāgasena, the one who is reborn, is he the same as the one who has died, or is he another?"*

*"Neither the same, nor another" (na ca so na ca añño).*

*"Give me an example."*

*"What do you think, o King: are you now, as a grown-up person, the same that you had been as a little, young and tender babe? "*

*"No, Venerable Sir. Another person was the little, young and tender babe, but quite a different person am I now as a grown-up man . " . . .*

*"... Is perhaps in the first watch of the night one lamp burning, another one in the middle*

*watch, and again another one in the last watch?"*

*"No, Venerable Sir. The light during the whole night depends on one and the same lamp.''*

*"Just so, o King, is the chain of phenomena linked together. One phenomenon arises, another vanishes, yet all are linked together, one after the other, without interruption. In this way one reaches the final state of consciousnes neither as the same person. Nor as another person.''*

Also, in the //Milindapanha// the King asks Nagasena:

*"What is it, Venerable Sir, that will be reborn?"*

*"A psycho-physical combination (//nama-rupa//), O King."*

*"But how, Venerable Sir? Is it the same psycho-physical combination as this present one?"*

*"No, O King. But the present psycho-physical combination produces kammically wholesome and unwholesome volitional activities, and through such kamma a new psycho-physical combination will be born."*

Also see this well written article (Anatta (Non-self) and Kamma (Karma), The Best Kept Secret in the Universe by Ajahn Jagaro):
http://www.katinkahesselink.net/tibet/anatta_jagaro.html

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19th December 2010

> *Originally posted by theWEIRDme:*
>
> *then can you at least shorten it? it is so longgggg*

There is the experience of reading these words. But there is no one reading it.

There is the experience of hearing the bird chirping. But there is no hearer.

There is the thought of what this actually mean. But there is no thinker.

There is the action to type a reply. But there is no doer.

In short: everything IS, but there is no you.

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19th December 2010

> *Originally posted by Beautiful951:*

*Is no self and not attached to self related? How are they related because I understand not attached to self but I don't understand no self.*

They are different.

You may be not attached to self, through, for example, giving away your things and time selflessly for the service of others.

But you may not realize that there is no self.

Realizing no self is about realizing a fact of your immediate experience... It dissolves the construct that there is a 'me' that is perceiving, doing, making things happen. Things are just happening. There is doing, deeds are done, but no doer. Hearing is just happening. Seeing is just happening, seeing is simply the experience of sights, colours, shapes, and hearing is simply the experience of music, tunes, etc, there is no hearer. There is no 'seer seeing things'... there is no inside and outside (no 'me' inside here watching things over 'there' - there is in the seen JUST the seen, no 'you' plus 'the seen'), there is no duality, there is no agency.

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19th December 2010

*Originally posted by Beautiful951:*

*Isn't it true that to understand no self, I first have to know what is the self?*

Zen Master Dogen:

" To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things of the universe. To be enlightened by all things of the universe is to cast off the body and mind of the self as well as those of others. Even the traces of enlightenment are wiped out, and life with traceless enlightenment goes on forever and ever.[6]

To know what is the self, is to realize that there is no self - then you are enlightened by the ten thousand things.

What does it mean?

Hearing the bird, there is no 'me' hearing the bird - I am the bird chirping! And there is no 'I'... just That....

Conventionally speaking 'You' are what is arising moment to moment... sensations, thoughts, sight, sound, smell, taste, touch... ultimately, there is no "You".

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19th December 2010

*Originally posted by Herzog_Zwei:*

*It's just replacing one thing with another thing. Why are you so pedantic?*

*Are you saying I replaced my belief of 'self' with 'no self'?*

To that: my answer is, no.

I do not believe in 'no self'. I have seen through the illusion of self, yes, but I do not hold on to any beliefs of any sort. There is just this real time authentication of the true face of experience/experiencing without an experiencer.

There is just the undeniable experience of hearing, seeing, thinking... without the sense or illusion of 'me in here seeing that over there'.

There is no concepts, beliefs required.

There is no self, and **also no 'no self'.**

There is just This... sound of keyboard typing, da da da.... words appearing on screen... all self-luminous, vivid, pristine, happening-of-itself.

Everything is just shining the obvious Truth... there is no need to keep thinking 'no self'. (oh but before you see this, keep contemplating)

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23rd December 2010

Everything arises dependent on supporting conditions.

Auditory, visual, tactile, etc... consciousness-es arise moment to moment, but each moment of manifestation is a fresh, unique, and complete expression dependent on many factors and conditions.

What we think of as 'I did this' is actually:

With certain event as condition, a particular thought arises, and with that particular thought process as condition, an intention arises, and with the intention as condition, physical action arises, and with the physical action as condition, (blah blah blah...)

What we think of as 'I experienced this' is actually:

With certain event as condition (dark clouds, lightning strikes, air, ear, etc), a particular auditory consciousness arises (without a separate observer - in hearing just sound)....

Everything is the action of an interdependent universe. There is no agent behind things... but mere co-dependent arising. An important note is that 'no agent' does not mean 'no intention' - 'no agent' does not mean you are apart from the process and the process simply happens by itself without volition - rather, you are still as engaged, intimate, and non-dual with the process (because there is no 'you' apart from the process!) which includes intentions and actions. The notion of agency and separation is rejected, nothing

else.

We don't step into the same river twice... because in each moment a fresh new experience arises dependent on various conditions.

Nothing is inherent... nothing exists on its own, but arises dependent on other factors. Consciousness is non-dual and non-inherent - i.e. consciousness is not a separate observer of objects but is simply the experience of sight, taste, scenery, etc, complete as it is without an observer-observed dichotomy... but it is also non-inherent: each non-dual arising arises dependent on various supporting conditions. There is nothing inherent (either subjectively or objectively) at all in experience... and therefore, being dependently originated, there is also nothing truly unchanging or permanent - change dependent on conditions, alone is.

Is Consciousness the ultimate source or cause of all experience? Not really... for Consciousness is simply experience as it is - it is not the source of experience. It's self-luminosity is simply the characteristic of each unique experience... Consciousness is the 'effect' of interdependence, not the 'cause'. i.e. Consciousness IS the sound of 'BANG'... it is not that there is a 'consciousness' causing the experience of hearing sound 'BANG'... and, this experience could not have happened without various supporting conditions. With supporting conditions, experience naturally arises, and where experience/arising is, consciousness is (experience IS by nature conscious).

And yet each moment of consciousness is a whole, complete, and unconditioned expression of interdependence. This unconditioned-complete-manifestation-of-consciousness is not 'created' by something else (it is a whole new complete reality), yet is supported by the other factors for its arising.

So, in the seeing, there is JUST the seen... not a segregated world of subjects and objects interacting with each other. The universe is just univer-sing as mountains and rivers.

In the hearing, there is JUST the heard.... not a segregated world of subjects and objects interacting with each other. The universe is arising as this sound, Dinggggg...

And yet, the heard cannot arise except with the condition of ears, object of hearing, etc... an interdependence that is so seamless and complex as to be incomprehensible by thought.

The seen cannot arise except with the condition of eyes, object of sight, etc... an interdependence that is so seamless and complex as to be incomprehensible by thought.

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23rd December 2010

*Din Robinson:*

*awareness, awareness, awareness...*

*all thoughts, sensations, feelings are seen as the environment in which I am the space, the presence thereof...*

@Din - to see 'Awareness' as an underlying space beneath perception is yet another illusion of duality...

The illusion of 'sight + a space underlying sight'... 'perception + a space underlying perception' where in reality in seeing JUST the seen. No duality! No 'sight + seer'... 'perception + perceiver'...

In actuality, in the seeing JUST the seen, the scenery... in the perceiving JUST the perception, no perceiver... in the sensing JUST the sensation, no sensor...

The perception of 'I AMness' as the space-like awareness is simply a particular state of Presence... the formless presence actually has a similar/one taste in all perceptions - all sensation, all perceptions, all feelings are actually non-dual without an observer-observed dichotomy, the I AM/Formless sense of Presence has no monopoly, and is not any more special than a passing sight, a passing sound..

And as Daniel Ingram have mentioned in a similar topic:

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/09/rigpa-and-aggregates.html

'...be wary of anything that wants to be a super-awareness, a rigpa that is larger than everything else, as it can't be, by definition...'

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24th December 2010

The experience of sound does not arise from somewhere (whether 'outside', 'inside', 'from Awareness', etc)... Why? Sound does not have independent and inherent existence. It cannot be located somewhere. Say, the sound of lightning strike.... It IS only when all supporting causal factors are present. (weather, air, lightning, ears, etc) It isn't when the causal factors have departed. Therefore, the arising of sound is dependent on various causal factors and therefore sound is empty of being an entity that has an origin or location. The experience of music playing does not exist in or come from your ear, your head, or the speakers. It is simply an interdependently originated experience. Its nature is empty, unlocatable, ungraspable, dependently originated. Same goes for thought, sight, etc....

What we see is so concretely 'out there' is really simply an experience of interdependent origination, and each species may perceive differently - dogs don't perceive colours, humans perceive colours, other realms can perceive something totally different, or if you perceive at a quantum level there is mostly just voidness and yet due to our karmic conditions, we perceive shapes and forms. Neither 'voidness' nor 'shapes and forms' are inherent! There is merely an infinite potentiality due to the emptiness and interdependent-origination of things.

Nothing we can see, hear, touch, think, has an actual location, and they do not exist or arise from some 'where'. In fact 'existence' does not apply... they merely appear - and their appearance is momentary like lightning strikes. Their appearance is like an illusion but not an illusion, vivid, self-luminous and yet ungraspable.

By clearly seeing D.O., we see that there is no 'coming from', no 'going to', no inherent existence or location, entities, ultimate source, permanence, independence, etc... Freeing ourselves from such notions, experience still arise as clearly as ever, and yet we are freed from notions that bind us, that causes us to grasp, that causes us to 'leave traces' of objects and of a Source. We see that there is no Ultimate Origin to experience, only Interdependent Origination to experience, and so we don't cling to a Source, an Awareness, etc (Awareness is simply an interdependently originated process of experiencing). Yet the self-luminosity of experience remains as clear as ever.

What IS is only this stream of dream-like phenomena rolling on according to conditions... that has no arising and ceasing, no coming and going, no origin, no abidance, and yet is the very brilliance of non-dual presence itself. I've seen videos of certain teachers who explain that there is a self-nature (Presence) that has no coming and going unlike appearances... but the fact is, appearance IS Presence, and appearance is by nature empty, unconditioned, without coming and going.

*"All composed things are like a dream,*

*a phantom, a drop of dew, a flash of lightning.*

*That is how to meditate on them,*

*that is how to observe them."*

~ Diamond Sutra

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24th December 2010

**Thusness**:

Hi AEN,

Though it sounded like you are repeating the past 3 posts, I can sense that you are getting it. :)

The initial break-through although may appear thorough to you but the clear experience of no-mind should not last more than few months. It will lose its grandeur and the 'split' will surface intermittently. So go through few cycles of refining your experience of no-mind and continue to adopt the 'right view' of understanding the experience. Have no doubt that Phenomena in their primordial purity is Dharmakaya.

Always check whether there is any lingering trace of a background. If there is, there will always be division. Do not fear challenging your imaginary split. In time to come, you will realize you can't re-experience the 'division' even if you want to.

Lastly when the subtest trace of a background is gone, still don't think of dropping 'right view'; it is only the beginning; you will begin to understand DO more deeply.

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25th December 2010

There is nothing that can be established in actual experience.... like what we call 'universe' is really 'universing'... what we call 'tree' is really 'treeing'... what we call 'wind' is really just the experience 'blowing'... a flow that cannot be pinned down, located, grasped or established in any way. As you said, everything is letting go every moment... there is just thoughts after thoughts, impressions, sensations, sounds, breath, etc. We can't establish 'something' that is ever-evolving, 'streaming', dependently originated and non-substantial as being this or that, existing or non-existing, etc.

Our experience must not only transform to non dual, it must transform (not really transform as this is already the case, but rather a 'shift' of perception, an insight) to a non-substantial stream of experience.

There is nothing that can be established in actual experience.... like what we call 'universe' is really 'universing'... what we call 'tree' is really 'treeing'... what we call 'wind' is really just the experience 'blowing'... a flow that cannot be pinned down or grasped or established in any way, its manifestation being dependent on various supporting conditions.

You said well about there being no movement and no space, only impressions... in actuality, only ever this arising without movement. What dependently originates is empty of inherent existence and hence have no movement, no origin, no location (and no space), no 'coming from', 'going to', etc. When supporting conditions are present, 'it' (whatever 'it' is) appears and when the conditions cease, 'it' ceases. Apparition-like appearance that appears out of no where and goes no where (but is sustained by conditions), has no movement and is unborn.

The insight of non-dual, as well as anatta, no-agent, and dependent origination leads to a transformation of view and perception of reality... no longer are we seeing an 'Awareness' perceiving 'things' and thus fabricate a world of a subjective agent and an objective universe... we see that all there is is a constant stream-ing of experiences that is empty and dependent on supporting factors. Life, the universe, is like the constant streaming/playing of music without a listener, a constant streaming of water down the river without a seer, there is nothing fixed, graspable, unchanging or inherent.

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29th December 2010

The sense of there being a 'Witness' of phenomena is simply a thought... in that thought, there is just a thought! There is no witness of thought... the witness of thought is simply a thought, a self-referencing thought. There is always just in thinking just thoughts. And

in the hearing, just sound, there is no hearer of sound... just the self-luminous and self-accomplishing process of hearing. And so on... The sense of self is simply another sensation, a sensation that does not actually refer to anything: it is just a sensation without a sensor. A thought of self is also simply an empty thought, an empty label or story that does not refer to anything substantial. Everything is just like this... You do not come to see the mountain, the mountain simply 'sees'/'reveals' by itself without a seer... this has always been the case.

When it's seen that thoughts and sensations that imply self are actually not self but is simply a pure sensation happening to nobody, then its coming and going becomes self-liberating. (Like you said, the sense of self is already no-self!) Otherwise, thoughts and sensations that imply self are clung to, solidifed, reified, and leads to a chain of suffeirng.

The annihilation of self is based on a false view of self: that it has existence to begin with, and is solid, real, etc.

By seeing the absence of an agent, or a solid, separate, permanent, controlling/perceiving self, such a view is overthrown... what remains is the arising and subsiding of arisings according to conditions.

How can there be a 'self' to annihilate when no 'self' is found to begin with?

---

29th December 2010

If you fixate on the Formless... the sense of I AM...

IT appears still, unmoving, present.

Relatively, forms appear to be moving.

BUT... it is only relatively. Means? You have dualified experience... subject vs object, permanent vs impermanent, formless vs form.

Experience is a seamless flow. There is no impermanent vs permanent, noumenon vs phenomenon, subject vs object, etc.

There is just this perception. This perception does not stay even if it appears to be static. Even appearances that appear static disappear. Looking at the room - there appears to be things that are stationary in comparison to things which are moving. The ground, the floor appears static relatively to the moving fan. Yet the perception we call 'floor' is actually also impermanent and is part of the seamless flow of impermanency, a seamless perception of floor, windows, ceiling, walls, etc...

By fixating on the formless, we form the idea of Awareness as an unchanging ground of being, in which phenomena 'moves' through, or arise from. Yet we are not aware that whatever we experience is simply a perception - including even the pure sense of existence, 'I AM'... a perception that goes, that fades. Seeing it's emptiness, we stop forming constructs and ideas about experiences. We stop reifying a 'self', an entity, a permanency. We stop dualifying experience... we stop reifying a stable formless source

from which things flow out. We stop clinging. We simply see that when condition is, experience manifest... and that is all.

In deep sleep, everything vanishes, even the barest sense of presence, of existence.

Even if you attain the formless jhana (absorption) of infinite space, infinite consciousness, of nothingness, or neither perception nor non perception, that jhana, state, experience can only last for kalpas and not longer.

The luminous essence of everything is never denied: only that it is empty. To see the union of luminosity and emptiness is wisdom.

The self-felt Certainty of Being can never be denied: yet the reification of a permanent self is seen through. What Is IS becoming... what we call Being is actually Becoming... a stream of becomings... without a 'something' becoming 'another thing'. In realizing one taste, the entire flow of 'becoming' is seen to be undeniable and certain in its luminosity and emptiness.

When we stop the self-referencing process of solidifying the duality and inherency of things, and simply see This for what it is, we realize that...

Like the utterly still certainty of beingness, every moment the universe stands still. Complete. Whole. Yet not permanent. It is impermanence without movement. It is a process without the continuity of an entity. Past, present and future do not apply to This. Ever just this one thought, this one sound, this one sight, this one breath. Certain and undeniable. Non-arising and non-ceasing.

There is no ‘non-arising and non-ceasing Awareness reflecting the comings and goings of arising and ceasing phenomena’, there is just This, non-arising, non-ceasing, transient phenomena.

---

29th December 2010

You don't come to see mountains and rivers. Mountains and rivers sees itself, feels itself, reveals itself. Every moment, universe is revealing itself in its self-felt luminosity AS this sight. As this thought. As this sound. There is no one at the center to witness them or appreciate them. And yet the dissolving of the self-construct is bliss.

---

30th December 2010

*Hey xabir,*

*Thanks for your reply. A few replies to your things, then some new stuff from me...*

*What do you mean by a "seal"? Is that one of the 3 doors?*

> *I agree that what I mentioned was not the Anatta you are talking about. I was mixing something up, since in the 4-path model, you have 3 doors which you enter to a fruition, one of them is the no-self door, and i think i went through that door. but definitely not a realization of Anatta in daily life.*

Dharma seal simply means the characteristic of dharma.

What this means is... 'no-self' is actually the nature of reality. It is not that you suddenly enter a state of no-self. Or you suddenly merge with the surroundings. Unity experiences are simply temporary experiences that may be induced in a state of high mindfulness and concentration or absorption. It is not insight. Neither is it about disassociating from all phenomena as not self, which is still dualistic in the sense that the sense of the subjective 'I' (the perceiver/doer/etc) is still strong, in which 'objects' are being disassociated from as 'not me'. It is also not a state where the sense of personality and individuality are dissolved.

Realization of Anatta as a *Seal* is to realize that 'In seeing, ALWAYS just the seen, no seer' - not 'I become the scenery' and so on... there must be the realization, otherwise it becomes a temporary glimpse or experience that fades. Once realization arises, you cannot unsee it, and it follows you throughout your daily doings (self-contraction can still arise by habit but is more easily seen through and dropped). Chop wood, carry water, without an 'I' doing or perceiving any of this...

…

> *Quote*
>
> *I am liking the Bahiya Sutta more and more. Also seems to really go well with Actualist practices, and the little I've read on the AF site so far seems to be on the same track. I'm not sure how I will continue with 'formal meditation', but in any case it seems worthwhile to be mindful during daily life, to ask HAIETMOBA, to realize in the seeing, just the seen, etc. certainly more pleasant than spinning thoughts in my head about how I'm in a Dark Night and that's why I feel bad! also seems like it would be useful to attempt to get a PCE, but it seems like not something you attempt but something that arises naturally after clearing away enough self.*

Sounds good... Yes, don't grasp or attach to desires. PCE arises of their own accord when you dissolve any attachments to a self/Self. Eventually it is realised that... all along, all experiences are pure and conscious by essence (self-luminous)... it is that by grasping on to a self/perceiver/etc that we miss the true face of phenomena/the universe. What we call ‘consciousness’ is really simply this arising sight, sound, taste, touch... the experiential universe displaying of their own accord without a perceiver or doer. So we just fearlessly and unreservedly open up to whatever experiences arise.

31st December 2010

Is there a choice that you are feeling hungry? You may think 'I can eat something and stop the hunger'. But I'm saying RIGHT NOW... can you stop hunger immediately? Hunger arises of their own accord. Headache arises of their own accord. Anxiety, thoughts, feelings, sensations, all happen on their own accord. You can't choose or stop them from happening. How you wish to stop all anxieties, stress, unpleasant feelings and sensations from ever happening again, but it just happens. Why? There is no 'you' that controls them. Whatever happens, happen in interdependence on various conditions and circumstances, but there is absolutely no 'I', controller, experiencer that caused them.

See that there is no 'you' seeing the universe: rather, every moment the entire universe reveals itself, self-felt, without a 'you' to cause it. See that in feeling, there is just that felt sensation, no feeler. See that in seeing, there is just mountains and rivers and the entire universe revealing itself by itself without a seer. See that in thinking there is just thought without thinker.

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31st December 2010

As long as the slightest sense of self remains, we cannot be at ease.

The slightest sense that there is an 'I' that can somehow shut off unpleasant thoughts and feelings.

The slightest sense that there is an 'I' that experiences things.

The slighest sense that there is a controller.

The slightest sense of 'I' leads to the attempt of trying to 'do' something to this experience... to make it go away... to make it stay... or even to 'try to accept things as they are'...

All these futile attempts and 'doings' drop away when we let go of the construct of a self/an agency.

Experiences manifest of their own accord, subsides of their own accord... end of story. No use (there is no 'self' who can perform these tasks) trying to push them away, trying to cling to them, trying to 'accept them as they are', trying to... (insert token) What Is simply IS, when conditions are. No feeler, no controller, no experiencer. Yet thought, action arises. There just isn't a clinging to them resulting from the illusion of self.

Perhaps, this is liberation... or maybe just a glimpse of it as I cannot claim that the habit of self contraction has stopped forever for good.

---

31st December 2010

*Originally posted by Weychin:*

*I am concerned with the ubiquitous use of the device of "I", everyday application of "I" in our train of conversational thoughts, the way we need to relate to another by using "I", it becomes so us(in this case, I). We've come to be so accustomed to using"I", maybe you share insights or maybe redirect my attention to something I may have missed. Thanks!*

You have never used 'I', ever. Why? There is no "I". You have merely used the word 'I', the thought 'I', but no real 'I' is ever involved in your life at all because there never was one.

You use words, like, 'Weychin', but that is merely a label. It is substanceless. It is a label on a conglomerate of everchanging visual shapes, experiences, sounds, etc. There is no true weychin to be found anywhere within nor apart from these transient experiences.

What you need to investigate is this.

There is no you. Is this true?

Is there a you at the center of experience, or is it really just one experience after another... sound, sight, scenery, all happening/emerging of their own accord without an observer or controller.

Can you stop anxieties from happening by hard will? The honest answer is no, it just happens. Can you stop hunger, unpleasant sensations, etc from ever happening again by mere will? The answer is no, it just happens. Why? There is no controller involved... sensations arise due to conditions and there is no self/agency involved.

The entire universe reveals itself self-felt of their own accord every single moment. No you.If this is seen, then everything is cleared... you still use labels but you know the labels are empty and do not refer to something real. It is simply used for convenience. Even if you say 'I am hungry', you know that truthfully there is just 'hunger' without you. You are free to use the word 'I' but the truth of no-self cannot be unseen. You do not need to use 'spiritual language' - you can continue to use conventional language with all its dualistic terminologies. Yet there is no longer this belief in a self/observer/ centerpoint/controller/agent that is experiencing and controlling things.

---

2nd January 2011

Consciousness isn't real.

It seems to be... everything that is displayed in consciousness, or rather, AS consciousness (since everything experiencable IS the activity of consciousness, and there is no 'consciousness' apart from these activities going on of itself)... seems really real.

But is it?

Certainly, consciousness cannot be denied. Consciousness of hearing music... consciousness of words appearing on screen... these are actual, undeniable experiences.

And I am not denying the actuality and undeniability of consciousness/experiencing. Do note however that that 'consciousness' here does not mean a perceiver: there is no perceiver or observer in reality! When Non-Dual and Anatta is realized, what is seen is that there is really no such thing as an agent, an 'I', a 'perceiver' looking outwards and 'perceiving' the 'outer object'. There is only ever this perception 'computer screen', the sound of music, revealing itself moment to moment of their own accord, self-felt, self-luminous. As weird as it sounds, you don't come to see mountains and rivers, mountains and rivers comes to see itself. Mind and body drops off, and the sensation of inside and outside dissolves into *This*. *This* is undeniable and actual as the activity of consciousness.

But what I mean is... is it something that truly 'exists', that is solid, that has some substance or inherent existence of its own? Is mountains and rivers real?

Our entire experience is actually appearing and disappearing every single moment... our experience of hearing bird chirping arises dependent on various factors and conditions. Our sight of this computer monitor also arises dependently.

Do you think that consciousness reflects an inherently existing world?

Or is our experience of so called an inherently existing world simply **like an illusion...**

The Buddha actually said this: **Consciousness is like a magician's trick.**

That tells you a lot...

We think what we experience is really existing. But actually the entire world as we experience it is merely an **appearance** arising out of infinite causes and conditions!

The entire world as we know it is a magician's trick! Out of nothing, out of nowhere, the entire universe appears like a magician's trick! How amazing! Out of nothing (but dependent upon infinite causes and conditions), out of nowhere, a thought pops up! A scenery pops up!

Whatever we experience is simply an appearance without substance... out of infinite causes and conditions, there is that particular appearance... but that appearance does not 'belong' to something inherent - like the appearance of a chair does not actually belong to an inherently existing chair. There is no chair apart from that experience of shapes and colours that is dependent on the way this organism perceives those forms according to its biological and karmic conditioning.

Consciousness does not reflect a real world. The world is a magician's trick. But it is not a 'trick of Consciousness' (that would imply an illusory world arising out of a Source/Agent, a dualistic and inherent view of consciousness)... Consciousness itself is the magician's trick, there is no source or agent involved. There is no Consciousness apart from appearances... which are like an illusion, but not an illusion as they are the actual and undeniable activity of consciousness, empty and illusory.

8th January 2011

After non-dual insight, the degree of non-dual experience is not reached by sustaining a particular state of experience/presence.

Rather, it is the 'degree' in which the sense of self is dropped in relation to *any* experience.

Presence is already self-accomplished as this arising appearance - thought, sound, sight, etc.... ordinary awareness is Tao.

What matters is not sustaining a formless state of presence. What matters is how far are you able to dissolve the self-contraction so that the 'self', mind, and body is dropped off... and the wind is no longer blowing on you, you are the wind blowing. You are not moving through the universe, you are the ever-changing and ever-fresh universe revealing itself by itself every moment. There is no more reference, center, agent, self, duality, inside and outside, no trace of a centerpoint within the body and mind.

But more important than the experience is the realization that this is actually always already the case... It is not that you 'forgot self and become' the universe, it is that all along, the experiential universe of seeing, hearing, thinking, smelling, tasting, touching, has always been revealing and arising by itself moment by moment without an existing agent, cognizer, controller, centerpoint, only that this experiential fact is apparently obscured by our deeply held attachments. Always already, there is in seeing just the seen, just THIS.... no 'me' in reference to the seen. In hearing there is always just sound, there is no me in reference to the sound (no hearer). There is no 'experience' + 'experiencer'... there is always simply just This... and realizing this, non-dual experience does not become a 'goal', it becomes seen as the natural state of existence. Aim for realization and not just a temporary experience of non-dual - the shift in perception through insight will make nondual experience become something 'natural' rather than contrived.

Was doing 24km route march yesterday, when all traces of a mind and body and a 'me' disappeared... (also, I think route march in mainland from Changi Ferry Terminal to The Float@Marina Bay was cooler than doing it in the forest)

*"To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things of the universe. To be enlightened by all things of the universe is to cast off the body and mind of the self as well as those of others. Even the traces of enlightenment are wiped out, and life with traceless enlightenment goes on forever and ever."*

~ Zen Master Dogen

I don't think anyone else including me can put it as precisely as Zen Master Dogen.

---

8th January 2011

AlwaysOn:

Make a sharp distinction between awareness and mind (thoughts).

By the way, awareness is just ordinary awareness coming out of your eyeballs and is looking at the computer screen right now.

Now you are a nonduality master just like Adyashanti or whomever.

If you need more help read the second paragraph here:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzogchen

I don't see awareness as 'looking out of my eyes'.

From the perspective of others, I have an appearance, I have eyes, ears, nose, etc....

From the first person perspective, I do not have an appearance, I do not have eyes, I do not have ears, nose, etc... unless I look in the mirror, but what I see in the mirror is a reflected appearance and not 'what I look out of'.

If I look at what I am looking out of, I find no appearances, no eyes, ears, mouth, face, etc...

But most importantly, I also do not find a great void, a background mirror, a seer behind things.

In the absence of a body, I find everything in the universe... self-felt, self-revealed.

There is no Awareness looking out of my eyes at something... There is simply the universe being revealed by its self-luminosity without a looker and being looked, without an inside and outside.

When this is seen, mind-body drops, no traces of a self or a distance between subject and object remains (you literally feel like you are the sun and the trees instead of 'looking at' the sun and trees) - but neither is there a 'subject' that is 'one with objects' - there is simply no subject and object, period... yet self-luminous manifestation rolls on without an agent.

*"To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things of the universe. To be enlightened by all things of the universe is to cast off the body and mind of the self as well as those of others. Even the traces of enlightenment are wiped out, and life with traceless enlightenment goes on forever and ever."*

*~ Zen Master Dogen*

p.s. Adyashanti's earlier works are talking about the I AM/Eternal Witness phase of

experience and realization and are dualistic, only his recent works are about Non Dual - but it is substantial non-dualism (aka Thusness Stage 4)

---

8th January 2011

> *pennyofheaven, on 08 January 2011 - 12:22 AM, said:*
>
> *How about...*
>
> *Awareness ... The silent observer, changeless, stillness, depth of the ocean*
>
> *Mind, thoughts...That which is in motion, ever changing, waves of the ocean*

This is still the dualistic I AM phase of experience...

See Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment

---

9th January 2011

> *pennyofheaven, on 08 January 2011 - 11:59 PM, said:*
>
> *The opening poster asked for distinctions. They are distinctions. Distinctions are duality.*
>
> *So what is your point? Care to elaborate?*

Such distinctions are false and illusory, though not seen through, even after transcendental glimpses of Presence (which under the influence of dualistic tendencies/view will in fact solidify the sense of a Witness apart from the witnessed) such as Thusness Stage 1. Although such distinctions are made in the earlier phase of one's practice in order to have a glimpse of non-conceptual Presence, they are dropped after non-dual insight arises.

In reality, there is no distinctions, there is no duality. As J Krishnamurti says, "the observer is the observed". Which is to say, there is no observer and observed. This is only realized in Thusness Stage 4 and 5.

As Buddha teaches (which I and many have realized directly), in seeing just the seen, no seer. In hearing just the heard, no hearer. In thinking just thoughts, no watcher or thinker.

Dzogchen Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche:

"...In reality, the calm state is the essential condition of mind, while the wave of thought

is the mind's natural clarity in function; just as there is no distinction whatever between the sun and its rays, or a stream and its ripples, **so there is no distinction between the mind and thought**..."

"...all that is necessary is to maintain pure presence of mind, **without falling into the dualistic situation of there being an observing subject perceiving an observed object**..."

Thrangu Rinpoche:

"Although one recognizes the cognitive lucidity or the lucidity of awareness within emptiness, there are different ways that this might be recognized. For example, someone might find that when they look at the nature of a thought, initially the thought arises, and then as the thought dissolves, what it leaves in its wake or what it leaves behind it is an experience or recognition of the unity of cognitive lucidity and emptiness. Because this person has recognized this cognitive lucidity and emptiness, there is some degree of recognition, but because this can only occur for them or has only occurred for them after the thought has subsided or vanished, then they are still not really seeing the nature of thought itself. For someone else, they might experience that from the moment of the thought's arising, and for the entire presence of that thought, it remains a unity of cognitive lucidity and emptiness. This is a correct identification, because whenever there is a thought present in the mind or when there is no thought present in the mind, and whether or not that thought is being viewed in this way or not, the nature of the mind and the nature of every thought is always a unity of cognitive lucidity and emptiness. It is not the case that thoughts only become that as they vanish..."

(continue reading this at http://awakeningtore...of-thought.html )

14th century Mahamudra Master, Dakpo Tashi Namgyal:

"When you look into a thought's identity, without having to dissolve the thought and without having to force it out by meditation, the vividness of the thought is itself the indescribable and naked state of aware emptiness. We call this seeing the natural face of innate thought or thought dawns as dharmakaya.

"Previously, when you determined the thought's identity and when you investigated the calm and the moving mind, you found that there was nothing other than this intangible single mind that is a self-knowing, natural awareness. It is just like the analogy of water and waves.

(continue reading this at http://awakeningtore...ng-natural.html )

Also see my older articles such as: Gap Between Thoughts, Thought Between Gaps

http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/419823

10th January 2011

(In reply to someone's statement that enlightenment is 'unconditioned'):

Enlightenment is conditional. If enlightenment were not conditional, everyone would be enlightened right now. However the fact is, not everyone is enlightened. Those who say otherwise is having a confused view. We all have the potential to be enlightened, but without practice, that potential will never be actualized. This potential is also called Buddha-nature or the Tathagatagarbha, or the embryo of Buddhahood.

That said, reality is already spontaneously perfected. However, whether we realize this makes all the difference.This is how Enlightenment is conditional.

Buddha:

http://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/417530?amp%3Bpage=1

"Thus, monks, ignorance is the supporting condition for kamma formations, kamma formations are the supporting condition for consciousness, consciousness is the supporting condition for mentality-materiality, mentality-materiality is the supporting condition for the sixfold sense base, the sixfold sense base is the supporting condition for contact, contact is the supporting condition for feeling, feeling is the supporting condition for craving, craving is the supporting condition for clinging, clinging is the supporting condition for existence, existence is the supporting condition for birth, birth is the supporting condition for suffering, suffering is the supporting condition for faith, faith is the supporting condition for joy, joy is the supporting condition for rapture, rapture is the supporting condition for tranquillity, tranquillity is the supporting condition for happiness, happiness is the supporting condition for concentration, concentration is the supporting condition for the knowledge and vision of things as they really are, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are is the supporting condition for disenchantment, disenchantment is the supporting condition for dispassion, dispassion is the supporting condition for emancipation, and emancipation is the supporting condition for the knowledge of the destruction (of the cankers).

---

11th January 2011

> *Originally posted by Aloozer:*
>
> *so if enlightenment is conditional, means enlightenment is not permanent? bcos in buddhism, everything that is conditional is impermanent what*

Wisdom is eternal but changing. To realize that in reality there is only change without experiencer is wisdom, and in the change no trace of self, enlightenment or wisdom remains, and this traceless enlightenment continues forever. But if one says one attains wisdom, one is fabricating something ('attainment', 'wisdom', 'attainer', etc) that cannot be established. No inherent wisdom can be found anywhere. Wisdom is the direct

cognition of reality without distortion, which arises dependent on our practice and insights. (see http://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/417530?amp%3Bpage=1)

http://www.byomakusuma.org/Ved%C3%83%C2%A0ntavis%C3%83%C2%A0visShentong/tabid/87/Default.aspx

*If we analyze both the Hindu Sankaràcàrya's and the Buddhist Śāntarakṣita's, we find that both agree that the view of the Hindu Advaita Vedànta is that the ultimate reality (âtmà) is an unchanging, eternal non-dual cognition. The Buddhists as a whole do not agree that the ultimate reality is an eternal, unchanging non-dual cognition, but rather a changing eternal non-dual cognition. These statements found in the 6th century Hindu text and the refutations of the Hindu view found in the 9th century Buddhist texts (both of which were after the Uttara Tantra and Asanga), show that the Hindu view of the ultimate reality as an unchanging, eternal non-dual cognition is non-existent amongst the Buddhists of India. Not only was such a view non-existent amongst Buddhists of India, but it was also refuted as a wrong view by scholars like Śāntarakṣita. He even writes that if and when Buddhists use the word 'eternal' (nitya), it means 'parinàmi nitya', i.e., changing eternal, and not the Hindu kind of eternal, which always remains unchanged.*

---

11th January 2011

> *Originally posted by Thusness:*
>
> *Yes. There is nothing that can arise without necessary supporting conditions and that includes 'nirvana'. No transcendental 'unconditioned' being or 'state' exists by itself and of itself. The 'unconditioned' in Buddhism is the spontaneous perfection of all necessary conditions in the natural state. This is only realized after the direct insights of the 2 fold emptiness. :)*

I see.. thanks :)

---

11th January 2011

Having realized the I AM is different from having a non-dual experience (with sound, sight, etc). And yet, non-dual experience (a temporary state) is different from non-dual insight...

And non-dual insight without right view turns into substantial non-dualism. Non-dual insight with right view gradually leads to the realization of Anatta.

Even if one is dedicated in practice, doesn't mean they will have the right view. Like I said before... I've seen practitioners and teachers and masters much more dedicated than me practicing for decades and they still get stuck at the I AM stage or substantial non-dualism stage. Without someone to point them out, they will never realize it their entire life.

Whereas for me, though I didn't practice very hard at all (quite lazy actually haha), due to having instilled the right view, these insights came quickly, all within one year. The right view is the 'right conditions'.

---

http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/419823

11th January 2011

**No distinctions to be made between 'unconditioned' and 'conditioned'**

Archaya Mahayogi Shridhar Rana Rinpoche puts it:

Madhyamika Buddhism Vis-a-vis Hindu Vedanta

*...As for Buddhism, the rope stands for interdependent origination (pratityasamutpada) for which it is a good example being itself interdependently arisen from pieces of jute etc., and the snake imputed upon it stands for real existence, which is imposed on the interdependently existing rope appearance. Here it is the rope that is the true mode of existence of Samsara (unlike the snake representing Samsara in Vedanta) and the snake is our ignorance imputing Samsara as really existing instead of experiencing it as interdependently arisen. This interdependence or emptiness is 'parinami nitya' i.e. an eternal continuum and this is applicable to all phenomena. Of course, this interdependence is the Conventional Truth whereas nisvabhavata which is synonymous to emptiness is the Ultimate Truth in Madhyamika.* ***Although interdependence is itself conditioned, in reality it is unborn and empty; its true nature is unconditioned. But this is not an unconditioned reality like Brahma but an unconditioned truth i.e. the fact that all things are in reality empty, unborn, uncreated.*** *Likewise the mirror reflection analogy is used to show that just like images which have no existence at all appear and disappear on the permanent surface of the mirror so too Samsara which is an illusory reflection on the mirror of Brahma appears on the surface of the Brahma and disappears there. In Buddhism this metaphor is used to show that Samsara is interdependently arisen like the reflection on the mirror. The mirror is only one of the causes and conditions and no more real than the other causes and conditions for the appearance of the reflection of Samsara. Here too the mirror is a very poor metaphor for the Brahma, being itself interdependently arisen like the reflection on it. Actually such analogies are good examples for interdependent origination (Skt. pratityasamutpada) and not for some eternal Brahma. The mirror Brahma metaphor is only a forced one. The same can be said of the moon on the pond analogy and the rainbow in the sky analogy...*

*...First of all, to the Buddha and Nagarjuna, Samsara is not an illusion but like an illusion. There is a quantum leap in the meaning of these two statements. Secondly, because it is only 'like an illusion' i.e. interdependently arisen like all illusions, it does not and cannot vanish, so Nirvana is not when Samsara vanishes like mist and the Brahma arises like the sun out of the mist but rather when seeing that the true nature of Samsara is itself Nirvana. So whereas Brahma and Samsara are two different entities, one real and the other unreal, one existing and the other non-existing,* ***Samsara and Nirvana in Buddhism are one and not two. Nirvana is the nature of Samsara or in Nagarjuna's words***

***shunyata is the nature of Samsara. It is the realization of the nature of Samsara as empty which cuts at the very root of ignorance and results in knowledge not of another thing beyond Samsara but of the way Samsara itself actually exists (Skt. vastusthiti), knowledge of Tathata (as it-is-ness) the Yathabhuta (as it really is) of Samsara itself. It is this knowledge that liberates from wrong conceptual experience of Samsara to the unconditioned experience of Samsara itself. That is what is meant by the indivisibility of Samsara and Nirvana (Skt. Samsara nirvana abhinnata, Tib: Khor de yer me). The mind being Samsara in the context of DzogChen, Mahamudra and Anuttara Tantra. Samsara would be substituted by dualistic mind. The Hindu paradigm is world denying, affirming the Brahma. The Buddhist paradigm does not deny the world; it only rectifies our wrong vision (Skt. mithya drsti) of the world. It does not give a dream beyond or separate transcendence from Samsara.*** *Because such a dream is part of the dynamics of ignorance, to present such a dream would be only to perpetuate ignorance...*

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http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/419823

11th January 2011

> *Originally posted by taoteching:*
>
> *AEN ,*
>
> *Questions 'bout self-inquiry and right view - their connections..*
>
> *In the case of someone striving hard to awakened/experience to the 'watcher',the 'One Mind' , the view he's having(or must have) at this stage seems *not* to be no-self,on the contrary,he must hold on to the perspective that "consciousness is all there is ". How is it possible the experience(for those haven't got/experience it)of oneness be achieved if one is believing otherwise?It's impossible!*
>
> *As Thusness said in http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html:*
>
> *' when I spoke to a Buddhist friend, he told me about the doctrine of no-self, about no 'I'. I rejected such doctrine outright as it is in direct contradiction with what I experienced. I was deeply confused for some time and could not appreciate why Buddha has taught this doctrine and worst still make it a Dharma Seal. '*
>
> *(In his case,the experience he *already had* was in contradiction with anatta ; my question ,though, concerns those haven't got the experience -)*
>
> *Am i right to say that at the beginning stage of inquiry,not only the view of no-self not to be hold on to,one must cling hard to the view of Self ?*

There is no need to develop a view of self. You simply need to discover what you are. This is a non-conceptual insight into an undeniable fact of Being. You don't need a concept of self or no-self to see that an undeniable fact of existence is present right where you are. Without a thought of 'I am' or 'I am not', what is present and shining?

By asking 'Who am I', you are finding out what the word 'I' refers to even in the absence of concepts and names. It leads to a non-conceptual realization of Presence, Beingness. There will be utter certainty about it. As there is no duality and separation in pure beingness, you will make statements like 'I am That'. This experience will be initially be treated as a purest identity due to the lack of insights into non-dual and emptiness. When non-dual insight arise, one finds non-dual Presence in every manifestation and no longer clings to a formless state of Presence as one's purest identity (all states and experiences are equally IT).

But no need to worry about that part yet, just start with the question 'Who am I?'

---

13th December 2011

> *Originally posted by MiddleWay87:*
>
> *Am i right to say that 'i' and 'me' is 'i' and 'me' because we name it that way? There is a me and i because we have a concept of the me and i, and we name it that way*
>
> *Im not sure if this view is right*

'I', 'me' is simply a convenient label we put on a conglomerate of experiences.

It is simply a convenient label... but when we try to find what is this 'me', we cannot locate it. It cannot be found.

It's like this.... Clouds rolling... shifting... changing shapes... disappearing... forming....

Rain.... falling.... stopping... falling...

Wind... blowing... change directions.... gets stronger...

Lightning.... appearing and disappearing....

Such a complex and intricate interdependence of phenomena rolling on, with no center or circumference to the entire display and manifestation, nor an ultimate controller behind it all.

Yet, to capture this entire phenomena into language, we call it something - we call it 'weather'. And yet, is 'weather' a thing? Can it be located somewhere? Inside a particular cloud? Or a particular wind?

Which are all changing every single moment, by the way...

In the same way, the word 'I' and 'me' is simply a convenient label, but no real 'I' can be located, pinned down, grasped in any way whatsoever!

Relatively speaking, what we are is simply this ever-changing flow of five skandhas, thoughts, feelings, sensations, arising and subsiding moment by moment according to conditions... so how can there be a self?

You may say 'I', 'me', etc for convenience... but I assure you, no such thing can be found! Look, observe, see for yourself.

---

Facebook Discussion

*Din*

*all of existence is appearing in universal mind, you and I are that mind*

**BF:** no im not dont include me in your weird logic ha ha

**Din:** welcome to heaven Brona :)

**BF:**im already there my life is heaven its a 24-7 party

**BF:**ps: no such thing as a universal mind xxxxxxx

**Din:** why not? if you open your mind you may find it infinite ;)

**BF:** my mind could NOT be more open there is no such thing as a universal mind believe that your mind is as unique as your fingerprints the only infinite i care about is infinite happiness and i overflow with that anyhoo get out more have fun i would recommend it

**An Eternal Now**

I actually agree with BH: minds are unique, not universal. And this is why: http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/390582?page=12#post_10095909

**DR**:

what is your agreement arising in AEN?

what is this aware presence in which everything appears including this post?

we can have all kinds of words pointing to all kinds of things with all kinds of reasons but what about the awareness that's a...ware ...of this all?

but i'll go read your link for fun! :)

**DR**: Soh, I read a bit and find you know a lot more than I do! ;)

**An Eternal Now**

@**din**: I don't know a lot... just some facts that are seen that's all, but these facts are in plain sight for everyone to look and realize.

This 'space of awareness' which appears like a container for all phenomena is in fact simply a previous non-dual experience that is captured by the mind and clung to as a purest identity. I do not see phenomena as being contained by a super space-like awareness.

Awareness is not in fact simply 'just' a space... what's realized is that whatever IS, IS a perception. The perception of awareness as a still space is simply another perception... awareness is actually equally ALL perceptions - the perception of sound is equally awareness as the perception of space, the perception of sight is equally awareness (self-luminous), etc... any sense of a super-awareness containing other phenomena is also just another thought, perception, sensation. All perceptions are self-luminous, empty, and spontaneously perfected. Let them manifest (effortlessly), and let them go (effortlessly)... do not cling.

So to answer your question, where is my agreement arising in? The fact is, this thought arises from nowhere, abides nowhere, goes nowhere, is without a core or essence, ungraspable in any way, cannot be located and yet vividly present/appearing, being a complete, non-dual, self-luminous phenomenon that spontaneously appears (dependent on factors and conditions) and self-liberates of their own accord without an agent, thinker, or perceiver. This applies to everything else: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch...

In any case, in any perception, there is always no perceiver... only perception.

In the perception of space, there is simply that perception without perceiver. In the perception of sound, there is also simply that perception without perceiver (not a sound + space of awareness containing sound)... etc.

Whatever I experience - be it space, thought, smell, sound, etc... there is only just THAT - a complete, whole, non-dual phenomena/perception without a duality of subject and object.

**An Eternal Now**

p.s. In my experience, there is no 'awareness that is aware'... as Steven Norquist puts it: "Some teachers talk of the Witness, the ultimate passive mind that observes all things moment to moment. This implies some level of separation, a witness over here watching the universe over there. It's not like this, there is only the experience, universe. There is no observer. Even if there were no manifestation the feeling would be the same. Once again let me make this clear: consciousness is not aware "of" the universe, consciousness is aware "as" the universe."

We can never capture what Awareness is in words and concepts which are always vague at best... but Awareness, this flow of life, is something too alive and dynamic to be

captured in words. To capture it as anything, including even 'space', 'background', 'ultimate witness', etc... is to miss its nature.

What is Awareness?

Rinnngggg... the telephone sounds. Sensation of coolness on feet. Words appearing on the screen... etc... the actual livingness of the entire display/manifestation.

**Trevor**

@AEN.
In your experience there is no awareness?
Steven Norquist? Teachers of secondhand conditioned knowledge will be the last to awaken to a thought free void.
The witness is looking out from every person who thought thinks me.
There ...is no moment to moment. You have let a thought enter and made time by adding two moments.
Who is the we who can never capture awareness. Me is You. Thought.
Let me make this clear.
Consciousness is not aware if a thought divides from what is by creating a person like Me.
@BH. True Party poppers never report back to facebook.

**An Eternal Now**

@T - I do not need rely on what other teachers said as this is already seen directly - yet there is also no reason to stop me from quoting something well-said by others.

It is not that there is no awareness. It is that there is no awareness *as an agent, perceiver, or source of things*. What is seen here is that awareness is always just perception, no aware-r. In seeing, always just sight and scenery, no seer. In hearing, always just sounds, no hearer. Awareness is this dynamic display of manifestation... so dynamic and alive that it cannot be captured into a word such as 'Awareness'. Awareness, hearing, seeing is simply this... the heart beating... the music playing... the sound 'da da da' on the keyboard... just THAT.

Every moment the universe stands still. Complete. Whole. Yet not permanent. It is impermanence without movement. It is a process without the continuity of an entity. Past, present and future do not apply to This. Ever just this one thought, this one sound, this one sight, this one breath. Certain and undeniable. Non-arising and non-ceasing.

There is no ‘non-arising and non-ceasing Awareness reflecting the comings and goings of arising and ceasing phenomena’, there is just This, non-arising, non-ceasing, transient phenomena.

There are no two moments... and yet there is also no one unchanging moment, which would imply an unchanging 'awareness' behind all phenomena (this is seen through).

There is no 'me' even when the thought thinks 'me'. The thought of 'me' is simply a thought arising without a thinker. And when we have seen this, we are all free to use the thought 'me' while understanding it is merely a label, convention, word, used for convenience, that does not actually refer to a substantial entity.

Also, there is no 'The Witness is looking out....' though it appears so in the early phases after transcendental glimpse of formless pure being (see my journal/bookhttp://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/12/my-bookjournal.html )

**Din**

AEN wrote:

"This 'space of awareness' which appears like a container for all phenomena is in fact simply a previo...us non-dual experience that is captured by the mind and clung to as a purest identity. I do not see phenomena as being contai...ned by a super space-like awareness."

the space of awareness is only ever NOW, it's the clarity in which this post is appearing,

some people call this "spirit"

nothing can really be known about it, in my experience, but i am THAT!

**An Eternal Now**

The space of awareness is only ever now, but so is the sound of awareness, the sight of awareness, etc... it is not the case that space contains sound, sight, because everything is equally IT - you are equally the sound and sight!

**Din**

AEN, don't get caught in language or understanding

they're both red herrings!

suffice it to know that the space of awareness is the ground of being and you are IT!
...

it's the absolute SUBJECTIVITY :)

**An Eternal Now**

Din, this is not an understanding but a fact seen through and through in real time. Right now, there is no space of awareness as a ground of phenomena like sound and sight etc.

Awareness IS the sound and sight and transient phenomena... including the perception of space. It is just this flow alone that IS... no agent or ultimate source is to be found, the awareness/source/whatever you want to call it is manifestation.

**Din**

AEN, i seem to no longer be that interested in trying to define or understand any of it, i prefer instead to open up to all of it, without needing to put it into words, because, it seems to me, you can't contain the limitless in the limited...

but notice how even our conversation creates edges and separation, all ideas do that,

don't cling to any of them

**An Eternal Now**

@Din, suffice if you open up to everything including what you see, hear, smell, everything as it is - without sinking back to a source or a 'space' :)

**Din**

AEN, you constantly come back to a suggestion of a right way or a wrong way of doing this

this may be the wrong way to look at any of this!

**An Eternal Now**

@Din: it is not exactly about the right way - but the tendency to sink back to a space is the illusion of duality - the notion that there is a space here that is perceiving that. In actuality, there is no such agency at all - perception alone IS without perceiver. As I see it, without seeing through the illusion of agency thoroughly, the dualistic tendency to sink back to an agent or source will definitely continue to surface.

Eventually it will be seen: sight sees, sound hears, thought thinks. You will not refer back to a source... and everything becomes much more spontaneous and effortless and traceless.

**Din**

AEN, do you really believe there is anything to understand?

you are making it all up as you go along!

wake up and smell the roses!

...

but i think i need to wake up too!

since it sounds like i know somethign!

**An Eternal Now**

@Din, as I said this is not a 'understanding' (conceptual)... it is a fact seen in real time and I am merely using words and language to try to express or point out certain things, though I do not require that to see this directly.

Is Awareness an understanding to you? Or is it What IS? Similarly, whatever I said is not an 'understanding'... it is What IS... and it is seen for what it IS.

**Din**

to be on a pathless path, is to be a groundless ground

**An Eternal Now**

Maybe you're just saying the same things... but anyway why be a something at all? I don't choose to be something... there is no choice here if I want truth. By not being a something... I am choicelessly everything arising moment to moment... truely a pathless path.

---

13th January 2011

Absolutely essential for those practicing self-inquiry:

http://www.kirtimukha.com/surfings/Cogitation/great_faith.htm

**Great Faith, Great Doubt**

On the pull between faith and doubt that can spark awakening - by a Zen teacher

Most of the work in Zen practice takes place while sitting zazen
because, in reality,
there's nothing anyone can give us.
There's nothing that we lack;
each one of us is perfect and complete.

That's why it is said that
there are no Zen teachers and nothing to teach.

But this truth must be realized by each one of us.

Great faith, great doubt, and great determination

are three essentials for that realization.
Great faith is the boundless faith in oneself and
in one's ability to realize oneself and make oneself free;
great doubt is the deep and penetrating doubt that asks:

Who am I?
What is life?
What is truth?

What is God?
What is reality?

Great faith and great doubt are in dynamic tension with each other;
they work to provide the real cutting edge of koan practice.

When great faith and great doubt are also accompanied by great determination --
the determination of "seven times knocked down, eight times up" --
we have at our disposal the power necessary
to break through our delusive way of thinking
and realize the full potential of our lives.

~ *John Daido Loori*

---

14th January 2011

> *Originally posted by taoteching:*
>
> *hi Aen,*
>
> *i need help regarding the koan/pointer ' before birth who am i'.*
>
> *what does this really means? though the actual practice (of following where the pointer is pointing to) is non-conceptual,i still couldn't comprehend how to follow the direction of it.*
>
> *is practising this koan means focussing in a direct/non-intellectual way on the ' when is the beginning point of my awareness/tracing one's awareness to the point when it 'is not'/b4 it's existence?*
>
> *pls elaborate*

There is no meaning. It is a question, it is not a statement, so how can it be meaningful? You are trying to find out 'before birth, who am I', that's all. Don't think too much.

Before birth, means before everything. Before anything imaginable. **Before all thinking.**

What is present? What are you?

Btw who says in the beginning, Awareness is not? Don't make assumptions. Observe and see.

---

14th January 2011

> *Originally posted by taoteching:*
>
> *i assumed 'before birth' means before physical bodily birth(when consciousness hasn't manifested) .... and based on this assumption,the practice means trying*

*to 'imagine'/comprehend what it feels when the i am(awareness) being born/manifested frm out of nothing(i.e b4 birth).*

*but isn't awareness is always present also an assumption?when im busy in the distractions of daily life -work etc ... im not always 'aware of awareness',and isn't this evident of lack of presence of awareness?*

As you stated yourself, those are assumptions. And assumptions are always prone to doubt.

What you are trying to find out is an irrefutible fact **not dependent on analysis, inference, or assumptions. It is a fact to be directly seen in naked awareness without conceptualization, and once seen will give rise to utter certainty and doubtlessness. It is not a matter of trying to infer 'because of this, it is...' - it is just a fact of existence that is seen, or not!**

You are trying to find out What IS, not what you think it should be. Also, try to stay focused and rather than trying to intellectually understand whether awareness is ever present or not... just find out this: Who am I?

---

14th January 2011

*Originally posted by taoteching:*

*About 'utter certainty and doubtlessness' . to me there seems to be degrees of clarity of awareness.can there be such 'unshakable certainty of being' being attained?*

*what's your personal experience? how 'bout thusness realization of this? i've read his stage 1 and 2,but hope for more elaboration to make things clearer*

There is no degrees of clarity in Presence. You either realize this or you don't. Your Buddha-nature is complete and whole, there is no such thing as partial Buddha-nature!

Whether in thoughtless beingness, or in sound, sight, etc... the experience of Presence is whole, complete, indivisible.

---

14th January 2011

*Originally posted by Deino:*

*Hmm...when i was young, I rmb having a vision of myself looking a huge screen. An angel then tells me that is what my life will be like ahead of me. Until now i dunno if it was just a dream or a memory.*

It is just a vision... to discover your true nature, drop all thinking, imagination, analysis and ask yourself: Before birth, Who am I?

---

14th January 2011

> *Originally posted by taoteching:*
>
> *i assumed 'before birth' means before physical bodily birth(when consciousness hasn't manifested) .... and based on this assumption,the practice means trying to 'imagine'/comprehend what it feels when the i am(awareness) being born/manifested frm out of nothing(i.e b4 birth).*
>
> *but isn't awareness is always present also an assumption?when im busy in the distractions of daily life -work etc ... im not always 'aware of awareness',and isn't this evident of lack of presence of awareness?*

Here's a hint: before birth also means 'before imagination' since anything imaginable is 'after birth'. You can never figure it out in your mind... so give up that attempt and look into what you are before birth. You will discover it is an undeniable fact of Being that has nothing to do with imagination and 'figuring it out'. It is what undeniably IS, not what you think/imagine it is/should be based on inference and learned knowledge of what 'before birth' should be.

Also, the fact that you know you were distracted means awareness is present in the distraction, otherwise you will never know it.

---

15th January 2011

Everything is a presently arising appearance.

From the perspective of others, I have an appearance, I have eyes, ears, nose, etc....

From the first person perspective, I do not have an appearance, I do not have eyes, I do not have ears, nose, etc... unless I look in the mirror, but what I see in the mirror is a reflected appearance and not 'what I look out of'.

If I look at what I am looking out of, I find no appearances, no eyes, ears, mouth, face, etc...

This means the sense of us being in the head, the sense that I (in the first person sense) have a head and a face "right here" even though experientially there isn't - this sense is merely a projected and inferred image, an arising thought, an appearance, without substantial reality.

Having realized that such a sense or image or thought does not correspond to reality, in other words the sense of there being a body is actually empty - this sense or thought is allowed to self-liberate without further clinging as its illusory nature is seen. The mind and body is allowed to drop off.

And yet, the sense of there being an 'Awareness' here looking out there - even a formless one - that too is an arising thought.

The sense of awareness is just an arising thought... the sense of there being an awareness on 'this side' is just an arising thought and not an actual experience (other than as an arising thought or perception) - in the same way that the sense or thought of there being a head and a face is simply an arising thought without a substantial reality.

Seeing that everything is just what is presently arising and without a substantial core and essence... they are not clung to and are allowed to self-liberate, including even the sense of there being an Awareness, a Source, a Space, a Background, a Self, a Witness, etc etc.

All there is is this... just thought after thought, sense after sense, sight after sight, yet without movement, coming, going, linkage or continuity. Always just This manifesting phenomena which is primordially pure and unborn.

---

15th January 2011

Just now, 'I' was singing in the dharma center along with 'others'. But actually, the fact is that I wasn't singing, rather the universe is singing interdependently... everything is one whole arising, arising co-dependently.

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22nd January 2011

*Dwelling at Savatthi... "Monks, I will describe & analyze dependent co-arising for you.*

*"And what is dependent co-arising? From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness. From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form. From name-&-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media. From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact. From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling. From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance. From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming. From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth. From birth as a requisite condition, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.*

*.....*

(continued in http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.002.than.html)

This is the perfect way of seeing how things arise without agency.

For example... on a hot day, unpleasant feelings of heat or heat rash on the body surfaces. Then a craving (there are three kinds of cravings: desire, aversion, and craving for becoming) arises as a form of aversion. Then thought arises "shit, I'm being so unspiritual for giving rise to aversion! I should be free of greed, hatred and ignorance"

But is there an 'I' that 'gives rise to aversion'? Is there a thinker? According to Buddha, no. It is not that 'you gave rise to aversion'...

In fact, to be more concise, there is no 'you' to control aversion either! It has to happen when it happens. There is just feelings, sensations, thoughts after thoughts... all arising interdependently... and no agent exists.

And based on the sutta, it is not the case that there is a 'you' that 'gives rise to aversion'... rather, it is that **from feelings (means pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feelings) as a requisite condition, craving (means desire, aversion or the desire to become) arises...**

So by lamenting about your lamenting due to ignorance of Anatta, you are creating further suffering for yourself. By being aware of the nature of reality, you let all arisings manifest and subside of their own accord without further grasping.

So the thing is this: **when conditions are there, the 3 poisons has to manifest. Understand this: when conditions are there, suffering has to manifest.** So what if you don't want suffering? Nobody wants suffering yet everyone still suffers! You have no choice over the matter! More precisely: there is no 'you' at all to have a choice over the matter! There is always just manifestation rolling on without doer and experiencer. Suffering will arise because the condition is there... unless you are already an arhant, bodhisattva, or Buddha!

Does this mean everything is fatalistic and there's nothing we can do about the situation? No... we can change the situation. How? By changing the so called 'requisite conditions'... by practicing to break the fundamental condition of Ignorance so that Nirvana/freedom from suffering can be achieved. This is achieved by contemplating on the nature of reality in direct experience. Without ignorance as a requisite condition, the 12 links no longer manifest. What remains is pure sensory awareness without the taints of the vision of duality and inherency, and as such all manifestation are crystal clear, self-luminous, without the sense of a distance, duality, agency, solidity or inherency, and they self-liberate on the spot without further grasping, desire and aversion. (*缘尽当了*)

But as long as ignorance is there as the fundamental condition, no matter how hard you try to let go, or suppress the feeling, or try your best to stop its arising... suffering still manifests. The condition is there, you can't help it. **There is no 'self' that can control manifestation as manifestation has always arisen due to requisite conditions. There is no agent, perceiver, controller of things.**

*见证真心 (To realize True Mind)*

*不明空性 (Without realizing Empty Nature)*

*只是明心 (Is only realizing Mind)*

*并未见性 (But not yet seeing Nature)*

*.....*

*天地法界，一切皆相 (Sky, earth, dharma realm, all are appearances)*

*因缘显相，无净无染 (Causes and conditions manifest appearances, there is neither purity nor impurity)*

*心生分别，净染方生 (When mind gives rise to discrimination, purity and impurity arises)*

*烦恼虽生，还是因缘 (Even though suffering arises, it is still due to causes and conditions)*

*.....*

*明蕴即心，即是明心 (Understanding that the aggregates are Mind, is realizing Mind)*

*蕴随缘现，即是见性 (Aggregates manifest due to conditions, this is realizing Nature)*

*所谓自然，只是因缘 (What is known as Natural/Spontaneity, is only Causes and Conditions)*

*性本自然，无为而显 (Nature/Essence is originally natural, manifests without action)*

*.....*

*强断烦恼 (Forcedly removing suffering)*

*只是妄动 (Is only deluded action)*

*缘尽当了 (Immediate liberation upon the cessation of conditions)*

*方是功夫 (Is real achievement)*

*~ Thusness*

*Even if we were to search the entire globe, still it is hard to find one that can be completely detached. Try as we may, 'attachment' continues to arise. The reason being detachment is not a matter of 'will', it is a matter of prajna wisdom and only in Buddhism this is pointed out and for this I am grateful to Buddha.*

*Although it is not right to spout high views, it is also important not to over simplify matters. In my view, if our mind is filled with 'dualistic and inherent thoughts', even with utmost sincerity and honesty in practice, there is still no true 'detachment'.*

*~ Thusness*

> *Originally posted by Dawnfirstlight:*
>
> *Enlightening article ！Thanks for sharing. Just one question. 心生分别，染净方生。(When mind gives rise to discrimination, purity and impurity arises) What if 法相生分别，法性不起分别，不起无明。(don't give rise to discrimination, don't give rise to ignorance) Will there still be 染净 (purity/impurity)? I wonder how a person who has already found his Buddha nature （见性）lives in this complicated society where there are times when there are absolute right and wrong, good and bad. Although I know good and bad, right and wrong are emptiness but there are times when we need to solve the real life problems, we need to take side (right and wrong, good and bad).*
>
> *Let's say many people don't wish to differentiate what is right and wrong, good and bad. Don't you think the society will be full of bad guys because no one wants to point finger at them and the bad guys can do whatever they want.*

Understand that discriminating between good and bad is not dualistic (in terms of subject object duality). It is only when you give rise to desire and aversion that it becomes dualistic - i.e. I (subject) hate that person (object) because he is 'bad'.

Last time someone asked my Master Shen Kai, whether he knows that girl over there is very pretty? He replied something like... 知道，但到此为止 (knows, but only up to that point). In this way there is only pure non-dual awareness without a subject-object situation of desire and aversion. Knowing what is bad and what is good, you simply react to the situation objectively without giving rise to a subject-object state of desire and aversion. For example, when you see a car driving towards you, naturally you know what is the "right" way to avoid the car… but if you give rise to hatred for the car driver for being "wrong", then there is suffering.

If you have no preferences (desire and aversion) on a particular experience over another, and just purely aware of things as they are... there is no such thing as 染净 (impurity and purity), only 如是 (suchness is).

---

23rd January 2011

**Thusness**:

AEN,

The summary of the experiences and realizations that you have written for your teachers and masters are good documentations of your journey but not to get too attached to external 'authentication'. :)

What that is more important now is to realize after the arising insight of anatta, how through the adoption of 'right view' lead to thorough seamless and effortless experience of non-dual. As I have told you in the earlier post:

*The initial break-through although may appear thorough to you but the clear experience of no-mind should not last more than few months. It will lose its grandeur and the 'split' will surface intermittently.*

*So go through few cycles of refining your experience of no-mind and continue to adopt the 'right view' of understanding the experience. Have no doubt that Phenomena in their primordial purity is Dharmakaya. Always check whether there is any lingering trace of a background. If there is, there will always be division.*

*Do not fear challenging your imaginary split. In time to come, you will realize you can't re-experience the 'division' even if you want to.*

Once again, check and fearlessly challenge whether such lingering trace remains. Is non-dual intermittent or reversible and has the right view sunk into the depths of your consciousness? This step must be done with utmost sincerity and must not be compromised.

The grandeur will disappear after a few months but once the right view is practiced correctly, your experience will be stable and continuous. There must be complete thoroughness and effortlessness in non-dual.

This is the only true authentication.

---

23rd January 2011

I see... thanks for pointing out... yeah I feel that authentication is quite pointless but yet there is this urge to write and share. haha

I guess the 'traces' remain... and yet when there is self contraction or clinging, when it is seen then the illusion is dropped... always already, there is only this sensation, thought, feeling, arising after another... even thoughts, sensations of bodily contraction, or whatsoever... is only pure sensation arising without an agent.

The practice is thus to open unreservedly to whatever arises... and seeing that 'in the seen, just the seen, in the sensed, just the sensed, in the thought, just thought'... and also not clinging to whatever manifests, letting them dissolve and be traceless.

---

28th January 2011

Presence is empty. Not formless... I mean, it cannot be located, it cannot be found, it cannot be pinned down.... there is no 'The Presence'!

Though this has been said so many times... somehow I overlooked its significance... somehow, unknowingly, a subtle seeking for Presence is occuring... why? Due to the

idea that there is a 'Presence' here, somewhere... be it 'Hereness', 'Nowness', etc... somehow it is there, and I must return to 'It'. And this becomes a subtle object of seeking.... seeking for something that is by nature empty, cannot be found. Even though it is often said, what you already are cannot be found by searching.... due to the tendency to see something inherent, a Self, a Hereness, a Nowness, an Awareness... a subtle searching is always going on. A subtle seeking... clinging... looking for something that is thought to be there...

Yet... now it is seen, there is no source... no 'Awareness'.... yet awareness is utterly present.... AS mirage, apparitional appearances. Utterly present, vivid, yet utterly unlocatable. Let go of all grasping for Presence... for a Source... for anything at all! It cannot be found....

And in this dropping of the subtle contrived effort and seeking, every appearance is spontaneously accomplished, perfected, present and empty. Just the appearance alone is.... no core, essence, source, awareness, etc etc.. (nothing findable and locatable and inherent)

And the subtle efforting and seeking is replaced by spontaneity, naturalness, interdependent origination...

So now it becomes clearer, what Padmasambhava said:

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/03/self-liberation-through-seeing-with.html

*As for this sparkling awareness, which is called "mind,"*
*Even though one says that it exists, it does not actually exist.*
*(On the other hand) as a source, it is the origin of the diversity of all the bliss of Nirvana and all of the sorrow of Samsara.*

And the third karmapa said:

http://www.rinpoche.com/vow.html

*It is not existent - even the Victorious Ones do not see it.*
*It is not nonexistent - it is the basis of all samsara and nirvana.*
*This is not a contradiction, but the middle path of unity.*
*May the ultimate nature of phenomena, limitless mind beyond extremes, be realised.*

---

28th January 2011

Wrote a comment in one of my blog posts:

A Presence, Self, Awareness cannot be found. Its unfindability is its emptiness. Due to interdependent origination, apparitions appear, like an illusion but not an illusion. All appearances are spontaneously perfected from the beginning as the spontaneous presence (effortless/natural manifestation) of intrinsic awareness, self-luminous and empty.

---

2nd February 2011

*Sitting quietly, doing nothing, spring comes and the grass grows by itself*

This quote just keeps ringing in my mind. This is just the way things are. Effortlessly, naturally, spontaneously manifesting.

Now all efforts to do something, like 'be aware', 'be here now', that is just seen to be some silly unnecessary acts, also spontaneously arising on its own...

---

12nd February 2011

> *Originally posted by taoteching:*
>
> *Right now im seriously inquire into the practice of 'direct experience' ; i.e ..entering into nondual.*
>
> *and i feel (suspect)the stages of insight that i've read(self-realization,non dual,anatta sunyyata...) need not be linear,they can unfold in unpredictable ways ....*
>
> *the most important thing is to keep letting go of the 'mind' , 'dualistic consciousness',and experiencing experience nakedly,totally.*
>
> *zen buddhism,with it's way(method) of pointing to what we can actually experience,rather than in conceptual mind,seems very appealing to me.*
>
> *come across this site www.wwzc.org (have to thanks AEN ,it's frm his article in Awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com that i discover link to the site),many many good articles pointing to the way we can direct experience sensations as it is,so that the mind can bcome clearer(uncluttered),and this wiil serve as potent condition for insight(seeing things as they really are)to arise.*
>
> *ttc*

My opinion is first to have the realization and glimpse of the Certainty of Being.

I have had actual non dual experiences even before the I AM realization... but due to not gaining conviction of the luminous essence of mind, these experiences came and went and does not provide lasting insight. It is after these experiences that Thusness told me to start doing self-inquiry.

Can refer to my 2008 thread Death, Consciousness, Nondual Perception

**Thusness**:

Yes AEN, you are beginning to experience what that is known in the Advaita Vedanta as 'Atman' except that the experiences you had did not lead to you to the wrong conclusion. This is because the doctrine of anatta has sunk sufficiently deep in your

inmost consciousness. Although the 'teaching of anatta' helps to prevent you from landing into wrong views, the downside is it also denies you from experiencing that deep and utimate conviction, that certainty beyond doubt of your very own existence -- "I AM'. This is a very important factor for Advaita practitioners.

The next important factor is the duration of this non-dual experience must be prolonged; long enough for you to enter into a sort of absorption that the experience becomes 'oceanic'.

***AEN**: Then how about for a Buddhist, does he need to experience "that deep and utimate conviction, that certainty beyond doubt of your very own existence -- "I AM'."?*

Yes it is still important (in my opinion). It is the experience of our luminosity. There must be certainty of our luminosity but this luminosity is empty of an essence. This is most difficult to understand and the purpose of insight into our emptiness and anatta nature (to me) is really just about 'effortlesssustainability'.

---

Originally posted by taoteching:

> *Hi AEN,*
>
> *can elaborate the essential diference btween 'certainty of being' and non-dual experience?*
>
> *is self realization (i am) something that that lasts(never leaves once you attained it?)this do not make much sense,as even if i had a feeling certainty of my beingness,with the passing of time,the realization(or experience) will remain as memory(of past experience);can memory be trusted?it can't...*
>
> *more importantly(as im interested in the practical aspect of practice than theoretical) how do you differentiate btween practices that will lead to i am realization and those leading to nondual?*
>
> *surrender,let go 'release' will lead to nondual(collapse of the observer),but what about inquiry?i found to put attention on the sense of 'myself' seems tiring and demands much attention...what's your experience?*

The Certainty of Being gives rise to a conviction about the immediate Beingness or pure luminosity of Being. Because this is not an experience, but a clear realization/insight into the luminous essence of Being, it does not fade - luminosity never fades, luminosity can never be lost and is ever-present. Whether thought/memory arise or not - the undeniability of Beingness is still present. Whether you want to remember or not - its there, it is inescapable.

Non-dual experience can simply be an experience without realization/insight. So here is the difference.

Mindfulness and letting go can lead to non-dual experiences, self-inquiry/koans/etc lead to self-realization.

Self-inquiry in my experience is not an attention-based practice, which will then be contrived.

You are not focusing your attention on something - on a feeling, a sensation, an experience, whatsoever. Rather, you are investigating - you are finding out what you truly are. What am I, truly?

So you are actually going to 'discover' something that is undeniably present already - you are not trying to reach or sustain an experience, you are simply going to discover what is already present.

**Update**:

One more thing: luminosity, beingness is not a feeling.

You cannot feel beingness. Why? 'Feeling beingness' implies there is a 'you' separate from 'beingness', a 'you' that can sometimes feel, sometimes perceive, and sometimes not perceive beingness. Because of a perceived separation you will always have the illusory sense of 'losing' or 'gaining' presence-awareness. It is like thinking 'oh I used to have it but now I don't' even while reality is shining in plain view in its immediacy - you simply overlooked it in favour of a false concept that you 'felt' it before but now you don't. In actuality reality never is an experience to be 'felt' - it is simply overlooked, maybe recognised at times, but due to lack of realization, the habits/ignorance of duality manifest and you then project a sense of separation again and there goes the 'I got it, I lost it' drama - but that is all illusory projections that stops arising after realization, and so the tendency is to rest naturally in the natural state (which isn't a state but the undeniable beingness).

Such a dichotomy is false, it is non-existent. There is no 'you' who can perceive or not perceive 'beingness'.

Why? You ARE that self-shining, self-knowing presence-awareness. Presence is aware by nature, and awareness is present by nature. Presence and awareness is one.

Self-shining, self-knowing presence-awareness cannot be approached by 'feeling' because there never was a subject-object dichotomy present. So you don't come to know/feel/see presence, but presence is self-felt, self-known, self-evident by its nature (but overlooked due to our ignorance).

Even if you had a so called 'strong feeling of presence' (which I often have even before the realization of I AM), if you do not realize non-separation, if you do not realize your non-dual nature as presence-awareness, you will be forever deluded even in the face of reality.

As Presence-Awareness cannot be approached by feeling, it can only be discovered, realized, as an ever-present, undeniable fact of existence, more undeniable and more intimate than your own nose. You don't need to remember your own existence or try to feel your own existence - these attempts are seen to be ridiculous much like the attempt to search for your horse elsewhere while riding in it, or looking all around for your eyes with your eyes - because you never were apart from existence, you ARE existence,

undeniably present in its immediacy. You simply need to realize that all along, you were riding on your horse, all along, you ARE pure presence awareness and there is no need to focus your attention on it, try to remember it, try to feel it, and all those nonsense.

---

12th February 2011

Everything is utterly empty. What it means? Doesn't mean non-existing. Doesn't mean void. Doesn't mean nothingness.

Means... everything is vividly appearing.. but it cannot be pinned down, cannot be grasped, found, located - you can't say 'here it is', or 'there it is', or that 'this is me', or that 'it is there' - etc...

Like a dream... everything is just like a dream. Vividly and undeniably appearing, and yet what? Is anything real there? Can you say that the dream tiger, the dream self, the dream pain is truly existing or out there? It is just a vivid insubstantial experience, that's all.

"Truth", "Reality", "Mind", "Awareness", "Thoughts", "Experiences" - all are just a dynamic stream of interdependently originated manifestation that is fundamentally empty and non-locatable. Awareness? Seeing? Hearing? All unfindable as something substantially existing somewhere - but its appearance is undeniably manifesting according to dependent origination.

Searching for truth? Sorry to say, there is no 'The Truth'. There is not even 'The Buddha Nature'. You'll find a thousand years to no avail, because you are searching for something that is empty without inherent existence. There is nothing fixed waiting to be found, including 'Truth'! Everything is dynamic. There is not even so much as an atom that is inherently existing! There is not even a Self, an Awareness, a Presence... all these are only labels for the luminous, vivid quality of experience. An inherently existing Presence cannot be found, even though under the spell of dualistic and inherent construct that it may seem to be inherent. Presence, Awareness are simply labels for the utterly undeniable 'beingness' of this moment... which is everything manifesting as it is - sights, sounds, smells, thoughts, etc... Yet vivid as it is, there is nothing there - like a dream, though vivid as it is, it all vanishes moment by moment, and it all vanishes into absolute nothingness in deep sleep.

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12th February 2011

Seeing the sights and sounds, the scenery, the people... there is no seeing.

I am the sights, the sounds, the scenery, I am everybody, revealing itself according to dependent origination, doing their things according to their karma.

Yet there is no cosmic consciousness... I am not you, you are not me. We each have unique karmas and experiences. There is nothing inherent.

12th February 2011

Not finding an agent... realizing the absence of an agent or a meditator, I find the innate spontaneous perfection of every moment of manifestation that cannot be improved, modified, altered, sought, or destroyed, by meditation. Why? There is no agent, meditator, that could do a thing to alter or improve the intrinsic luminosity and emptiness of this manifestation.

There is nobody present who could 'become more present', there is nobody present who could 'become', 'be', the inherent perfection of the ungraspable moment. There is only the inherent perfection of the ungraspable moment.

Sitting quietly, doing nothing, spring comes, grass grows. Never was a 'you' there who could do a thing about reality.

Doesn't mean I don't meditate - I do, for the purpose of developing calmness and absorption, samadhi. But this is done without the intention of 'moving towards reality'. Reality already IS, there can be no movement away or towards it (that would imply a duality subject and object which is non-existent).

Try as you may, you can never 'reach' reality - there is no subjective 'you', and no objective 'reality' to be found. Try as you may, you can never escape reality - the inescapable, undeniable beingness of the ungraspable moment. The movement to search or escape reality is also the undeniable beingness of the ungraspable moment like no matter what waves appear on the ocean it can never leave its nature as water - yet temporarily overlooked due to the search (wave seeking for water - how ridiculous).

Just sitting... that is truth. Just walking on the street, is truth. No activity is closer or more distant from truth, because everything is truth.

Simply... drop all desires and effort.

p.s. but all desires and efforts are unavoidable before realization due to the deep rooted construct of duality and inherency! That is why realization is important, and contemplative practices/investigation into the nature of mind is vital. To have a master to give direct introduction into the nature of mind, and a contemplative investigation that brings the dawn of wisdom, is essential. Effort arises until it doesn't. Sense of separation will arise (due to false view) until it doesn't (via realization).

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12th February 2011

Everything is miraculously manifest as vivid presence.

Everything doesn't come from somewhere, doesn't go elsewhere, cannot be even be located somewhere presently - manifest interdependently and thus empty, independent (not the result of antecedent causes and conditions), complete, whole, unconditioned as it is.

Because this moment doesn't change to the next, it cannot be said to be impermanent.

Because this moment doesn't stay even for an instant, it cannot be said to be permanent.

Impermanent without movement, flow without direction, spontaneous and free a yogi lives.

No movement, no process, no development, no transformation, no change, no 'going somewhere'... only the spontaneous perfection and completeness of this moment, and yet instantaneously dissolved upon its manifestation.

Firewood does not turn into ashes, autumn does not turn into spring, sentient beings do not turn into Buddhas. And yet, someday, through engaging in practice, Buddhahood is realized.

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19th February 2011

There are two phases to Anatta in my experience which corresponds to the two stanzas of Anatta in Thusness's article On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection.

In the beginning... when I had the sudden realization by contemplating on Bahiya Sutta, there was a very clear realization of 'in the seeing just the seen' - the second stanza of Anatta in Thusness's article... seeing, hearing, is simply the scenery, the sound, it is so clear, vivid, without dualistic separation (of subject and object, perceived and perceived)... there never was, there is only the music playing and revealing itself. The scenery revealing itself...

It is very blissful, the luminosity is very clear and intensely felt. Yet it became a sort of object of attachment... somehow, even though luminosity is no longer seen as a Self or observer, there is still a sense of solidity that luminosity/presence is constantly Here and Now. A subtle tendency to sink back into substantialist non-dualism is still present.

Later on, I came to realize that luminosity, presence itself, is ungraspable without solidity. Much like the first stanza of Anatta in Thusness's article. There is no luminosity inherently existing as the 'here and now'... presence cannot be found, located, grasped! There is nothing solid here. There is no 'here and now' - as Diamond Sutra says, past mind is ungraspable, present mind is ungraspable, future mind is ungraspable. What there is, is unsupported, disjoint thoughts and phenomena... There is only the ungraspable experiencing of everything, which is bubble like. Everything just pops in and out. It's like a stream... cannot be grasped or pinned down... like a dream, yet totally vivid. Cannot be located as here or there.

Prior to this insight, there isn't the insight into phenomena as being 'scattered' without a linking basis (well there already was but it needs refinement)... the moment you say there is a Mind, an Awareness, a Presence that is constant throughout all experiences,

that pervades and arise as all appearances, you have failed to see the 'no-linking', 'disjointed', 'unsupported' nature of manifestation.

The luminosity and the emptiness are inseparable. They are both essential aspects of our experiential reality and must be seen in its seamlessness and unity. Realizing this, there is just disjoint thoughts and phenomena arising without support and liberating of their own accord. There is nothing solid acting as the basis of these experiences and linking them... there is just spontaneous and unsupported manifestations and self liberating experiences. Simpo_ described it well recently:

*Will like to add that, in my experience, no-self is a more subtle insight than non-duality.*

*Usually, we see a continuity of mental formation... well... my experience is that it is not always so. The streams of thought seems to be linear but it is not.. To my experience, it is the fast movement of thoughts that give the impression of continuity of self.*

*Now... thoughts can appear and disappear and they do not have to be linear... 'Simpo' the name pop up and dissapear... another image appears and dissapears... all of them are not self... just appearance, sensations, etc... and we cannot say they arise from a base or sink into the base. There is no base (as far as I see it)... just this ungraspable appearing and dissappearing.*

Without this realization, one can never hope to understand this phrase in Diamond Sutra:

***Therefore then, Subhuti, the Bodhisattva, the great being, should produce an unsupported thought, i.e. a thought which is nowhere supported, a thought unsupported by sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or mind-objects.***

应无所住而生其心

This is the phrase that got 6th Ch'an Patriarch Hui-Neng his great enlightenment after the 5th Patriarch explained it to him.

A lot of people think they understood this, yet they are merely disassociating from phenomena and thoughts... this is not what is meant here. What Diamond Sutra described here requires the insight into emptiness... without which all are just contrived practice based on our paradigm of duality and inherency.

It is all just a matter of depth... one phrase... everyone claims to understand it, but do they truly penetrate its depth and essence? Non-enlightened people think they understood it, people at the I AM phase think they understood it, non dual people may think they understood it, etc... we all think we have grasped it, but true understanding comes via penetrating the twofold emptiness.

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19th February 2011

Without realizing emptiness, all efforts to let go are still happening in a contrived and dualistic mode and do not lead to liberation. They are a form of disassociation.

That is why what is taught out there are mostly only touching the surface... (teachers telling people to let go, etc)

To go deep into the essence, to go straight into liberation, contemplate and realize emptiness.

Nevertheless, the practice of dropping and letting go is still important for a beginner even though it is contrived and not ultimate.

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19th February 2011

'One Mind' is precisely the trace that prevents self-liberation. Self-liberation (spontaneous dissolving without traces) happens in seeing all things as bubble-like, unsupported, insubstantial.

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19th February 2011

**Thusness**:

Just wrote a reply to your posts and posted in your blog Putting aside Presence, Penetrate Deeply into Two Fold Emptiness.

Your expression is clear and well written.

Putting aside Presence, Penetrate Deeply into Two Fold Emptiness

Posted by: PasserBy

Hi AEN,

Just read your post this morning and an innocent joy arose spontaneously. Indeed, after bringing non-dual to the foreground, the next step is to let go of this subtle grasping of presence and penetrate deeply into the two fold Emptiness.

In many of your recent posts after the sudden realization of anatta from contemplating on Bahiya Sutta, you are still very much focused on the vivid non-dual presence. Now the everything feels 'Me' sort of sensation becomes a daily matter and the bliss of losing oneself completely into scenery, sound, taste is wonderful. This is different from everything collapsing into a "Single Oneness" sort of experience but a disperse out into the multiplicity of whatever arises. Everything feels closer than 'me' due to gaplessness. This is a natural but as you mentioned in your post,

> ...somehow, even though luminosity is no longer seen as a Self or observer, there is still a sense of solidity that luminosity/presence is constantly Here and Now. The tendency to sink back into substantialist non-dualism is still strong...

Indeed and very well said. 'Now-ness, Here-ness' are no different from 'Self-ness', let go of of all these. There are several discussions in your forum recently that are related to

the pointing out of the difference between the bliss that comes from non-dual Luminous Presence and 'self-liberating' aspect that comes from the insight of two fold Emptiness. You can re-read them, it may help. Also, it is time for you to put aside the Presence, this taste is already implicity present, rather focus on having direct experiential insight of the following:

**1. Unsupported**

This experience is radically different from One Mind that is non-dual. It is not about stillness transparency and vividness of presence but a deep sense of freedom that comes from directly experiencing manifestation as being disjoint, spontaneous, free, unbounded and unsupported. Re-read the first stanza – an excerpt:

> 1. The lack of doer-ship that links and co-ordinates experiences.
> Without the 'I' that links, phenomena (thoughts, sound, feelings and so on and so forth) appear bubble-like, floating and manifesting freely, spontaneously and boundlessly. With the absence of the doer-ship also comes a deep sense of freedom and transparency. Ironical as it may sound but it's true experientially. We will not have the right understanding when we hold too tightly 'inherent' view. It is amazing how 'inherent' view prevents us from seeing freedom as no-doership, interdependence and interconnectedness, luminosity and non-dual presence.

**2. Unfindability, Corelessness, Essencelessness and Ungraspability**

Further penetrate into these unsupported freely manifesting phenomena and look into the core of whatever arises, not only there is nothing behind as a background, there is no inner core that can be found, nothing 'inherently there'. If we truly see this unfindability, corelessness, essencelesnesss and ungraspability empty nature of the moment to moment of experience, something 'magical' will happen. Observe how the karmic tendency to 'hold' releases itself when the empty nature of 'whatever arises' comes into view.

**3. Embrace the view of Dependent Origination**

Do not get bounded by the 'who-where-when' construct and embrace the view of dependent origination fully; always only 缘起当生,缘尽当了*(AEN's translation: arises upon the arising of conditions, ends upon the cessation of conditions)*. Practice diligently until there is the experience of unsupported continuous opening without inner core but do not rush into any experience. :-)

Happy Journey!

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27th February 2011

After reading some chapter in David Loy's book 'Nonduality' (highly recommended), here are some of my reflections (not necessarily following everything he said, but my own personal notes of my experience).

**All Self/True Self is No Self**

'Seer', 'seeing', 'seen', 'hearing', 'awareness', 'Self', these things are not non-existent, but are mere labels for the wordless activity of knowing - the experience of colours and shapes shifting, tree waving, the experience 'chirp chirp'. The seer IS the seeing IS the seen. All these words are only pointing to a single undivided self luminous flow of cognizance that naturally manifests according to dependent origination, with no agent, inherent self, that truly exists. How do we know this? It is simply realized to be so.

Because it is realized that there is no self to contrast with the not-self, observer to contrast with the observed, rather - in the seen is just the seen, in the heard is just the heard, without a seer or hearer - everything is experienced intimately without division. Everything is you, and yet 'you' are a mere label collating the five aggregates. In seeing just the seen - a seen + you doing the seeing is a dualistic inference unsupported by direct experience. There is no you apart from chirp chirp, colours, shapes... just this.

What we experience to be 'intimately me', turns out to be everything experienced as it is without split/division, without a trace of a separate self, agent, or perceiver. And hence, All-Self/True Self is No Self.

Yet to leave a trace of a non-dual True Self is to fall into the error of substantializing what is fundamentally without substance, essence, core - there is just disjoint, unsupported events and process.

There has never been a 'you', an 'experiencer', apart from the events/experiences of your life.

*Consider “your” past. The things that “happened to you.”*

*Did “they” happen to “you”… or is the idea of “you” completely dependent on the events the “you” experienced?*

*—John Russel*

**All Time is No Time**

*You may suppose that time is only passing away, and not understand that time never arrives. Although understanding itself is time, understanding does not depend on its own arrival. People only see time's coming and going, and do not thoroughly understand that the time-being abides in each moment. This being so, when can they penetrate the barrier? Even if people recognized the time-being in each moment, who could give expression to this recognition? Even if they could give expression to this recognition for a long time, who could stop looking for the realization of the original face? According to the ordinary people's view of the time-being, even enlightenment and nirvana as the time-being would merely be aspects of coming and going.*

*~ Dogen*

Not only is there no self, there is no movement in reality. Due to a paradigm of duality and inherency, we perceive the universe as a collection of objects flowing through the course of time, arising at a time, abiding for some time, and subsiding at a later time.

Like John Russel's comment on events and self, the same could be made about events and time:

*Consider "your" past. The things that "happened in time."*

*Did "they" happen to "time"… or is the idea of "time" completely dependent on the events that happened?*

We fail to realize that of course, all there is IS time, and there cannot be 'objects in time' - time has no meaning apart from manifestation. Time IS manifestation, and manifestation IS time, and since all there ever is is manifestation, all there is IS time.

What does this imply? There can never be non-temporal things occurring and passing away in time, because since all there is is time, there can be no non-temporal things. In other words: there is change, yet no changing 'thing'.

Because impermanence is thoroughgoing, total flux, it leaves no room for the slightest sense of an entity or identity, or an unmoved mover, there can be no persisting entity 'me' that is born, say, in 1990, and that passes away in 2050.

This leaves each moment complete and whole as it is - coming from nowhere, leading nowhere. Birth is birth, death is death, there is no one going from birth to death. Firewood is firewood, ash is ash, firewood did not turn into ash. Each phenomenal expression abides as they are without transformation, without persistence, without essence.

Walking from point a to z, there is no entity that has moved from a to z, for point a is simply a, b is b, etc. No entities ever was - all there ever is fresh unseen-before events. Each manifestation is like lightning, momentary, disjoint, unsupported, complete, whole as it is.

Each step you walk on the road is literally is like the bird's flight-path vanishing without a trace: each previous perception vanishes without repercussion, without persistence, simply because all is fundamentally empty without coming and going.

And so, to realize all there is is time, is to realize that there is no time, since time requires entities/objects, persistence and movement, none of which can be found in each moment of manifestation. This is the true permanence of Mahaparinirvana sutra, beyond the notion of something impermanent, and something permanent.

**Total Causality is Unconditionality**

*"Morever, Ananda, according to your understanding of it, the ear-faculty and sounds are the conditions for the coming into being of the ear-consciousness. But does this consciousness come into being from the ear-faculty such that it is restricted by the*

*boundaries of the ear-faculty? Or does it come into being from sounds, such that it is restricted by the boundaries of sound?*

*"Suppose, Ananda, that it came into being from the ear-faculty. But without the presence of either sound or silence, the ear-faculty would not be aware of anything. If the ear-faculty lacked awareness, because there would no objects for it to be aware of, then what attributes could the consciousness have? You may insist that it is the ears that hear. But without the presence of sound or silence, no hearing can take place. Also, the ear is covered with skin, and the body-faculty is involved with objects of touch. Could the ear-consciousness come into being from that faculty? Since it cannot, what can the ear-consciousness be based on?*

*"Suppose the ear-consciousness came into being from sounds. If the ear-consciousness owed its existence to sounds, then it would have nothing to do with hearing. But if no hearing is taking place, how would you know where sounds are coming from? Suppose, nevertheless, that the ear-consciousness did arise from sound. Since a sound must be heard if it is to be what we know as a sound, the ear-consciousness would also be heard as a sound. And when it is not heard, it would not exist. Besides, if it is heard, then it would be the same thing as a sound; it would be something that is heard. But what would be able to hear it? And if you had no awareness, you would be as insentient as grass or wood.*

*"Do not say that sounds, which have no awareness, and the ear-faculty, which is aware, can intermingle to create the ear-consciousness. There can be no such place where these two can mix together, since one is internal and the other is external. Where else then could the ear consciousness come into being?*

***"Therefore, you should know that the ear-faculty and sounds cannot be the conditions for the coming into being of the ear-consciousness, because none of these three constituents - ear-faculty, sounds, and ear-consciousness, has an independent existence. Fundamentally, they do not come into being from causes and conditions; nor do they come into being on its own.***

*~ The Surangama Sutra - A New Translation with Excerpts from the Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, page 111*

Just like thoroughgoing impermanence denies movement of things (thoroughgoing impermanence leaves no room for nontemporal things moving through time, or unchanging things undergoing change), thoroughgoing/total causality denies there is truly something being the effect and something being the cause (thoroughgoing causality leaves no room for noncausal/independent entities causing something/be caused by something).

Everything being the manifestation of causality, thus lacking an independent core or self sustaining essence, being merely an intangible appearance like a bubble or a mirage, is for the same reason beyond arising, ceasing, cause and effect.

Our experience as it is is unconditioned, without movement, origin, destination, arising, passing, and so on. But once we view our experience through the false view of

inherency, we start to see independent/non-causal entities 'interacting' causally in space and time. This is not what Buddha meant by Dependent Origination. The teaching of dependent origination is precisely taught in order to negate the view of an independently existing cause or an independently existing effect of a cause by pointing out their absence of independent, inherent existence. As such, cause and effect cannot be established.

*That which, taken as causal or dependent, is the process of being born and passing on, is, taken noncausally and beyond all dependence, declared to be nirvāṇa.*

~ Nagarjuna

This leaves everything as an unconditioned, complete, end in itself, like a mirage spontaneously manifesting and dissolving without an existence behind the appearance, without an origin, without coming from, without going to, yet seamlessly interconnected with all and everything (without the notion of entities interacting/causing each other).

What is imagined to be real with inherent existence, when observed is seen to be merely dependently originated at the relative level with no independent existence, and thus is ultimately being perfect and unconditioned as it is.

This corresponds to the three natures of yogacara or the third turning of the wheel teachings.

This is the true nature of unconditionality, beyond the notion of things being conditioned, or an ultimate Unconditioned substratum.

**Conclusion**

Not understanding the middle way, we create false views, and make a dichotomy between experience and view due to our framework of duality and inherency. Under such views, we misperceive experience in terms of entities. We fall into the extremes of being and non-being, eternalism and nihilism. We misperceive the unmoving characteristic of experience as an unchanging self, we misperceive the nature of change into a world of objects arising and passing away in 'time'. We misperceive the interdependence of the world into a collection of noncausal objects interacting causally in time and space. We miscontrue the unconditioned nature of experience into an independently existing Absolute.

And yet the wisdom of emptiness points to This... sound, sight, taste, unconditioned, complete as it is, without the duality of Self and non-Self, Observer and Observed, timelessness and time, causality and unconditionality.

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5th March 2011

> *Quote:*
>
> *Originally Posted by **Lysander***

> *I am having trouble understanding this concept. The simile of the chariot in relation to anatta is easy to understand when it comes to relating our physical body parts with the components of the chariot.*
>
> *But, what about the more subtle aspects, such as our mental states, mind and awareness?*

Another analogy is weather. Clouds, rain, wind, blowing, lightning, changing moment to moment according to conditions.

Now is there a weather located somewhere? Here, there, etc? Or is it just a label conventionally put on the everchanging stream of patterns and phenomena with nothing locatable and graspable?

Apply this to 'self', 'mental states', 'mind', 'awareness'. They apply in the same way. Then we see that 'self', 'mental states', 'mind', 'awareness' is just like the word 'weather'! It doesn't point to an inherently, independently, existing entity... but it does point to an undeniable stream of happenings that dependently originate.

Just a stream of sensations, sight, sound, thoughts, feelings, etc... changing moment by moment, nothing fixed.

> *Quote:*
>
> *What is the consciousness? In rebirth, when the conditions are right, consciousness comes into being again. How do we see this consciousness as not part of I? It is just if that the consciousness is doing the transmigration, why is not us?*

Read this passage carefully because it answers every single question you posed:
http://www.leighb.com/mn38.htm

> *Quote:*
>
> *On an intellectual level, I understand the consciousness is constantly changing as our thoughts rise and go.*

This is where you go wrong. There is no 'The Consciousness'! There are six types of consciousness, and they arise according to conditions moment by moment.
'...consciousness arisen dependent on eye and forms is eye consciousness. Consciousness arisen dependent on account of ear and sounds is ear consciousness...'

> *Quote:*
>
> *But why is it incorrect to label our consciousness as what are we?*

If consciousness is you or yours, then you will be able to control it. But are you controlling consciousness, or is it happening of their own accord due to dependent origination?

For example, if your ear is functioning properly, and an airplane passes by, can you even choose not to hear it? No! Ear-consciousness happens of their own accord, dependent on conditions..

For example, if your eye is functioning properly, and your mom passes by, can you choose not to see it? No! Eye-consciousness happens of their own accord, dependent on conditions.. (oh yes you can close your eyes, but what I am saying is that at that particular moment the sight occurred, do you have a choice to see it or not?)

You may think "ok, I can't control sense consciousness. How about mental consciousness, thoughts, and feelings?"

Well I say, keep looking... if you can control your feelings, you can make yourself feel good every single moment! Yet inevitably, anger, discomfort, fear arises. Why? Because of various kinds of conditions, including ignorance, bodily and external conditions. You can't stop them when they arise! (Even though you can gradually let them go if they do arise)

Furthermore: ask yourself this question, can you know the next moment of your thought? We think we are the 'thinker' of our thoughts, that we somehow control and produce our next thought. But is this so? If you are the producer, controller, and thinker of thoughts, then you should know what your next thought will be. But no matter how we look, we just don't know what the next thought is! Thus, thoughts actually occur spontaneously of their own accord, dependent on conditions.

Thus, mental consciousness also happens of their own accord, dependent on conditions.

You can read this sutta on this topic: Anatta-lakkhana Sutta

So you see, the six types of consciousness arises dependent on conditions. You do not control it, you do not have a choice, because it is no you, it is not yours.

Furthermore: once you contemplate 'in the seeing there is just the seen, in the hearing there is just the heard', there is no seer, hearer, etc, then you realize that Consciousness never was an observer, perceiver or agent! Consciousness IS perception... there is no observer apart from the observed, and thus how can Consciousness be a self?

Normally, we think that we are an inner perceiver inside our body, perceiving objects outside of us. However, this notion of a subject and object dichotomy drops when we do contemplative practice.

This requires direct experience and realization through contemplation and meditation, no amount of intellectualizing this helps. It is always already so, you just need to realize it.

*Quote:*

*I may be wrong and my faith in Buddhism predisposes me to consider myself as knowing I have a wrong view. But it is difficult to get past this view i have, perhaps if you could help me understand this better on an intellectual level it would help me greatly in my realization of this.*

It is very good you are putting an effort to understand this. Everyone of us (including the Buddha) used to have wrong view, and is transformed by the power of dharma.

*Quote:*

*Also, at the moment i am doing meditation on anatta, using my experience in life for contemplation. So any advice or guidance on my meditation would be helpful as well. I think the only difficulty i have is when i experience an intense itch (lol) which distracts me from my train of thought. It is not necessary for me to move to scratch the itch, it is just me observing the coming and going of the itch and resisting the urge to scratch it. But should I just stick to concentrating on my breathing when i can be so easily distracted by an itch?*

Yes, just observe the itch, but you don't have to resist the urge if you need to scratch it.

*Quote:*

*Originally Posted by* ***Exonesion***

*It's difficult to fully understand what anatta is as it is an abstract term. I've read many articles about that and after reading them, my understanding about anatta remains unchanged. We will only be able to grasp their meanings through insight in meditation. And insight will only arise when the mind is completely still.*

*Here is an article about anatta and some other matters but it's still hard to understand what it is. ==>http://www.triple-gem.net/The_Long_View_03Dec07.pdf*

*Good day to you.*

It's actually not very difficult to understand Anatta, and it is vital to understand this (see Your Nirvana is assured if you have right view). What doubts do you have?

---

5th March 2011

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Lysander**

*Thank you so much!*

No problem...

Here's something that I think is a good pointer:

*Q. So there is no self (Atman). so what exactly is it that is reborn, and how does what is reborn pass from one body to another?*
*Thanks in advance for any answers received. bow.*

---

*The question is wrongly put and the Buddha's reponse when asked such a question was to reject it as an improper question. Having rejected the question he would then inform the questioner of what he ought to have asked: "With what as condition is there birth?"*

*The reason that it is an improper question is that rebirth is taught as the continuation of a process, and not as the passing on of any sort of entity. For a more complete exposition of the subject see Mahasi Sayadaw's Discourse on Paticcasamuppada.*

*Best wishes,*
*Dhammanando Bhikkhu*

Also:

*In the //Milindapanha// the King asks Nagasena:*

*"What is it, Venerable Sir, that will be reborn?"*

*"A psycho-physical combination (//nama-rupa//), O King."*

*"But how, Venerable Sir? Is it the same psycho-physical combination as this present one?"*

*"No, O King. But the present psycho-physical combination produces kammically wholesome and unwholesome volitional activities, and through such kamma a new psycho-physical combination will be born."*

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5th March 2011

> *Originally Posted by* ***Lysander***
>
> *As thread says, sometimes i have no idea when i'm sitting in the right posture. I don't know when my back is straight and sometimes i just fall asleep while meditating and end up just heading back to bed anyway. What did you people do when starting out meditation?*

Sleep enough.

When you are meditating, observe the sensations as clearly as possible - very very clear, very very vivid, very very intense, very very present. This breath.... the coolness, softness, hardness, solidity, fluidity, etc... without the labels, without thoughts. As clear as possible.

So clear... is there an experiencer separate from the experience? No... there is just that sensation. So intense that it is felt as pure clarity and pure bliss. At this point you really really enjoy it - so how can you fall asleep? You only fall asleep when you are 'bored'... but in this intense state of joy and clarity, almost to a point of excitement (but not an emotional state), you will not fall asleep. It's like taking psychedelic drugs, all the sounds and colours are so wonderful, you go 'wow' at the simplest of things - but except in meditation this heightened clarity is not induced by drugs and is not an altered state of perception, rather, it is an 'intensified state of perception/mindfulness'. There is a lot of energy in this state. You become radiant looking. This becomes your everyday experience after non dual realization.

In such a heightened state of alertness and clarity and joy, sleepiness will dissipate.

For aligning body: try imagining a line that goes from the top of your head all the way to the bottom. Align yourself to this line. Do this only once/when necessary (don't keep doing it) at the start of your meditation.

> Originally Posted by **Lysander**
>
> *Is it necessary to breath with the nose? I find it difficult for some reason and end up breathing through my mouth.*
>
> *Furthermore i still don't know if keeping a straight back is necessary, sometimes i find myself so bent over i decide to move to a wall to continue my meditation.*

Don't try to control the breath. Your only job is to sense as much clarity as possible, everything that is arising in experience.

Every happening in its pristine, vivid, luminous immediacy. It's intense presence, wonder, magical-like quality of awareness. Then you'll see you're literally living in paradise.

It is good to start with breathing - then you can extend that clarity to all senses. Practice this even in daily living.

---

6th March 2011

1. seer..... seeing..... seen

2. seer ------> seeing <------seen

3. seeing

4. seeing ------> seen

5. | seen | | seen | | seen |

~~6. | seen | | seen | | seen |~~

---

6th March 2011

> *Originally posted by realization:*
>
> *Can you explain so we can better understand?*

First we have the ordinary deluded sense of an observer inside observing the world outside.

Second we realize ourselves to be an infinite awareness that contains all objects.

Third we realize that there is no objects, only awareness and appearances of awareness, or awareness appearing as everything, which is to say there is only awareness.

Fourth we realize that awareness is really only manifestation and perception.

Fifth we realize that perceptions are disjoint, unsupported, and experience release every moment without leaving traces.

Sixth we realize that perceptions are empty like a mirage, like an illusion but not an illusion, like a dream but not a dream, looks there but not really there, merely dependently originated.

---

6th March 2011

**Thusness**:

Quite a creative way of presentation.

Indeed it is important to have the keen eye to discern correctly the difference between 4 and 5. Even after the realization that a background never really existed and what left is just the 'world', practitioner even after maturing the experience of no-mind can still be attached to the a ground in the 'here and now'. This too must be thoroughly seen through that it is no more than another subtle attachment to a 'center'. When this is further penetrated, whatever arises will turn disjoint and unsupported. Before that, experience maybe said to be luminous, present and blissful but not exactly liberating. After that, it is more about 'liberation' than being 'blissful'.

One point I would like to add is about 'wrong view' vs 'right view'. In many of your recent posts, although you have described quite clearly the experiences and the realizations you have undergone, the aspect that how 'wrong view' has contributed to the refication/personification of a non-conceptual non-dual experience isn't clear.

The view that the nature of all things relies not upon their 'essence' and 'substance' but upon supporting conditions is unique in Buddhism. Why must there be a 'source' and a 'starting'? It comes from this latent tendency of 'inherent view' that runs deep. This 'inherent view' is the cause that practitioners got stuck in your diagram 1,2,3 as they rely their view on 'substance' rather then dependent origination.

The subtlety of the latent tendencies of our dualistic and inherent view cannot be under-estimated. Do not rush into any experiences but refine our understanding of the view. Before we mature our insights, it is advisable to hold firmly to the right view and not to discard it too early in the name of direct non-conceptual experiences. All views will dissipate in their own accord when our momentary experience turns blissful and liberating.

Just my 2 cents. :)

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31st March 2011

> *Originally Posted By: davlon ^ Cool thanks.. A few questions pop into my mind now, though.. 1) Once "you" have escaped the illusory confines of your "self"...and realize that there are no selves anywhere...shouldn't you then be able to completely disassociate from the localized perspective of "your" body and be free to choose any other vantage point? Like someone or something else entirely? Another "person," a tree, a stone, etc...? Why would you still be liimited to "following" only "lovingheart" or "docresults" around here? Or might that be possible at a higher level of Enlightenment, if not now? 2) I think lovingheart commented on this earlier - but if the self is an illusion - then so is "free will," correct? And so is the LOA as well, right? If so, then is it true that*

*"we" actually have no control over "our" lives??? Everything simply just happens spontaneously?*

1) As in the realization of anatta it is realized that there is no agent, self, entity, or a real identity, that seeing is just sight revealing itself by its self luminosity without a seer, hearing is just sound revealing itself by its self luminosity without a hearer, and so on, there is no entity that can possibly disassociate from this particular body mind experience, since disassociation necessarily implies someone disassociating from something. If there is no self at the center, there is no one who can escape the present appearance even if you wanted to. That is all there is. In the absence of a central identity, all there is is unique body-minds interacting with other unique body-minds in a web of interconnectedness. There is no self, agent involved.

Furthermore: in the realization of anatta (thusness stage 5), there is no granduer of a cosmic universal consciousness which we all share or part of. Consciousness is individual (pertaining to unique body-minds) but non dual (without the duality of a subject and object). At this phase not only is consciousness no longer seen to be an ultimate background behind experience, consciousness is understood to be the manifestation of cognizance in six forms: Visual consciousness (cakkhu-viññāna), Auditory consciousness (sotā-viññāna), Nasal consciousness (ghāna-viññāna), Taste consciousness (jihvā-viññāna), Tactile consciousness (kāya-viññāna), Mind-consciousness (mano-viññāna).

Every felt sense of phenomenal existence, including even the sense of non-dual presence, existence, discovered in a state of non-conceptuality via methods like self-inquiry, and reified into an ultimate noumenal Self, actually fall into these categories. In particular, the I AM realized via self-inquiry is a manifestation of non-conceptual thought (a subset of "mind-consciousness"). However this will not be initially apparent or obvious to such practitioners as their framework of duality and inherency are still deeply conditioning their view of things. As such, once the non-dual, non-conceptual, direct without intermediary, immediate, experience of a thought or a moment of mind-consciousness occurs, owing to their view (of inherency and duality) and way of inquiry ("Who am I?" Already presumes the existence of a true identity), such an experience is immediate clung to and reified into an ultimate identity.

But as further insights reveal, the non-dual, non-conceptual, direct without intermediary, immediate mode of perception (NDNCDIMOP) equally applies to all sensate, cognitive perceptions, and as such a pure conscious, NDNCDIMOP experience of a sound, sight, or indeed even on a conceptual thought eventually reveals all forms of cognition to share the same taste and nothing is more ultimate than anything. There is no ultimate identity transcending manifestation as all manifestation are in a sense equal even though each manifestation is radically different from another in form and in the requisite conditions that gave rise to that form. Having said this however, I must also mention that I would prefer people to start their path (if they choose to follow the Direct Path to realization) with the practice of self-inquiry which results in the direct realization of I AM.

As being explained, consciousness is the manifestation of the six modes of cognition, and as such, there is not even a "One Consciousness" subsuming all phenomena or

manifestation. (Thusness Stage 4 and the peak of Advaita attainment) Consciousness is the manifestation itself. There is nothing inherent, independent, permanent about "consciousness", and as the insight into anatta arises, the term "consciousness" is now understood to be a mere label collating the conglomerate of various sensate cognizance arising in its myriad of forms according to the specific requisite conditions of that moment, in the same way that the word "weather" is not referring to a findable, locatable, graspable, independent, unchanging entity, but is a mere label denoting the various ever changing weatherly phenomena arising moment to moment, e.g. Lightning strike, wind blowing, clouds forming and parting, rain, etc etc.

As you can see, consciousness is not universal, not cosmic, but is actually disperse as the multiplicity of manifestation. Consciousness pertains to unique individual body-mind and I cannot therefore claim that I am you or you are me. We are different, unique, individual body-minds interacting with each other in a web of interconnectedness even though no agency or self at the center is involved in acting, controlling, perceiving etc - the perceiving, acting, etc occurs of their own accord, in accordance to the laws of causality.

What is discovered through the realization of anatta is a luminous, delightful, magical fairy-tale like wonderland of ordinary sights and sounds, unsullied by any sense of self/Self, revealing an intimacy, lustre, intensity, aliveness, never appreciated before. Further insight then reveals each perception and thought to be bubble-like, dream-like, disjoint, unsupport, self-releasing (self-liberates upon inception without leaving traces). All that much said, it is true that consciousness is non-local (no where inherently located, manifests according to interdependent origination), as such deeply penetrating into its emptiness and non-locality does result in so called psychic or supernatural powers (Thusness prefers to simply call them non-local activities).

To quote Thusness:

*http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/05/different-degrees-of-non-duality.html*

...Conventionally, to experience non-local aspect of pristine awareness is through concentration. It is the job of concentration. Concentration till one enters into a deep stage of absorption and object-subject becomes one, a state of transcendence. Non-local experiences in such a practice are reached through the power of ‘focus’. So the key towards non-local experiences is absorption and transcendence.

Non-duality on the other hand is a form of realization, a realization that all along there never was a split. Its clarity and level of transcendence come from dissolving the ‘seeds’ that prevents the ‘seeing’. Very seldom we hear people talk about the non-local aspect in the practice of wisdom but non-duality do meet non-locality at the point of transcendence (phase 4). It is some sort of absorption as in the case of concentration but it is more of 'clarity till the point of absorption'. It may sound paradoxical, but this is true. This is the way of wisdom.

There are many layers of consciousness and the truth of non-duality must first sink deep down into the inmost consciousness. It is important to reach the phase of ‘turning point’ as at this phase, the realization of no-self has sunk sufficiently deep into consciousnesses

till there is no retreat. Otherwise that joy and experience of no-self will be lost in few months time (This is my experience) and re-surface again until "Emptiness as forms' is deeply experienced. In phase 2-3, non-local experiences may be experienced for some people and mostly with the help of concentration (like asking a question of our past lives) it can be experienced after 6-9 months of practices especially after deeply experiencing 'Emptiness is Form'. Non-local aspect is triggered at the point of transcendence...

Lastly, in the realization of anatta, it is true that there is no free will, there is no control, but equally true is that there is no determinism. So do not fall into extremes. Intentions and latent tendencies influence our actions which affects our life in every moment so do not overlook anything. Actions continue to be done, fruits continue to be sowed, just that there is no doer nor recipient.

Sorry for the late reply as I haven't been checking up this forum lately.

---

1st April 2011

Recently had a MSN discussion with two forummers about dharma practice. Conversation took place on 31st March 2011 (Fri),

Here is an edited version of the conversation:

**Participant 1:** If there is no self, then who and what is restraining the mind, following the virtues (i.e. practicing the dharma)?

**Me:** That's like asking who or what is hearing, who or what is seeing, who or what is acting. This is actually a falsely put question as never was there a doer, perceiver, or agent in the first place. Seeing, action, all arise according to inter-dependent origination. No agent or source is necessary as such.

**Participant 1:** Where does volition come from?

**Me:** Volition does not come from anywhere, just as burning fire does not come from north, south, east, or west. Neither does fire go to north, south, east, west, up, down, or anywhere in-between after blowing out. Rather, it is by the requisite/supporting conditions that fire burns: in this case, by virtue of candle and oil, fire manifests. By the cessation of those conditions, the fire ceases as well. This is the principle of dependent origination:

*When there is this, that is.*
*With the arising of this, that arises.*
*When this is not, neither is that.*
*With the cessation of this, that ceases.*

Everything functions in the way of dependent origination, neither coming from somewhere nor going somewhere.

**Participant 1:** So, restraining the mind and following the virtues come from the conditions of hearing the dharma and self-discipline?

**Me:** You can say so.

**Participant 1:** What about those who hear the dharma, have self-discipline, yet have conditions that prevent them from following Buddhism such as karmic obstruction?

**Me:** Karma only becomes obstruction if you allow karma to obstruct you. If you are obstructed by karma, it is termed karmic obstruction.

**Participant 1:** What is the condition that allows their karma to obstruct them from dharma?

**Me:** Difficult to say as situations differ so you need to provide concrete cases. Just an example: If a person doesn't live near a dharma center, then he reasons to himself that he does not have a karmic affinity with dharma, then that becomes a karmic obstruction. If nonetheless, regardless of distance, that person is earnest, he will be willing to go an extra mile in search of right guidance. This is just an example I made up.

**Participant 1:** So does it *become* karmic obstruction or is it *because* of karmic obstruction (that the person does not come to practice the dharma)?

**Me:** In this case, it becomes a karmic obstruction, partly due to his personal attitude, intention, decisions.

**Participant 1:** Ah okay. I found a good link for what I need answered:
http://www.buddhanet.net/budsas/ebud/mahasi-anat/anat03.htm

**Me:** Good link. Mahasi Sayadaw is likely a fully liberated arahant. That said I don't practice his method of noting, even though it is a very efficient practice (countless practitioners have reported swift progress using that method). In my own opinion, Thusness's method of Vipassana is a little more direct and closer to the method laid out in Mahasatipatthana Sutta, and I personally prefer that method. Noting is sort of noting and labelling sensations quickly in order to perceive it's three characteristics (impermanency, disattisfactoriness, non-self), however it is not the direct experience of luminous clarity like what Thusness's method result in. At some point (when the noting practitioner progresses to a more advanced phase of his practice), the practitioner will have to drop its noting and resort to a direct method such as that elucidated by Thusness and Mahasatipatthana Sutta.

Update: Visit this thread to have a better understanding of the Two Kinds of Vipassana:
http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/427761

**Participant 1:** What is Thusness's vipassana method?

**Me:** As elucidated in his conversation with Ck/truthz:
http://www.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/419870?page=1

**Ck**: John, how to practise vipassana in daily life?

**Thusness**: Just observe every sensation, until one day you are able to experience "emptiness as form". Then it becomes effortless. Truthz you cannot imagine the bliss when one clearly experiences that.  But there is no point to over stress anything.

**Ck**: Thusness, just observe every sensation... give me an example?

**Thusness**: When you breath, you don't have to care what is the right way of breathing, whether you breath hard or soft, smooth or fine...just experience as much clarity as you can...just that experience...regardless of what it is like. Same for all other experiences.

**Ck**: What about sound? How is it?

**Thusness**: When you hear, just the sound...the totality of the sound. There is no how but just to do away with all arbitrary thoughts. Hear the sound as clear as you can.

**Ck**: Then what about thoughts? Thoughts are very sticky.

**Thusness**: Thoughts seldom arise if the practice is correct. If it arises, then not to chase after its meaning. Not to answer urself what it means, not to dwell in 'what'...then you will resort to just the moment of awareness.

**Ck**: When I try to be just openly aware, I notice that I jump from sense to sense. Like one moment hearing, then touch, etc.

**Thusness**: That is ok. Our nature is so.

**Ck**: What's the right way to do it?

**Thusness**: Don't think that you should concentrate. Your only duty is to sense with as much clarity as possible.

**Ck**: And for all the sensations, I don't dwell in the 'what'?

**Thusness**: Your mind is looking for a way, a method. But what that is needed is only the clarity. However because our mind is so molded and affect by our habitual propensities, it becomes difficult what that is direct and simple. Just stop asking 'how', 'what', 'why'. And submerge into the moment. And experience. I prefer you to describe. Not to ask how, what, why, when, where and who. Only this is necessary.

**Ck**: Ok.

**Thusness**: If you practise immediately, you will understand. If you entertain who, what, where, when and how, you create more propensities and dull your own luminosity.

**Ck**: By the way, I shuffle self-inquiry, observing sensations and thoughts, being aware... It's ok, right?

**Thusness**: Yes.

**Ck**: Means start work i'll have even more propensities...

**Thusness**: That is when you do not understand what awareness is, but it is true to certain extend.

....

**Partipant 1:** If we don't note, does that mean we just sit and let everything just be?

**Me:** And sense the luminous clarity in every vivid arising. You have to be attentive and sort of zoom into the minutest details of every single sensation. Visual sensation, Auditory sensation, Nasal sensation, Taste sensation, Tactile sensation, Mental sensation.

**Participant 1:** What is luminous clarity exactly?

**Me:** Pause all thoughts and look at your palm. Don't think of a background, an observer, a self. Just what you see in direct experience. Isn't the shapes, colours, so vivid, so real, so clear? That is luminous clarity.

**Participant 1:** Hmmm...

**Me:** Don't 'Hmmm', just the obvious sensate reality shining fully in its immediacy!

**Participant 1:** I was looking. But it's nothing special. You said it like I can evoke wonder and awe in me just by looking. I was looking at it... then?

**Me:** It's not special when you look at the world through the 'lens' of an 'I'. There is still this deep clinging to an identity, a sense of self, that which separates 'I' from what I see. That must be dropped. What happens is apperception: you no longer feel like 'I' look at the world through my eyes, 'I' hear the world through my ears. Instead, poetically speaking, it is just sights seeing itself, sound hearing itself, there isn't an 'I' at the center separate from the vivid arising and perceiving them. When this 'I' is seen through and dropped, the vivid, luminous, alive quality of the sensate universe is revealed... when 'I' go into abeyance, it is as if everything 'stands out' bursting forth in brilliant aliveness, total intimacy and absence of separation.

**Participant 1:** But how do I practice this "technique"? To be able to sense luminous clarity, you have to remove the concept of a self through direct experience, but you speak as if I could do it now.

**Me:** There are two ways you can give rise to the insight of Anatta. One is like what Thusness said to Truthz: this is one type of gradual path. In that practice you basically have to pay attention to every felt sensation, feeling, perception, until apperception arises (where it is no longer 'I' seeing, but perception sees itself). A direct way of contemplating Anatta is like Bahiya Sutta style contemplation (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/10/my-commentary-on-bahiya-sutta.html). Or contemplating on Ven Buddhaghosa verses on Anatta (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2008/05/no-self-no-doer-conditionality.html), or the two stanzas of Anatta by Thusness (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html)

**Participant 1:** What is the difference between Thusness's method of Vipassana and Mahasi Sayadaw's method of Vipassana? Both involve noting and observing sensations.

**Me:** No. Thusness's method does not involve noting. Noting is like labeling, noting things that arise. It is like within a cycle, how many sensations you can note, within 1 second, you note 'thinking, sound, taste, bird chirping, anger, gone, heart-beat, sound'... note every single arising as fast as possible, but through the noting you miss the immediate luminosity. Whereas, Thusness's way is to deeply sense and penetrate into the minutest details of every point of luminous clarity.

**Participant 1:** So you stop labelling things and just observe?

**Me:** In Thusness's Vipassana method, yes. Just fully sense the minutest detail of this breath, the sensation of your feet, the cool breeze carressing your skin, the colours and shapes of your room. Everything sort of stands out in a pristine clarity you never noticed before. You might also experience details of the things you are seeing that you have missed out before. It can become very blissful.

**Participant 1:** What about the more direct ways like contemplation of Bahiya Sutta? In a way, I already know the intellectual "answer". What is there to ponder? Isn't following a train of thought in meditation discouraged?

**Me:** This is not just about an intellectual agreement. The contemplation is about finding out what 'in seeing just the seen', 'no hearer only hearing', etc actually mean or how it applies to direct experience. You have to experientially deconstruct the perception of an agent, perceiver, by contemplating those verses, then you realize that perception/sensation/sight itself is the seeing - there is no other seer. The seeing/seen happens of itself, all are self-luminous activities happening on their own accord. And there is, in seeing, only the seen, the self-luminous activity. I do not want to overcomplicate this and it appears I have been repeating myself... but you will come to see what this all is in direct experience.

*Participant 2 joins in the conversation.*

**Participant 2:** I had an experience once years ago. I didn't do any thing special that day or imbibe any drink that would make me different. I was sitting by the river, and I sensed everything sort of like acutely, and I can identify with the blissful bit. It happened just that once, but I could never get back that same bliss, even at the same spot by the river.

**Me:** Good. Is there a sense that you are no longer an 'I' here looking out through the eyes at the world out there, but now the scenery sees itself without any distance?

**Participant 2:** It seems like the sense of self is still there.

**Me:** What you experienced is the intensity of luminosity, but it has not gotten to the point where the construct and sense of self go into abeyance and apperception takes place - apperception meaning that sensate consciousness becomes aware of itself without being sullied by a sense of an external perceiver. But keep practicing and you will experience NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception) or PCE (pure consciousness experience).

**Participant 1:** I thought you said that (NDNCDIMOP/PCE) wasn't possible without having realized no-self directly?

**Me:** Not true. You can have temporary PCEs or NDNCDIMOP through mindfulness practice, or through a spontaneous event (the Actualism 'founder' Richard in fact goes to say that everybody has had such events occur to them in their lives, mostly in childhood, though not all can remember them). However, having a temporary NDNCDIMOP/PCE does not imply arising the insight into Anatta.

For example: You may have an experience of the sense of 'I' going temporarily into abeyance and apperception takes place, which is that mind consciousness, or the sensate consciousness becomes aware of itself, and occurs by itself, without a thinker or perceiver.

However the insight of Anatta is different: it is the realization that 'in seeing always just the seen', 'in hearing always just the heard' - always already so! By nature so! Seeing IS the seen. There can be no doubt about this. This is the realization that results in a permanent shift of perception and isn't merely a temporary experience of apperception/NDNCDIMOP/PCE.

Now it should be noted that there are two paths that lead to realization of Anatta. The gradual path may develop and lengthen the NDNCDIMOP/PCE until a point of utter stability, then the realization follows/occurs. Whereas the direct path investigates and arises the insight much earlier, while stability only comes some time after the realization.

As an analogy, the gradual path is like polishing the mirror to reveal the luminosity. While the direct path aims for direct realization straight away.

**Participant 2:** At which stage will you know that you are freed from samsara?

**Me:** When you clear all ten fetters (which occurs progressively via the four stages to Arhantship), all clinging ceases. In the Hinayana path, this is their ultimate aim. Whereas for Mahayana practitioners, they aim further than that - nothing short of the omniscience of Buddhahood.

**Participant 2:** If you have not cleared the 10 fetters, what happens?

**Me:** If you attain Sotapanna (stream entry) enlightenment, your liberation from birth and death is assured to occur at most in 7 lifetimes. If you attain Sakadagami (once returner) enlightenment, your liberation from birth and death is assured in at most 1 more life. If you attain Anagami (non returner) enlightenment, your liberation is assured at most in 1 more life (if you do become reborn, you will attain birth in the celestial plane of the 4th Jhana pure abode, and attain liberation there - you will no longer return to the human realm). If you attain Arhantship, your birth and death is ended.

In short, as long as you have even the initial realization of Anatta and clear the first 3 fetters, you have attained Stream Entry (Sotapanna), and your Nirvana is assured as you have already entered into the irreversible conveyer belt (precisely the meaning of 'stream entry') into the freedom from the cycle of samsara.

**Participant 1:** The assurance of a pre-determined Nirvana is so attractive.

**Me:** It sure is, and I can assure you your effort will be worth every bit.

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9th April 2011

A sincere practitioner from DhO (Dharma Overground) and owner of another spiritual forum asked me for some comments.

S: *thank you for your email. *deep bow**

*Has the division of both the subjective and objective pole been collapsed into a single field of undifferentiated oneness... in your experience?*

*if i understand you correctly, no, not at all. but occasionally i get intuitive glimpses. my sense is that they are not even direct glimpses, more like shadows in my peripheral vision that i intuitively assume must be from a light source (speaking completely metaphorically) .*

*i mean, i get moments of nonconceptual clarity, where there is "simply what is", but, the way i currently understand things, my awareness quickly contracts habitually into a pattern of sensations that 1) seem to confirm a "here" vs "out there" and 2) imply a separate self "here" being controlled vs "out there" a mostly of control world.*

*here is something i wrote a few days ago that might give you a better sense of where i am at, if you care to read:*

*there is still an irritating sense of peering out from behind my eyes.*

*sometimes it's like i take a wrong turn and this whole thing becomes a form of self-consciousness that has me feeling and even acting awkward, "out of it", not all there, shy, introverted.*

*i want to penetrate this sense of separation.*

*there is something relevant about this sense that arises strongly that i am behind the sensations of my face, behind my eyes predominately, that this is the location of who i am, my identity as thoughts, beliefs, from there then down into my feelings, my body. the construction of an identity.*

*the world is "out there", and i am peering out.*

*at times i get a brief glimpse that this is only a belief, yet so deeply habitual.*

*vipassana noting seems to be a powerful process in deconstructing this. following awareness as it playfully swirls through experience without any volition or center.*

*i sense that this awareness is merely accustomed to rapidly swirling back and forth in specific habitual ways, e.g., rapidly moving from a perceived object, a sight or a sound,*

*back to sensations that appear to confirm a separate perceiver "in here" vs. what was perceived, e.g, this idea that "i am behind my face" and things are "out there".*

*exploring this further, i've been noticing that some aspect of this is a very subtle visualization that i project faintly very close in front of my visual perception including out into my periphery. a visualization of, the best way i can describe is, the inside of a mask kind of, the "other side" of my face in a way. its very subtle, hard to get a real sense of, much less describe.*

*another aspect of it is the feeling of my face, of the skin of my face, but there is also this strange sense that i am feeling the reverse side of the skin of my face, like i am inside my face with a sensation of the skin from the inside.*

*what a weird way to create a self.*

*my inquiry is to see this more directly while openly pondering, what is it that experiences even this most rudimentary aspect of this sense of a "me"?*

AEN: Hi S,

The self seems so real, the division seems so obvious, it will not be obvious that it is simply a 'view'. That is, the existing framework we use to orientate the world is obscuring and shaping our experience.

The magic of 'view', its power to 'blind' is amazing... much like a magical spell creating a made belief division. We will have to revisit the transformation of 'view' again...

Therefore we start by loosening the grip by being 'bare' in attention as a first step towards deconstruction. Means to sense everything in bare, naked, awareness... as Thusness have taught:
http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/390582?page=14#post_10208045

After which we investigate mind-objects, such as 'body', 'face', 'self', and so on.

That is – investigate all the constructs of a 'body', a 'face', a 'self'.... what we call self or even a face or a body is merely a projected felt-sense or image... we feel that there is a face here, but on direct evidence, there isn't a face, a head that is 'in here'. That felt-sense of a face, a head, a body, is actually inferred – for example, by looking into the mirror, there is the reflected image of a face, but to imagine that there is a real face 'here' behind what is being seen is simply that – an imagination, an inference. It really cannot be found but is something like a trick of the mind, an illusion that we conjured out. Likewise, the sense of a body with a specific shape and solid mass 'here' is really an inferred construct... it is just bits of sensations that we link up to form an apparently solid shape of a body which we then identify with.

If we go by direct observation of experience... a self inside the head, behind the face, cannot be found. There is only in the seeing just the seen, in the hearing just the heard... without a seer or hearer - just more perceptions and sensations, some of which we then reify into an entity with a solid shape and characteristic... some of which we then take to

imply a self, a centerpoint, and so on, yet when that sense of a centerpoint or a self is investigated, all we find are only more sensations, perceptions, popping in and out like bubbles - which are simply being 'sensed' where they are, self-luminous as it is, without a cognizer... in the same way that all sensations are simply 'felt' where they are without a perceiver. At that point all constructs are seen through and dropped.

The Bahiya Sutta style of contemplation would be a powerful way to investigate Anatta: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/10/my-commentary-on-bahiya-sutta.html

Regards

AEN

S: **deep bow**

*these instructions are very direct, i appreciate your attention.*

*also, fyi, i am leaving for a 10 day silent vipassana retreat on friday morning.*

*i had planned on doing noting practice, mahasi sayadaw style.*

*given what you know about me so far, do you think that is the best to insight on my retreat?*

*thanks again!*

Me: If you practice noting, and following MTCB style... you should take note that it lacks the PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) aspect. I described it in the link to my forum I provided you. Without that aspect, the insight into Anatta will be incomplete. The luminous clarity of PCE is lacking from such approach... they are dissolving the sense of self from the arising and passing.

S: *yes, this is a concern. i am really not very interested in going through a big theravada "cycling" trip if that is unnecessary.*

*a part of me just wants to intuitively alternate between three practices:*

*1) mantra, which i can use to get to a place where awareness is watching the reciting of the mantra, without any sense that "i" am reciting the mantra. the mantra is simply being recited.*

*2) bare attention, e.g., zuowang as taught by my taoist teacher (liu ming)*

*3) advaita style inquiry, e.g., what do i absolutely know? what is always already present? etc.*

*s*

Me: Hi S,

You are a sincere and humble practitioner and I truthfully hope that you will achieve swift spiritual break-through. As I am too in a learning process, I will try to share with you what I have learnt.

First you should break-through the division between subject and object. It is OK to experience substantial non-duality first, but it is good to bear in mind that there are further phases.

When we challenge the boundaries and division between subject and object, we are able to collapse our experience into oneness. This is the phase of substantial non-dual. By challenging the boundary where awareness ends and manifestation begin, or the border between awareness and content, everything reveals itself to be an expression of a single field of undivided awareness. Such that things no longer occur 'In' awareness, but 'As' awareness. Everything is equally an expression of the infinite field of awareness... and there is no separation whatsoever between awareness and content, perceiver and perceived, subject and object.

That is the substantial non-dual phase. After which you can try to contemplate, 'in seeing just the seen', 'in hearing just the heard' like in Bahiya Sutta. This is not just a matter of substantial non-dualism. It is not 'everything is Awareness' but that 'there is no Awareness apart from the sights, sounds, etc'. So effectively, the term 'Awareness' is just a label, like the word 'weather', for the myriad of self-luminous experiences... it has no independent, permanent existence of its own. In seeing, ONLY just the seen. Apart from that there is no seeing or awareness. Just the seen, heard, cognized, thought, etc... just manifestation. So we no longer see a metaphysical essence. We no longer see anything inherent. Not even an 'Awareness'. Instead, we see a dynamic stream of luminous activities, without an agent, without a perceiver, a doer, controller, etc. This is not the inseparability of subject and object, but seeing how there is no subject to begin with – only self-luminous processes, activities, dharmas.

When a person undergo awareness practice until a certain phase – non-dual, it is very very important to keep instilling the right view and keep breaking the 'essence'. At this point you will need to have clarity on anatta and dependent origination in order to refine the experience of anatta. Even if one had glimpses and experiences of no-mind, one will still be unable to realize anatta, until practitioners realize that it is not necessary to have an 'essence' at all – it is simply a distorted view. So, to penetrate into Anatta, there must be the willingness to let go of the wrong 'view' entirely – the entire idea of an 'essence' must be gone. So with the adoption of view, we perfect the experience until all doubts are gone, and the center is completely gone – just flat, disjoint, unsupported, dimensionless and pure experience, manifested as whatever arises.

First investigate and clear the bond of duality, then investigate and clear the bond of inherency.

Regards,

AEN

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16th April 2011

**Gradual Path and Direct Path**

Chat took place on 15th April 2011. Slightly edited.

**Participant 1:** So gradual method is more stable, while direct method allows you to skip stages, but may be unstable and disconcerting.

**Me:** You can skip stages (referring to Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment) in gradual methods (depending on which method you practice) as well. Means if you practice Vipassana alone, you will not go through I AM.

**Participant 1:** I see. Is it possible to do meditation when walking?

**Me:** Yes.

**Participant 1:** But it is very distracting. A lot of noise. Scenery, movement, and heat even, these days. What kind of meditation is best while walking?

**Me:** If you read Thusness's Vipassana instructions (http://www.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/419870?page=1) you would see that his instructions were given to 'Truthz' who asked, '*john, how to practise vipassana in daily life?*'.

He also stated that you do not need to concentrate. If you need to concentrate on something, like a particular object, or the breath, then you will not be able to focus on your other work in daily living. It is not necessary to focus or concentrate in Thusness's Vipassana. You just need to immerse yourself in sensate clarity, whatever it is that appears at the moment.

Noise, scenery, movement, all becomes sensuous and delightful. They are all part of your Vipassana practice. You must sort of 'trip on' sensuousness, on sensate actualities. Then even traffic sounds become clear, incredible, wonderful, and delightful.

**Participant 1:** So basically, just try and immerse yourself in the sensations. But there are so many different sensations.

**Me:** Yes, but at each moment, there is one global sensation so to speak... if we do not hold on to separative constructs. Not a state of oneness, but it is diverse multiplicity being seamlessly experienced.

**Participant 1:** You can only direct your mind to one sensation at a time?

**Me:** You don't have to direct your mind to anything. It is best to let go of control and just let whatever manifest, manifest in its vivid clarity.

**Participant 1:** What about traffic lights?

**Me:** Traffic sound is part of what manifests. And what manifests is vividly clear, luminous, alive. It is 'aware' of its own accord. There is no 'you' being aware, the sound is its awareness.

**Participant 1:** I mean it requires some thinking and awareness to be aware of crossing the road, etc.

**Me:** Then thinking and focusing would happen.

**Participant 1:** You can't just let go, at least not in my experience.

**Me:** You don't have to let go. What I meant was letting go of contrived effort to focus on some particular thing all the time. This is not necessary (unless you are practicing something like mindfulness of breathing in sitting meditation). But focusing, thinking, happens of their own accord according to circumstances. You need focusing to cross the road, drive the car, listen to a lecturer, etc. In any case, there isn't an actual thinker. They just arise according to conditions. But before realization we feel ourselves to be the thinker of thoughts, the doer of deeds, the feeler of feelings, the seer of sights, etc.

*Participant 2 joined the conversation.*

**Participant 1:** So far from what I have understood from your articles, the gradual path consists of three stages. The normal deluded stage, then the I AM stage where you feel in tune, interconnected with the world, but there is still a sense of self, a sense of presence, a sense of substance.

**Me:** The I AM stage is the realization that You are that Presence... and this Presence is the universal ground of all beings and all phenomenon. But to answer your question, no, it is not the case that all gradual paths consist of three stages.

There are many types of gradual path, just as there are many types of direct path. Gradual paths are any path that 'is like polishing the mirror to reveal the luminosity' while the direct path 'aims for direct realization straight away' as stated in my previous conversation. Gradual path focus on the experience first, the realization happens later. Direct path focus on investigating and getting a direct realization.

For example, Michael Langford's 'Awareness Watching Awareness/Turning Awareness upon itself, to the Pure Presence, to Pure Being' - this is a gradual path leading to I AM.

Self-inquiry, asking 'Before birth, Who am I?' is a direct path leading to I AM.

Vipassana is a gradual path leading to Anatta realization. Whereas, contemplating Bahiya Sutta, Ven Buddhaghosa's verses on Anatta, or Thusness's two stanzas of Anatta, or Ruthless Truth/Ciaran's contemplation on 'There is no you, Look!' are all forms of direct path leading to the realization of Anatta.

So in short, if you practice Vipassana, you do not enter I AM. You will just realize Anatta.

**Participant 2:** I heard of this term, 'non-dual luminosity'. Exactly what does it refer to?

**Me:** It means if you see something, there is no you seeing something that is separate from you. There is no perceiver-perceived, subject-object duality, dichotomy. There is just pure awareness of whatever is, without distance, without separation, from what is perceived. There is just pure seeing, hearing, without a separate seer, hearer.

However, non-dual luminosity may not be Anatta. It could be like Thusness Stage 4 kind of insight, substantial non-dualism. (check my last reply to S in the first post of http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/390582?page=15) Or it can be a temporary experience of NDNCDIMOP or PCE, which is like a peak experience.

**Participant 2:** Ok, with regards to Master Sheng Yen's article which you posted yesterday in the forum, *'When you are in the second stage, although you feel that the 'I' does not exist, the basic substance of the universe, or the Supreme Truth, still exists. Although you recognise that all the different phenomena are the extension of this basic substance or Supreme Truth, yet there still exists the opposition of basic substance versus external phenomena. Not until the distinctions of all phenomena disappear, and everything goes back to truth or Heaven, will you have absolute peace and unity. As long as the world of phenomena is still active, you cannot do away with conflict, calamity, suffering and crime.'*

How should I understand Master Sheng Yen's use of "everything goes back to truth or Heaven", especially the word Heaven?

**Me:** I think it is a Chinese phrase, or expression. I need to see the Chinese words. But the 'Truth' here is this: *...One who has entered Ch'an does not see basic substance and phenomena as two things standing in opposition to each other. They cannot even be illustrated as being the back and palm of a hand. This is because phenomena themselves are basic substance, and apart from phenomena there is no basic substance to be found. The reality of basic substance exists right in the unreality of phenomena, which change ceaselessly and have no constant form. This is the Truth...*

You can replace the word 'basic substance' with the word 'weather', or the word 'self' with the word 'weather'. For example:

...This is because weatherly phenomena (rain, lightning, wind, etc) themselves are weather, and apart from weatherly phenomena (rain, lightning, wind, etc) there is no basic substance to be found. The reality of weather exists right in the unreality of weatherly phenomena (rain, lightning, wind, etc), which change ceaselessly and have no constant form. This is the Truth...

The problem with us is that, even if we have a transcendental glimpse of luminosity, of non-duality, and so on... due to our framework of viewing things inherently, we treat luminosity as something ultimate, as something inherent.

Just like the word 'Weather'... Ok, weather is undeniable. But is weather a thing? An entity? If yes, then where is it located as a fixed position?

It cannot be located, and is not other than these ceaselessly changing phenomenons. The same goes for 'self', 'awareness', 'luminosity', 'basic substance'. They are something being directly realized and experienced, yet reified into something independent and permanent and ultimate... but what we need to see is that the so called 'self' is merely a label collating the conglomerate of five ever-changing aggregates (matter, feelings, perceptions, volition, and consciousness) or the five skandhas, and 'awareness' is merely a label that denotes the six modes of cognizance (Visual consciousness (cakkhu-viññāna), Auditory consciousness (sotā-viññāna), Nasal consciousness (ghāna-viññāna), Taste consciousness (jihvā-viññāna), Tactile consciousness (kāya-viññāna), Mind-consciousness (mano-viññāna), the same goes for 'luminosity' and 'basic substance'.

There is nothing ultimate to be found. After realizing Anatta, you should apply the same insight onto objects: chairs, tables, weather; all are like the 'weather' analogy... unlocatable, apart from a stream of insubstantial activities. Vivid, luminous, alive, yet like a mirage, like bubbles, like a dream.

**Participant 1:** To borrow Thusness's words, the realization of "I AM" is to be able to perceive without intermediary, the perceived?

**Me:** In the realization of "I AM", you are able to have direct perception of I AM without intermediary. Means there is just that, I AMness, no concepts, no division, no dualistic separation. And not only that, there is a realization and utter conviction of something undeniable. So you no longer have doubts.

**Participant 1:** Is "I AM" and luminosity synonymous with each other?

**Me:** Yes and no. I AM is only an aspect of luminosity pertaining to mind consciousness. There are 18 dhatus (the six sense objects, six sense faculties, and six sense consciousness) - see http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Eighteen_dhatus. 'I AM' is simply pure consciousness of the mind realm. It is luminosity pertaining to the mental realm. Therefore, I AM is only the luminosity of a single dhatu. In particular, it is the luminosity of non-conceptual thought. Not the entirety of mind consciousness as mind consciousness can refer to a myriad of mental experiences like conceptualization, emotions, remembering, imagination, etc.

**Participant 1:** Then the realization of Anatta 'extends' the realization of luminosity from mind-consciousness to eye... ear... nose... tongue... body... consciousnesses?

**Me:** Yes.

What people realize as 'I AM' is simply the non-conceptual thought which is a particular manifestation of mind-consciousness, and this realization and experience is being reified into something ultimate, independent, permanent, Self. It is seen to be something special and more ultimate than other phenomena.

In Anatta, all realms become 'flat'. Because if in seeing there is just the seen without seer, then everything becomes implicitly non-dual and luminous (without reifying a non-dual substance or Absolute). There is no more hierarchy, no more treating a particular dhatu as something more ultimate than another. There is no more 'treating a speck of

dust as ultimate and making every other phenomena dusty' to put it in Thusness's way of speaking.

**Participant 2:** If a person claims to not feel anger when insulted, even thanking the person who scolded him, for example, does that indicate No Self? (I have my own opinion, but I wanna hear from you guys)

**Participant 1:** Not necessarily, because realizing not-self does not mean the fetters are completely cut off. So if the conditions are right for anger to arise, then it is unavoidable. Only arhats and above are incapable of feeling anger. But realizing anatta is only stream-entry.

**Me:** To Participant 2: No. No Self is not a state of non-attachment to self-image or ego. As I wrote before: First I do not see Anatta as merely a freeing from personality sort of experience as you mentioned; I see it as that a self/agent, a doer, a thinker, a watcher, etc, cannot be found apart from the moment to moment flow of manifestation or as its commonly expressed as 'the observer is the observed'; there is no self apart from arising and passing. A very important point here is that Anatta/No-Self is a Dharma Seal, it is the nature of Reality all the time -- and not merely as a state free from personality, ego or the 'small self' or a stage to attain. This means that it does not depend on the level of achievement of a practitioner to experience anatta but **Reality has always been Anatta** and what is important here is the intuitive insight into it as the nature, characteristic, of phenomenon (dharma seal).

To put further emphasis on the importance of this point, I would like to borrow from the Bahiya Sutta that 'in the seeing, there is just the seen, no seer', 'in the hearing, there is just the heard, no hearer' as an illustration. When a person says that I have gone beyond the experiences from 'I hear sound' to a stage of 'becoming sound', he is mistaken. When it is taken to be a stage, it is illusory. For in actual case, there is and always is only sound when hearing; never was there a hearer to begin with. Nothing attained for it is always so. This is the seal of no-self. Therefore to a non dualist, the practice is in understanding the illusionary views of the sense of self and the split. Before the awakening of prajna wisdom, there will always be an unknowing attempt to maintain a purest state of 'presence'. This purest presence is the 'how' of a dualistic mind -- its dualistic attempt to provide a solution due to its lack of clarity of the spontaneous nature of the unconditioned. It is critical to note here that both the doubts/confusions/searches and the solutions that are created for these doubts/confusions/searches actually derive from the same cause -- our karmic propensities of ever seeing things dualistically.

So, No Self is not a state. It is a fact about existence. It means always already, there never was a self. There never was an agent. So this is about a realization. It is like what I said just now regarding 'weather'. All along, there is no 'weather' to be found. It is just a convenient label for a conglomerate of ceaselessly changing phenomena. So how can there be an entity called 'weather' to be found anywhere? So having realized this, do you say that suddenly, there is no more weather? This is obviously not the case. 'No Weather' is not talking about the disappearance of weather. It is simply pointing out a fact about reality, that there is no independent, unchanging, locatable entity called

'Weather' anywhere. 'Weather' is simply a convenient label for the everchanging weatherly phenomenon. The same goes for No Self. No Self is not a state, it is simply pointing out a fact about reality, that there is no independent, permanent, locatable self or agent. And Self is a mere convenient label for the five skandhas.

A fetter-model first stage Sotapanna realizes Anatta or what you call No Self, whereas a fetter-model fourth stage Arhant has removed all traces of defilements, afflictions, attachments, passionate emotions, and sense of self. That is the difference.

To Participant 1: Even the fetter-model third stage Anagamis have already stopped cravings for sensual pleasures as well as anger, worry and fear... needless to speak of the fetter-model Arhant.

**Participant 2:** It (realising No Self) is about realising a fact.

**Me:** Precisely... you simply realize that it has always been so. All along, in seeing always just the seen, no seer. In hearing always just the heard, no hearer. So it is not the case that you dissolve the seer or hearer, it is that there never was a seer or hearer to begin with, and you realize that this has always been the case. However for those who experienced a peak experience, aka a NDNCDIMOP or a PCE, these people haven't realized anatta as a dharma seal, as a fact about reality. So they may be under the impression that suddenly, the self disappeared, and then returned later on. That is because the bond of 'self' temporarily goes into abeyance. But without the insight, it becomes just a state that comes and goes... he does not realize anything. So he might think that 'I became the sound' or 'I suddenly dissolved for a moment', not realizing that all along, there never was an 'I', a perceiver, an agent.

**Participant 1:** I still can't believe you can memorise the acronym NDNCDIMOP lol.

**Me:** Non dual, non conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception. Easy to remember.

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24th April 2011

**I am my flesh and blood body**

I saw some writings in facebook and online articles (commonplace, really) about 'I am not my body, I am the deathless Presence/Absolute/Awareness' and this triggered me to write a post about this...

I was living in the state named as 'enlightenment' by Richard since February 2010 since the my self-realization culminating from almost two years of self-inquiry practice, and since Feb '10 I went from being identified as a formless Presence, and later to a seamless Awareness that unites every experience into a seamless field in which subject and object are inseparable and everything is simply seen to be inseparable expression of that single field of awareness (August 2010, onwards).

At that time I see myself as being a bodiless, birthless and deathless, transcendent Self, a

metaphysical Absolute, God, Awareness, etc.... because my view had it that Presence, Awareness has an independent, permanent, inherent existence.

In September, while I was busy doing my BMT, I had a dream*... of awakened beings whose bodies were semi transparent. I immediately intuited that, to deepen my experience I have to undergo what is known as a 'body-mind drop-off' to experience total transparency... I also asked him, What are You!? That semi transparent being gestured non-verbally and it was very clear what it meant: this sensate body.

Two weeks later I got it... the realization of Anatta arose, and also, the body-mind construct dissolved... there is no longer the sense of a solid object 'in here'... the body is merely disjointed sensations and perceptions that we link up into a feeling, a conjured mental construct of a solid entity with forms and shapes being a stable, solid entity 'here'... that is merely an illusion.... yet at the same time, it is not the dissociative experience of 'I am not my body' I had even much earlier on.

I am not a grandiose universal consciousness, rather, I am this sensate, flesh and blood body only (which is nothing solid, but an ever-dynamic, fresh, sensate experience of being this body, being these sense organs seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and thinking)... I am the universe experiencing itself as a sensate, reflective human being, interacting with other fellow beings in a process of interconnectedness (as contrast to oneness) without agency or control and the illusion of being an Identity, a Soul, a Feeler, Seer, Observer 'inside my body' looking outwards at the world... has dissolved. And neither is the world seen as being subsumed or contained in an all-subsuming Awareness... And awareness is now realised to be more of an effect rather than a cause or source: cognizance depends on body and its sense organs for its manifestation... It is a dependently originated manifestation, in contrast with the previous state where the entire universe is seen to be a mere projection of awareness/consciousness, which is seen to be a single unchanging, unifying and universal source. There is absolutely nothing immortal and metaphysical about consciousness/awareness.

I am the seeing, the hearing, which means in the seeing is JUST the seen... the scenery... in hearing is just the sound... there is no such thing as a perceiving nor controlling agent.... perceiving is just the perceived. This is the insight of anatta. This was what I basically realized after contemplating on bahiya sutta. Awareness, the seeing, is just the seen! There is nothing metaphysical and 'absolute' about Awareness... there is no 'The Awareness' or 'One Awareness'... there is pure awareness of sight, pure awareness of hearing, etc... to pure awareness of thought. There are six kinds of pure awareness corresponding to the six senses (five senses + mental activities). Awareness is nothing transcendental or metaphysical; it is precisely the activities, the manifestation... The process itself rolls and knows without a knower. Without an identity, that separates and distances 'me' from 'the world', I am in intimacy with all things actual... with the floor, the chairs, the trees, and so on. The sun feels as close as my breath. The entire universe is experienced as alive, wonderful, delightful, a fairy-tale like paradise.

It is now seen that there is no two entities, one called body and one called spirit. Our

universe is not made of entities, but activities and processes. All there is is this body, and it is not that there is a body 'in here' in contrast with the environment 'out there' - our perception of a body is simply a bunch of disjointed sensations and perceptions not seperated from, and forms part of the environment... The perceptual environment made of various sensations and perceptions. The clinging to a construct and sense of a solid body 'in here' dissolves without denying or disassociating from the actuality of the bodily sensations (the body reveals itself to be a luminous and transparent field of aliveness), and there is a sense of being transparent and intimate with the entire environment, without any sense of and inside or outside, and this is what is known in Zen as the 'mind-body drop'.

Nowadays there are rarely any authors that have clear insight into anatta, most just stop at I Am (realization of the formless Presence, taken to be one's purest Identity), and the deepest most go is substantialist non-dual (subject-object collapsed into oneness, all forms subsumed into a single field of awareness), the realization of anatta (I.e. The seeing IS the seen, in hearing just the heard, etc) and for this I am greatly indebted to Thusness's guidance. The least I could do is to share what I know and experience and hopefully it can be of help to someone else.

* Thusness later revealed that my dreams manifested due to his prayer for me to know certain important issues crucial for my next phase of insight from my dream state... And that those dreams could manifest due to our deep connection. He also does seem to have an uncanny ability to know accurately what is the 'next step' for another person, and even exactly when will those insights occur for that person. I had a number of such spiritual dreams during my BMT phase (possibly because I hardly had much time to talk with Thusness during that period) of profound significance regarding my spiritual practice that helped me to understand a lot of what I am going through and was very helpful... now not much anymore and Thusness often visits me... physically, not in dreams, haha.

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29th April 2011

In reply of a great dharma teacher (Kenneth Folk: http://kennethfolkdharma.com/)'s inquiry into my experience:

> *Hi xsurf. I read your essay on the Bahiya sutta and I think it is excellent. If you have indeed seen through the illusion of self at age 20, you are an extraordinary yogi. Have you spoken to a teacher about your realization? How are things in your life since October of last year? Do people around you notice a difference in the way you relate with them?*
>
> *Best,*
>
> *Kenneth*

Hi,

I just saw your private message four months late. Oops! I have spoken to Thusness, who I consider a 'non-sectarian' teacher of mine, and my local teacher and Taiwanese teacher (from the Chinese Mahayana tradition), who affirmed my realization and experience and gave me further pointers.

Life is a lot more blissful and liberating these days. Though I am not practicing AF, something Richard describes resonates - being happy, delighting in the senses... in other words tripping on the senses... And this is not something effortful for me (as might be for a pre-anatta-realization yogi who is trying so hard to dissolve the 'self' without realizing that the 'self' never really was to begin with) as without the illusion of self, there is naturally in the seeing always just the seen, in hearing always just the heard, so there is a natural, effortless 'immersion' and intimacy (without 'self' there is no separation) with the senses, both ordinary and wonderful every moment. Everything feels fresh, alive, incredible, and wonderful. This mode of experiencing is becoming natural for me. I'd like to think of it as an ordinary, mini samadhi in daily life. Like entering jhanas, the more you dissolve the sense of subject/object separation with the meditation object/sensations, the more you release your sense of self and immerse into that blissful sensation, the more intense the jhanic bliss and more stable the jhana... well, I now see that such a 'state' is possible in daily living with ordinary sensations, but this time it isn't exactly about resolving to enter jhana, rather, by seeing thru the 'self' in real-time I am naturally and fully delighting and immersed in the sensations even in daily life circumstances... so it can be blissful. Thusness calls this 'mini samadhis'.

Another aspect is that experience is liberating... I no longer need to cling to anything, not to awareness, not even a Here/Now... I do not need to reference anything... as everything only references itself, and is self-liberating - everything vanishes without leaving traces. So there is just this thought, this sight, this sensation... without anything linking them - everything is disjointed, unsupported, insubstantial, bubble-like, dream-like, and self-releasing. I don't see this aspect described in AF (imo they focus too much on grounding to an actuality, a here/now, and didn't notice the other aspects).

Behaviour wise, my family thinks I have changed for better...Not exactly sure how, but perhaps I might have matured in some ways after entering into army (enlisted on Sept' 10 for a mandatory 2 year national service), maybe no longer as bad tempered and unreasonable, idk. In terms of emotions, I can report a gradual transformation (I said gradual cos for me it wasn't instantaneous after the realization of anatta but the emotional transformation is clearly becoming apparent) after initial insight of Anatta - situations once triggering fear, nervousness, irritation, anger, etc now only manifest as some bodily sensations that self liberates upon inception. For example if a loud explosion is heard there can be a surge of adrenaline just for a moment but no psychological fear surfaces.

Also, I find that sense of dread and aversion to life and experience (not only in daily routine life but also when physical pain and discomfort arises - pain but no suffering) can

dissolve, which reminds me of the koan:

***Where There Is No Cold or Heat***

*By Ted Biringer, on November 26th, 2010*

*A monk asked Tozan, "When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?"*

*Tozan said, "Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?"*

*The monk said, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?"*

*Tozan said, "When it's cold, the cold kills you; when it's hot, the heat kills you."*

*This is not advice to "accept" your situation, as some commentators have suggested, but a direct expression of authentic practice and enlightenment. Master Tozan is not saying, "When cold, shiver; when hot, sweat," nor is he saying, "When cold, put on a sweater; when hot, use a fan." In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe. The heat kills you, and there is only heat in the whole universe. The fragrance of incense kills you, and there is only the fragrance of incense in the whole universe. The sound of the bell kills you, and there is only "boooong" in the whole universe…*

~The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing

(btw Thusness asked me to look into Ted Biringer's book, haven't started reading yet though)

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30th April 2011

If you find out what is a non conceptual thought, what is the essence of the mind at rest, it may be revealed that it is that same powerful presence and certainty as that I Am realization but now it's simply viewed as a thought - and no more intimately me than a sight or sound so it is nothing like a background.

It is not that I AM is a still formless presence underlying forms. That so called I AM is simply a manifestation of intimate (non-dual) non-conceptual thought, reified into an ultimate identity. After non-dual is experienced, one no longer clings to that formless Presence as an ultimate identity.

However, identity can still linger after clear nondual experience, so that person now has an grandiose, unified identity view like "I am everything and I am everywhere" or "Brahman is the world". It is like 'firewood becomes ash' - it is an illusion to think that awareness is, or becomes, the world. This is distinct from the realization of "in the seeing just the seen" such that the radiant world/every experience only references itself without dualistic and inherent thought. There is nothing I, nothing Me, just seeing/seen, hearing/heard, thinking/thought, activities occurring yet without anything linking a thought with another, an experience with another.

As Zen Master Dogen teaches, firewood is firewood, ash is ash, each phenomena abides on its own phenomenal expression, complete as it is, disjoint, and unsupported. ‘Awareness’ is a manifestation (and 'Awareness' is simply and only the six forms of cognizance: five senses + mental cognizance). ‘The world’ is also manifestation. Whatever arises is manifestation and there is no identity ‘firewood becomes ash’, ‘firewood transforms into ash’, and so on – each phenomenon abides as its own phenomenal expression without becoming, coming, or going. When we have non-inherent and non-dual insight, we do not make the mistaken of those who have non-dual insight/experience but view of inherency (thinking that 'Awareness' is an entity identical with, or that it becomes, or that it transforms into the 'world').

The insight of anatta (in the seeing just the seen) along with the insight of everything being disjoint and self-releasing allows one to become traceless.

The nondual, noninherent view releases every dual and inherent though, releasing every experience without traces, so that there is only direct experiencing without views... Viewlessness.

I think both the inquiry "what is nonconceptual thought without thinker" and "who am I" can lead to similar experiences yet very different realization. But imo it’s better for people to go through the I Am realization first, followed by non-dual and anatta, as otherwise it is not easy for there to be stable, deep, penetrating insight into Anatta.

---

30th April 2011

**Breathing is Bliss**

In this book, all that I have written were issues concerning realization and insights. I would like to also emphasize that tranquillity and samadhi is equally important, and that the Buddha taught that it is only via insight and samadhi in tandem that we can achieve liberation.

Therefore, I highly recommend a consistent practice of sitting meditation, whether or not you have achieved realization. Sitting meditation still remains important for me even though I have realized I AM, non-dual, and anatta.

Speaking from my limited experience with meditation:

As you sit, stilling your mind and body, letting go of everything that arises, a spontaneous uninterrupted awareness of breathing will occur.

This awareness naturally expands to encompass the whole body and every single sensation.

At this time you will feel utter stillness of the body... your body is literally stilled, to the point of disappearing, to the point of becoming unhindered, numb-like (for a lack of a better words but don't take it literally).

As your power of mindfulness developes to the point of absorption, a very pleasurable physical sensation will occur. At first the sensation is weak... at this point do not analyze or get mentally excited at this bliss, what is of utmost importance is that you must let go of your sense of self, any sense of subject-object dichotomy and just delight and immerse yourself in that pleasurable sensation to the point that there is ONLY that pleasurable sensation. You will notice the rapture getting more and more intense, spreading all over your body. Your mind stabilizes on this bliss, enters into a state of absorption and mental activities subside. At this point you enter samadhi and jhana.

You have stilled your mind and body.

With this as base, contemplate the nature of your experience until clear comprehension of the nature of experience arises.

There are two threads that is of relevance here:

The Tranquil Calm (the rest of the posts after the first one are off-topic)

And

Samadhi Sutta

From the Samadhi Sutta thread:

AN 4.170

PTS: A ii 156

Yuganaddha Sutta: In Tandem

translated from the Pali by

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

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On one occasion Ven. Ananda was staying in Kosambi, at Ghosita's monastery. There he addressed the monks, "Friends!"

"Yes, friend," the monks responded.

Ven. Ananda said: "Friends, whoever — monk or nun — declares the attainment of arahantship in my presence, they all do it by means of one or another of four paths. Which four?

"There is the case where a monk has developed insight preceded by tranquillity. As he develops insight preceded by tranquillity, the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it — his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.

"Then there is the case where a monk has developed tranquillity preceded by insight. As he develops tranquillity preceded by insight, the path is born. He follows that path,

develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it — his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.

"Then there is the case where a monk has developed tranquillity in tandem with insight. As he develops tranquillity in tandem with insight, the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it — his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.

"Then there is the case where a monk's mind has its restlessness concerning the Dhamma [Comm: the corruptions of insight] well under control. There comes a time when his mind grows steady inwardly, settles down, and becomes unified & concentrated. In him the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it — his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.

"Whoever — monk or nun — declares the attainment of arahantship in my presence, they all do it by means of one or another of these four paths."

And another sutta:

AN 4.94

PTS: A ii 93

Samadhi Sutta: Concentration (Tranquillity and Insight)

translated from the Pali by

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

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"Monks, these four types of individuals are to be found existing in the world. Which four?

"There is the case of the individual who has attained internal tranquillity of awareness, but not insight into phenomena through heightened discernment. Then there is the case of the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquillity of awareness. Then there is the case of the individual who has attained neither internal tranquillity of awareness nor insight into phenomena through heightened discernment. And then there is the case of the individual who has attained both internal tranquillity of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

"The individual who has attained internal tranquillity of awareness, but not insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, should approach an individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment and ask him: 'How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be

seen with insight?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'Fabrications should be regarded in this way. Fabrications should be investigated in this way. Fabrications should be seen in this way with insight.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquillity of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

"As for the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquillity of awareness, he should approach an individual who has attained internal tranquillity of awareness... and ask him, 'How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'The mind should be steadied in this way. The mind should be made to settle down in this way. The mind should be unified in this way. The mind should be concentrated in this way.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquillity of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

"As for the individual who has attained neither internal tranquillity of awareness nor insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, he should approach an individual who has attained both internal tranquillity of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment... and ask him, 'How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated? How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be seen with insight?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'The mind should be steadied in this way. The mind should be made to settle down in this way. The mind should be unified in this way. The mind should be concentrated in this way. Fabrications should be regarded in this way. Fabrications should be investigated in this way. Fabrications should be seen in this way with insight.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquillity of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

"As for the individual who has attained both internal tranquillity of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, his duty is to make an effort in establishing ('tuning') those very same skillful qualities to a higher degree for the ending of the (mental) fermentations.

"These are four types of individuals to be found existing in the world."

And yet another sutta:

Vijja-bhagiya Sutta: A Share in Clear Knowing

"These two qualities have a share in clear knowing. Which two? Tranquillity (samatha) & insight (vipassana).

"When tranquillity is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned.

"When insight is developed, what purpose does it serve? Discernment is developed. And when discernment is developed, what purpose does it serve? Ignorance is abandoned.

"Defiled by passion, the mind is not released. Defiled by ignorance, discernment does not develop. Thus from the fading of passion is there awareness-release. From the fading of ignorance is there discernment-release."

From a 2011/2012 transcript from audio recording:

Jui asks: (? Question about samadhi)

John: actually what is more important is that background is completely gone. Then when the background is completely gone, you do not have a behind, only the sound. Then your experience becomes most direct, cannot be more direct. Then when you hear the basketball sound, bum bum bum.. only. You understand what I mean? Initially even if you have seen through, there will always be a tendency – you and the basketball. I ever went through a period where I thought that I will not have that problem anymore. After about three months later, it comes back. Then I wondered why does it come back after I have seen through? Then after that, the tendency (comes back?). for yours (me) it is quite clear, because lucid dream until one can control the three states, it is quite deep already. After the initial insight one needs 4-5 years to have that kind of calibre, you see? So some people are different. So it is sufficiently deep into the mind body tendency. For me, three months after (?) it has a dual sensation, then after still a period (?) after.

Jui: I always hear people say when you see one object you are like the object… but in my experience…

John: In your experience now, your self at the behind will be gone. But you are unable to reach completely mind to object (one pointedness). But your behind disappears. But to zhuan zhu yi ge (focus on one/one-pointedness?) you are unable to reach, that requires Samadhi state. That is, that behind is gone, but you are one pointed into one object, then with view you will experience maha experience, total exertion. He (me) is also the same, the behind is gone, no more self, only the sound but there is no self, there is just this, there is just that. That is because the insight has arisen but concentration (?) my way is different. Before insight of anatta I had decades of practicing meditation, then I AM, then meditation, then I AM. My practice is like that. (?) but for you guys, you see clearly first, the behind is gone and your experience becomes very clear and vivid and yet you are unable to concentrate. So you must understand that concentration is different. Peacefulness and releasing is (different), clear vivid awareness is also different. It requires different insights and practice. You still have to meditate, it is impossible that (?) you should be in this stage, you are very clear, the click click sound is felt to be very

vivid, then one day you will have total exertion feeling, but you must practice releasing and concentration. When the mind is discursive and wandering, you need practice. your mindfulness/thought needs to be practiced. You need to have a stillness/Samadhi. (to me) Your stillness is still not enough. Your mind is still having thought after thought, you are unable to have stillness. But your insight is able to reach no self. You are still unable to reach stillness and releasing. It is not a matter of saying then you can reach it, it requires practice.

Me: best way is to practice vipasssana?

John: Vipassana … when it becomes non conceptual and non dual, it is even more difficult like for you, your insight is there, there is no self, yet when you sit you are unable to reach it. Because you need to focus. You need to focus your breath, (otherwise?) unable to reach it. For normal people they are able to reach it even easier. For you it is somewhat more difficult. So I always tell you, for example, for you and him the way of entering is by clear luminosity… feel as clear as possible. For example when you breathe, feel your breathe entirely. So you feel very very clear, just this breath you know. Then you feel the vividness. It is easier to enter this way.

Me: so you are advising Anapanasati?

John: yes of course, then you do many times. But when you do many times you are not counting. Don't count. Just feel the entire sensation of the breath. You are just that sensation of your breath. Then you are so clear with your entire breath. That whole aircon that touches your nostrils, then going into your lungs. It is just this sensation. This is what we call breath. So you keep on doing. You are very aware of it. Actually it is not you are very aware of lah. This is what I call awareness and the whole thing is awareness, there is no somebody awaring. It is just breath. Then slowly you will have this (Samadhi?), you need to keep doing.

.....

p.s. interesting note from Loppon Namdrol:

"In the early period of Budddhism, there were two yānas, śamatha yāna and vipaśyāna yāna; beginners went to Śariputra to training in vipaśyāna for stream entry; then they would go train in śamatha with Maudgalyana for further progress.

Lance Cousins wrote a very interesting article about this."

(Samatha = tranquility meditation, Vipasyana = insight meditation, stream entry = first out of four stages of awakening culminating in liberation)

Dzogchen, Meditation and Jhana

Also see: Right Samadhi

Many people have a very warped understanding of the so called "highest teachings" such as Dzogchen and Mahamudra, thinking that these teachings allow us to bypass or skip meditation training, or that it does not require "practice" and "meditation". This cannot be further from the truth.

Here are the words from Lopon Malcolm, a qualified dharma teacher who was asked by his Dzogchen master, Kunzang Dechen Lingpa to teach Dzogchen -

Malcolm (Loppon Namdrol) wrote:

Rongzom makes the point very clearly that Dzogchen practitioners must develop the mental factors that characterize the first dhyana, vitarka, vicara, pritvi, sukha and ekagraha, i.e. applied attention, sustained attention, physical ease, mental ease and one-pointedness. If you do not have a stable samatha practice, you can't really call yourself a Dzogchen practitioner at all. At best, you can call yourself someone who would like to be a Dzogchen practitioner a ma rdzogs chen pa. People who think that Dzogchen frees one from the need to meditate seriously are seriously deluded. The sgra thal 'gyur clearly says:

The faults of not meditating are:

the characteristics of samsara appear to one,

there is self and other, object and consciousness,

the view is verbal,

the field is perceptual,

one is bound by afflictions,

also one throws away the path of the buddhahood,

one does not understand the nature of the result,

a basis for the sameness of all phenomena does not exist,

one's vidya is bound by the three realms,

and one will fall into conceptuality

He also added:

Dhyanas are defined by the presence or absence of specific mental factors.

The Dhyanas were not the vehicle of Buddha's awakening, rather he coursed through them in order to remove traces of rebirth associated with the form and formless realms associated with the dhyanas.

...

Whether you are following Dzogchen or Mahamudra, and regardless of your intellectual understanding, your meditation should have, at base, the following characteristics:

Prthvi -- physical ease Sukha -- mental joy Ekagraha -- one-pointedness Vitarka -- initial engagement Vicara -- sustained engagement

If any of these is missing, you have not even achieved perfect samatha regardless of whether or not you are using an external object, the breath or even the nature of the mind.

...

Even in Dzogchen, the five mental factors I mentioned are key without which you are really not going to make any progress.

...

Samadhi/dhyāna is a natural mental factor, we all have it. The problem is that we naturally allow this mental factor to rest on afflictive objects such as HBO, books, video games, etc.

Śamatha practice is the discipline of harnessing our natural predisposition for concentration, and shifting it from afflictive conditioned phenomena to nonafflictive conditioned phenomena, i.e., the phenomena of the path. We do this in order to create a well tilled field for the growth of vipaśyāna. Śamatha ultimately allows us to have mental stability and suppresses afflictive mental factors so that we may eventually give rise to authentic insight into the nature of reality. While it is possible to have vipaśyāna without cultivating śamatha, it is typically quite unstable and lacks the power to effectively eradicate afflictive patterning from our minds. Therefore, the basis of all practice in Buddhadharma, from Abhidharma to the Great Perfection, is the cultivation of śamatha as a preliminary practice for germination of vipaśyāna.

2nd May 2011

**Which Path Should I Choose?**

I am often asked what practice suits them. Theravada, Advaita, Zen, Tibetan, self-inquiry, direct path, gradual path, direct contemplation, vipassana, it's all so confusing. How do they know which path to take?

My answer is, basically, discern for yourself (or if you meet a master or teacher who can advise you that'll be helpful too).

For me, I chose to go through the path to realize I AM... as I am influenced by Advaita, Zen, etc. If you are influenced by Zen, Advaita, etc, I will recommend self-inquiry to you. But self-inquiry is not suitable for all and sundry: it depends on the person's inclinations.

If you are strictly Theravada you might not be interested. However Kenneth Folk is an exception and is a mix of various traditions: Theravada, Zen, Advaita, Tibetan, etc.

Direct path, self inquiry, all feels right to me... as in it resonates with me. It's more interesting than entering the many stages of nanas and jhanas, that's why I practiced it - the path that stresses on the Immediate truth rather than gradual development. After self-realization I switched to direct contemplation on non-dual and anatta (e.g. Bahiya Sutta style contemplation).

---

2nd May 2011

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 02 May 2011 - 02:40 AM, said:*
>
> *If you look through this model of progress, it's basically ending all mode of interpretations of the mind, and its tendency to give legitimacy to "thingness" of things...A complete and fearless opening to what arises, without giving ground to what was, is, or will be.*
>
> *But I hesitate to write things such as "there is no grandiose universal consciousness." It's just that whether there is, or isn't one is an unnecessary supposition. Once you have gone, who is there to know?*

Yeah I understand. At present, I embrace a view that can allow me to fully experience whatever arises fearlessly and unreservedly and that has helped me tremendously. E.g. from intimacy to "thingness" of things, then more to "thingness" of whatever arises.

For example, what exactly is Consciousness? In Anatta, I do not deny consciousness. All is experienced as consciousness in a dependently originated way. **In the eighteen dhatus**, Awareness is understood and experienced in terms of the eighteen dhatus. For example, I do not say eye-consciousness is the same as ear-consciousness, or that eye-consciousness turns into ear-consciousness, or that a previous moment of thought is the same as this moment of thought. As 'Awareness' is not an entity and is a mere label

collating experiences, it has to be these diverse manifestations, that dependently originates (the six consciousness arises dependent on the six sense faculties and six sense objects). This understanding enables practitioners to fully and completely experience whatever arises.

Now, let's say I tell someone to "experience consciousness as sound". How are you going to experience that? How thorough can it be? First of all there is already this delineation - there is sound, and consciousness. Either consciousness is here or sound is there, or is taking place in here, or out there. But when you say, in hearing only heard - or there is only sound - sound-consciousness, sound, is fully and totally experienced. This moment of 'arising sound' is fully experienced.

> *Quote*
>
> *Once you have gone, who is there to know?*

Whatever arises speaks thusly.

*A thousand petals*
*Drift into an empty house.*
*Though the sound of the herder's flute passes by,*
*The man and the ox are no where to be seen.*

*~ Suh Sahn*

---

12th May 2011

**Samadhi is NOT Enlightenment**

> *Twinner, on 09 May 2011 - 10:14 AM, said:*
>
> *Hello Hagar,*
>
> *I enjoyed your post. I used to live in Washington State, from where I was I could look out my window and see Mount Ranier (on a clear day). At first it was very awe inspiring, but after awhile, the more you see it, the less amazing it seems. It's taken nearly a decade in Florida, a land without mountains, to really appreciate it again.*
>
> *I understand what you mean by just forgetting about "It", allowing "It" to become what it's intended to be, but I think even doing nothing, is doing something. Wu Wei after all. I think for many people it takes time to realize that they need to let go, to just experience things, to understand the moment for what it is.*
>
> *I also think that, as Kate pointed out, there is no end of me, that those moments when I believe me to be gone are fleeting, I will always return. The Hindu and Buddhist refer to this, Samadhi as it's called. The notion of self is eradicated and*

> *in it's place is the absence of self, the realization that everything that exists is only an illusion. Again, this realization is fleeting, it fades in time, and in order to continue to appreciate it, one must experience it again and again. For me, this inability to permanently annihilate self is evidence that the self does exist.*

Your statements have a lot of misunderstanding. It is totally possible and I am speaking from experience... to permanently end the illusion of self.

Yes, you are right in that through the power of concentration and absorption, you may temporarily send the sense of self into abeyance, in a state of samadhi.

**But samadhi is NOT enlightenment.**

Enlightenment is a permanent realization about the nature of reality - in the seeing there is just the seen, no seer, in the hearing there is just the heard, no hearer, in the thinking there is just thoughts, no thinker.

Having direct realization of this ends the illusion of self forever. This is not an experience that has entry and exit - you do not enter this, and you can never exit/escape this 'condition' - because always already, there is no self, so there is no self to remain, no self to cease, no self to [insert token].

This needs to be realized.

So yes, there is no 'permanently annihilating self', since annihilating self implies there is a self, but if you realize no self, then it is seen that there is no such self to remain or cease... the illusion is seen through and what is seen cannot be unseen.

This is vastly different from a temporary samadhi state. A samadhi state does not bring realization.

> *Quote*
>
> *I also don't necessarily believe that life is suffering, but rather that suffering is part of life.*
>
> *"Life is suffering" is one of the most misquoted thing attributed to Buddha. The Buddha did not say this. He taught that there is suffering, he didn't say life is suffering or there can only be suffering.*

Please read this article: http://www.accesstoi...o/lifeisnt.html

“...You've probably heard the rumor that "Life is suffering" is Buddhism's first principle, the Buddha's first noble truth. It's a rumor with good credentials, spread by well-respected academics and Dharma teachers alike, but a rumor nonetheless. The truth about the noble truths is far more interesting. The Buddha taught four truths — not one — about life: There is suffering, there is a cause for suffering, there is an end of

suffering, and there is a path of practice that puts an end to suffering. These truths, taken as a whole, are far from pessimistic. They're a practical, problem-solving approach — the way a doctor approaches an illness, or a mechanic a faulty engine. You identify a problem and look for its cause. You then put an end to the problem by eliminating the cause...

...Other discourses show that the problem isn't with body and feelings in and of themselves. They themselves aren't suffering. The suffering lies in clinging to them. In his definition of the first noble truth, the Buddha summarizes all types of suffering under the phrase, "the five aggregates of clinging": clinging to physical form (including the body), feelings, perceptions, thought constructs, and consciousness. However, when the five aggregates are free from clinging, he tells us, they lead to long-term benefit and happiness.

So the first noble truth, simply put, is that clinging is suffering. It's because of clinging that physical pain becomes mental pain. It's because of clinging that aging, illness, and death cause mental distress. The paradox here is that, in clinging to things, we don't trap them or get them under our control. Instead, we trap ourselves. When we realize our captivity, we naturally search for a way out. And this is where it's so important that the first noble truth not say that "Life is suffering." If life were suffering, where would we look for an end to suffering? We'd be left with nothing but death and annihilation. But when the actual truth is that clinging is suffering, we simply have to look for the clinging and eliminate its causes..."

> *Quote*
>
> *In fact I think it is much more beneficial to understand that all things are pleasing, for everywhere that suffering resides, there resides pleasure as well, for without it, suffering cannot exist.*

This isn't true, suffering does not require pleasure. Also, suffering is not displeasure. Unpleasurable sensations can arise yet without mental aversion or suffering.

> *Quote*
>
> *Notions of annihilation are very much illusions, just as this world is an illusion. Of course it's important to remember without the reality, the illusion itself can't exist.*

The world is not an illusion, and there is no reality apart from the world. But this not to say that the world is real (inherently, independently, permanently existing) - there is no independent existence of the world of its own as all appearances dependently originate without anything that can be pinned down as having inherent reality.

The world is like an illusion, but not an illusion, looks there but isn't really there.

http://awakeningtore...Rana%20Rinpoche

*First of all, to the Buddha and Nagarjuna, Samsara is not an illusion but like an illusion. There is a quantum leap in the meaning of these two statements. Secondly, because it is only 'like an illusion' i.e. interdependently arisen like all illusions, it does not and cannot vanish, so Nirvana is not when Samsara vanishes like mist and the Brahma arises like the sun out of the mist but rather when seeing that the true nature of Samsara is itself Nirvana. So whereas Brahma and Samsara are two different entities, one real and the other unreal, one existing and the other non-existing, Samsara and Nirvana in Buddhism are one and not two. Nirvana is the nature of Samsara or in Nagarjuna's words shunyata is the nature of Samsara. It is the realization of the nature of Samsara as empty which cuts at the very root of ignorance and results in knowledge not of another thing beyond Samsara but of the way Samsara itself actually exists (Skt. vastusthiti), knowledge of Tathata (as it-is-ness) the Yathabhuta (as it really is) of Samsara itself. It is this knowledge that liberates from wrong conceptual experience of Samsara to the unconditioned experience of Samsara itself. That is what is meant by the indivisibility of Samsara and Nirvana (Skt. Samsara nirvana abhinnata, Tib: Khor de yer me). The mind being Samsara in the context of DzogChen, Mahamudra and Anuttara Tantra. Samsara would be substituted by dualistic mind. The Hindu paradigm is world denying, affirming the Brahma. The Buddhist paradigm does not deny the world; it only rectifies our wrong vision (Skt. mithya drsti) of the world. It does not give a dream beyond or separate transcendence from Samsara. Because such a dream is part of the dynamics of ignorance, to present such a dream would be only to perpetuate ignorance.*

> *-K-, on 11 May 2011 - 02:00 PM, said:*
>
> *Can you explain how this "clinging" comes about if there is technically nothing/no-one to cling to?*

Even though there is technically nothing and no one to cling to, ignorance conjures something and someone. With the ignorance as condition, with pleasurable and displeasurable sensations as condition, with craving as condition, clinging arises.

Not comprehending the insubstantiality of perceptions, we cling to pleasurable sensations and experience aversion to unpleasurable sensations. Not comprehending arising and passing, we cling to things as permanent. Not comprehending no-self, we cling to 'I' and 'mine'.

Without these delusions, everything self-liberates.

Since everything arises via dependent origination, no agent exists to cling, to crave. Clinging arises, no actual clinger, craving arises, no actual craver, yet clinging and craving arises dependent on ignorance, the sense or illusion of self.

That is why realization and insight is important... all clingings, cravings, and passionate feelings(fear, anger, etc) are intrinsically related to the sense of self/Self.

---

12th May 2011

Scenery delights scenery,

Music enjoys music,

I am not a human being having a spiritual experience,

nor a spiritual being having a human experience,

but the universe experiencing itself as

a sensate, reflective, human being.

Finger types, sound hears.

Finger stops typing, sound stops hearing.

Impersonal Co-manifestation

Happening but nowhere,

Occuring but nowhen.

Gone!

---

12th May 2011

> *justme wrote:In traditional buddhist literature it's written that once a person has realised no self other realisation start to arise.*
>
> *Two days ago i had the realisation that all phenomena is a product of mind. I zoomed in on my hand contacting my leg and experienced that the feeling of contact was in my head not outside of it, as were my hand and leg.*
>
> *Has anybody else had further realisations?*

No, the feeling of contact is not in your head.

It just is.

With the meeting of the requisite conditions of eye and visual object, seeing occurs, there is no seer. The occurrence of seeing is a new and complete manifestation distinct from the eye and visual object, hence seeing cannot be said to be taking place in the visual object or in the eyes or in the brain... nor is there a self inside the body doing the seeing.

With the meeting of the requisite conditions of ear and auditory object, hearing occurs, there is no hearer. The occurrence of hearing is a new and complete manifestation distinct from the ears and auditory object, hence hearing cannot be said to be taking place in the auditory object or in/on the ear or in the brain... nor is there a self inside the body doing the hearing.

With the meeting of the requisite conditions of nose and olfactory object, smelling occurs, there is no smeller. The occurrence of smelling is a new and complete manifestation distinct from the nose and olcatory object, hence smelling cannot be said to be taking place in the smell or in/on the nose or in the brain... nor is there self inside the body doing the smelling.

With the meeting of the requisite conditions of tongue and gustatory object, tasting occurs, there is no taster. The occurrence of tasting is a new and complete manifestation distinct from the nose and olcatory object, hence smelling cannot be said to be taking place in the smell or in/on the tongue or in the brain... nor is there self inside the body doing the tasting.

With the meeting of the requisite conditions of body and tactile object, touching occurs, there is no toucher. The occurrence of touching is a new and complete manifestation distinct from the body and tactile object, hence touching cannot be said to be taking place in the tactile object or in/on the body or in the brain... nor is there self inside the body doing the touching.

With the meeting of the requisite conditions of brain and mental object, thinking occurs, there is no thinker. The occurrence of thinking is a new and complete manifestation distinct from the brain and mental object, hence thinking cannot be said to be taking place in the thought or in the brain... nor is there self inside the body doing the thinking.

The image occuring on your computer monitor is not happening 'inside' the hard disk. It is a new and complete manifestation distinct from the hard-disk, CPU, and even the monitor (though thoroughly interdependent with each other).

Comprehending this, one sees that the universe arises by interdependent origination without an agent, source or location. 'In here', 'out there', 'who', 'where',' when' does not apply to a luminous and empty (interdependently originated) universe.

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12th May 2011

> *justme wrote:* @aneternalnow. You seem to be missing the point. Answer me this. Where does the table in front of you exist?

I get what you're saying... I do not say that the table exists in front of me... the experience of table is located nowhere, as it is a dependently originated image.

Neither is it existing in a mind or a brain... if you search for a mind or a brain that

'contains' the image of table, that too reveals itself to be a phantasm.

There is no 'existing in'. There is no mind, no brain, no [insert token]... that contains something else. Appearances appear via dependent origination, and are empty. Often it is the case that when one deconstructs objectivity, one subsumes everything into a single entity called 'mind'. This too is an illusion. Both objectivity, and subjectivity ('Mind') are illusions. To say that all is Mind, or all are Objects, are equally false then, since both do not have inherent existence.

All appearances are empty of inherent existence or characteristics. A red flower experienced by humans due to our specific genetical and biological conditions, are not shared by dogs (they see roses as black), roses are almost complete voidness under inspection on the quantum level (if let's say you have a quantum glasses you'll see 99.999% empty space)... so vision and appearances are all empty of independent, inherent existence. Whether you observe flower as a red object with the shapes of a flower, or as atoms, or as empty space, none of those attributes are intrinsic to the object, they're only the result of our particular ways and mode of investigating/observing it.

The world cannot be determined by itself. If it was, we'd all perceive it in the same way. But that's not to deny reality as we observe it, nor to say that there's no reality outside the mind, but simply that no 'reality in itself' exists. Phenomena only exist in dependence on other phenomena.

---

12th May 2011

**The Non-contingent Joy Not Born Out of Stimulus**

**Participant 1**: How would you convince someone about the visible fruits of the Buddhist practice here and now?

**An Eternal Now**: http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.02.0.than.html

**Participant 1**: Hmm I'm thinking of something more relevant to a westerner lol, they would be sceptical about super powers etc. Furthermore, how to convince a westerner that it is possible to transcend suffering? Where does suffering come from?

**An Eternal Now**: Supernatural powers are only a small part of the visible fruits mentioned in the sutta

**Participant 1**: Ya but I don't want to give him a sutta to read.

**An Eternal Now**: You can summarise the sutta. Suffering arises due to ignorance, attachments and cravings.

**Participant 1**: From this notion of a self right? From a subject-object dichotomy.

**An Eternal Now**: Yes but not just subject-object dichotomy. Various forms of attachment to self.

**Participant 1**: Such as?

**An Eternal Now**: Duality is part of the sense of self. It is removed in Thusness Stage 4. At Thusness Stage 5 realization of Anatta, the 'I' agent is gone. But the 'mine' attachment lingers. Attachment to personality may still linger. There are many degrees of attachment to 'I'.

**Participant 1**: Hmm but, for westerners who enjoy sense pleasures, how would you convince them?

**An Eternal Now**: Every pleasure deriving from sensual stimulus is impermanent and thus ultimately unsatisfactory. However there is a joy that does not depend on the senses. It does not come from sensory stimulus. It does fade with the absence of sensory stimulus. In fact, speaking from experience, you can experience deep joy and equanimity even if your body is experiencing very unpleasant sensations. By tranquilising bodily and mental formations, giving rise to bliss and joy, centering the mind in samadhi, one is able to overcome all bodily hindrances and experience deep clarity, joy and equanimity even in the midst of unpleasantness. You will not experience aversion to life, and a non-contingent joy manifests. A non-contingent perfection and purity lies right there even in the midst of pleasant/unpleasant sensations.

Joy that arise non-contingent on senses is the joy arising from abandonment. When you abandon the body, the mind, and the self, joy naturally arises. This can happen via two ways. Either via opening, though that is more for insight practitioners after certain realization like anatta, or it is via absorption like the practice of jhanas. When you practice insight meditation in daily life, you experience joy and delight even in ordinary seeing and hearing in mundane activities.

But it is not joy born out of sensory stimulus. For if that were the case, the joy would be contingent and unsatisfactory. Rather, it is the joy arising when you drop your self and simply immerse in direct experience.

**Participant 1**: Why are we reborn after realizing not-self?

**An Eternal Now**: We are reborn due to latent tendencies. When you overcome sensual attachments, cravings and aversions, you no longer have the cause for rebirth in the sensual realms. That is the anagami level. If you overcome even subtle cravings for jhanic existence, then you have destroyed the cause of birth even in these subtler realms.

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29th May 2011

Zen Koans….

**The Sound of One Hand Clapping**

Shhh.... listen!

The sound of one hand clapping is the whole universe listening.

If you cannot hear the sound of one hand clap, fret not.

The bird chirping knows... chirp chirp... one hand claps.

Music enjoys music... scenery delights scenery... scenery sceneries scenery. One hand claps... universe listens.

**The Koan of Going Beyond Abiding as I AM/Witness**

**Proceed Beyond The Top Of The 100 Foot High Pole**

Master Sekiso said, "You are at the top of the 100 foot high pole. How will you make a step further?" Another Zen Master of Ancient Times said, "One who sits on top of the 100 foot pole has not quite attained true enlightenment. Make another step forward from the top of the pole and throw one's own body into the 100,000 universes."

Mumon's Comment:

Should there be any who is able to step forward from the top of the 100 foot pole and hurl one's whole body into the entire universe, this person may call oneself a Buddha. Nevertheless, how can one step forward from the top of the 100 foot pole? Know thyself!

Should one be content and settle on top of the 100,000 foot pole,
One will harm the third eye,
And will even misread the marks on the scale.
Should one throw oneself and be able to renounce one's life,
Like one blind person leading all other blind persons,
One will be in absolute freedom (unattached from the eyes).

---

29th May 2011

**Thusness:**

I recalled that about 2 years back, you read some zen masters said one hand clapping is the realization of Absolute, why is it at phase 5 insight?

There is no logic to it. It just came, the heart opens and the essence realized!

---

22nd July 2011

There are two benefits, in my experience, to no-self realization and experience.

**1) liberation**

By liberating the view that there is a real self, it stops clinging. To what? Clinging to a sense that there is a 'me', a solid subject, or more subtly a sense of being or awareness... apart from the flow of sensate phenomenality.

All sufferings come from clinging (clinging to something as 'me', something as 'mine'), and all clingings/attachments basically come down to two views: 'is', and 'is not'. If there is no self or agent, then 'is' and 'is not' of a self does not apply. For example: imagine you are deluded about the nature of wind, and you think that there is a windness behind the blowing, so you grasp onto this construct of an inherent windness and obviously when the blowing changes from what you want or see it to be, 'you' suffer. But when you truly see that there is no 'windness' of wind, that 'wind' is merely a label for an ungraspable process of blowing, then what is left is simply the blowing activities. There is no more clinging to 'windness' or relating particular activities as 'belonging to a wind'.

Relating back to 'self': there is no 'self', 'awareness', 'subject' being 'here' to be clung to. There is no me, no I, no ownership... only the aggregates that simply 'flows'. There is nothing that is inherently 'me', or 'mine'. There is no more clinging or relating things back to a self or owner which results in craving and aversion, and this is very liberating.

What's left: referenceless, ownerless, disjoint, bubble-like, insubstantial, self-releasing and self-luminous experience.

As you progress from the initial no-self realization by transforming the five skandhas to eighteen dhatus (discussed in some of my earlier posts), you will also see that fetters (craving, fear, anger, etc) begin to lose hold and disappear from your life. However the overcoming of subtler fetters be an immediate effect and the insights and experience may not sink in so deeply as to remove all the latent tendencies and habits (it also depends on whether he has former meditative practice, for RT their experience may not be as stable due to the nature of the direct path which is to result in direct insight quickly without necessarily having the meditative foundation, as they do not have years of vipassana and samadhi practice as a foundation). I consider the no-self realization as Buddha's Sotapanna, since it entails the end of 'self-view', and the further stages to Arhantship are the removal of remaining fetters.

**2) happiness**

Most people are not really enjoying their experience. They are always either in aversion of the moment, or in desire of something better, therefore they can never be truly happy even if they get a billion dollars. The resting of dualistic and self-referencing tendencies leaves us with simply immersing in selfless pure sensate clarity which results in great bliss. There is a sense of perfection in the here and now and a non-contingent happiness. The bliss/happiness (I am using both terms synonymously here) of pure sensate enjoyment without clinging to a separate experiencer is beyond imagination. Everything ordinary becomes intensely alive and wonderful.

# SHUNYATA

# (SECOND-FOLD EMPTINESS)

1st June 2011

The realization of the entire universe as a magic display of empty luminosity just arose when I was reading http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/2008/11/niguma-vajra-verses-of-self-liberating.html - his blog is truly full of gems!

Where does thought come from? Where does it reside? Where does it go? Unfindable – unfathomable – ungraspable… Haha! The entire universe is a wonderful magic show of luminous apparitions!

---

2nd June 2011

> *Originally posted by Almond Cookies:*
>
> *There is no nihilism nor eternalism.*
>
> *This statement very important.*
>
> *Alot of non-buddhist tot no self means nothing exists in buddhism. I don't exist there's no me ... ...*
>
> *There's no table, no chairs,no universes ... ...*
>
> *They have nihilistic views.*
>
> *Eternalism mean things exist forever which is a false view.*
>
> *Maybe doctrines like an etenal soul.*
>
> *This is my point of view correct me if I am wrong.*
>
> *Buddhism teaches middle way.*

Yes, indeed emptiness is the freedom from all extreme views like existence and non-existence. Emptiness does not deny five skandhas, the reality as we observe it, as insight into anatta reveals all transient phenomena to be pristine awareness itself and thus

utterly vivid, intimate, actual and seemingly real. But the further realisation of emptiness shows how all phenomena are void of inherent existence in and of itself, independent of conditions. There is the insight into how the entire experiential universe, the five skandhas as we experience it - is empty, void, coreless, substanceless - that it is like the magician's magic tricks, a magical apparition that is substanceless behind its appearance. Being a magical luminous display that cannot be pinned down or located, it far transcends view of existence, nonexistence, birth, abiding, and death. the unborn nature of dharmas is realised.

I wrote an email to Thusness titled "the unborn dharma":

*In attempting to find and locate where thought comes from, reside, and go to, it is realised that thought is ungraspable, unfindable, unfathomable... A magician's magical apparition, like everything (the experiential universe) is... A wonderful display of luminous emptiness, dependent origination. Yet after this is seen, it is nothing resembling nihilism or non-existence... When someone lights up his lighter to burn an innocent ant, compassion just arise... A magical universe demands magical response and compassion from no one to no one*

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2nd June 2011

There is one quote I like very much that I read before but it didnt made sense to me until I re-read it yesterday:

Lankavatara Sutra:

*Mahamati: How did the Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas abandon the view of an absolute arising, dwelling, or dissolving?*

*[Buddha]: They abandoned it in this manner. They cognized that all phenomena are like an ephemeral illusion and dream, that they are detached from the duality of self and others, and that they are therefore unborn [emptiness.] They focused on the mind's manifestations and cognized external reality as unreal. By perceiving the unreality of phenomena, they brought about the cessation of the outflowing sensory consciousness. Because they cognized the unreality of their psychosomatic aggregates and the interacting conditions of the three planes of cosmic existence as originating from their deluded mind, they saw external and internal phenomena as devoid of any inherent nature and as transcending all concepts. Having abandoned the view of an absolute arising [of phenomena,] they realized the illusory nature and thereby attained insight into the unborn Dharma [expanse of emptiness.]*

---

3rd June 2011

*In the process of searching for all that manifests as mind and matter*

*There is neither anything to be found nor is there any seeker,*

*For to be unreal is to be unborn and unceasing*

*In the three periods of time.*

*That which is immutable*

*Is the state of great bliss.*

~ Savaripa

---

3rd June 2011

> *Originally posted by sinweiy:*
>
> (in reply to Almond Cookies)
>
> *:) yes, non-dual, almost there. still got one more level of no wandering thoughts. as still got this wandering thought of non-dual or middle way. :) it's also no "neither nihilism nor eternalism". that's true emptiness. Impermanent* is *permanent.*
>
> *Heart sutra:- Form IS emptiness. Emptiness IS form. Form doesn't negate emptiness. Emptiness doesn't negate form.*
>
> *"eternalism is nihilism, nihilism is eternalism. eternalism doesn't negate nihilism, nihilism doesn't negate eternalism. "*
>
> *useful maxim:- "Sunyata affirms the existence of existence, but negates the self-nature of existence."*
>
> *http://www.dhammaweb.net/books/Lamp.pdf*
>
> *all depends on conditions. 缘起性空. best in Mahayana to* ***round*** *things up.*
>
> *freedom from all extreme views is right. then one will go and* grasp *that extreme views is wrong? yet freedom from all extreme views also include "sticking" to "extreme views" in certain situation to help break attachment of some sentient beings. but in truth, one is not really attached to that extreme, it's just pretending. and that's true freedom from all extreme views. :)*
>
> */*

Yes the antidote of emptiness is necessary at first, then in the end even the antidote of emptiness gets dissolved. This post is of relevance
http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/2007/10/self-liberate-even-antidote.html

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3rd June 2011

*Originally posted by Almond Cookies:*

*The dharma teachings also needed but you got to let go of it to reach the other shore.*

Yes indeed. Want to add something about the extremes of existence and nonexistence…. The world is vividly apparent – sights, sounds, smells, a vivid luminous display. Yet is there truly an 'it' there, truly a 'tree' or a 'flower' out there… In examining those appaearances, no 'itness' can be pinned down, found, or located anywhere. Its nature is emptiness, is its unfindability, ungraspability and unfathomability. Since no 'it' can be found, how can we make the extreme statements of 'it exists' or 'it doesn't exist' when we don't even know what 'it' is? If no 'it' can be pinned down to begin with? How can we say 'flower exist' or 'flower don't exist' when we cannot even find the flowerness of flower? Realising emptiness thereby transcends all extremes.

1st Ch'an (Chinese Zen) Partriach Bodhidharma's "not knowing who he is" and 2nd Ch'an Patriarch Hui Ke's inability to locate his mind are not results of ignorance but the manifestation of their prajna wisdom discerning emptiness.

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5th June 2011

**The Magic of Empty Luminosity**

**Thusness**: the songs (in luminousemptiness.blogspot.com) are truly enlightening.

**Thusness**: When we see the mind's nature, there is nothing to hold. As there is nothing unchanging to ground. Phenomena is itself mind, so how is 'mind' unchanging? The purpose of the realization is to realize that all is mind.

**Me**: When I was reading this article and his commentaries "Reflections on Niguma - Vajra Verses of Self-Liberating Mahamudra – Reflections" ( http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/2008/11/niguma-vajra-verses-of-self-liberating.html ) … and it suddenly clicked, and I was amazed at how the thoughts are magical appearances without location, origin and destination, or arising and ceasing, or abidance…

**Thusness**: from sound, taste to phenomena

**Me**: And everything… thoughts and everything else are just like unreal, though vivid. Yeah, it's like… all are just mind's illusions, and mind is located nowhere.

**Thusness**: No, all is mind, not mind's illusion.

**Me**: Sorry yeah that's what I meant… mind is itself the appearance which are like illusions.

**Thusness**: The purpose of no-mind is to realize that all is mind so that we can experience mind directly, otherwise how is sound, taste, and all phenomena, mind? Therefore when

we see thoughts and observe its whereabout, its origination, we see it all has the same nature… we then realize, it is mind. The five aggregates all share the same taste.

**Me**: Same nature = emptiness?

**Thusness**: Yeah.

**Me**: I see. Yeah… it is mind, cos they are all luminous appearances without an iota of objective reality.

**Thusness**: Behind and in front, in and out… we see nothing, find nothing, and locate nothing… yet vividly present, luminous and clear… always only empty phenomena. All is ever so magical and releasing. ☺ When we see substantiality in Awareness, what is seen is illusion. For there is nothing graspable, locatable, findable. How is 'unchangingness' possible? Therefore the quintessence is to realize the empty nature of whatever arises and rest upon nothing. Mind uncontrived is the true essence of practice.

**Me**: Yeah, nothing whatsoever, even Awareness can be found… and on the 2nd blog post I read "Reflections on Niguma - Vajra Verses of Self-Liberating Mahamudra – Reflections" ( http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/2008/11/niguma-vajra-verses-of-self-liberating.html ), and just really read it through (with some investigation and contemplation), I didn't really spent too much time trying to figure it out… I read carefully, investigated the origin, place of abidance, and destination of thoughts, and it just occurred to me that thought is a magical appearance. Then, I spent the next few days reading all his blog posts… all the way back to late 2007. I haven't read his 2004-early 2007 entries. I think all his stuffs are great.

**Thusness**: Yes. What you have not realized in the past is 'magical'.

**Me**: Yeah, out of nowhere, in nowhere, going nowhere, yet vivid and apparently real.

**Thusness**: The key is in dwelling in the "magic" of the natural state ☺

**Me**: I see…

**Thusness**: Then there will be true wonder as you always 'wrote' :P lol

Me: What do you mean?

**Thusness**: You have been writing about 'wonder and presence and beautiful' about manifestation. What is the difference with what you realized?

**Me**: Previously, it was about the wonder, presence, and beauty of vivid presence and awareness as transience. Now, it is about wonder about the magical nature of presence as vivid and empty.

**Thusness**: It means how marvellous is the functioning… as manifesting, 'real', yet illusory. Empty luminosity.

**Me**: Yeah.

**Thusness**: Now when anger arise, it is a magical display. It is this 'magic' that is releasing. If you cannot understand, then there will be staying and attachment. There is nothing dull in releasing.

**Me**: I see…

**Thusness**: Describe how you feel about this realization?

**Me**: When I saw that… I was amazed, marvelled, and felt very blissful… but then soon later a deep compassion arose, cos someone burnt an ant with his lighter... and I was like, so the universe is unreal and sentient beings are a magical appearance... yet compassion has to arise... without a subject or object... it's part of the magical display.

**Thusness**: No. You should not say it is 'unreal yet'.

**Me**: It's not exactly unreal in the sense that it is clearly and vividly manifesting, yet not really out there.

**Thusness**: When you say it is not really out there, it is always not true… then, you are subsuming all as One. It is not really out there, yet nothing in here. It is just the nature. You do not subsume anything into One.

**Me**: Yes… there is nothing in here as well. There is always only a display of magical luminous apparition… there is nothing out there, as in there is no core to things, apart from the mere appearance.

**Thusness**: Yes. When we talk about the magical display, it is about the 'functioning', it is not about subsuming anything.

**Me**: I see… Yeah it's not about subsuming, it's more about… thoughts and all sensory experiences cannot be found anywhere, cannot be located in anywhere, yet amazingly 'it' appears…

**Thusness**: Yes… only the nature and essence of whatever arises. Not to collapse all into this mind and all external phenomena as appearances. That would be wrong understanding.

**Me**: Hmm… but Mahamudra talks about that right?

**Thusness**: Not exactly sure.

**Me**: I mean they talk about all as mind. I think it's ok to say all is mind, except it is not One Mind, not a cosmic mind, but an individual mindstream.

**Thusness**: Yes.

**Me**: I think we can exchange 'mind' with 'experience'… all are mere luminous experience/apparition.

**Thusness**: Yes. There is only experience.

**Me**: I see… oh by the way, I just suddenly remembered something Namdrol said about realizing emptiness, though I can't remember exactly what it was that he said, I just found the quote:

*At base, the main fetter of self-grasping is predicated upon naive reification of existence and non-existence. Dependent origination is what allows us to see into the non-arising nature of dependently originated phenomena, i.e. the self-nature of our aggregates. Thus, right view is the direct seeing, in meditative equipoise, of this this non-arising nature of all phenomena. As such, it is not a "view" in the sense that is something we hold as concept, it is rather a wisdom which "flows" into our post-equipoise and causes us to truly perceive the world in the following way in Nagarjuna's Bodhicittavivarana:*

*"Form is similar to a foam,*
*Feeling is like water bubbles,*
*Ideation is equivalent with a mirage,*
*Formations are similar with a banana tree,*
*Consciousness is like an illusion."*

*...*

*"In other words, right view is the beginning of the noble path. It is certainly the case that dependent origination is "correct view"; when one analyzes a bit deeper, one discovers that in the case "view" means being free from views. The teaching of dependent origination is what permits this freedom fromviews. The teaching of dependent origination is what permits this freedom from views."*

**Thusness**: The real purpose is the 'freedom' from 'inherent' view and then releases itself from any forming of 'views' so that the magic of functioning can be realized and directly experienced. However during the journey, there is always attachment here and there… therefore the 'emptying of emptiness'. We go through step by step in dissolving the knot of 'inherency' till we see that 'mind' is the full embodiment of the immediate marvelous activity. Just eating, seeing, sensing, tasting, thinking...simply sound, thoughts, scenery and scents. Nothing within and without, only this spontaneous miraculous functioning, an interplay of dharma. When we entertain conceptual knowledge and seek unchanging Awareness or Self, the marvelous 'interconnectedness' of functioning is being misunderstood as 'something' being transformed into 'something' as if 'winter' has been transformed into 'spring'.

It is also important to take note not to ascribe the functioning to a 'higher' power. That is because of 'a thought of personality' that creates the confusion. If there is no attachment to a self, identity, personality, then the functioning itself is marvellous without reification, or any form of personification.

Also, to truly get into this 'magic' of functioning, the doing away of the 'how' is also important. It arises when we penetrate and look deeply the where-about of anything. Just magical appearances.

**Me**: Yeah… Now, I realize my practice sort of switched a lot into penetrating and looking deeply into the non locality of everything… it's like what Buddha taught in Phena Sutta, *"That's the way it goes: it's a magic trick, an idiot's babbling. It's said to be a murderer.[1] No substance here is found. Thus a monk, persistence aroused, should view the aggregates by day & by night, mindful, alert; should discard all fetters; should make himself his own refuge; should live as if his head were on fire — in hopes of the state with no falling away."*

**Thusness**: Yes, until the mind becomes uncontrived and groundless. If we stay on with the Self, unchanging awareness, we will not be able to realize the essence in the teachings of emptiness. The purpose is not to get attached to the 'non-inherent' view either.

**Me**: Yeah, it's like what Namdrol said,

*As such, it is not a "view" in the sense that is something we hold as concept, it is rather a wisdom which "flows" into our post-equipoise and causes us to truly perceive the world in the following way in Nagarjuna's Bodhicittavivarana:*

*"Form is similar to a foam,*
*Feeling is like water bubbles,*
*Ideation is equivalent with a mirage,*
*Formations are similar with a banana tree,*
*Consciousness is like an illusion."*

**Thusness**: It is to completely dissolve all 'inherent' view so that we can realize and experience directly, the magic of empty luminosity.

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5th June 2011

Emptiness... emptiness....

In normal, everyday life, when someone uses the word "emptiness", it usually has a negative connotion.

Like a 'lack of something'... like as if life is lacking something (e.g. "life feels so empty nowadays"). If anything, things lack 'inherent, unchanging, independent existence'… yet they are wondrously, intensely vividly luminous and apparent!

Unfortunately, the teaching of 'emptiness', along with other teachings of Buddha (including the most common misperception of Buddha's teaching as 'Life is Suffering' which is certainly NOT what he said!*) gives the misconception of Buddhism as having a life-denying, pessimistic view of the world.

But this is NOT the Buddhist understanding of Emptiness!

Form is emptiness, emptiness IS form!

Emptiness IS Fullness!

I can assure you when you realize emptiness, you will marvel, be amazed, at the whole universe as a magical apparition... it's like Whoa, the universe is magic, luminous and empty, clearly manifest yet no-thing 'there'! No place of origin, place of abidance, and destination - to thoughts, to sensate experiences... just a clear display of luminous apparitions. Shunyata is a wonder.

This is a wonderful truth... This is nothing dreadful... and is nothing short of Great Bliss.

The luminous and empty universe is spontaneously perfected, lacking nothing, amazing!

*The Buddha taught that suffering is a part and parcel of life, or to put it more simply, 'there is suffering in life', and that there is a way to end suffering. He did NOT say "Life is Suffering" or "Life can only be suffering" even though sadly, this is what many teachers are promoting - their own distortion of Buddha's original words. For more info see this well-written article: Life Isn't Just Suffering by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

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8th June 2011

The Unborn Dharma

Posted by: An Eternal Now

A discussion with a friend in TheTaoBums, who himself has pretty deep insights.

Hi,

Sorry for the slow reply... Didn't really have much time last week - long shifts on duty in operations on an island and lack access to internet apart from my phone. (well I am still only using my phone now but have more time to reply). I'm back from the operation late saturday and just fired 115 rounds last night in a machine gun live firing exercise (from one hill to another hill with night vision, kinda fun). Not that I like military life in general tho - we are just told to "suck up" the two years of national service in Singapore. (It does suck to have your freedom taken away and have to stay in camp every weekday)

There are different understandings about unborn... Related to different realisations.

At the I AM (realization of luminosity but inherent and dualistic) and substantial nondual (nondual but inherent) level, unborn is understood in terms of an unchanging, inherent, birthless and deathless awareness. At this point, we discover ourselves as an all-pervading presence not bounded by the birth and death of this body-mind. As an analogy, you used to think you are one of the wave arising and subsiding in the ocean, but now you realize you are the whole ocean. Or you used to think you are the drop of

water, until that drop of water sinks into the ocean and you can no longer find a separate identity or drop of water apart from the entire ocean. Or the outbreath merges with the air in the environment, the air in the vase becomes inseparable from the air of the whole world when the vase breaks. These analogies should give you a sense of the 'all-pervadingness' of Pure Presence, and how 'deathlessness' is experienced when the sense of 'individuality' is overcome in the discovery of one's true identity as this all-pervading Presence. At this level of insight, the transience (the birth and death of waves on the ocean) in contrast is understood to be illusory, unlike the real, absolute unchanging awareness (the deathless oceanic Presence)... it should be understood that the lack of individual identity in the all-pervading Presence is not to be understood as the no-self of Anatta which will be explained further on.

Even though it might be understood that the unchanging awareness is inseperable from illusory, transient experiences (nonduality of subject and object). This is understanding unborn from an inherent (albeit nondual) perspective. This is also the understanding of advaita vedanta (though a common understanding among some zennists, shentongpas, etc). This is understanding things from the substantialist non-dual point of view.

Second is unborn from the perspective of anatta... Due to the insight of anatta it is seen that there is no inherent self anywhere, no subject, no substantiality to any phenomena including a superawareness of sorts... Seeing is the seen, scenery sees! Awareness is realized to simply be a label collating the various transient experiences in the same way that the word weather is a label collating the various diverse, dynamic and ungraspable manifestations like clouds, rain, lightning, wind, etc. Similarly awareness is not an unchanging essence located anywhere but is simply the self-luminous transient manifestations.

So how is this anatta linked to unborn if there is no unchanging awareness? It is the absence of a self at the center that links and persists throughout experience - walking from point A to point Z, there is no sense that there is a self unchanged throughout point A to point Z - instead, experiences are experienced as disjoint, unsupported, self-releasing and spontaneous. In other words, point A is point A complete in itself, same goes to point B, C, to Z.

Do take note that experience is effortlessly and implicitly non-dual, just a refinement of 'view' after this new found experience and realization. That is, from this implicitly and effortlessly non-dual experience and without having the need to reify and rely on a 'source', how is 'unborn' understood?

If we keep on penetrating this, it will come a time that 'boom' we suddenly realized that why is there a need to do so? Why is the relying of the Source so persistent? It is because we have relied on a wrong view despite the right experience.

Once the willingness to let go of the 'wrong dualistic and inherent view' arose, it suddenly it became clear that all along I am still unknowingly relying on 'wrong view'. For example, seeing the same 'mind' being transformed into the transience manifestation.

In actuality there is in seeing just the seen, no seer, in hearing just sounds, no hearer. How is this deathless if there is just manifestation? Just as Zen Master Dogen puts it: firewood does not turn into ashes, firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood while ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash, while at the same time ash contains firewood, firewood contains ash (all is the manifestation of the interdependent universe as if the entire universe is coming together to give rise to this experience and thus all is contained in one single expression).

The similar principle applies not just to firewood and ash but to everything else: for example you do not say summer turns into autumn and autumn turns into winter - summer is summer, autumn is autumn, distinct and complete in itself yet each instance of existence time contains the past, present and future in it. So the same applies to birth and death - birth does not turn into death as birth is the phenomenal expression of birth and death is the phenomenal expression of death - they are interdependent yet disjoint, unsupported, complete. Accordingly, birth is no-birth and death is no-death... Since each moment is not really a starting point or ending point for a entity - without the illusion and reference of a self-entity - every moment is simply a complete manifestation of itself. And every manifestation does not leave traces: they are disjoint, unsupported and self-releases upon inception. This wasn't dogen's exact words but I think the gist is there, you should read dogen's genjokoan which I posted in my blog.

Lastly is understanding the unborn dharma from the perspective of shunyata. This perspective should complement with the perspective of anatta for true deep experiential insight (without realization of anatta, there will still be clinging to a base, ground, somewhere).

I should say the realization of the unborn dharma (from shunyata) arose the day after you sent me this PM - the details of which can be found in the last ten to twenty pages of my ebook - new materials just added on sunday, in a new chapter called "shunyata". The realization arose spontaneously while simultaneously reading and contemplating an article from a highly experienced mahamudra practitioner/blogger, Chodpa, owner of the blog luminous emptiness.

The realization of unborn from the perspective of emptiness is the realization that everything experienced - thoughts and sensate perceptions are utterly unlocatable, ungraspable, empty. In investigation where did thought arise from, where is thought currently located, and where will thought go to, it is discovered that thoughts are indeed like a magician's trick! No source can be located, no destination can be found, and the thought is located nowhere at all - it is unfindable, ungraspable... Yet "it" magically and vividly appears! Out of nowhere, in nowhere, to nowhere, dependently originated and empty... A magical apparition appears, vividly luminously yet empty. When this is seen, there is an amazement, wonder, and great bliss arising out of direct cognition of the magic of empty luminosity. So how is this linked to unborn? It is realized that everything is literally an appearance, a display, a function, and this display is nowhere inherent or located anywhere - so like a dream, like a tv show, characters of the show may vividly appear to suffer birth and death and yet we know it is simply a show - it's undeniably

there (vividly appearing) yet it's not really there. It has no actual birth, death, place of origin, place of abidance, place of destination, ground, core, substance.

However in the insight of emptiness, this is different from substantial nonduality as there is no referencing of the manifestations and appearances as being part of an unchanging awareness. Awareness is the unborn display - not the display is appearing in/as an unborn, unchanging Awareness. This is the difference between unborn understood from a nondual and noninherent view, and unborn understood from a nondual but inherent view. Even though it is realised all is mind/experience, there is no substance to mind/experience. It is not the same as the subsuming of all experiences to a "one mind" like substantial nondualism. There is also no cosmic mind (this is actually a nonbuddhist view) but individual, unique and nondual mindstreams.

Lastly if you are interested in dzogchen (oh and just wondering, are you more into mahamudra or dzogchen?) you might want to chat with Loppon Namdrol (Malcolm Smith) in dharmawheel (Vajrahridaya informed me that namdrol has recently started posting in that forum, previously Namdrol posted mostly in esangha before it was taken down), Namdrol is very knowledgeable, has deep wisdom and is an experienced dzogchen practitioner under Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He is a Loppon which means he has something like a Ph.D in buddhism, and if memory serves he was asked by a lama to teach dzogchen though he rejected it.

Finally just a note, whenever there is any mentions of permanence, it is not a permanent metaphysical essence of awareness or substance... But emptiness (the absence of inherent existence) is the permanent nature of everything.

Also, as Loppon Namdrol pointed out, Mahaparinirvana sutra and other teachings on Tathagatagarbha on permanence, self etc should be understood in terms of Emptiness and No-self - it is simply the subversion of Hindu concepts of atman and brahman into emptiness and noself - the true essence is lack of essence. And as Lankavatara sutra points out, the teachings of true self by Buddha is not the same as non-Buddhist teachings of an all-pervasive creator and Self but is simply a skilful means to lead those who fear emptiness to the profound prajna wisdom. It (true self, tathagatagarbha, etc) is not meant to be taken literally as pointing to an inherently existing metaphysical essence. It is a teaching device.

---

11th June 2011

“I would usually sum up what's being said in this entry like this: Each moment is interdependently originated and inherently empty. Awareness and it's "knowing" aspect is also interdependently originated and inherently empty.

At this phase there is no longer any association with an absolute arising, abiding, or cessation of "self" and phenomena. So each moment that arises according to causes and conditions, is self-perfected. The extremes of subject/object, self/other, existence/non-existence, etc. at this phase give way spontaneously to the "middle way;" because there

is no longer an association with an absolute arising, abiding, or cessation of "self" and phenomena at this phase.

Due to having insight into the unborn dharma: "By perceiving the unreality of phenomena, they brought about the cessation of the outflowing sensory consciousness. Because they cognized the unreality of their psychosomatic aggregates and the interacting conditions of the three planes of cosmic existence as originating from their deluded mind, they saw external and internal phenomena as devoid of any inherent nature and as transcending all concepts."

What's your experience with the last paragraph?

-SJ"

---

11th June 2011

Hi,

Everything is ungraspable, unlocatable, un-pinnable as a solid entity...

Like weather, you can't say 'weather is located there' - weather is really not findable as an entity.

Since there is no 'the weather' as such, you cannot say the entity 'the weather' is existing somewhere, or that 'the weather' is non-existent, since both claims predicate an existent entity.

So 'it is', 'it is not', the four extremes, concepts about a substantial entity, as well as concepts about its birth, abiding, cessation, simply do not apply to all external and internal phenomena, which are simply an empty cognizance vividly shining yet located nowhere... transcending all concepts... just a magical, shimmering, luminous and empty mirage. i.e. The mirage of an island off shore on a sunny day looks there, but there is no core that can be found or located - similarly all experiences are apparent yet coreless, beyond concepts like 'it is there' and 'it is not there', it is unfathomable (since you cannot fathom a true existent entity 'there').

Since everything is an empty cognizance, there is nothing out there, or in here, or anywhere in between, therefore the cessation of the 'outflowing sensory consciousness' (I take it to mean projecting a solid world out of empty perceptions).

The deluded mind is what projects inherent nature to the aggregates and the interacting conditions.

Since all that dependently originates are like magical appearances, without a real place of origin, abidance, and destination, there is no true interaction of different entities -

and therefore seeing from the perspective of this natural state of interconnectedness, all is self originated. What's your experience with it?

….

Haha... just saw that you wrote about your previous paragraphs. (I read backwards)

Not very different from what I said.

---

11th July 2011

I have just come to a new realisation of the implications of views in daily life. I could have misunderstood what goldisheavy meant but I think it has to do with the fields of meaning. I have realised how ideas, beliefs, notions, views pervade our life and causes attachment.

I now see that every single attachment is an attachment to view, which, no matter what it is, comes to two basic clinging: the view 'there is' and the view 'there isn't'.

I started by noticing how in the past I had a sense of self, body and awareness... That these all seem so real to me and I kept coming back to that subjective sense and this is no longer the case now: I don't even have a sense of a body nowadays. Then I realized that all these clingings are related to view.

The view of There is.... Self, body, mind, awareness, world, whatever. Because of this clinging on to things as existent, they appear real to us and we cling to them. The only way to eradicate such clingings is to remove the root of clinging: the view of 'there is' and 'there isn't'.

The realization of anatta removes the view of 'there is self', 'there is awareness' as an independent and permanent essence. Basically, any views about a subjective self is removed through the insight that "seeing is just the seen", the subject is always only its objective constituents. There is no more sense of self, body, awareness, or more precisely there is no clinging to a "there is" with regards to such labels. It is seen that these are entirely ungraspable processes. In short the clinging and constant referencing to an awareness, a self dissolves, due to the notion "there is" such things are being eradicated.

The realization of dream-like reality removes the view of 'there are objects', the universe, the world of things... One realizes what heart sutra meant by no five skandhas. This is basically the same realization as anatta, except that it impacts the view "there is" and "there isn't" in terms of the objective pole, in contrast to the earlier insight that dissolves "there is" of a subjective self.

What I have overlooked all these while is the implications of views and how the thicket of views cause all clingings and suffering and what underpins those thicket of views, and

how realization affects and dissolves these views.

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Related stuff:

A view is a fundamental belief one holds about reality. For example, "everything exists" (sarva asti)

....

The root of both these mistaken positions is "is" and "is not" -- for example "I exist now, and I will continue to exist after death" or "I exist now but when I die I will cease to exist".

~ Loppon Namdrol

At base, the main fetter of self-grasping is predicated upon naive reification of existence and non-existence. Dependent origination is what allows us to see into the non-arising nature of dependently originated phenomena, i.e. the self-nature of our aggregates. Thus, right view is the direct seeing, in meditative equipoise, of this this non-arising nature of all phenomena. As such, it is not a "view" in the sense that is something we hold as concept, it is rather a wisdom which "flows" into our post-equipoise and causes us to truly perceive the world in the following way in Nagarjuna's Bodhicittavivarana:

"Form is similar to a foam,
Feeling is like water bubbles,
Ideation is equivalent with a mirage,
Formations are similar with a banana tree,
Consciousness is like an illusion."

...

"In other words, right view is the beginning of the noble path. It is certainly the case that dependent origination is "correct view"; when one analyzes a bit deeper, one discovers that in the case "view" means being free from views. The teaching of dependent origination is what permits this freedom from views. The teaching of dependent origination is what permits this freedom from views."

~ Loppon Namdrol

Another related article from an Actualist practitioner:
http://nickdowntherabbithole.blogspot.com/2011/07/conversations-breakthrough.html#more

16th July 2011

> *goldisheavy, on 16 July 2011 - 07:58 PM, said:*
>
> *Crap answer. You're weaseling here by slipping into the doctrine-talk. Instead you should try to confront the discrepancy between the ultimate truth as you tell it and appearances. And I mean, confront it in personal terms. Don't run to the doctrine for help. Tell me how you resolve this dichotomy. Why doesn't the relative realm look anything like what you explain the ultimate truth is?*

What is relative, is not true, i.e. not inherently so. This is ultimate truth.

I never said relative realm 'looks different' from ultimate truth... There is only one truth, non-arising. Since what dependently originates cannot be found to have an essence anywhere, whatever appears is an empty-appearance without arising and ceasing.

Emptiness cannot be understood apart from form*, and form is by nature empty.

*the unfindability of weather as an independent locatable entity, is the nature of weather

---

17th July 2011

> *goldisheavy, on 17 July 2011 - 12:01 AM, said:*
>
> *What is relative is true. For example, I am typing on a laptop right now.*
>
> *This is true. How do you deal with that? Are you claiming I am not actually typing right now? What's your answer?*

Typing cannot be found. There is just appearance, which is not denied, but nothing can be asserted: including laptop, including typing. Everything is like an illusion, like a dream. Like a dream of typing, conventionally said to be so... yet it isn't really real.

> *Quote*
>
> *How can something appear to arise without arising?*

Find out where does the thought come from, where the thought is, where the thought goes to. Find the core or essence of that thought. You will see that it is magical appearance, like a magic show - appearing, yet not truly there or anywhere, without a place of origin, abidance, and subsidance. You will realize that there is no essence or

substance or thingness of that appearance, that there is no-thing coming into being and no-thing to cease.

> *Quote*
>
> *For example, I light a match and a fire appears on the match. A while ago there was no fire and now there is.*
> *Clearly the fire arose. But you're saying the fire did not arise. Something is fishy here. How do you explain this?*

There is nothing locatable about fire. It is utterly unlocatable and ungraspable. There is no fireness of a fire... therefore there is nothing undergoing arising, abiding and disappearance... just self-releasing traceless appearance.

---

17th July 2011

*On the ultimate level all events in samsara and nirvana never come into being, and so have no separate existence. On the relative plane they are illusory figments of mind, so again they have no separate existence. They are unoriginated events appearing in a plethora of magical illusion, which is like the reflection of the moon in water, possessing an inherent acausal dynamic. Since this essentially insubstantial magical illusion also never comes into being, ultimate and relative are identical and their identity is the one cause. Thus intuitive realization of [total presence] arises [with attainment of the unity of the two truths].*

- Padmasambhava - Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba –

---

17th July 2011

> Lucky7Strikes, on 17 July 2011 - 06:16 PM, said:
>
> And you do this through your subject. How do you know the emptiness of things if you don't investigate it with something.

Investigation does not require investigator

In seeing there is just the seen, in hearing there is just the heard.
Seeing is, no seer. Hearing is, no hearer.
Seeing is the seen, hearing is the heard.
Deeds are done, no doer.

Lucky7Strikes, on 17 July 2011 - 06:16 PM, said:

And you due this by just reifying the object.

Anatta does not require reification of objects, however anatta alone does not remove reification of objects.

Anatta is that awareness is an empty convention like weather, collating a ungraspable self-luminous process of the six consciousness that dependently originates, and not a subjective self or agent. There is no agent, perceiver.

Shunyata is that even that process is unlocatable and empty.

> Lucky7Strikes, on 17 July 2011 - 06:16 PM, said:
>
> This is like saying. "There are all these things I see with the eyes. But I can't find the eyes except these things. So I must not have eyes and the objects must see themselves."

Contemplating the non-locality of things leads to emptiness of object

To realize anatta you have to contemplate what I said above ala bahiya sutta style.

---

17th July 2011

> Lucky7Strikes, on 17 July 2011 - 07:02 PM, said:
>
> And my post above was inquiring into how you know this. And how you come to this conclusion besides blind belief in concepts like "emptiness."

I do not rely on beliefs. I have realized and directly seen this to be so (seeing is just seen, hearing is just heard). "Is" does not apply to awareness or subject. I do not mean there is something heard, but it is just the self-evident clarity of appearances that the label "awareness" refer to, like the word "weather", but there is no subjective self or inherency to "awareness".

> Lucky7Strikes, on 17 July 2011 - 07:02 PM, said:
>
> Your process of inquiry is very flawed as I now see it. You certify the emptiness of subject through reifying the object. Then certify the emptiness of the object through the eyes of a subject.

In seeing just the seen, means there is no seer, whereas "seen" too is simply a convention for self-luminous unlocatable d.o. And empty appearance/display like weather. To say "there is just a display" does not imply the display must be inherently there, it could simply a tv show, a dream, etc but that there is no agent seeing the display is true.

First we realize "weather" is an empty name, doesn't refer to some permanent independent entity apart from that process of clouds, rain, lightning etc, then the next step we realize clouds, rain, lightning etc is also just as empty and ungraspable as

"weather".

Step one does not contradict step two, its like 1) there is no weather 2) weather is just a convention for appearances 3) appearances are empty

Step 2 does not reify phenomena, step 3 does not reify subject. They are absolutely consistent and complements each other.

---

18th July 2011

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 18 July 2011 - 05:19 AM, said:*
>
> *In order to convince yourself of this, you objectify the occurring world as part of another whole. This is seeing the absence of subject by just saying everything is object.*

Like I said, there is no objectification at all.

If you say there is no river apart from flowing, no wind apart from blowing, no awareness apart from the process of knowing, how is it objectification?

It is only reification when you say there is an entity river somewhere behind the flowing, a 'wind' behind blowing, a 'hearer' behind hearing, etc.

Anatta leaves you with non-conceptual unreified experiencing.

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 18 July 2011 - 05:19 AM, said:*
>
> *To contemplate the non-locality of objects you subtly allow a subjective mind to evaluate the supposed objective experiences.*

Your statement does not make sense. Just because there is investigation means there is investigator? That is your inference and assumption. There is just seeing without seer. Investigating without investigator. Observing without observer.

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 18 July 2011 - 05:19 AM, said:*
>
> *And quickly revert to above reasoning for anatta to do away with that subjective mind as another object.*

There is no reasoning involved. This is not analytical meditation. This is direct experiential contemplation that leads to a direct experiential realization and not just an intellectual conviction.

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 18 July 2011 - 05:41 AM, said:*

> *It doesn't matter how appearance-like reality appears. You are still seeing it as an objective reality of some universal process happening as (conventional) you.*

What is convention has no (inherent) reality

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 18 July 2011 - 05:41 AM, said:*
>
> *No matter how d.o.ing or what not. There is no self evident wisdom in things that arise. The "seen" does not see dependent origination. Something dependently originated cannot see directly its origination. It can only do this through speculation.*

You basically think, objects cannot see, only subject can see.

I basically say, there is no subject or object, because the seen is the seeing and the seeing is the seen, just like wind is the blowing and the blowing is wind instead of "wind behind blowing", so it is flat.

What this translates to is that D.O.is a self-evident fact in what is seen (but obscured by ignorance). You can directly see how the stick, hitting, air, hitter, is interconnected with this sound. Without reifying whatever I said conventionally as objective things (like I said, total relativity breaks down entity-view).

> *Quote*
>
> *A baby cannot directly realize his coming into birth from non-birth (if we assume that people are originated at birth). it can only learn this after he is born.*

Actually you don't need to know the past to see in direct experience what D.O. is in its immediacy. But you also should not deny the past and even past lives. That would necessitate recalling and even past life remembering, yes.

> *Quote*
>
> *Your weather example does not hold because weather is not alive and doing the investigation. Your looking at your mind as if it were a thing and this is a faulty assumption to begin an inquiry with.*

You are just assuming that the example does not hold whereas in actuality it does, if you have truly contemplated and realized anatta. And you are assuming aliveness to be a subject behind investigation.

Mind is not a thing nor is mind a subject, mind is an ungraspable process and "there is" and "is not" does not apply as there is no mind-ness of mind anywhere, just like there is no wind-ness of wind, river-ness of river, car-ness of car or weather-ness of weather... Or a windness behind blowing, riverness behind flowing, awareness behind awaring,

mindness behind knowing, seer behind seeing, hearer behind knowing. Even though there is no mindness I have not denied unreified, luminous and spontaneous experience - an ungraspable mindstream.

A self-luninous ungraspable process of eighteen dhatus is all there is, and not even that "is" as it is utterly d.o., empty, unlocatable and ungraspable. Definitely no "one mind" or "brahman" of hinduism.

P.s. You are the one steering to extremes by subsuming objects into a subjective one-mind. Whereas I do not assert the reality of subject or object.

---

19th July 2011

> *goldisheavy, on 18 July 2011 - 11:23 PM, said:*
>
> *I'm thinking that dependent origination is a poisonous teaching because when physicalists hear of it, instead of uprooting physicalist ideas, it simply entrenches and legitimizes physicalism.*
>
> *thuscomeone is completely lost right now. He thinks that objects exist outside mind, bouncing around like a bunch of billiard balls, and then eventually some of the balls bounce up against the mind, which is kind of like a ball with the distinction that the mind ball can feel, whereas other non-mind balls don't feel anything. So dependent arising is seen as these little balls of matter bouncing around according to rules of physics. With this kind of view a rebirth in a physical realm full of suffering (struggle for limited resources, status posturing, etc.) is absolutely guaranteed.*
>
> *Physicalism is an incorrect description of reality. There is nothing whatsoever outside mind simply because each object does not know itself, rather, there is one knowledge that knows all the diverse objects. There is one knowledge and one intent. Knowledge has many aspects, it's not flat, it has character and it changes, but it's still one unbroken state of knowledge. It's the mind's function to discern. When the mind discerns something to be outside of itself, it's purely imaginary. There is no basis for the mind to believe something exists outside itself. In other words, there is no reason to believe that the state of knowledge is influenced by something unknown outside knowledge. If such things exist, they have to be taken on blind faith. There is no way to know that which is beyond knowledge.*
>
> *It's like in a math formula (y = x*x + xb + 3 + g + ab) there can be many elements, but only one relation is described by the formula. In fact, if there were not one relation in a math formula, the formula would have no meaning at all.*

Wrong. Causes and conditions do not need to literally "bounce into each other" to manifest effect. They can be ten million miles apart and still an effect takes place. This is why psychic powers and buddha's omniscience is possible. Read aspect's discovery.

Secondly, anatta and dependent origination are precisely what breaks down the view that consciousness reflects a material world.

Why? Consciousness does not reflect external (that would imply a reflective substance/perceiver). Consciousness is manifestations that dependently originates, and is empty in nature. With the condition of eye and visual object, visual consciousness manifest. Consciousness is a unique and complete manifestation, not a thing/non-thing that 'reflects' other things. Of course this is still speaking relatively, and what is relative is ultimate empty of inherent existence and thus non-arising.

People really need to read and understand these two sutta/articles about consciousness and dependent origination:

http://www.leighb.com/mn38.htm

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2008/12/dependent-arising-of-consciousness.html

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19th July 2011

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 19 July 2011 - 09:17 AM, said:*
>
> *Self evident to what entity. In your view there is no such thing, only a thought of such thing. And since that thought is d.o.ed shouldn't it be evident in that thought that it is d.o.ed by...what exactly? Then everyone would be enlightened because it would be self-evident.*
>
> *The what are you implying is aware or self evident?*

Self evident does not require a "to what entity". There is simply knowing without knower. Self-evident facts can be obscured by delusions such as the delusion of self.

Here are some koans to contemplate about.

Xue Feng said, “To comprehend this matter, it is similar to the ancient mirror – Hu comes, Hu appears; Han comes, Han appears.” Xuan Sha heard this and said, “Suddenly the mirror is broken, then how?” “Hu and Han both disappear.” Xuan Sha said, “Old monk’s heels have not touched ground yet.” Jian says instead, “Hu and Han are ready-made.”

Dogen said, "When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body-and-mind, you grasp things directly. Unlike things and their reflections in the mirror, and unlike the moon and its reflection in the water, when one side is illumined the other side is dark."

Xuan Sha said, “When the blind, the deaf and the mute come, how to receive them? Raising the duster is not seen, conversation is not heard, in addition, the mouth is dumb; how do you consult for them? If they cannot be received, then the Buddha Dharma would be ineffectual.” A monk said, “These three kinds of people still allow consultation or not?” Xuan said, “How do you consult for them?” The monk bade farewell and exited. Xuan said, “Not so! Not so!” Gui Chen retorted, “How to receive those with eyes, ears and mouth?” Zhong Ta said, “The three kinds of disabled people, where are they right now?” Another monk said, “Not only denouncing others, but also denouncing oneself.”

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20th July 2011

> *Informer, on 20 July 2011 - 09:03 AM, said:*
>
> *He has expanded nothingness ad infinitum Vmarco.*

No. I experience and guide others (as per my ebook) through progressive stages of realization about luminosity and emptiness (and their inseperability).

I talk about the luminous awareness that while being the basis of everything, is utterly empty of inherent existence or non-existence, this being the middle way. This accords with the 3rd karmapa's text:

*All phenomena are illusory displays of mind.*
*Mind is no mind--the mind's nature is empty of any entity that is mind*
*Being empty, it is unceasing and unimpeded,*
*manifesting as everything whatsoever.*
*Examining well, may all doubts about the ground be discerned and cut.*

*Naturally manifesting appearances, that never truly exist, are confused into objects.*
*Spontaneous intelligence, under the power of ignorance, is confused into a self.*
*By the power of this dualistic fixation, beings wander in the realms of samsaric existence.*
*May ignorance, the root of confusion, he discovered and cut.*

*It is not existent--even the Victorious Ones do not see it.*
*It is not nonexistent--it is the basis of all samsara and nirvana.*
*This is not a contradiction, but the middle path of unity.*
*May the ultimate nature of phenomena, limitless mind beyond extremes, he realised.*

*If one says, "This is it," there is nothing to show.*
*If one says, "This is not it," there is nothing to deny.*
*The true nature of phenomena,*
*which transcends conceptual understanding, is unconditioned.*
*May conviction he gained in the ultimate, perfect truth.*

*Not realising it, one circles in the ocean of samsara.*

*If it is realised, buddha is not anything other.*
*It is completely devoid of any "This is it," or "This is not it."*
*May this simple secret, this ultimate essence of phenomena,*
*which is the basis of everything, be realised.*

---

21st July 2011

> *Lucky7Strikes, on 20 July 2011 - 09:01 PM, said:*
>
> *@ Seth,*
>
> *I wrote this in another thread to share my observations of anatta inquiry. I would like to know if what I wrote pertains to your experience somewhat. Thanks!*
>
> *Does thinking see thinking? Does sound hear sound? That would mean sound is aware. (You would blast music and awareness would drift as the soundwaves) Or mental processes are aware in themselves. Where does a thought begin and end? You would be all these chopped up awarenesses and have no connection between tasting and hearing. No memory would be established or a sense of being.*
>
> *You may conclude that from such reasoning that objectifies that moment of thought to itself, and go, "look, there is just these disparate moments of thought, me moving, jus things arising spontaneously." And the critical juncture during this inquiry is the realization that that very thought ("look, there is just these disparate...") itself is also another rising. And one falsely thinks this is the nature of reality when really you are just impersonally experiencing things as they rise because they are objectified. This is what you call "no-self realization."*
>
> *This is just another way of experiencing reality and I have no problem with that. It's spontaneous and liberating, a great way to practice and let go of grasping for me/mine mental habits.*
>
> *But the Buddhadharma says the objects are empty also. So you inquire into thoughts, movement, phenomena, and conclude there are no inherent separation or identity to them. However, here you are missing a critical flaw in the process, because in order to investigate various arisings, they must be contained, connected, or somehow perceived in their totality. You are stepping out of the "just this arising" understanding in order to see the relationship between multiple arisings. And to justify this process, you say afterwards, "oh, that was just another arising." There is no such thing as "just arising" inquiry. Inquiry demands connection, division, multiplicity, memory, reflection. It is a fluid process.*
>
> *So it's like you have a loop of justification. So you come to a nonsensical*

*conclusion that, well, it's just like magic. As a crude example this is like a man looking for his eyes and seeing objects and not his eyes concludes that objects "see" themselves. And to see whether objects really exist or not, he closes his eye and sees darkness. So he concludes objects are not really there either. He doesn't understand that this whole thing just happens in his seeing-nature and denies his seeing entirely.*

*You can deny everything in the world, but not awareness. Because that final denial happens in awareness. Nor does it make sense to say awareness belongs to arising of disparate moments. Not does it make sense to say one can directly know that awareness comes from something else (that can only be speculated as scientists attribute it to the brain).*

*You can say awareness dependently originates, but only in the sense that a ball bounces. The fact that the ball bounces does not deny the ball. That would be stupid. Dependent origination is just how this dimension of awareness works.*

Sorry I know you are probably too tired for discussion but I still have to clarify something.

The realization of anatta arises from direct experiential insight and not an inference. It is not an inferred conclusion due to not being able to locate the whereabouts of an agent or perceiver. Similarly the emptiness of objects is not just about being unable to locate where phenomena is, it is the direct realization of dependent origination and the corelessness of all phenomena. Anatta realization is also not inferred conclusion from peak experiences of no-mind which you had.

It is the irrefutable seeing that "seeing is just the seen", that the actuality of what "seeing" is is simply the stream, the process of seeing without seer. It is not "I cannot locate where the seer is, therefore I conclude there is no seer", but rather, there is the direct realization that there is no seer, no core to mind, and waking up to the nature of seeing. It is a waking up, like suddenly you realize what you call "wind" is just the entire blowing activity, so too is the luminosity, presence, awareness simply a term collating the self-luminous stream or process. There is no inference involved, and in fact you clearly see that an unchanging mind is infact totally inferred just like an unchanging windness of blowing is inferred out of the "view of inherency"... it is either you realize this or not. If you realize this you can never unsee it... No inference at all.

Luminosity cannot be denied, it is only the view of duality, and the view of inherency that must be seen through.

---

21st July 2011

*thuscomeone, on 21 July 2011 - 10:00 PM, said:*

> *No. The arising of memory is just the arising of memory. Not "the arising of memory." Remembering yesterday, thinking about today. Switching off the lamp next to the bed. Emptiness is form.*

Is there no cause for this arising?

If you think arising arise without cause, then there is no rebirth. If there is, then there is rebirth. In other words, a process of causal continuity.

*Firewood becomes ash, and it does not become firewood again. Yet, do not suppose that the ash is future and the firewood past. You should understand that firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood,* ***which fully includes past and future and is independent of past and future****. Ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash,* ***which fully includes future and past****. Just as firewood does not become firewood again after it is ash, you do not return to birth after death.*

~ Dogen

Note: 'you do not return to birth after death' is not the denial of rebirth, it is the denial of the notion that a soul reincarnate, but the assertion that rebirth is the continuity of a causal process, neither same nor different.

Do not suppose that ash is the continuation of firewood, but do not suppose that firewood would simply annihilate suddenly either. Not finding entities but seeing dependent origination, one becomes free of extremes of eternalism and nihilism.

---

22nd July 2011

> *thuscomeone, on 22 July 2011 - 02:54 PM, said:*
>
> *Xabir, you don't have to take my advice here. But if you do, you should go back and read your blog post about views, as I'm not sure you fully understand its implications yet. That is because you don't fully understand "emptiness is form." Or what emptiness is form is pointing to. You're still caught in a very subtle dualism, dividing emptiness from emptiness. I'm not talking about rebirth or any sort of thing like that. You're starting from concepts, and until you see beyond them, you will go no further.*
>
> *If you want to talk Dogen, you should focus on the 4th line of the Genjokoan. The first three lines are conceptual. The fourth is beyond concepts. You're stuck at the third line.*

Actually, I do experience the entirety and not just the 4th line, non-conceptually.

There are a few experiences involved: Maha, Disjoint and unsupported, and Anatta.

The aspect of dependent origination is Maha... this is a non-conceptual experience.

Apparently you experienced and realized the Disjoint and Unsupported, and Anatta, but you did not realize dependent origination or experienced Maha otherwise you wouldn't say they are conceptual. This also explains why in the earlier part of the post you insisted on impermanence and denied D.O.

When you experience Maha, everything is a process of everything coming together to manifest this moment without agency. Rebirth totally makes sense in this (non-conceptual) perspective.

You will totally understand what Dogen meant by:

*Zazen is "mustering the whole body-mind (the whole of existence-time, inclusive of "A" and "not-A") to look at forms and listen to sounds," which is described by Dogen as "direct experience."*

If you read Dogen stuff, you will know that the most important thing he keeps emphasizing is Maha.

---

22nd July 2011

> *thuscomeone, on 22 July 2011 - 09:04 PM, said:*
>
> *Eh, not sure you know what I mean by non-conceptual. I understand d.o. D.O. has lead me to a place where d.o. doesn't apply. It sounds like you're still stuck on certain experiences.*
>
> *This isn't a certain non-conceptual experience. It's seeing what is happening now and that concepts don't fit that happening.*
>
> *You have to stop conceptualizing and see how conceptualizing itself ties into rebirth.*
>
> *"Emptiness is form" is talking about YOU, xabir. Seeing, smelling, hearing, moving your hands, walking. Drop the talking about certain experiences and just Look at YOURSELF. What else do you think it's pointing to? sheesh.*

Seeing is not just seeing (no independent essence, dependently originated), therefore it is seeing. As Diamond Sutra keeps saying over and over again with countless examples: A is not A, therefore A is called A.

It is the entire universe manifesting this seeing - the whole body-mind, which means, the eyes, the trees, the space, the wind, everything!

You can never hope to experience D.O. if you don't realize and experience this:

*Zazen is "mustering the whole body-mind (the whole of existence-time, inclusive of "A" and "not-A") to look at forms and listen to sounds," which is described by Dogen as "direct experience."*

p.s. Maha is not an experience, but the natural state of seeing, hearing, smelling, moving your hands, walking. When walking, the universe walks. There is no point in time where it isn't actually Maha.

And yes, concepts don't fit, but it isn't enough just to say concepts don't fit... you need to realize and experience what dependent origination is in real time and at that point concepts do not apply.

Even those in I AM stage says "concepts don't fit" and "this is about YOU", "look at YOURSELF", etc. But they know nothing about non-dual, Anatta, D.O., etc. Non-conceptuality per se doesn't liberate, the realization does, it liberates you from extreme views.

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> thuscomeone, on 27 July 2011 - 04:21 PM, said:
>
> *This is just it. Xabir and I have shared many insights. He is at the point now where he's starting to see that concepts and views are the problem.*
>
> *But he doesn't yet realize that he still clings to views. Now, people ask how you can be free from views. Isn't that just another view? No, there is something beyond views which isn't another view. What is it? Just the fact of your experience. Just the skandhas pre-conceptualization. Just pure activity.*
>
> *That's timeless. Oh, and guess what. "D.O." has NOTHING to do with it. As soon as you call it "d.o." or "no self", you distort it.*

I don't cling to views. If you think I do, substantiate your claims.

The only problem is the view "is" or "is not" I.e. The view of inherency with regards to selfhood and objects, which can only be dissolved via the realization of the twofold emptiness. The view of inherency results in clinging - for example if we think "wind" that's not a problem if we understand it to be mere empty conventions for the ungraspable activities of blowing, unless we cling to a notion of inherent windness behind blowing then it becomes a problem, source of clinging and suffering. The concept, thought, convention, label in itself is not the problem but the reification of conventions into independent existence is a problem as it causes grasping and a distorted vision of reality (I.e. Dualistically and inherently). After realization, we do not cling to concepts and thoughts, but it is not the same as not being able to think or being in aversion to thoughts. In fact after realization, concepts lose their appeal and one prefers to rest in direct experience. This is a good thing and is a natural progression in experience. But one must not mistake non conceptualization with true realization. True

realization of anatta and agentlessness and shunyata/d.o. Liberates... Not the practice of non conceptualization which is in and of itself simply a shamatha practice (though also important).

Many people stress on non conceptuality as a form of practice (be it teachers like eckhart tolle or even usual or even clinical mindfulness therapy) but because twofold emptiness insight has not arisen, they still cling to their notion of self or objects as inherent. And they don't need to verbalize their clinging - just as lucky said, the view runs deep and the clinging occurs on a pre verbalization level. They may cling to an awareness even without engaging in labels or conceptualization, due to a subtle belief in an inherent awareness, for example. Telling these people to cease conceptualizing isn't going to help, as they already had ample non conceptual experiences of reality and yet are unable to overcome their inherent view. Therefore it is not non conceptuality in and of itself that liberates... It is realization that liberates you from extreme views... And in fact all views, hence called the viewless view.

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30th July 2011

Posted Today, 06:41 AM

> *thuscomeone, on 28 July 2011 - 11:39 AM, said:*
>
> *It's funny, because what I'm talking about is the natural result of full realization of what "emptiness is form" is pointing to. But d.o., anatta, etc. are not facts about the nature of reality as you claim them to be. They are just pointers.*

Have already discussed this. D.O. is a pointer to the realization of Shunyata and Maha as a natural state.

The realization of Shunyata and Maha is completely non-conceptual. It is not a view, it is freedom from all views.

> *Quote*
>
> *When I came to this realization, I saw that I could abandon all other views. Because only this is true. And that truth doesn't depend on d.o., anatta. The truth is just non-conceptual, timeless suchness. But remember, these are only words. They don't capture it.*

Even those at "I AM" makes the statement. Even those at substantial non-duality makes the same statement.

What you have to realize is that it is the realization of the twofold emptiness that liberates you from inherent view.

When you are liberated from inherent view, you are free from the constructs/concepts of 'is' and 'is not' - and therefore being free from such constructs, you are left with the suchness of experience.

But what is essential is the realization of the twofold emptiness. Because you can have non-dual experience and realization... you can have non-conceptual experiences, and talk about 'suchness'. Whether before realization, or after 'I AM', or after substantial non-duality... people all talk about Suchness and deem it as highest.

But they are unable to overcome inherent views, and they had ample non-conceptual experiences but non-conceptual experiences does not liberate - only realization does.

Anyway when you realize anatta one striking thing (like all previous realizations) is how free of constructs and conceptualization and direct it is - I mean what more direct can be 'in seeing just seen, in hearing just heard' etc. Anatta, emptiness, etc are non-conceptual realizations.

There is no such thing as an anatta view or emptiness view. Maybe to the unenlightened, they understand it intellectually and hold them to be a view. When you realize it, they are not views at all... it is just a non-conceptual realization that causes you to drop all views, without leaving even an 'anatta/shunyata view'. Just like you wake up from a dream of chasing monsters means 'full stop'. Freedom. Awakeness. You realize there wasn't a monster, but you don't create another dream of 'not chasing monsters'.

> *Quote*
>
> *You need to see that it is concepts themselves (when clung to) that create the self. Not just one particular concept.*

All concepts - body, I am my body, I am my mind, I am ...

All come down to a basic misperception of 'is' and 'is not' due to not comprehend the emptiness of self and objects.

It is not the gross concepts 'I am so and so...' that is the problem - it is the underlying view and belief that 'I Am' is a truth that has true existence. Buddha calls it 'the conceit of I Am'. Therefore it is a view, and from which stems other grosser conceptualizations and thoughts like 'I am such and such'... but when you cease conceptualizations, you realize and experience a bare naked fact of being and awareness to be the luminous essence of mind, you still do not overcome that view of 'I Am' - in fact that bare naked non-dual fact of presence and awareness is then quickly reified as the pure I AMness even without that thought of I AM, in other words we still cling to it as an independent and unchanging essence. People generally call this the 'I AM' prior to 'I am this and that' - the I AM prior to concepts. And those who realize this tend to treat this as ultimate, so they spend all their effort trying to abide as that non-conceptual, non-dual Self. There is realization and experience of the non-conceptual luminous essence, but not the empty nature.

By not realizing anatta, i.e. in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard, we conceive of some independent, separate, unchanging self that is behind and perceiving things...

some kind of independent agent.

This self-view can only be dissolved by realization of the right view of twofold emptiness, no other ways.

> *Quote*
>
> *There are no facts about the nature of reality, except for the fact of that which is before concepts.*

Those who have realization of luminosity will say this - even at I AM level, or substantial non-dual level, much less anatta insight. But they have not overcome inherent view so aren't liberated.

You aren't being clear about what causes liberation... it is not as simple as being non-conceptual. If not, any people who realized I AM or even the ordinary mindfulness therapy teacher would have attained anuttarasamyaksambodhi.

I can remember always talking about the non-conceptual truth of presence, ungraspable by any concepts or thoughts, 'suchness', when I first attained self-realization over a year ago.

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3rd August 2011

> *Informer, on 03 August 2011 - 10:38 PM, said:*
>
> *What you say is true, but only from your POV. If you own fixed a POV, I say woe to you. And especially to he who thinks there is no you.*

I do not have a point of view. Existence and non-existence are points of views. The 'I Am conceit' as buddha calls it is the most fundamental pov that leads to rebirth and suffering. To be freed from such extremes is to be free from views and positions.

I have stated in the past many times, there is no you but also no "no you" - just in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard. (With regards to anatta insight) I negate the extreme view of existence [of self] without asserting non-existence, so I am not a nihilist and do not have a point of view.

Today I just found something well said so I'm going to quote them because it expresses what I said earlier with clarity.

"If I had a position, I would be at fault,
Since I alone have no position, I alone am without fault"

-- Vigrahavyavartani.

"The great 11th Nyingma scholar Rongzom points out that only Madhyamaka accepts that its critical methodology "harms itself", meaning that Madhyamaka uses non-affirming negations to reject the positions of opponents, but does not resort to affirming negations to support a position of its own. Since Madhyamaka, as Buddhapalita states "does not propose the non-existence of existents, but instead rejects claims for the existence of existents", there is no true Madhyamaka position since there is no existent found about which a Madhyamaka position could be formulated; likewise there is no false Madhyamaka position since there is no existent found about which a Madhyamaka position could be rejected."

- Loppon Namdrol

"Does Master Gotama have any position at all?"

"A 'position,' Vaccha, is something that a Tathagata has done away with. What a Tathagata sees is this: 'Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception... such are mental fabrications... such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.' Because of this, I say, a Tathagata — with the ending, fading out, cessation, renunciation, & relinquishment of all construings, all excogitations, all I-making & mine-making & obsession with conceit — is, through lack of clinging/sustenance, released."

- Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta

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6th August 2011

(Last update: 10 August 2012)

Something I wrote in May but updated again today.

A friend asked me about the difference between substantial and insubstantial non-duality... so I edited a little from a post I wrote in the past and added a little more:

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Our paradigm, view, insights, experiences, affect our every moment perception of life, self, the universe. Speaking from experience, this is what a seeker might go through:

**Duality**

Generally every normal non-spiritual person sees himself as a subject, self, perceiver, doer, which is a psychic entity conceived as locating inside the body - be it inside the head behind the eyes or in the heart or some other locations.

Because of the false view of inherency and duality, the view that there is an inherently existing self causes us to project and cling to the sense of self-hood.

This conceived self-entity causes a sense of alienation as 'I' am inside my body, looking outwards at the world through my eyes, ears, etc. I am self-contracted, separated from the world out there, and so experience is divided into 'inner' and 'outer'. Reality consists of three components: I, the seer, sees the world out there. (Seer, seeing, seen) I, the doer, does the deed (Doer, doing, done). All these actions, and perceptions, are felt to have occured by virtue of this psychic entity residing inside my body, which I call Me.

This mentally conceived sense of alienation from a separate objective world resulting from the perceived existence of a separate self and psychic entity residing within this body-mind results in all manners of passionate feelings such as fear, anger, craving, malice, sorrow, and all forms of destructive undertakings endemic in our world: war, murder, torture, rape, domestic violence, corruption and so on.

Basically it comes down to this: craving (craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, and craving for extermination), which arises due to the view of there being an inherently existing self alienated from the world, whereby the self must always get away from unpleasant experiences and chase after pleasant experiences, in search for happiness and the attenuation of suffering, not knowing this process of craving is precisely what causes suffering.

**Self-Realization, Partial Duality**

By the practice of contemplating on the Source of experiencing ("Who am I?", "Who is the Source?"), we trace the radiance back to the essence of mind-consciousness. At the moment where the seeker reaches the pinnacle of his self-inquiry, one has a non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate perception of the self-luminosity of mind's Presence. But it is not an experience or a mere perception - it is a discovery of Mind's luminosity by stepping out of the flow of conceptualization into the utter stillness of luminous Presence by tracing the radiance back to its origins (the 'quiescent mind' or 'mind of clear light' or 'natural mind') through self-inquiry.

The self-felt, Self-Knowing certainty arising from the non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception (NDNCDIMOP) of mind's luminosity leads to a self-felt certainty that results in utter conviction of having touched the essence of being and existence. As all doubts pertaining to the nature of one's identity can no longer linger, one's self-inquiry into 'Who am I' comes to a closing conclusion. Being absolutely intimate as a sheer sense of Presence, Beingness, and Existence, shining in plain view prior to conceptual sullying, it is nevertheless immediately reified due to the paradigm and view of duality and inherency, even though in itself it is a non-dual perception.

What it is reified into is a grander entity than the psychic entity conceived as locating in the body as previously conceived. Though the psychic entity located inside the body, aka. the ego, is now being released through seeing the falsity of a personal self, the Identity remains intact at large, now expanding to become a Metaphysical entity transcending space and time, the grand, impersonal, and universal Self that is birthless and deathless. Due to the view of duality still largely being intact - Presence and Awareness is also seen as the Eternal Witness, an impartial and unchanging watcher of

all phenomena that passes. 'I' am God, the ground of being, the source of all animate and inanimate objects, the universal consciousness underlying all my manifestations which comes and goes like waves in the ocean of Being.

All along not knowing that what they have realized is simply an aspect of luminosity pertaining to non-conceptual thought, a manifestation of mind-cognizance, and is as such nothing ultimate or special (as compared to any other manifestations).

At this phase, one may progress by deconstructing that sense of personality, resulting in the sense that everyone and everything is being lived and expressed by some universal source or higher power - so effectively everything is experienced as an impersonal happening rather than through some personal experiencer or doer, but still the bond of subject-object duality remains. Impersonality should not be mistaken as non-duality, nor anatta.

**Non-Duality**

Via the contemplation into the absence of a separate self or the seamlessness of awareness and its contents, a direct and experiential realization that the subject-object separation and dichotomy is illusory arises. Everything is experienced at zero-distance in the absence of the bond of dualistic psychic construct.

Nevertheless at the beginning, as the insight of non-duality arises but not the insight into no-inherency, one ends up falling into:

**Substantial Non-duality**

- truly/inherently/independently existing awareness/Subject subsuming subject-object separation and phenomena and sees everything as a display of itself or one's Self (as the truly existing, unchanging and independent One Awareness)

- subject-object dichotomy collapses, and everything (the various diversity and multiplicity) is subsumed, into inherent oneness, into One Naked Awareness. In other words, subject-object duality collapses by deconstructing and subsuming all sense of objectivity into being mere modulations of a single inherent subjective reality (One Mind/One Naked Awareness). Instead of "awareness seeing a thing over there", it is realized that there is no "thing" other than the one awareness itself. One Awareness aware of itself 'AS' all its own modulations.

- subject/perceiver/experiencer, experiencing, and experienced, or seer, seeing, and seen, are seen as One Awareness, they are seamless and without boundaries. In other words, it is not realizing the absence of an agent (watcher/perceiver) but more on the seamlessness and inseparability of subject and object, where Awareness is just undivided and seamless beingness: in hearing, hearer and sound are indistinguishably one

- due to the view of inherency (that reality must have 'existence' located somewhere and somewhen, even if it is Here and Now), the vivid 'realness' of non-dual luminosity is being treated as something Absolute, as having inherent, independent and unchanging existence, and is being reified into Noumenon (in contrast to illusory phenomenon), and as being the ultimate non-dual Self

- the intimacy experienced via the collapse of subject-object dichotomy is being referenced to a grandiose all-pervasive Self ("I am Everywhere and I am Everything")

- all phenomena are seen to be illusory projections of a single underlying source, such that all phenomena are self-expressions of the single nature of Awareness, as depicted by the analogy of the mirror and its reflections - reflections as such do not have an objective, independent existence outside the mirror - and in fact only the Mirror is seen to have absolute, independent, inherent existence - only the Mirror is Real, and the appearances are only Real as the Mirror

- appearances are inseparable from the Source, and yet the Source is independent of appearances

**Insubstantial Non-duality (The Emptiness of Self)**

- effectively, in the steps above, the view of duality is progressively removed, but the view of inherency still remains, and this is where the Buddhist teachings of 'emptiness' comes in

- view of inherently/independently existing awareness, awareness is deconstructed in direct experiential realization of mere manifestation without a Subject, thus without a basis for subject-object separation and all phenomena are seen as a non-referencing or self-referencing display of itself (as transient, self-luminous or self-knowing phenomena-ing/flowing, not subsumed to some source or substance)

- no truly/inherently/independently existing awareness, awareness is deconstructed into mere manifestation without a Subject, thus without a basis for subject-object separation and all phenomena are seen as a non-referencing or self-referencing display of itself (as transient, self-luminous or self-knowing phenomena-ing/flowing, not subsumed to some source or substance)

- it is not merely the seamlessness and inseparability of subject and object where hearer/heard, seer/seen is indistinguishably one in Awareness, but that there is absolutely no subject, no seer, no hearer whatsoever. Without an agent, without a subject, there cannot be 'inseparability' or 'union' of subject and object, Awareness and content - it absolutely does not make sense to talk about the inseparability of an Awareness and its contents, such analogies break down when 'Awareness' is realized as empty of a self and completely deconstructed into its constituents of six consciousnesses (which dependently originate according to the the six sense faculties and six sense objects). If inseparability is being talked about, it must be understood like heat is to fire and wetness is to water or sweetness is to sugar, that kind of inseparability

(and not the inseparability of an existing awareness with its reflections). As I paraphrase Jui, awareness is a quality of experience and does not exist independently or separately from each particular manifest sensation

- the intimacy experienced via the lack of separation has no frame of reference due to the lack of something inherent - in the seeing is just the seen, in the hearing is just the heard, there is no True Self of any sorts - the world of multiplicity and diversity only references itself without an agent, without a source or oneness - no more referencing back to 'One Naked Awareness' as if everything is the display or emanation 'OF' a common source - without a source from which things issue forth, there is no more reference as to 'where' or 'to whom' phenomena 'comes from' - awareness does not 'issue' or 'illuminate' phenomena but rather awareness is simply the phenomena itself, self-aware where they are without a source

- Awareness is simply understood to be a label, like the word 'weather' - it has no substantial inherent existence, but is simply a convention for a conglomerate of diverse ever-changing phenomena like raining, clouds forming and parting, wind, lightning, etc... likewise Awareness is simply mind's clarity in the various modes of manifestation (it arises in six modes via dependent origination: Dependent Arising of Consciousness) – as such, we free ourselves of views such as "everything is contained within awareness" or "everything comes from awareness" as if awareness is some inherently existing source or substratum, just as we understand awareness is a mere convention like weather (there is no 'The Weather' to contain, give rise to, things), we do not say the rain is inside the weather or comes from the weather

- There is no 'The Awareness' that remains independent and unchanging, existing in and of itself, even when everything else dissolves, for we understand that even if there is voidness or awareness is self-aware in voidness, that aware-voidness (or I AMness) itself is an arising experience and not some untouched experiencer, for that too is 'being known' - in effect everything is manifestation only, awareness is manifestation only, the so called potential for arising is itself an arising/being known rather than being some unaffected knower

- there is no grandiose, universal consciousness, only individual bodies and mindstreams totally exerted seamlessly and interconnectedly due to interdependent origination, without any conceived 'underlying oneness behind multiplicity' - absolutely no identity remains, even the notion that "I am you and you are me" is seen as absurd

- as mentioned, there is no such thing as 'seamlessness of awareness and contents' or 'inseparability of awareness and its contents' - for awareness IS the process and activities of cognizance only, there is no such thing as 'awareness + its contents'

- seeing, cognizing, awaring never exists as nouns pointing to a noumenon but as verbs collating various activities of cognizance - what is seen, heard, taste, touch, are activities manifesting of their own accord with the presence of requisite conditions and factors via interdependent origination, without an agent, perceiver, controller, doer

- further penetration into anatta reveals that all phenomena are disjoint, unsupported, unlinked, bubble-like, insubstantial, dream-like, and self-releasing - there is absolutely nothing, not even an Awareness that underlies two thoughts, two manifestations - in fact there is not even two thoughts as such, just this thought, which spontaneously self-releases upon inception leaving absolutely no traces

- there is absolutely no collapsing of subject-object dichotomy into a base or oneness existing somewhere, even as a Here/Now - there is no linking base, oneness or source at all, only the experience of dispersed-out and de-linked multiplicity

- all manifestations are intrinstically luminous and vivid yet insubstantial and vanishes without a trace upon inception like drawing pictures on water manifests vivid appearances that does not leave trace - no existence of any sorts can leave traces when reality is momentary, popping in and out like bubbles but leaving no traces.

**The Emptiness of Objects**

**-** In addition to the emptiness of self in insubstantial non-duality, there is the emptiness of objects (second-fold emptiness) where all experiences, thoughts, and perceptions are discovered to have no independent essence - as such a core of appearance is unlocatable, unfindable, and ungraspable - the appearances shimmers vividly but no core can be found. They are like an empty shell, appearing due to dependent origination, and yet coreless.

- All appearances, due to being realized as empty of inherent existence, is seen to be like an illusion, like a magician's trick, like a dream - appearing and yet no-thing truly there. This is amazing and magical, and gives rise to wonder - like if you see a very clear mirage on the edge of the sea of an island, you may think it is wonderful, but this time your entire experiential field is seen to be like a mirage - vividly shining and appearing and yet empty. How wonderful is that!

- Experience becomes liberating as you are liberated from all views of 'is' and 'is not', ‘existence’ or ‘non-existence’ with regards to both subjective self and objects, so there is no-thing to cling to, only the ungraspable flow of unreified suchness of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, thinking, all self-liberating upon inception leaving no traces, the trace being clinging to any views of 'is' and 'is not'. (With regards to views: The View)

- Everything is the dynamic state of creation of interdependency, so it is always everything coming into being in a causal process, there is nothing with real existence that is inherent, independent and static – whether self or objects, as if there is a self or a thing already existing somewhere waiting for us to ‘discover or reveal it’, but rather the myriad dharmas are constantly ‘created’ or rather, totally exerted every moment in seamless interpenetration– complete and whole as it is. Hence there is simply this ever-dynamic, ever-advancing state of manifesting or self-actualization incorporating all causes and conditions

24th September 2011

Yesterday, I had this weird dream where there is this woman telling me (my memory of the words are no good but it goes something like this:) she likes animals like birds, cats, etc, because they have a sense of wonder in them, then more so should we (I presume its referring to buddhist practitioners), experience that like twenty times more.

At that point, my dream blanked out into blackness, and I entered into a samadhi like state, where the sense of wonder and bliss was so incredibly intense... After that I woke up. And though I didn't sleep much, I felt very refreshed and awake and not tired at all.

I had many spiritual and prophetic dreams (very accurate) of late, but decided to share this one partly because Thusness told me to, and also I felt it is also important for others.

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1st October 2011

Don't try to become "more aware". Like what satsang nathan said, what many people are practicing mindfulness is simply practicing the i-thought. (See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bZmm6jH4C4&feature=results_video&playnext=1&list=PLA35815749C414E5F ) True mindfulness can be said to be mindlessness - empty of a subjective mind or observer. Any attempt to confirm a state of awareness (due to reifying awareness as real and existent) is illusory and intrinsically linked to the illusion of I - instead, not under the spell and illusion of self, all experience reveals its own nature and essence, the nature of mind reveals through and as all appearances. (Note: nature of mind is inseparability of emptiness, luminosity, and appearances)

When you realize all spontaneous happenings are self-luminous, luminosity is itself the magical display, then any contrivance to maintain an existing state of awareness is an illusion. Existence and non-existence does not apply to awareness/experience/appearances. The entire notion of inherent existence is itself a belief which we cling tightly due to ignorant uninvestigated false views, and this view is what led to all clingings, effort and contrivance. When view of inherency dissolves via the realization of the twofold emptinesses, there is no holdings whatsoever, just self-shining non-local appearances emerging and releasing on its own (via d.o.), like painting on water.

If awareness is co-emergent with appearances, then all that is necessary is simply to rest as the natural display which dependently originates.

Also, although there is no center and border to experience and therefore awareness can be said to be space like, any ideas about what awareness is, including being space like, is a phantasm. Since awareness is fundamentally empty and groundless, even to say "awareness is" is an illusion. Awareness is not space anymore than the sound of fan humming. There is no independent or unchanging Awareness or Source - just experiences which dependently originates, and are the self-luminous display of mind. And when I say mind I don't mean there is "a mind". Mind is itself the magical display. It could be better described as mind moments or just "experience". Sound of rain dripping

on the ground just this speaks it all, I do not reference pure experience to some lofty ideations of some cosmic "One Mind".

If we do not realize the emptiness of all phenomena including space-like awareness, we will tend to reify certain sensations like space-like awareness into an unchanging ground out of which epiphenomena like body and mind arise from. But once we realize twofold emptiness, all phenomenon including space-like awareness are self-liberated upon inception, leaving no trace. Space-like awareness - self-liberated. Constricted awareness - self-liberated. Thoughts - self-liberated. Sights, sounds, smell, taste, touch - self-liberated. Ignorance - self-liberated. Wisdom - self-liberated. No modification whatsoever necessary - only the presence of prajna wisdom, the wisdom that realizes and recognizes the inseperability of luminosity and emptiness. Everything is as vivid and clear as can be by the presence of luminous clarity, but utterly intangible and empty.

And because there is no attempt to hold onto a state as solid/unchanging, realizing no existent state could be found, awareness self-liberates. Because awareness being seen as co-emergent with all appearances/experiences which simply self-liberates without trace, we cannot establish awareness as being the source of a current thought or phenomenon. Since self-arising and self-release happens spontaneously and instantly, being too quick for thought, each experience remains completely referenceless and we cannot establish conceptual relationships like "source" and "manifestation" - a previous moment of awareness (being empty of inherent existence) has already self-liberated and completely traceless before you can make such a linkage. If awareness is held onto as truly existent due to false view, then such a relationship could be established, but since we realize that awareness is completely empty of a self, that awareness is simply a convention for empty-selfluminous-manifestations, then all attachments cease and hence experience can only self-liberate without trace.

Due to the insight of emptiness and the dissolving of the view of inherency and hence seeing everything as dream-like and ungraspable, we do not cling to each moment of experience. We do not cling even to "awareness". Therefore, each moment of awareness self-liberates and no position of an existent, source, ground or essence can be established - be it of a self, of awareness, of mental and physical phenomenon. Everything is just a coreless, non-locatable, ungraspable, dream-like, self-releasing magical display like drawing paintings on water, or like a movie. Nothing is real, nothing can be established to have 'existence' - including Awareness, and this distinguishes Buddhism from non-Buddhist or Advaita teachings - luminosity, awareness itself is utterly empty, unestablished and self-liberating.

Not realizing the true face of awareness, we attempt to get behind thoughts and try to "get back" to an existent state of awareness, which basically means dissociation. Because true awareness cannot be separated into a subject and an object, all that is necessary is to remain in that state of non-dual contemplation where all thoughts and perceptions self-liberate effortlessly without intentions or a subjective reaction or dissociation. All attempts at dissociation are based on the false view of a self and a false subject-object dichotomy. In the true presence of awareness, it is simply seeing forms - self-liberate, hearing sounds - self-liberate, thoughts manifest vividly - self-liberate. Since

everything effortlessly self-arise as luminous clarity and self-liberate, what effort is necessary?

The practice of the four foundations of mindfulness coupled with the right insights, the three dharma seals and sunyata, is simply to recognize and experience all sensations displaying themselves in their spontaneously perfected bright self-luminosity and self-release by its emptiness. Freed from false views of duality and inherent existence, no efforts to cling to any states, and no efforts to dissociate from any experience is required.

Any false views that we cling to will prevent automatic, spontaneous liberation and effortless awareness, even though we may mistakenly think we are beyond effort before emptiness is realized. When the two emptiness dawns and our false views are overthrown, all experiences reveal themselves as self-perfected and self-liberating spontaneous presence.

p.s. before that effort put in to practice mindfulness is fine, but at some point effort to sustain a purest state of awareness is seen through as unnecessary and illusory.

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1st October 2011

Anatta: Not-Self or No-Self?

Posted by: An Eternal Now

As this Buddhist term Anatta gets mentioned quite often in this blog, I think it is worth some clarifications.

Did the Buddha teach No Self? There are articles which states that the Buddha did not teach No Self, but Not-Self (Anatta). Indeed, the term Anatta refers to non-self. Why non-self and not no-self? I think to term it non-self brings the point that Anatta merely rejects the view of an existent self, but does not assert non-existence of self, which is another equally erroneous extreme. Actually I have no problems with calling it No Self at all - as long as it is not taken to mean that a self becomes non-existent (rather, it should mean that no existent self within or apart from the five aggregates could be established

to begin with, that could become non-existent, both or neither).

Cooran (moderator of Dhammawheel) pointed out that a note to Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of this sutta is worth considering:

''We should carefully heed the two reasons that the Buddha does not declare, ''There is no self'': not because he recognizes a transcendent self of some kind (as some interpreters allege), or because he is concerned only with delineating ''a strategy of perception'' devoid of ontological implications (as others hold), but (i) because such a mode of expression was used by the annihilationists, and the Buddha wanted to avoid aligning his teaching with theirs; and (ii) because he wished to avoid causing confusion in those already attached to the idea of self. The Buddha declares that 'all phenomena are nonself'' (sabbe dhamma anatta), which means that if one seeks a self anywhere one will not find one. Since ''all phenomena'' includes both the conditioned and the unconditioned, this precludes an utterly transcendent, ineffable self."

(Part of Note 385 on Page 1457 of The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya by Bhikkhu Bodhi).)

While it is true that Anatta is more like 'non-self' than 'non-existence of self', I do not agree with some of the articles' assertions that the question of the existence of self is simply a question to be put aside as something irrelevant to liberation. Although it is true that the four extremes are rejected by Buddha, it is not so much because it is 'unrelated to liberation', rather it is more like 'all the extremes views are false and relate to self-view in one form or another, and hence prevents liberation' and as such, all such false assertions/views must be abandoned through insight and realization in order for there to be liberation. Those articles, while explaining the rejection of the four extremes, fail to elucidate the **realization of Anatta** and the **freedom from views (i.e. self-view) that result from such realization.**

Furthermore, "Not-self" is not just a "strategy of letting go" or "strategy of perception devoid of any ontological implications" as certain articles may state or simply, but rather it is a truth, and there must be experiential realization of this truth.**The Buddha constantly talks about discerning the three characteristics as an insight into dharmas, that is to "discern, as it actually is" all dharmas as inconstant, unsatisfactory, and non-self. In Bhaddhekaratta Sutta, in reference to anatta, instructs a practitioner "that which is present he discerns — With insight as and when it comes". If not-self is merely treated as a strategy, what has it got to do with insight and clear discernment into the way things actually are?** After realizing the truth, there is naturally letting go of I-making, but it is not due to 'taking not-self as a strategy to dissociate with things'. That would be far away from realizing the essence of anatta as described in Vajira Sutta (excerpt quoted below).

To understand what this realization of anatta entails, it is important to first understand what exactly is this self-view we are dealing with, the self-view that is relinquished

permanently upon realization. The view of a self means believing or holding the view that there is an independent, unchanging, self-entity that persists from one moment to the next and one lifetime to another, and is the agent, controller or experiencer of stuff in life. "Self" thus has the quality of permanency, independence, separateness (separate from the flow of experiences), and agenthood (being the controller, perceiver, experiencer of things). If there is any such thing, it could qualify as Self. However, the realization of Anatta is that there is no such Self. It is the realization as I wrote in my commentary on Bahiya Sutta, the realization that in seeing, there is no three things: the Seer, that is doing the seeing of the seen. (Seer seeing seen) Instead, in the seeing, there is JUST the scene - that pure, vivid experience of scenery. That's it. No experiencer apart from the experience. This realization that "seer seeing seen" is **a false view or perception of reality** relinquishes the notion of a self or agent, but it does not establish a conceptual position such as "the self does not exist" because non-existence only pertains to an existent going into non-existence. This realization is not a new conceptual view to be held on to, but a complete freedom from self-view. **In seeing JUST the seen, and all notions pertaining to existence or non-existence of self doesn't apply there.**

As I see it, without abandoning ALL views of the existence (and likewise, the non-existence, etc) of the self, we cannot gain liberation (or in fact even stream entry, which requires the abandoning of the view of self).

However, to call it not-self or non-self also leans itself to possible misinterpretation which I shall discuss later: such as treating 'not-self' as a form of dissociative practice.

If we look into the Buddha's discourses, the Buddha rejected views pertaining not only to the existence of self, but also the non-existence of self, the both existence and non-existence of self, and the neither existence nor non-existence of self. These four extreme positions are utterly rejected by the Buddha.

In reality, both self and dharma is neither existent nor non-existent (nor both, nor neither): since self and dharma has never arisen to begin with, cannot be established to begin with, cannot be pinned down to begin with, therefore self and dharma cannot go into non-existence, or be both and neither.

Here, the Buddha clarifies:

http://www.accesstoi...2.086.than.html

*..."What do you think: Do you regard the Tathagata as form-feeling-perception-fabrications-consciousness?"*

*"No, lord."*

*"Do you regard the Tathagata as that which is without form, without feeling, without perception, without fabrications, without consciousness?"*

*"No, lord."*

*"And so, Anuradha — when you can't pin down the Tathagata as a truth or reality even in the present life — is it proper for you to declare, 'Friends, the Tathagata — the supreme man, the superlative man, attainer of the superlative attainment — being described, is described otherwise than with these four positions: The Tathagata exists after death, does not exist after death, both does & does not exist after death, neither exists nor does not exist after death'?"*

*"No, lord."...*

And all the great Buddhist masters from the past have said the same things with regards to what Buddha said above.

As Chandrakirti states:

*"A chariot is not asserted to be other than its parts,*
*Nor non-other. It also does not possess them.*
*It is not in the parts, nor are the parts in it.*
*It is not the mere collection [of its parts], nor is it their shape.*
*[The self and the aggregates are] similar."*

And Padmasambhava states:

*"The mind that observes is also devoid of an ego or self-entity.*
*It is neither seen as something different from the aggregates*
*Nor as identical with these five aggregates.*
*If the first were true, there would exist some other substance.*

*This is not the case, so were the second true,*
*That would contradict a permanent self, since the aggregates are impermanent.*
*Therefore, based on the five aggregates,*
*The self is a mere imputation based on the power of the ego-clinging.*

*As to that which imputes, the past thought has vanished and is nonexistent.*
*The future thought has not occurred, and the present thought does not withstand scrutiny."*

And Nagarjuna states:

*“The Tathagata is not the aggregates; nor is he other*

*than the aggregates.*

*The aggregates are not in him nor is he in them.*

*The Tathagata does not possess the aggregates.*

*What Tathagata is there?"*

And the Vajira Sutta states:

*Then the bhikkhuni Vajira, having understood, "This is Mara the Evil One," replied to him in verses: "Why now do you assume 'a being'? Mara, have you grasped a view? This is a heap of sheer constructions: Here no being is found. Just as, with an assemblage of parts, The word 'chariot' is used, So, when the aggregates are present, There's the convention 'a being.' It's only suffering that comes to be, Suffering that stands and falls away. Nothing but suffering comes to be, Nothing but suffering ceases."*

Notice that the Buddha said that you cannot find the self of the Tathagatha inside **nor apart** from the five skandhas (aggregations): there is no Tathagata to be pinned down as a form-based or a formless Truth or Reality. This means that the so called 'self' actually cannot be found, located or pinned down as a reality just as the word 'weather' cannot be found or located as something inherently (independently, unchangingly) existing (apart or within the conglomerate of everchanging phenomena such as clouds, lightning, wind, rain, etc) - the label 'self' is merely a convention for the five skandhas or the body-mind aggregates, which is a process of self-luminous (having the quality of luminous clarity, knowing, cognizance) but empty phenomenality, in which no truly existing 'self' can be found within nor apart from them.

And if we cannot pin down an entity called 'self' to begin with, how can we assert the non-existence of a self: which means that an existent 'self' annihilates or goes into non-existence? To assert non-existence, you must have a base, an existent entity to begin with, that could become non-existent. If the convention 'self' is baseless to begin with, then existence, non-existence, both and neither become untenable positions.

So as you can see, the whole point of Anatta is to reject the view and notion of an existent self, without thereby asserting the non-existence of self. I would like to borrow Loppon Namdrol's quotations on this regard:

*"The great 11th Nyingma scholar Rongzom points out that only Madhyamaka accepts that its critical methodology "harms itself", meaning that Madhyamaka uses non-affirming negations to reject the positions of opponents, but does not resort to affirming negations to support a position of its own. Since Madhyamaka, as Buddhapalita states* ***"does not propose the non-existence of existents, but instead rejects claims for the existence of existents"****, there is no true Madhyamaka position since there is no existent found about which a Madhyamaka position could be formulated; likewise there is no false Madhyamaka position since there is no existent found about which a Madhyamaka position could be rejected."*

As I have said since long ago (with regards to the emptiness of self in persons): in seeing always JUST the seen without a seer, in hearing always JUST the heard without the hearer - as what the Buddha taught in the Bahiya Sutta that led to my realization, explained here. So, no (existent) self - but also no *no self*. The main point is that in seeing

JUST the seen (no self, no *no self* or whatever)! I am not asserting non-existence or any new positions to cling to, I am simply rejecting the false, misconceived, learnt view that there is an agent, a self, that stands behind the activity of seeing, hearing, thinking, etc. For in order for me to assert non-existence, there must be some base in which I can assert its non-existence, but such a base or entity cannot be found, and when the emptiness of an inherently existent self is realized, the four extreme positions cannot be established.

The liberation of the view of an agent, a self that stands behind experience as an agent that controls, or perceives, phenomena - due to the realization that such a view is utterly unfounded in the reality of 'in seeing always just the seen', liberates you from self-view without proposing any further positions to be held on to (such as the non-existence of self).

**I often say that the insight into Anatta and Shunyata is not a conceptual position I cling to, but a realization and wisdom that when actualized in daily experience, is indeed a non-conceptual freedom and wonder.**

Only when we see Anatta as a **realization** (not merely a technique to dissociate, but a realization into a dharma seal, a characteristic of phenomenon or truth) which liberates us from false views about reality, instead of something to support a position of our own, will we be able to gain liberation. **It is not also not merely an experience whereby the sense of self dissolves which is temporary and is in fact rather common - but a permanent abandonment of a false view seen to be false through realization, leading to a stable non-retrogressing experience of the freedom from self-view in direct experience of 'in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard', etc.**

The Buddha says,

*"Bhikkkhus, as purified and bright as this view is, if you covet, cherish, treasure and take pride in it, do you understand this Dhamma as comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up [i.e. crossing over] and not for the purpose of grasping?" "No, venerable sir." "Bhikkhus, as purified and bright as this view is, if you do not covet, cherish, treasure and take pride in it, would you then know this Dhamma as comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up [i.e. crossing over] and not for the purpose of grasping?" "Yes, venerable sir."*

As you can see, the raft of the Buddha works as merely a non-affirming negation that frees us from ALL views whatsoever.

As Thusness have said in A casual comment about Dependent Origination

*Dependent Origination is too a raft; it is like the stick that stirs the fire and is eventually consumed by fire without leaving any trace.*

Loppon Namdrol have said elsewhere:

*"In other words, right view is the beginning of the noble path. It is certainly the case that dependent origination is "correct view"; when one analyzes a bit deeper, one discovers that in the case "view" means being free from views. The teaching of dependent origination is what permits this freedom from views."*

The teaching of Anatta (as I define it as the emptiness of self in persons), and the teaching of Dependent Origination (which further leads to the realization of the emptiness of self in all phenomena) are simply rafts that lead to some fundamental insight that burns away our false views and perception about reality.

Only when we are able to liberate ourselves from such false perceptions, can we stop clinging to self, and phenomena, and as a result end our afflictions, attachments, and sufferings.

No amount of trying to force ourselves to stop suffering or attachments is ever going to work, if fundamentally we hold self and phenomena to have graspable, inherent existence, that is subject to birth and death, etc. If we hold on to things as 'I', as 'mine', as objects that are real and hence conducive for grasping, craving and so on, we are never going to be liberated. Only when we give up (through insight) our attachments to the sense of 'I', to the sense of things as 'mine', to the sense that there are 'things' (by realizing them to be completely illusory and empty), will we then be able to experience what *liberation* is.

Having said all these, I should also mention **the pitfalls of calling Anatta not-self or non-self.**

The problem with calling Anatta not-self or non-self, is not so much the term itself, but that people generally think of not-self as implying a practice of dissociation. This means there is still I, here, trying to dissociate from 'other objects' as 'not-self'. As a result, I still cling dearly to the sense of 'I', or maybe a very subtle grasping (which can occur at the I AM level or even the substantial non-dual level to a subtler degree) to Knowing or Awareness as the true self beyond all objects.

So the point is: I can dissociate from all objects as 'not-self', but still cling to an ultimate non-objective Subject/Self. Therefore such a form of dissociation is never going to get us to understand what Anatta is all about. And this is also not what the Buddha set out contemplation of Anatta to be.

Why do I say so? Because the Buddha's method of contemplating on Anatta is not like the Advaita Vedanta technique of self-inquiry, contemplating on Anatta is very different from the practice of 'neti neti'. The practice of 'neti neti' is done in order to reject the not-self in order to find or discover the Self. To put it in Namdrol's terms, the Advaita technique *resorts to affirming negations to support a position of its own.* Why? The not-self of Advaita is established only in contrast with the True Self.

The contemplation of neti neti, or dissociation, the separation of the witness from the witnessed, Self from not-self and so on, is done to 'support' a position of a true Self. So with regards to the phenomenal world of everchanging things, I reject as not me and mine, for I am the ultimate Witness that is perceiving all these.

This is the false View no. 4 described in Sabbasava Sutta: "...As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view *I have a self* arises in him as true & established, or the view *I have no self*... or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self*... or the view ***It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self...*** or the view *It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self* arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: *This very self of mine — the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions — is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will stay just as it is for eternity.* This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress." - the commentary of 'Middle Length Discourses' book explains, *"of these six views, the first two represent the simple antinomy of eternalism and annihilationism; the view that 'no self exists for me' is not the non-self doctrine of the Buddha, but the materialist view that identifies the individual with the body and thus holds that there is no personal continuity beyond death. The next three views may be understood to arise out of the philosophically more sophisticated observation that experience has a built-in reflexive structure that allows for self-consciousness, the capacity of the mind to become cognizant of itself, its contents, and the body with which it is inter-connected. Engaged in a search for his 'true nature,' the untaught ordinary person will identify self either with both aspects of the experience (view 3),* ***or with the observer alone (view 4),*** *or with the observed alone (view 5). The last view is a full-blown version of eternalism in which all reservations have been discarded."*

The Buddha's contemplation of Anatta however, is not done with any of such views. The Buddha was very adamant throughout his teachings that the purpose of contemplating the three characteristic of phenomenon, namely: **impermanence, dissatisfactoriness, and non-self** are done not to discover some ultimate reality, but rather to result in **knowledge and vision of things as they are (as being empty of self)** which leads to **dispassion** and ultimately **cessation (nirvana)** of suffering and afflictions. The result of contemplating as such results in the realization of Anatta.

**As we can see, contemplating, and realizing the three characteristic has the effect of letting go of all attachments. It does not in any way strengthen the subject-object dichotomy, the sense of an observer apart from the observed. Contemplating non-self in the Buddha's sense does NOT mean dissociation, it does not mean seperating the observing self from the observed objects: it simply means contemplating non-self in the midst of directly experiencing pure sensations as they are, resulting in the insight into Anatta, and hence relinquishing ALL sense of self with regards to all sensations, including even the sense of an observer.**

To support my claims I will discuss one of the most popular technique the Buddha said could lead to the attainment of Anagamihood and Arahantship in as little as 7 days and at most 7 years (of course you must be *seriously* practicing it with a background of right view and understanding, otherwise you can't possibly have *right* mindfulness to begin with, which is why not everyone who meditates become enlightened so quickly), which

is the Four Foundations of Mindfulness found in the Satipatthana Sutta (which I highly recommend everyone to read) which is according to Wikipedia the most popular Buddhist text. In that technique, one is mindful/aware of every sensation. You may think 'oh this is probably some typical Witnessing technique found even in common self-help books to dissociate from all forms and experiences in order to transcend to the formless Self or Watcher', BUT notice that the Watcher is nowhere mentioned in the sutta (and any other Pali sutta for that matter) and more importantly: the Buddha's repeated expression in the sutta of "observing the body in the body," "observing the feelings in the feelings," "observing the mind in the mind," "observing the objects of mind in the objects of mind." Why are the words, body, feelings, mind, and objects of mind repeated? Why 'observe the … IN THE ….'? It means you are living and experiencing IN and AS the sensations, and not observing the sensations in and as an observer/watcher and the sensations are not meant to be disassociated from in order to get to an ultimate reality or transcendental Self!

**The Buddha's method of contemplating anatta therefore is for practitioners to have direct experience and contemplation of pure sensations as in Bahiya Sutta, 'in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard'* WITHOUT the filtering of the conceptual mind, the false sense or conception of a self, or the passions and afflictions that causes all manners of craving and aversions for the sensations, so that insight and realization can arise, so that true liberation and abandonment can take place, and it is only in this context that contemplating anatta can be understood.** And this is the insight meditation taught by Buddha himself, which, at least in the Pali canon, is considered as the most direct path to liberation (however note that the term 'direct path' is used differently by me in my e-book).

*Bahiya Sutta said, *"Then, Bahiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. 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 cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in terms of that. When there is no you in terms of that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."*

Udana Suttasays, "Now, a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones — who has regard for nobles ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma — does not assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form. He does not assume feeling to be the self... does not assume perception to be the self ... does not assume fabrications to be the self... He does not assume consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness.", "He discerns, as it actually is, not-self form as 'not-self form' ... not-self feeling as 'not-self feeling' ... not-self perception as 'not-self perception' ... not-self fabrications as 'not-self fabrications' ... not-self consciousness as 'not-self consciousness."

A lot of people think contemplating not-self means dissociation or on first impression it may seem like a different set of instructions from Bahiya Sutta but actually **it is exactly the same as Bahiya Sutta**. Many people think of not-self as meaning "does not assume form to be the self" (which means there could still be a person or witness dissociating himself from form), yet anatta is not only that, since it negates also “the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form” (no possibility of a witness or awareness which contains or observes form - form is just form without any referent of self - whether it is a self seen to be inside my body, or my body inside me as if I am a container-like awareness!), in other words, exactly as per Bahiya Sutta, “Then, Bahiya, you should train yourself thus: **In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen...** only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bahiya, **there is no you in terms of that. When there is no you in terms of that,** there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

The Buddha also specifically rejected the notion of Self as infinite and formless (prevalent for those who hold the 'Ground of Being'/all-encompassing container of phenomena sort of Self-view) in Maha-nidana Sutta: "The one who, when delineating a self, delineates it as formless and infinite, either delineates it as formless and infinite in the present, or of such a nature that it will [naturally] become formless and infinite [in the future/after death], or he believes that 'Although it is not yet that way, I will convert it into being that way.' This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self formless and infinite obsesses him."

**Many people practice vipassana as a kind of dissociation, not understanding that anatta-contemplation as Buddha intended it actually leads to insight-discernment of anatta, not-self, which is not a form of dissociation or merely a rejection of 'form = self' but a rejection of the view of self pertaining to forms, feelings .... consciousness in all manners (including as happening to self, in self, or self in it, etc), including any self of a permanent, independent, separate nature, or of agency (perceiver, controller), such that there is "In reference to the seen, only the seen, no you in terms of that". It furthermore ends with, "this, just this, is the end of stress."**

The Buddha is very clear that all sensations are without self in any form whatsoever - whether as an observer, or a container, or something inhabiting forms like a soul in a body. He rejected all kinds of self-view and taught that the direct path to liberation is the practice of mindfulness as taught in Mahasatipatthana sutta. His entire path of practice is in sync with his view and realization. He did not talk about Self nor about dissociation (he did talk about dispassion which is important but an entirely different matter however), he talked about the aggregates, the elements, the sensations and manifestation and their nature - empty of self, impermanent (dissolving, releasing, disjoint), unsatisfactory (ungraspable and passing - nothing is satisfying). He taught that by contemplating as such, you can gain insight, release, liberation.

So do not mistaken anatta with neti-neti. The neti-neti (not this, not that) of Advaita self-inquiry is a process of dissociation, i.e. to get to/realize the fundamental true self, one must dissociate from all thoughts and concepts as being 'not self'. What remains in the absence of conceptual thoughts is the true self. While in the absence of conceptual

thoughts, arises a direct non-conceptual realization of a palpable and undeniable presence-existence-consciousness is discovered and feels as if one has touched the very core of one's existence itself, and this experience should not, and in fact cannot be denied, nonetheless the very framework of self-inquiry (Who am I? already presumes a purest identity) and the practice of dissociation based on the existing framework of duality and inherency... the realization, experience, framework and practice all come together to strengthen the existing framework of duality and inherency where it appears there is a true Self behind and transcending all phenomena as the transcendental witnessing consciousness. One then fails to understand, until further investigation, that this realization and experience while true, does not actually require the faulty framework that posits an inherent substantial reality. That the pure presence discovered is simply another manifestation that does not convey anything 'ultimate', 'independent', or 'permanent'... in fact all transience turns out to have the same taste and intensity of luminosity, and are all empty of self.

Anatta on the other hand is not a process of dissociation - it is first and foremost a dharma seal that is always and already so - always in seeing just the seen never a seer, never was there a self. **Secondly, the way of contemplating anatta is not via dissociation but via contemplative *deconstruction*.** Inother words, contemplating on anatta or anatta as a truth doesn't set up opposites like true self vs not-self. There is no observer or Self that could dissociate from the observed. Instead, it is a process of deconstruction. Deconstruction means really challenging the idea of an inherent self, an inherent awareness, or a subject, by investigating experientially if it it holds up to reality. It deconstructs our idea of a 'seer-seeing-seen', or a 'self/Self' into its constituent components such that at the end, we realize that there is no agent, no self/Self, not even a super-Awareness transcending phenomena as an ultimate identity, but rather the very notion of 'self/Self' or 'Awareness' is being deconstructed into its impermanent constituents of experiences, (in seeing just the seen, in hearing just the heard, no seer/hearer) thus we realize that even what is known as 'Awareness' is also empty of any substantial self, being a mere convention for the flow of self-luminous phenomena. It is at this point where the Buddha says, "you can't pin down the Tathagata as a truth or reality even in the present life". He never said something like "the Tathagata is the truth and reality which is the pure consciousness transcending all forms" as his Advaita counterparts would put it.

Likewise, the dharma seal of Impermanence should also be understood likewise – as a seal rather than as a method of dissociation (many people are doing dissociation via impermanence instead of realizing impermanence as a seal, a truth). As Thusness pointed out years ago, there is a difference between realizing impermanence (the attainment of stream entry is described as the opening of the dhamma eye which realizes that "Whatever is subject to arising is all subject to cessation.") and using it as a method of dis-identification and dissociation. Realizing impermanence as a seal leads to the perception of the disjointed, bubble-like and self-releasing aspect of phenomena and no-self. As Thusness said years ago, “With the right view, reality itself is [seen as] impermanence, and it has to bring about a new understanding and and not enhance our dualistic and inherent tendencies. What is the use of teaching dis-identification and dissociation if the path leads to further inherent and dualistic thoughts?”

It is important to take note here that from I AM to One Mind to No Mind and Anatta (Also see: Experience, Realization, View, Practice and Fruition), the self-luminosity is still as intense and important - it is not denied at all. Anatta does not deny luminosity. We're not saying 'The Pure Consciousness of Advaita is bullshit', nothing of that sort! In fact, the realization of anatta makes this experience of non-dual luminosity all the more effortless and intense! Every transient experience is naturally luminosity-bliss in anatta. So Anatta does not deny anything but simply deconstructs the view of inherency and duality we form about it. In the same way the process of deconstructing the notion of a solid car with its own independent car-ness entity into its constituents (such as windows, engine, steering wheel, pedals, cooling system, etc etc) where no car-entity can be pinned down does not in any part of its inquiry ever deny the appearance/experience of what appears to be a car, but nonetheless the entire notion of a solid car gets deconstructed at the end yet the appearance is still as vivid as ever, in fact even 'clearer' because now there is no longer the layer of false notions obscuring the true face of it. As the old masters said, "Keep the experience, refine the view." One Awareness is deconstructed into the pure-consciousness of each of the six sense doors without a perceiving subject, pure-consciousness of sight and pure-consciousness of sound and the pure consciousness of non-conceptual thought (the "I AMness") are all of the same intensity, yet disconnected and radically different in manifestation and arising in different conditions, all equally pure and empty. Every arising is one whole and complete manifestation. Presence/Luminosity/Awareness is not denied, but simply realized to be empty of self or substantiality.

As a side-topic:

If there is no existent self, or a soul, how does it fit in with Buddhist doctrines like rebirth? Or even more simply (for those who don't believe in rebirth), how does feeling, sensing, perceiving happen, without an existent self?

The Buddha's answer to this is direct, simple, yet profound. He explains this through dependent origination:

http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.012.nypo.html

*"Who, O Lord, feels?"*

*"The question is not correct," said the Exalted One. "I do not say that 'he feels.' Had I said so, then the question 'Who feels?' would be appropriate. But since I did not speak thus, the correct way to ask the question will be 'What is the condition of feeling?' And to that the correct reply is: 'sense-impression is the condition of feeling; and feeling is the condition of craving.'"*

The same would apply for rebirth, which actually is a term for the **continuity of a causal/karmic process and not of a self-entity.**

Who is reborn is asked falsely, as the Buddha did not say 'he reborns'. The correct way to ask would be, 'What is the condition for birth?' And to that the correct reply is: 'with ignorance as condition i.e. false view and clinging to a self, birth arises'. The next birth is neither the same nor different from a previous birth in the same way that the flame of a

newly lighted candle is neither same nor different from the previous candle, being merely a process of causal continuity instead of the passing on of an unchanging soul-entity.

As we can see, Dependent Origination only truly makes sense when we are not obscured by self-view. Before the realization of Anatta, D.O. can be grasped intellectually, but not fully actualized due to dualistic view, and therefore cannot be fully appreciated. Hence to realize D.O. we have to realize Anatta, then when everything becomes seen as causal processes, the insight into Shunyata (as in the secondfold emptiness, the emptiness of phenomena) can arise with further contemplations and pointers.
One last thing: although it is the case that all phenomena are empty of self, one must not go to the extreme by denying or rejecting conventional self or doer, which brings in the problem of rejecting karmic responsibilities and so forth. In one of the scriptures, the Buddha talked about self-doer -- basically the idea is that you get what you sow in terms of karmic cause and effect. Does this contradict the teaching of anatta? It does not.

What we have to understand here is that whenever the Buddha talks about self (in many places in the suttas), he is speaking about it purely as a conventional self. As Thusness told me in 2012, "To me [the matter] is just, is "Wei Yu" an eternal being... that's all. No denial of Wei Yu as a conventional self". There is no denial of a conventional self or doer, only an inherently existing, changeless self/agent/doer existing in and of itself.

For example in the Araham Sutta, the Buddha states,

*[Deva:]*

*He who's an Arahant, his work achieved, Free from taints, in final body clad, That monk still might use such words as "I." Still perchance might say: "They call this mine." ... Would such a monk be prone to vain conceits?*

*[The Blessed One:]*

*Bonds are gone for him without conceits, All delusion's chains are cast aside: Truly wise, he's gone beyond such thoughts.[1] That monk still might use such words as "I," Still perchance might say: "They call this mine." Well aware of common worldly speech, He would speak conforming to such use.[2]*In the Potthapada Sutta, the Buddha is stated,

*"In the same way, when there is a gross acquisition of a self... it's classified just as a gross acquisition of a self. When there is a mind-made acquisition of a self... When there is a formless acquisition of a self, it's not classified either as a gross acquisition of a self or as a mind-made acquisition of a self. It's classified just as a formless acquisition of a self. "Citta, these are the world's designations, the world's expressions, the world's ways of speaking, the world's descriptions, with which the Tathagata expresses himself but without grasping to them." [10]*

In the Dighanakha Sutta, the Buddha states, *"A bhikkhu whose mind is liberated thus, Aggivessana, sides with none and disputes with none; he employs the speech currently*

*used in the world without ahdering to it."*

However the Neo-Advaitins however would not be able to accept this as they are unable to distinguish the conventional and the ultimate, therefore they reject conventional self, karma, afflictions, path, cessation (nirvana) and so forth. Nagarjuna says, "The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma is based on two truths: a truth of worldly convention and an ultimate truth. Those who do not understand the distinction drawn between these two truths do not understand the Buddha's profound truth. Without a foundation in the conventional truth the significance of the ultimate cannot be taught. Without understanding the significance of the ultimate, liberation is not achieved."

For further elucidations on the two truths based on the Madhyamika teachings, see Dependent Arising and the Emptiness of Emptiness: Why did Nagarjuana start with causation?

**For further reading, see Thusness's article Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives**

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18th November 2011

(Something I wrote in DhO)

There is no movement at all in ANY form of NDNCDIMOP (non-dual, non-conceptual, direct, immediate mode of perception) of any manifestatation: be it NDNCDIMOP of a thought, of a sense perception, of anything.

For those I AM experiencers: they experience no movement while abiding in the Self.

Actually what is meant by abiding in Self? It is simply abiding in the NDNCDIMOP of a non-conceptual thought. However that is treated as the ultimate, the purest identity, etc. So to them, the non-conceptual thought is clung to as Self, and the Self has no movement, while all other manifestation has movement. So the Self may seem at this point to be a "still-point at the center of a turning world" (except that the 'point' is not a finite point but an infinite all-pervading presence)

But what happens when you experience PCE or NDNCDIMOP in all other six sense entries? A sound? A sight? etc

Then you experience something amazing: Everything that you thought was 'moving', that is transient, in fact turns out to be not-moving. In other words, transience reveals non-movement. In seeing - just seen, in hearing - just heard. Each manifestation is complete, whole, in itself - there is no self or observer apart from the transience to measure movement.

So at this point 'non-movement' shifts from simply abiding in the Source, to every

transient phenomenal manifestation.

One point remains however: your emphasis on phenomenal descriptions can lead to an over-emphasis on experience to the overneglecting of insights. Why? You can have countless non-dual glimses, and yet without the correct insights that lead to a complete overturning of views, in which the entire framework of viewing inherently and dualistically is resolved through a realization (i.e. anatta, shunyata), then no matter how you try to rest in NDNCDIMOP, PCE, there remains a desync between view and experience. You may end up using dualistic terms to express non-dual experience, or you may still have a tendency to sink back to a base, a ground, etc. Without those insights, you can have many PCEs and still remain deluded and fail to experience true liberation.

The insights may sound theoretical, but I assure you it is not - it is an experiential seeing of a fact about reality.

…..

Movement is perceived when it is falsely perceived that there is some unchanging self-entity that links two moments together.

For example as a bystanding observer on the roadside, it appears that a car quickly moves through your field of vision. So it appears that you, as an observer, observed an object moving across. What if however, you are on a vehicle moving at the same speed as the other vehicle, do you perceive movement of another vehicle? No. Why? Because the observer is now at the same speed as the observed object, and movement only occurs as a contrast between the unmoving subject and a moved object.

But what if there is no observer at all (which is what we realised to have been always the case in the insight into anatta - the observer being merely a constructed illusion) - with no reference point, is there movement? No. Because movement requires a dualistic contrast, and without a perceiving subject, perceptions have no reference point to compare with. In fact there is no 'perceived object' either - there is just disjoint, unsupported, self-releasing images that has no link to each other. Without a self and an object, only unsupported and disjoint images, each manifestation being complete and whole in itself with no dualistic contrast, transience reveals itself to be non-moving. You don't say "You" walked from Point A to Point Z. Because there is no 'You' there to link or observe movement. Instead, Point A is Point A, Point B is point B, and so on... Z is Z, whole and complete in itself. Each moment, ever fresh, whole, complete, and leaving no trace the next moment.

As for defilements: defilements only arise along with the sense of self. If the sense of self arise, there is reference points, (sense of self itself being merely a clinging to a falsely constructed reference to a person, a self) and so there can be a perceived movement. If there is no sense of self/Self, then also there is no sense of movement (such as during a PCE, even though PCE is just experience and need not imply realization). We realise that any sense of a movement is merely a dualistic referencing and contrasting, a referencing that asserts an entity (a subjective observer) that links the process and sees movement

not from the transience itself but from the perspective of a dualistic bystander (an illusion).

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30th November 2011

**Latent Tendencies, Afflictive Emotions and Realization**

My post in DhO:

> *John Ferguson:*
>
> *An Eternal Now,*
> *How does AF line up with Thusness' stages of enlightenment?*

Hmm... potentially controversial topic (had engaged in some discussions about this in the past and noted down my thoughts in http://www.box.net/shared/sbyi64jrms) . In short AF is highly linked to Stage 5 but it can get more complicated than that as issues like the stanzas of anatta, issues about affect (like do they arise at all) etc can become topics of discussions.

To me, AF is about Thusness's 2nd stanza of anatta, and when the realization arises, when one becomes doubtless about the insight and then the experience settles and becomes stable and uninterrupted, this is what AF is (however AF seems to under-stress the importance about realization and focused more on the experience). In my experience after the realization of anatta is that there is just this effortless, continuous, clean and direct perception of the sensate world without any feeler/seer/observer/thinker/doer, in seeing just the colours, shapes, and forms, alive, wonderful, magical, just shapes and forms and sounds and sensations presenting by itself moment by moment without any sense of 'being', emotions, separation, etc, in a perpetual way (not being merely a temporary, fading state*).

*I used to have PCEs when I was younger which had a big 'wow' factor to it because the sense of self/Self suddenly disappears and any sense of distance, separation, sense of feeler, seer, just disappear into just the sights and sounds of the moment, and this huge contrast between the self mode and pce mode makes the experience a big deal like it was (imagine carrying a ton of load on your shoulders and suddenly it was dropped for a moment, you go Wow), but this is different, as everywhere I go, it is just this sensate world presenting itself in an intimate, clean, perfect, wonderful way, something that 'I' cannot 'get out of' even if I wanted to because there is simply no illusion and sense of self/Self that could get out of this mode of perceiving, and there is nothing I needed to do to experience that (i.e. effortless), something that has no entry and exit. So now this mode of perception is still amazing, wonderful, but much more mundane and ordinary even though not any less rich, similar to what Vineeto has said here:

http://actualfreedom.com.au/directroute/10.htm#15Feb10

*The PCE always had a 'WOW'-factor, which happens when the identity (in abeyance) comments on this body's experience of the actual world. In an actual freedom this 'WOW'-factor is absent – everything is just ordinary and magical at the same time.*

*In a PCE I always knew (apart from the very first PCE) that this experience would eventually fade whereas an actual freedom is forever and can therefore be explored far deeper and infinitely further (literally) than any PCE ever could.*

*A PCE has a static quality to it as the identity is in abeyance and temporarily 'allows' this flesh and blood body a brief glimpse into the actual world whereas an actual freedom is the dynamic vital in-depth and forever ongoing experience of the magic quality of actuality each moment again.*

However, what I notice is that after realization, certain tendencies may still arise (such as a momentary contraction even though seemingly emotionless), which seems to simply fall away as time goes on. I cannot say if I have no such tendencies any more, but they don't show up nowadays: e.g. just now some loud sound made my body jerked forward automatically from a sleep state, but without any perceivable fear, contraction, emotion at all, just selfless spontaneous action as a natural bodily reaction to an experience. Could it be that under some very stressful situations the tendencies may surface*, it might (as latent tendencies are not something immediately apparent or obvious in the present experience), so I do not want to make any claims and simply state my current experience as it is. As Thusness says, even though waking experience (of pce) seems to be completely emotionless, 'affectless', without any sense of self/Self (in which emotions could take root), latent dispositions aren't naturally done away with simply by directness.

As an analogy I (as taught by my Taiwanese Mahayana teacher) often make: emptying the jug of its contents (likened to the realization of anatta), needs to follow the emptying of the residual smell in the empty jug (likened to the eradication of remaining latent tendencies).

*Update: since then, I've had experiences showing more clearly the workings of latent tendencies, so this actualization of insights are still unfolding day by day and moment by moment for me. Now there is simply unreserved openness as uncontrolled manifestations always. At times when there is karmic disturbance, still, there is retraction and contraction, but I will spend quality hours to open up fuly until Anatta is clear in view and effortless again.

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1st December 2011

End in Sight:

An Eternal Now:

> Stream entry confers the 'ending of self-view', Arahant confers the 'end of conceit [of 'I Am']'. If for example, you merely recognise 'this thought is painful' but don't see that 'the view of self is false', then this current thought may subside, and yet the view of self remains intact,

No.

According to the Pali suttas, all identifications are caused by craving.

When you abandon the painful view, you abandon craving.

There is no view of self that does not manifest via craving and is thus not visible in the attention wave.

All identifications are caused by ignorance, ignorance is supported by taints, and taints supported by ignorance.

However, you cannot remove taints without removing ignorance via "knowledge and vision of things as they are" in other words, insights, realization. It cannot be removed by sheer suppression, by sheer will, etc.

It's like trying to remove your craving for santa claus when you still believe that santa claus exist. Even if you can subdue that craving for santa claus to a great extent by whatever means, that belief in santa claus will keep you locked in ignorance, delusion, effort, etc. Once you clearly see that santa claus doesn't exist, then likewise your craving ceases too. That is why Thusness said, "...When one is unable to see the truth of our nature, all letting go is nothing more than another from of holding in disguise. Therefore without the 'insight', there is no releasing.... it is a gradual process of deeper seeing. when it is seen, the letting go is natural. **You cannot force yourself into giving up the self...** purification to me is always these insights... non-dual and emptiness nature...."

> Yes, and it can be as simple as this:
> http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.036.than.html

How simple or how difficult depends on the person's capacity to understand things. Some people can understand the dharma in brief, some need elaborations, it all depends.

> Because, according to the Pali suttas, all identification (including all self-view) is caused by craving.

I don't deny that, but still, you cannot eliminate craving by simply eliminating it heads on, without insight. Ignorance is at the base of the 12 links, so it is the remainderless cessation of ignorance we should practice for - the cessation of ignorance leads to the cessation of the rest of the links. Also, you don't expect to end ignorance by ceasing sense-perception, or you don't expect to end ignorance through ceasing birth (you are already born). You end ignorance through wisdom.

And as Richard says, you cannot eliminate feeling without eliminating being (sense of self) first.

You also cannot eliminate defilements without 'knowledge and vision of things' (aka insight), which is what leads to disenchantment and dispassion which brings about release.

Imagine a holder of Self-view, trying to eliminate craving. What will he do? Surely, he will dissociate himself from the craving, but by doing so simply strengthens his hold onto 'self'. Without insight that his view is false, no matter how he tries to let go, he is in fact increasing his holding in disguise.

When insight arises however, no such contrived effort (which never leads to resolution) is necessary at all. With the seeing of the nature of dharma - being anicca, dukkha, anatta, there is no way one can fasten in a sense of self.

Without seeing through the false view of self by insight, one can never release the false of view of self, in the same way as a child who doesn't realize santa claus as false will never end craving for santa claus. Even if he is convinced not to crave santa claus in an obvious way, that very belief in santa claus leads to clinging. And the way to end the belief of santa claus is not to beat the hell out of the child, to take the child's gift away, etc etc... it's just to tell him that there's no santa claus.

Another example: someone who is deluded into seeing a rope as a snake will try to get away from the snake. He will try all methods to subdue the snake. Or maybe he managed to get some distance from the snake, but the delusion that the snake is there will surely haunt him again, despite the temporary relieve. There is no resolution to this - except through knowledge and vision of the rope as it is.

> If you practice full-on jhana, you can observe how it occurs: not by adjusting views, but by not thinking, which reduces the attention wave, which allows one to not think more, which reduces the attention wave more...a short-cut to subduing craving, completely independent of one's views and beliefs.

No beliefs are required: but knowledge and vision of things as they are. Whatever ways, long or short, must lead to this, without which no dispassion, disenchantment, release can be brought about.

> As you are well aware, the kind of insight you are talking about is the sort that is discussed in Mahayana traditions, not the Pali suttas.

Insights into the three characteristics is what I'm talking about. You need to have the insight that ends self-view, followed by self-conceit.

You cannot end self-view, which means self-belief, merely by suppressing it (i.e. beating the hell out of the kid), all it takes is to see it as false. Try as you may to forget about it, but without seeing the falsity of a snake in a rope, there is no hope for liberation.

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1st December 2011

Thusness's reply to me:

Yes but to know how anatta progresses to the empty nature of whatever arises is even more important. I can see that you are getting clearer and clearer why the emphasis of the difference between no-mind as an experience and anatta as a realization. However see the importance of insubstantiality of whatever manifests, it refines further the very insight of anatta and helps us understand the importance of right view of seeing things as they are.

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2nd December 2011

**From:** AEN

**Sent:** Friday, December 02, 2011 2:47 AM

**To:** C

**Subject:** Re: af clinging

> *it is easy to think of self as something substantial when it is such a deep ingrained part of moment-to-moment experience.*

Indeed, in fact tendencies always affect us moment to moment... this is its power, I think Thusness said something like 'karmic tendencies are as amazing as buddha-nature

[luminous-empty nature of everything]' since it shapes how we experience things like a spell every moment.

> *there is no self-view, there is no self-conceit. (there is no view whatsoever.) these views are not totally eradicated, yet they are temporarily in abeyance.*

No. Sense of self is not self-view. Sense of self can go into abeyance, while self-view is a latent thing so you cannot say it can go into abeyance – it is not a manifested thing (like memory). As an example: anger at your abusive stepfather is a manifested experience when you actively recall that memory, but memory of the stepfather is a latent/imprinted-in-your-psyche thing which cannot be erased merely by the abeyance of the manifested anger/recalling-of-memory (as evident by your ability and tendency to recall it again some other day or time). However the memory of the stepfather may be permanently transformed through developing loving kindness, changing your attitude to him, maybe increasing your understanding about him etc. So as an analogy, the framework of inherency and duality cannot be forced away, will not disappear even with the temporary abeyance of the sense of self and so on, except through wisdom, through right discernment, in which that framework is permanently dissolved like the sun in an instant dispelling all the darkness in the room (revealing the illusion to be an illusion and the magnificent sensate world without that illusion).

As a very gross analogy:

You believe the moon is made of green cheese. Ok, now pause that thought for a moment. (PCE) 10 minutes later... you start thinking the moon is made of green cheese. The belief is completely intact – it merely stops manifesting as gross thoughts in the 10 minutes pause, and that 10 minutes of pause has nothing to do with changing or eradicating your belief, it is simply that – a momentary pause of your conceptual thoughts. If lets say someone were to ask you during that 10 minutes, do you believe the moon is made of green cheese? You will reply instantly "yes sure why not" without hesitation at all, not like that pause has done any damage with your view of things, as view is not the same as the manifestation (e.g. sense of self) but an imprinted position/stance/view/belief in your psyche in which you perceive the world with, like a framework. It merely is temporarily forgotten during the state of PCE, but by no means eradicated. So if you zoom into the senses and for a moment temporarily drop/forget the framework of "seer sees the seen", what happens? PCE. Does that mean the framework isn't there anymore? No, it just means you are so fascinated by the senses that you temporarily forget the dualistic framework. That is why some people get PCEs when they see very amazing and grand stuff – the sun setting, the beautiful sceneries, etc, those awe-inspiring moments that make you drop everything and there is 'just that'. No insights involved at all. But this is why everybody has at some point in their life – even without spiritual practices – experienced a PCE. Anyway this is just an imperfect analogy but I think you should get some idea.

> *so, if your path focuses on getting back into an actual, legitimate PCE (which is an experience, yes), then what will you have to do? you will have to work on gaining insight into what those views are. what causes all those views that are absent in a PCE to arise. you will need to gain insight into whatever causes them*

> *to cease. and you will have to gain insight into how to develop a path that leads to those views ceasing.* ***by the very fact that you are aiming to experience a state in which those views are absent****, i think you are gaining insight into those views themselves.*

Nope. Just like “aiming to experience a state in which the thought of moon made of green cheese is absent” is not the same as “realizing that the moon is solid rock”.

> *it is true that the experience won't do anything. having a 5-month PCE, when you get out of it you will be just where you were when you got into it, except with perhaps a lot more motivation to make it permanent, this time (note that AF is not just permanent PCE; there is a list of distinguishing qualities somewhere on the AFT site[1], but it is clear that AF is different). but learning how to 'forget the self' in that fashion, will - that is where the insight lies. it is not emphasized in the actualist method because it is implied in the method itself. 'naivete' is vital , here , as 'naivete' entails holding no views, which as you said is the problem in the first place.*

Which is what I was saying – forgetting the self is like trying to forget the moon made of green cheese. No matter how skilled you become at that, you still don’t wake up from the delusion (that moon is made of green cheese). What the Buddha taught is to discern the nature of phenomena (i.e. three characteristics), seeing things as they are, you no longer delude yourself. You see the moon is solid rock, not green cheese. You wake up. You are free and none of those ‘forgetting the green cheese’ or ‘taming the snake’ nonsense are necessary anymore.

In other words: you realize “in seeing always just the seen, shapes, colours, forms! never a seer! never was there a seer-seeing-seen! seeing is just the seen!” which is a eureka moment, and this realization wakes you up from the delusion of a seer, never again to haunt you (like waking up from the delusion of rope being snake makes you not being haunted by the snake again), apart from potential traces or remnants of tendencies (contractions related to the sense of personality usually) which gets resolved over time.

PCE becomes an effortless (though not necessarily perpetual at first) thing after anatta – you will not have any more sense of entering or exiting. The notion of entering and exiting anatta itself becomes as untenable as the notion of entering and exiting the moon made of green cheese, after you have seen it to be false. (though that doesn’t mean remnant habitual tendencies wouldn’t surface momentarily in the beginning) That framework of perceiving the world through a self simply doesn’t arise after realization in the same way as the framework of perceiving the moon as green cheese won’t arise anymore once you wake up from that idea by going to the moon (weird example but you get the idea).

Similarly you cannot let go without deeper insights... you cannot force yourself to let go, it is always the deepening of insights into the three characteristics, and shunyata. This is the way Buddha taught.

> *so... do you still think AF is a lock-in PCE?*

AF is basically lock-in PCE, but with self-immolation. Self-immolation can be taken as a state... I think Thusness said Richard had insight into anatta (personally I'm not too sure about that), but failed to bring across that insight, or never saw its importance, or never saw the cause of 'self' grasping, and overly focused on experience. This is the problem with AF teaching and its effects on followers that Thusness told me long time ago – since last year, and I am starting to see just how true it is (people focusing too much on experience, having no clarity, etc).

To realize the importance and difference of view, realization, experience (of anatta, and shunyata) is truly rare. I just wrote an email yesterday to Thusness saying how rare in this world it is to even find someone who genuinely realizes anatta (I can count by my fingers), and that so far none as I know actually have clarity about the different phases of insights, or explained with clarity the difference of view, realization and experience. This is my recent reflection... now some statements from Thusness really make sense, such as I won't have any more spiritual teacher to learn from in the world soon (he told my mom about this many months ago, at least insight-front), the insights presented in the blog is rare and cannot be found elsewhere, etc. Sounds a little like the sort of elitist statements made by Richard... in some ways even though I sort of despised his tones when I discovered his site years ago, now I find myself in a position of not blaming him, or even symphathizing with him (though it doesn't mean I agree with everything he said), since it is so rare nowadays to even find a teacher who can distinguish No Mind from One Mind.... much less No Mind from realization of Anatta or beyond (though he himself wasn't very clear about the distinction of realization and experience). With so little clarity in the world nowadays, it is not difficult to see why someone might think they are the only ones who have truly 'gotten it', or why this might be considered the "Dharma Ending Age" (despite seemingly many 'enlightened persons' and 'enlightenment is doable' attitude in DhO which I appreciate).

> *[1] one of these (emphasis mine): "**SUBSCRIBER NO. 10:**Could you describe any differences (no matter how subtle) between actual freedom and PCE's?*
>
> ***VINEETO: It's not subtle at all.***
>
> *The PCE always had a 'WOW'-factor, which happens when the identity (in abeyance) comments on this body's experience of the actual world. In an actual freedom this 'WOW'-factor is absent – everything is just ordinary and magical at the same time.*
>
> *In a PCE I always knew (apart from the very first PCE) that this experience would eventually fade whereas an actual freedom is forever and can therefore be explored far deeper and infinitely further (literally) than any PCE ever could.*
>
> *A PCE has a static quality to it as the identity is in abeyance and temporarily 'allows' this flesh and blood body a brief glimpse into the actual world whereas an actual freedom is the dynamic vital in-depth and forever ongoing experience of the magic quality of actuality each moment again.""*
>
> *http://actualfreedom.com.au/directroute/10.htm*

I posted this yesterday. I think this is why you saw it.

http://www.dharmaoverground.org/web/guest/discussion/-/message_boards/message/2475963

**I used to have PCEs when I was younger which had a big 'wow' factor to it because the sense of self/Self suddenly disappears and any sense of distance, separation, sense of feeler, seer, just disappear into just the sights and sounds of the moment, and this huge contrast between the self mode and pce mode makes the experience a big deal like it was (imagine carrying a ton of load on your shoulders and suddenly it was dropped for a moment, you go Wow), but this is different, as everywhere I go, it is just this sensate world presenting itself in an intimate, clean, perfect, wonderful way, something that 'I' cannot 'get out of' even if I wanted to because there is simply no illusion and sense of self/Self that could get out of this mode of perceiving, and there is nothing I needed to do to experience that (i.e. effortless), something that has no entry and exit. So now this mode of perception is still amazing, wonderful, but much more mundane and ordinary even though not any less rich, similar to what Vineeto has said here:*

*http://actualfreedom.com.au/directroute/10.htm#15Feb10*

*The PCE always had a 'WOW'-factor, which happens when the identity (in abeyance) comments on this body's experience of the actual world. In an actual freedom this 'WOW'-factor is absent – everything is just ordinary and magical at the same time.*

*In a PCE I always knew (apart from the very first PCE) that this experience would eventually fade whereas an actual freedom is forever and can therefore be explored far deeper and infinitely further (literally) than any PCE ever could.*

*A PCE has a static quality to it as the identity is in abeyance and temporarily 'allows' this flesh and blood body a brief glimpse into the actual world whereas an actual freedom is the dynamic vital in-depth and forever ongoing experience of the magic quality of actuality each moment again.*

> *i am sometimes afraid of dissociating. in that, i know it isn't useful, but i'm not sure whether i am doing it or not. how can i be sure i am not?*

When you are practicing HAIETMOBA, you won't dissociate. You will dissociate if there is either a) trying to experience a purest state of consciousness or being, perceived as separate from 'others' such as emotions, feelings, thoughts, sensations, etc, b) you have a sense of aversion to an experience and want to get away from it. If you are practicing according to apperception article, not rejecting anything including emotions but just seeing (with naked awareness) everything as it is, this is not a form of dissociation. In Mindfulness, you are not trying to separate/distance/rid yourself of/from anything, but merely throwing awareness on whatever is arising. However it does not mean you are free from dualistic experience and framework, but at least you are not strengthening the sense of a dualistic split.

This is not about AF but you may find some useful suggestions:
http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/search/label/John%20Welwood

> *thus it's more directly focused on abandoning suffering, in whatever way possible. one uses insight **as a supplement** when one cannot just abandon suffering right there on the spot. but the goal is not to gain insight, but to abandon suffering.*

Insight in the Buddhist path is not a supplement at all, but the main thing. As the Buddha always said, liberation is not for one who doesn't see, or liberation is not without cause which is dispassion, which is knowledge and insight, etc... or that they way to liberation is to see the three characteristics, or that all who attain arhantship attain by insight and tranquility in tandem, and so on. You cannot have liberation without insight.

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2nd December 2011

**Deal with the Latent**

There is a reason why Stream Entrants (Sotāpanna) are called Stream Entrants. Buddha defined Stream-Entry as someone who has finally gotten into the stream of Noble Eightfold Path which leads to Nibbana. Why? They have eradicated the fetter of false view (aka personality view, sakkayaditthi), a knowledge and vision (in terms of 4nt and 3 seals) which permanently overcomes the false view (personality-view) which sets right the first of the eightfold path (right view). When you have right view, you have naturally entered the noble path, naturally your practice will flow in the right direction, naturally it will incline towards dispassion, letting go and freedom, no matter how hard or how lax your practice is (whether you attain liberation in 1 life or 7 lives, you are still destined for it). Why? You have 'entered the stream of the noble eightfold path', or in Daniel's words, 'the irreversible conveyer belt', or in my words 'the correct direction to Nirvana'. No matter how slow or how fast you walk, once your direction is set right, there is only one way you can walk: to Nirvana. But if your view is false, that is like 'no matter how slow or how fast you walk, since your direction is wrong to begin with, there is no way you will reach your intended destination'. Why? False view inclines towards clinging, not dispassion and liberation.

If you do not have right view, no matter how hard you practice mindfulness and concentration, now matter how hard you try to let go of your clingings and attachments, it will not lead to Nirvana and end of ignorance, simply because you are practicing under the influence of wrong views, you are dealing with gross manifest attachments but not addressing a more fundamental and underlying cause of ignorance.

Lots of people are very hardworking practitioners who mastered concentration and mindfulness but aren't any closer to liberation because they don't have right view. Also, lots of people had some insights, like I AM, or nondual, and think they are liberated but they are not... since they have not overcome false view, they may let go of much of their clingings, and yet still cling to a self*. You see, as long as the view maintains some self

that is existent, you may let go of everything but not be able to let go of that which you view as existent, and that which you view as existent – you cannot drop (leads to the seemingly logical but deluded question of 'How can I drop I?' or 'How can the right hand get rid of the right hand?'), or you will not want to drop it because you deem it as desirable (for some, to an ultimate awareness), or you will fail to see how you can drop it in the same way as you don't know how to subdue the snake, even though you never needed to because there actually wasn't any snake: just a rope. Even if you managed to master 'forgetting the snake' to the point where that thought of 'snake' seemingly does not arise anymore, that root of ignorance is there, latent, unaddressed.

Those 'certain recluses and brahmins' too claim to practice letting go the sense of self, they too claim to practice letting go of craving and attachments, but there is no breakthrough. They may seemingly experience more freedom, but the last vestige of clinging, particularly the clinging to self/self-view/self-conceit simply cannot be removed without the right insight. The right path deals with the latent by uprooting the roots of ignorance through knowledge and vision, the wrong path tries to cut off all the leaves and branches leaving the root intact. They may propound the full understanding of many kinds of clingings, but not the understanding of how clingings relate to the clinging of self and self-view.

So you see, right view is at the top of the eightfold path for a very good reason.

**12. "Though certain recluses and brahmans claim to propound the full understanding of all kinds of clinging... they describe the full understanding of clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, and clinging to rules and observances without describing the full understanding of clinging to a doctrine of self. They do not understand one instance... therefore they describe only the full understanding of clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, and clinging to rules and observances without describing the full understanding of clinging to a doctrine of self."* -
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.011.ntbb.html

**"8. This passage clearly indicates that the critical differentiating factor of the Buddha's Dhamma is its "full understanding of clinging to a doctrine of self." This means, in effect, that the Buddha alone is able to show how to overcome all views of self by developing penetration into the truth of non-self (anatta)."*

p.s. something from my old chat logs with **Thusness**:

*Session Start: Sunday, 29 May, 2011*

***Thusness**: Anatta is often not correctly understood. It is common that one progress from experience of non-dual to no-mind instead of direct realization into anatta. Many focus on the experience and there is a lack of clarity to penetrate the differences. So you must be clear of the various phases of insights first and not mistake one for the other. At the same time, refine your experience.*

On 6 Dec, 2011, at 12:14 AM, I wrote:

> > By the way, I remember last time you said everything is a thought, like even sense perception is a thought.
> >
> > I couldn't understand that time
> >
> > But now I see that everything is really no different from a thought - as in as baseless and empty as a projected thought like a dream, though it doesn't literally mean everything (including sense perceptions) are mere figment of imagination or projection
> >
> > So there is no fundamental diff, everything is like a thought
> >
> > So all is mind in terms of emptiness signifies this dreamlike nature, vastly different from all is mind from substantialist perspective.

P.s. Substantialist nonduality subsumes all perceptions to be the expressions of a single metaphysical all-perceiving subject devoid of subject-object division, I.e. sees everything as one mind, one naked awareness.

Anatta breaks down this view by seeing awareness to be a label collating all self-luminous processes of phenomenon: in seeing always just (seeing simply a collating label for) transient vivid self-luminous shapes, colours and forms, never a seer-seeing-seen.

Emptiness breaks the view of object inherency by viewing all manifestation to be a causal process of dependent origination, empty of any findable or locatable essence, leading to the wisdom that perceives all phenomenon to be like a magician's trick, an illusion, a dream. Being dream-like, sense perceptions are seen to be no different from a thought in the sense that thought-projected images of an apparent solid world actually have no basis or actual substantiality or solidity to them. It does not mean all sense percepts are subsumed into a single entity of One Mind, but expresses the dream-likeness, illusory nature of everything: no different from a thought, but not a thought, as conventionally mind and matter could be distinguished, but ultimately both are equally illusory.

Thusness replied:

Yes and very good. There is a very big difference between substantialist non-dual of One-Mind and what you said. In this experience, there is no background reality. It is not

about the background Awareness but rather the foreground aggregates that you are talking about - A thought. There is just aggregates that are like foams, bubbles, ethereal having all the same taste without substantiality and implicitly non-dual. No sense of body, mind and the world, nothing actual or truly there.

Before when insight of anatta first arose, you still risk the danger of seeing the physical as inherent and truly existing. Therefore there is a period that you are lost, unsure and AF seems appealing - a sign that you have not extended the insight of emptiness to phenomena though you kept saying twofold emptiness.

At present you focus on the following:
1. When there is no cold or heat
2. Total exertion

For 1, it is not difficult to understand now but for 2, you have not directly or adequately replaced the 'Self/self' with the interdependence of whatever arises.

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13 December 2011

**The Misconceptions of What Shunyata (Emptiness) and Clear Light/Luminosity Means**

> *"The black hole of Emptiness forms when the dependent nature of phenomenon dies out and fades away; and the force of awakening caused the Mind to collapse into it to infinitely singular point"*

If you are talking about emptiness as the nature of phenomenon, then no, emptiness is not formed when dependent phenomena cease.

Rather, what dependently originates, is precisely empty.

If you are talking about emptiness as a state of relative cessation, which makes it confusing because in other instances you talk about emptiness as the nature of phenomenon, then, relative cessation is not about collapsing the mind into a single point. Enlightenment has nothing to do with mind collapsing into a single point so I have no idea what you are talking about.

In fact there is nothing in Buddhism about mind collapsing into single point, unless you are talking about one pointedness. But one pointedness is not a characteristic of nirvana, rather it is just a necessary mental component when doing tranquil meditation. I.e. You need one pointedness to concentrate the mind on the breathing

> *"[Emptiness creates the Samsara, but it enables also the escape or the liberation from it to Nibbana.]"*

No. You are making emptiness into a metaphysical essence, a substratum, a source or creator. As Thusness warned before,

*"This is not to pick on Advaita Vedenta teachings. Phrase like "everything arises from Emptiness and subsides back to Emptiness" is equally misleading. By doing so, we have made 'Emptiness' into a metaphysical essence; similarly not to make the same mistake for "causes and conditions", not to objectify it into a metaphysical essence. All are provisional terms to point to our insubstaintial, essenceless and interdependent nature."*

There is really no such thing as "emptiness" – emptiness simply means that interdependently arisen activities are empty of any inherent, locatable, graspable, tangible, substantial, core or existence.

As Thusness used to say before, *"In actuality there is no 'Emptiness' to be cognized beyond concepts for 'Emptiness' is just a 'raft' that exist only in conceptuality." And "Thus only for the purpose of communication the above quote is written that way; there is only 'Emptiness' to be cognized by a dualistic/inherent mind, no 'Emptiness' to be cognized in true luminosity."*

Namdrol also says: *"The great 11th Nyingma scholar Rongzom points out that only Madhyamaka accepts that its critical methodology "harms itself", meaning that Madhyamaka uses non-affirming negations to reject the positions of opponents, but does not resort to affirming negations to support a position of its own. Since Madhyamaka, as Buddhapalita states "does not propose the non-existence of existents, but instead rejects claims for the existence of existents", there is no true Madhyamaka position since there is no existent found about which a Madhyamaka position could be formulated; likewise there is no false Madhyamaka position since there is no existent found about which a Madhyamaka position could be rejected."*

Emptiness is a non-asserting negation: it negates inherent existence of "self" and "objects" without asserting some ultimate reality or ultimate substratum. To fall into such a view (asserting emptiness as an ultimate substratum) is to become an eternalists (like hindus), while to assert the non-existence of things is to become a nihilist. The middle way is simply to reject views of existence, without asserting non-existence, or some transcendental ultimate reality. Emptiness is empty, there is no "emptiness" ultimately. Just a raft, a non-asserting negation, a fire that burns the candle that consumes both itself and the candle in the end, not leaving any thing (positions, views, etc), not even something called "emptiness". Yet vivid luminosity and appearances are not denied – still as vivid and clear as ever.

So how samsara (the world of suffering) arise? Samsara is not created. Samsara does not come from something called "emptiness". Samsara arises according to causes (craving, ignorance), and subsides with the cessation of causes (the end of craving, ignorance, afflictions).

Emptiness is not a thing, not an Absolute, not nothingness, not ground of being or substratum, it is not an escape from samsara. Samsara does not "escape" into emptiness, because emptiness is not some substratum of things. He said nirvana is the escape from samsara. What is nirvana? Cessation of afflictive arisings (samsara) is nirvana. Cessation (nirvana) is the escape from samsaric sufferings via the cessation of the causes of suffering - craving, aggression and delusion. It is not some ultimate substratum of everything.

Emptiness as the nature of all phenomena is not the same as relative cessation, since all relative arisings are already ultimately empty, emptiness in the sense of being the nature of everything (lack of independent essence), and thus not a particular state of cessation or nothingness. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.

Do read this article: http://www.heartofnow.com/files/emptiness.html

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*At this juncture, it is necessary to have clarity on what Emptiness is not to prevent misunderstandings:*

- *Emptiness is not a substance*
- *Emptiness is not a substratum or background*
- *Emptiness is not light*
- *Emptiness is not consciousness or awareness*
- *Emptiness is not the Absolute*
- *Emptiness does not exist on its own*
- *Objects do not consist of emptiness*
- *Objects do not arise from emptiness*
- *Emptiness of the "I" does not negate the "I"*
- *Emptiness is not the feeling that results when no objects are appearing to the mind*
- *Meditating on emptiness does not consist of quieting the mind*

Source: Non-Dual Emptiness Teaching
(http://www.heartofnow.com/files/emptiness.html)
And I would like to add,

Emptiness is not a path of practice
Emptiness is not a form of fruition

> *"[Literally, in Nibbana, all basic elements i.e. energy, matter and space are practically frozen. Any input would churn no output – this arises, that ceases; that arises, this ceases.]"*

Nibbana means cessation. Not "frozen".

There is no such thing as "this arises, that ceases". This was not taught by Buddha. You are again distorting the teaching of dependent origination. The Buddha teaches this:

*"When there is this, that is.*
*With the arising of this, that arises.*
*When this is not, neither is that.*
*With the cessation of this, that ceases."*

When conditions are present, afflictions Will arise.

Nirvana is the cessation of afflictive causes (craving and ignorance), and due to the cessation of afflictive causes, the entire chain of afflictive dependent origination also ceases.

An analogy the Buddha gave is that when the fuel for the fire runs out, the flame stops burning.

So cessation happens in the manner of “this ceases, that ceases”

> *[Picture depicting clear light as the core of being, transcending dependent phenomenon, and relating clear light with the tunnel of vision in near-death-experience]*

The tunnel of light vision is not the experience of clear light. Clear light is not a visually experienced light as in the tunnel of light. A lot of people don't understand this and distort its meaning. **Clear Light is simply a Metaphor for the sheer brilliance and illuminating quality of pure awareness, not a visually experienced light.**

Worse still, a lot of people experience seeing bright light in meditation, and think it has anything at all to do with Buddha-nature. They are screwed, completely deluded by appearances.

When you realize the true clear light, you don't see any funny lights. It is just pure awareness.

As Lobsang P. Lhalungpa clearly states:

*"Lucid awareness" refers to an individual's pure consciousness, which is detached from any dualistic discrimination. A perfect insight into the intrinsic void of reality, it is wisdom with clarity. This is one of those important points that have been misinterpreted in the West. The literal rendering of the original Tibetan term "osel" (spelled 'od-gsal) as "clear light" seems to be the case. It is a metaphor, signifying an inbred clarity.*

The Tibetan text (f. 204 B, l. 4) gives the following description:

*The meaning of osel (clear light) consists of its being a natural state - detached from any absolute emergence or cessation and from any substance or element - and being unstained and immutable like spaces or nondifferentiable from it.*

Furthermore, the common description "the void of clear light" (Tib. osel tongpanyi, spelled 'od-gsal stong-pa-nyid; Skt. pratibhasa sunyata) makes my point eminently clear."

By the way, while the subsidance of gross mental experiences can result in a glimpse of clear light, it does not mean that clear light itself is not a 'dependent phenomenon'.*

Also, more often than not, a glimpse of clear light in the gap between of thoughts is simply a mere glimpse and can lead to the I AM sort of understanding. The Hindus also talk about pure luminous consciousness in the gap between two thoughts (see latest post in http://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/439257). Without insight into the twofold emptiness, we will not gain liberation this way.

*Clear light mental activity is not dependent on ignorance, so it is in itself not an afflictive phenomenon (adventitious defilements can be destroyed leaving luminosity intact), but it is defiled by afflictions in the manner Buddha spoke of:

*"Luminous, monks, is the mind.[1] And it is defiled by incoming defilements." {I,v,9}*

*"Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements." {I,v,10}*

*"Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is defiled by incoming defilements. The uninstructed run-of-the-mill person doesn't discern that as it actually is present, which is why I tell you that — for the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person — there is no development of the mind." {I,vi,1}*

*"Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements. The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns that as it actually is present, which is why I tell you that — for the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones — there is development of the mind." {I,vi,2}*

*~ Pabhassara Sutta*

Nonetheless you should understand mind as also an activity that dependently originates, even though not afflictively.

Here is an excerpt regarding the dependent origination of clear light by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his book 'Dzogchen: Heart Essence of the Great Perfection':

*Question: Is the fundamental innate mind of clear light dependent on causes and conditions? If it is not dependent, how can it be empty of independent existence?*

*HHDL: This is a very good question. Often in the texts we find mention of the fundamental innate mind of clear light being not produced by causes and conditions. Now here it is important to understand that in general when we use the term 'produced phenomena' there are different connotations. Something can be called 'produced' because it is a production of delusions and the actions they induce. Again, it may also refer to a production by causes and conditions. And there is also a sense of 'produced' as being caused by conceptual thought processes.*

*Certain texts speak of the activities of the Buddha as permanent and non-produced in the sense that they are continuous, and that as long as there are sentient beings, the activities of the buddhas will remain without interruption. So, from the point of view of their continuity, these activities are sometimes called permanent.*

*In the same manner, the fundamental innate mind of clear light, in terms of its continuity, is beginningless, and also endless. This continuum will always be there, and so from that specific point of view, it is also called 'non-produced'. Besides, the fundamental innate mind of clear light is not a circumstantial or adventitious state of mind, for it does not come into being as a result of circumstantial interaction of causes and conditions. Rather, it is an ever-abiding continuum of mind, which is inherent within us. So from that viewpoint, it is also called 'non-produced'.*

*However, although this is the case, we still have to maintain that, because it possesses this continuity, the present fundamental innate mind - this present instant of consciousness - comes from its earlier moments. The same holds true of the wisdom of Buddha - the omniscient mind of Buddha - which perceives the two truths directly and*

*simulttaneously, and which is also a state of awareness or consciousness. Since it is a state of awareness, the factor which will eventually turn into that kind of wisdom, namely the fundamental innate nature of clear light, will also have to be maintained to be a state of awareness. For it is impossible for anything which is not by nature awareness to turn into a state of awareness. So from this second point of view, the fundamental innate mind of clear light is causally produced.*

Also, he explains,

*The fundamental mind which serves as the basis of all phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana is posited as the ultimate truth or nature of phenomena (dharmata, chos nyid); it is also called the 'clear light' (abhasvara, 'od gsal) and uncompounded (asamskrta, 'dus ma byas). In Nying-ma it is called the 'mind-vajra'; this is not the mind that is contrasted with basic knowledge (rig pa) and mind (sems) but the factor of mere luminosity and knowing, basic knowledge itself. This is the final root of all minds, forever indestructible, immutable, and unbreakable continuum like a vajra. Just as the New Translation Schools posit a beginningless and endless fundamental mind, so Nying-ma posits a mind-vajra which has no beginning or end and proceeds without interruption through the effect stage of Buddhahood. It is considered 'permanent' in the sense of abiding forever and thus is presented as a permanent mind.* ***It is permanent not in the sense of not disintegrating moment by moment but in the sense that its continuum is not interrupted…***

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20th December 2011

All views of self lead to suffering (clinging, effort, seeking, desire, craving, and other forms of suffering). If you were to achieve mastery of samadhi and abide as the I AM 24/7, which can have profound life transforming effects, nonetheless you cannot overcome the subtle clinging and achieve liberation. Even if you sit in samadhi bliss all day, this is not the same as liberation - as Buddha left his previous teachers who were masters at samadhi and had their own insights.

When you achieve higher insights, your clinging lessens and disappears, your effortlessness increase.

You also see how deeper insights are a natural progression of your original experience - the I AM is not denied, but now experienced in all manifestations in all conditions, effortless and spontaneous, without any attempts to re-confirm or any effort needed to sustain any experience.

As I told Thusness:

*I just realized that the four aspects of I am are not just four aspects of I am*

*They are also four aspects of non dual*

*Four aspects of anatta*

*Four aspects of shunyata*

*Etc*

*Those four aspects are refined in every phase*

*as an example: seeing through the need to abide in non dual and dropping it - notice the tendency to reconfirm nondual by giving rise to thoughts like "the sound is as much you as the thought", seeing how ridiculous it is when always already in seeing just sound, in thinking just thought, all thoughts to reconfirm nondual arise due to falsely perceiving there to be a self to be nondual with "that" which turns into one mind and worse still it presumes there to be a subtle split that needs to be resolved when that notion of separation is entirely illusory. The entire movement to become nondual is illusory when anatta is fully seen and all self notions are dropped*

*Intensity of luminosity in non dual - peak is in "no cold no heat", no mind, pure transparency, luminosity as textures and shapes and forms and all details of manifestation*

*Effortlessness - when all latent views are replaced with right views then there's effortlessness of nondual*

*Impersonality - even in nondual and anatta, impersonality must be matured*

*Etc...*

**Thusness** replied me,

*This I have told u. I have told you that later you will understand.* (though I didn't remember him telling me - not that he didn't as I'm sure he has, but when I heard it then, I probably didn't understand it at all)

He also said,

*U must also understand that the four aspects are conveyed to you so that in the event you got lost In "I Amness", they can lead you back to the deeper insight of anatta n DO.*

So as you can see, each arising insight leads to greater freedom and liberation, greater effortlessness, greater bliss.

…..

I believe the Buddhahood is the ultimatum of spirituality. Why do I believe? Because I have no direct knowledge of Buddhahood. I have not experienced Buddhahood. But I have faith in Buddha, partly due to confidence from my direct experience - how it completely lines up with what the Buddha taught, how deep and profound was Buddha's insights... that by inferrence surely, what the other stuff I've not seen but have been said by Buddha, must be true too.

However what I do know from experience (without any need of inference) is this: as my insights progressed, there is deeper freedom experienced, deeper liberation experienced, greater effortlessness, greater clarity, lesser clinging, lesser afflictions, etc etc... greater insight into the nature of reality. Therefore this is of course a very obvious progress in my path. And I say - without anatta, emptiness, etc, you cannot achieve maximum effortlessness, maximum clarity, trueliberation, etc. Even in I AM due to belief in purest identity of I AM it is clung to tightly and practice aims at achieving 24/7 abidance in a purest state of presence - a form of contrivance and effort. In non-dual, though lesser effort and greater seamlessness with the manifold manifestation, still there can be subtle habit to reconfirm a source, an attempt to be nondual, etc, which are again subtler but still present effort, clinging, ignorance. And so on... so as I said, greater freedom, lesser effort, greater clarity, greater bliss, lesser clinging, lesser suffering, lesser afflictions (in their various forms)... greater results with the deepening of insight into the way things are. Which is why this is worthwhile for me. This is why while there is no strict one-for-all linear hierarchy of things, it does not mean there is no observable progress. Ultimately, all Buddhist paths that aims at liberation, i.e. the total ending of suffering, clinging, craving, etc must lead to twofold emptiness, to the qualities mentioned above.

Believe me - or not, I am only stating my experience, just see for yourself.

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30th December 2011

> *Quote*
>
> *So if there is just suchness of seen, do you not know that it's a tree you are looking at? If your answer is no, well then you must have a very hard time doing anything. If yes, how do you know that it's a tree by this direct vision?*

I do not know 'it's a tree' because the fact is, there is no tree. It is only for communication that sometimes I say 'it's a tree'.

Spontaneous action and awareness does not necessitate perceiving conventions, and does not preclude one from using conventions to communicate (but doesn't mean you believe in them). A Buddha's action is completely spontaneous and non-conceptual (a Buddha don't perceive conventions).

In other words, I won't bang into a wall just because I don't perceive the convention of wall when I'm walking. My walking is completely spontaneous based on wisdom. I don't

establish a controller, a walker, a walking, a destination, a wall, an obstruction, without any concepts, thoughts, notions, the action is completely accomplished spontaneously in full (non-conceptual) awareness.

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7th January 2012

One of the crucial factors to liberation is dispassion.

Even the purpose of realizing emptiness is to lead to this arising dispassion. Because if there is no clinging at a true existence of anything, there is just an illusory dream like appearance without grasping that is self-arisen and self-liberated, instead of there being some strong mental attachment or craving to things.

Instead of seeing things as a big deal, all thoughts and sensations are naturally released since there is no core, nothing substantial, graspable, about anything that could lead to craving and grasping. So one faces everything with a sense of dispassion and equanimity.

It is like for example if we treat the image of diamonds and gold as something solid and real, craving and excitement arises, but if we realize it is no different from a dream or TV show, just some illusory patterns of shapes and colours, how can craving arise?

Through the twofold emptiness, there is just the vividness shapes, colours, forms, but utterly empty and thus a complete dispassionate and "released" mind.

As the Buddha said in the Phena Sutta:

"Now suppose that a magician or magician's apprentice were to display a magic trick at a major intersection, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him — seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it — it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a magic trick? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any consciousness that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him — seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it — it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in consciousness?

"Seeing thus, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he grows dispassionate. Through dispassion, he's released. With release there's the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'"

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7th January 2011

There are two good articles:

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2012/01/realizing-genjo-koan-shohaku-okumura.html - On the Maha aspect

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2012/01/self-liberated-appearances-self-arisen.html - On the Empty and Self-liberating aspect

I lent both books to Thusness on Monday.

Had an interesting meeting with Thusness a couple of days ago, and he brought up a point which accords with my own understanding and experience as well.

There are two insights and experiences pertaining to anatta, dependent origination and emptiness - the Maha experience (integrating anatta with dependent origination) described above, which Zen and Zen Master Dogen emphasizes, and the 'dependently originated is empty of a locatable core and thus illusory, dream-like' which Mahamudra and Dzogchen emphasizes.

We should integrate these two insights, then we will understand these two traditions. A pure Zennist may not understand Mahamudra, and Mahamudra person may not understand a Zennist because their emphasis and practice is different. Thusness also emphasized to me not to confuse these two distinct realization and experience, don't mix them up. It is important to have clarity about them. He said he had the Maha sort of experience for about a decade, but the 'empty, illusory and thus self-liberating' nature only becameclear to him after he started reading Mahamudra texts in 2008. However it should be understood that it does not mean one insight is less valuable than another, therefore we should integrate them.

In two SMSes I wrote to Thusness:

"I am at the KMSPKS library. Their library is very big, all kinds of dharma books, awesome place. I meditated there also, haha. I realized even the thought to remove defilements is delusional since defilements are also empty. The mere recognition of appearance-emptiness liberates all trace of clinging."

"I used to sit meditation with a goal and direction. Now, sitting itself is enlightenment. Sitting is just sitting. Sitting is just the activity of sitting, air con humming, breathing. Walking itself is enlightenment. Practice is not done for enlightenment but all activity is itself the perfect expression of enlightenment/buddha-nature. There is nowhere to go. Defilements can arise due to latent tendencies but without a slightest delusion of a true existent whatsoever, there is no clinging at anything. So, there is no trace."

Thusness replied, "This is Dogen's state and the essence of Zen, but it is different from what you previously SMS-ed me. They are of different insights."

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15th January 2012

Was going through some old conversations with Thusness last year... here are some good points about the difficulty in entering anatta, unless one has right guidance and right view (important).

...

**Thusness**: it is very difficult to move from substantialist non-dual to anatta
even after arising insight of anatta, there is still this problem
**AEN**: oic..
**Thusness**: very often you need to have clarity in DO (Dependent Origination) to rid it...that is using DO to refine the experience of anatta
so when a person undergoes awareness practice until a certain phase (non-dual), it is very very important to keep instilling the right view

**Thusness**: keep breaking the essence
for this, a certain amount of faith in the teacher is very important

**AEN**: ic..
Thusness: otherwise one will not be able to progress to the next phase

**AEN**: oic..

**Thusness**: even if you have undergone the experience, you will not be able to realize anatta
until practitioners realized that it is not necessary to have 'essence' at all...it is just simply a distorted view

**AEN**: the experience of D.O.?

**Thusness**: no anatta

**AEN**: oh icic
experience of anatta like a glimpse of no mind experience?

**Thusness**: yeah

**AEN**: ic..

**Thusness**: like luckystrike...

**AEN**: yeah

**Thusness**: there is the experience of no mind

**Thusness**: so for u, there must be willingness to let go of the 'wrong view' entirely
then with the experience of no-mind and realization, the adoption of the view carries you on...until you perfect the experience
then the doubts is completely gone
your entire experience transcend the entire idea of 'essence'
the center is completely gone...just flat, disjoint, unsupported, dimensionless and pure experience

manifested as whatever arises
this is very important and must take note
otherwise you will not be able to advice correctly

**AEN**: oic

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9 February 2012

A practice advise to someone on how to realize anatta:

You are a sincere seeker but not to get obsessed with desire of "when will realization happen to me?" Patience is important, the most important for your part is to instill right view, and with right practice and contemplation, the realization will arise in due time. While practicing and contemplating, do not practice with expectations or unnecessary desires, but with a keen interest in discovering the truth.

In actual fact all of us experience the original, unsullied and pure moment of naked awareness (such as hearing or seeing something before analyzing or thinking about it) from time to time, but as you rightly pointed out, it is often quickly obscured and overshadowed by "another thought" that arises which seems to say I am doing everything, that imputes or conceives of a fictitious self or label over the original naked experience.

Indeed, this deeply rooted karmic conditioning to conceive of a self keeps manifesting in thoughts, therefore the first step in practice is to be bare, naked, stripped off the symbolic and conceptual layer and simply be bare and naked in pure awareness. Then follow by a form of contemplation that investigates and penetrates into the truth of anatta.

An advise I often give which in my experience is a highly effective method for realizing no-self: "spend quality hours (or however much time you can afford) everyday practicing being naked in awareness (whether in sitting meditation or in movement), which is to say hear the sounds as clear as can be in its pristine clarity and vividness… observe/experience the minutest details of sensations in its crystal clarity and aliveness, the sights, smells, taste, touch. Then contemplate and notice the fact that “there is no experiencer behind experience, just the experience” or “in seeing just the shapes, colours, forms, no seer”... this can eventually lead to non dual experience and insight.”

One more thing: no-self or anatta is not just non-doership. Non-doership is just one aspect of anatta, not its entirety. It is not yet the realization of no agency. Realization of anatta arises when you see that the framework of there being a seer seeing the seen is false, that always already, in seeing always just the sight, shapes, forms and colours vividly manifesting without an observer/seer. In hearing just sounds, no hearer. Always already so.

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25th February 2012

I see Shikantaza (The Zen meditation method of “Just Sitting”) as the natural expression of realization and enlightenment.

But many people completely misunderstand this... they think that practice-enlightenment means there is no need for realization, since practicing is enlightenment. In other words, even a beginner is as realized as the Buddha when meditating.

This is plain wrong and thoughts of the foolish.

Rather, understand that practice-enlightenment is the natural expression of realization... and without realization, one will not discover the essence of practice-enlightenment.

As I told my friend/teacher 'Thusness', “I used to sit meditation with a goal and direction. Now, sitting itself is enlightenment. Sitting is just sitting. Sitting is just the activity of sitting, air con humming, breathing. Walking itself is enlightenment. Practice is not done for enlightenment but all activity is itself the perfect expression of enlightenment/buddha-nature. There is nowhere to go."

I see no possibility of directly experiencing this unless one has clear direct non-dual insight. Without realizing the primordial purity and spontaneous perfection of this instantaneous moment of manifestation as Buddha-nature itself, there will always be effort and attempt at 'doing', at achieving something... whether it be mundane states of calmness, absorption, or supramundane states of awakening or liberation... all are just due to the ignorance of the true nature of this instantaneous moment.

However, non-dual experience can still be separated into:

1) One Mind

- lately I have been noticing that majority of spiritual teachers and masters describe non-dual in terms of One Mind. That is, having realized that there is no subject-object/perceiver-perceived division or dichotomy, they subsume everything to be Mind only, mountains and rivers all are Me - the one undivided essence appearing as the many.

Though non-separate, the view is still of an inherent metaphysical essence. Hence non-dual but inherent.

2) No Mind

Where even the 'One Naked Awareness' or 'One Mind' or a Source is totally forgotten and dissolved into simply scenery, sound, arising thoughts and passing scent. Only the flow of self-luminous transience.

....

However, we must understand that even having the experience of No Mind is not yet the realization of Anatta. In the case of No Mind, it can remain a peak experience. In fact, it is a natural progression for a practitioner at One Mind to occasionally enter into the territory of No Mind... but because there is no breakthrough in terms of view via realization, the latent tendency to sink back into a Source, a One Mind is very strong and the experience of No Mind will not be sustained stably. The practitioner may then try his best to remain bare and non-conceptual and sustain the experience of No Mind through being naked in awareness, but no breakthrough can come unless a certain realization arises.

In particular, the important realization to breakthrough this view of inherent self is the realization that Always Already, never was/is there a self - in seeing always only just the seen, the scenery, shapes and colours, never a seer! In hearing only the audible tones, no hearer! Just activities, no agent! A process of dependent origination itself rolls and knows... no self, agent, perceiver, controller therein.

It is this realization that breaks down the view of 'seer-seeing-seen', or 'One Naked Awareness' permanently by realizing that there never was a 'One Awareness' - 'awareness', 'seeing', 'hearing' are only labels for the everchanging sensations and sights and sounds, like the word 'weather' don't point to an unchanging entity but the everchanging stream of rain, wind, clouds, forming and parting momentarily...

Then as the investigation and insights deepen, it is seen and experienced that there is only this process of dependent origination, all the causes and conditions coming together in this instantaneous moment of activity, such that when eating the apple it is like the universe eating the apple, the universe typing this message, the universe hearing the sound... or the universe is the sound. Just that... is Shikantaza. In seeing only the seen, in sitting only the sitting, and the whole universe is sitting... and it couldn't be otherwise when there is no self, no meditator apart from meditation. Every moment cannot 'help' but be practice-enlightenment... it is not even the result of concentration or any form of contrived effort... rather it is the natural authentication of the realization, experience and view in real-time.

Zen Master Dogen, the proponent of practice-enlightenment, is one of the rare and clear jewels of Zen Buddhism who have very deep experiential clarity about anatta and dependent origination. Without deep realization-experience of anatta and dependent origination in real time, we can never understand what Dogen is pointing to... his words may sound cryptic, mystical, or poetic, but actually they are simply pointing to this.

Someone 'complained' that Shikantaza is just some temporary suppressing of defilements instead of the permanent removal of it. However if one realizes anatta then it is the permanent ending of self-view, i.e. traditional stream-entry.

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7th March 2012

**Nothing Hidden, Totally Manifest**

Mind, awareness, experience, sensations are synonymous. It is not “mind is aware of experience”. For what is mind? Seeing sight, hearing sound, all is mind. So, experience is mind is awareness. This is the truth of non-duality. The non-conceptual sense of beingness or am-ness is mind, the non-conceptual presence of seeing, hearing, etc too is mind, thoughts too is mind. To apply effort to sustain a particular state of mind as being “nature of mind” is thus irrelevant, since every state and manifestation is in fact not other than the nature of mind. There is no nature of mind apart from mind, and no mind apart from experience. But until this is experientially realized, there is no benefit.

There is nothing concrete, substantial or unchanging about mind, thus allowing for infinite potential of appearances. Emptiness, luminosity and energy co-emerge. Inseparable from the interconnectedness of causes and conditions, vividly present but empty, being a ceaseless flow, appearing as various shapes and forms and bubbles like an endless river flowing according to various conditions. Mind is not some pure potential behind manifestation, rather lacking an independent self-substance, mind points to this very manifestation itself, whatever it is for “you” at this moment (probably the sight of these words).

What about analogies that the nature of mind is like space? It does not mean there is a space behind phenomenon, but rather the mind is empty of a concrete identity, and being so is free from limitations, center or boundaries just like space, manifest as this very appearance. There is no noumenon behind phenomenon. At this point, “who is aware?” no longer applies. Nothing hiding, totally manifest! This is what Padmasambhava meant by “Since there is only this pure observing, there will be found a lucid clarity without anyone being there who is the observer; Only a naked manifest awareness is present.”, and what a cook told Zen Master Dogen, “Nothing in the entire universe is hidden.” This is what Thusness calls, “total transparency”.

Another point to “Nothing in the entire universe is hidden.” is that this manifestation is the activity of the entire universe, so this very manifestation is in fact not different from and not the same as the entire universe. The apple is the sun-apple, the farmer-apple, the air-apple, the universe-apple, the biting is the apple-biting-apple and the mouth-biting-apple, the universe biting apple. Nothing in the universe is hidden for the universe is totally manifest As this very activity. This activity is the manifestation of the whole universe of interdependency in a perfect and complete expression, just like this. The ever evolving process of an interdependent universe universing universe. All causes and conditions are incorporated in seamless interdependence in a single activity. (E.g. Hand, shaking, cup, water, ripples) What we call “universe” is simply this evolving process of interactivity made manifest in each unfolding moment, an interconnected process rolling on and on without an agent, nothing hidden whatsoever.

So in summary: when we talk about “intrinsic awareness” or “intrinsic mind”, we may also call it “intrinsic luminosity of experience”, for what is mind? Nothing whatsoever and yet nothing is not (totally manifest, nothing hidden), the words experience/mind/awareness all point to this very luminous-experience-mind. It points to the dynamic flow of mind-activities. Thus luminosity is not an attribute of a fixed unchanging entity hidden somewhere, but the essence of the manifesting mind/experience itself, unfabricated and unconditioned (not created by something, by

effort or by contrivance). And yet manifesting as whatsoever due to an interconnected flow of activities, nothing independent and nothing lasting more than moment.

Experience can really be summed up this way:

Vividly present dependent on conditions
Utterly gone upon the cessation of conditions.

Thus come, thus gone!

One who sees the suchness of dependent origination sees the Dharma, one who sees the Dharma sees the Tathagata (Thus Come One).

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7th March 2012

Many people mistook 'impersonality' for 'anatta'. Those of true experience of anatta will be able to experience the fusing into everything... in seeing just the colours, shapes and forms, the foot steps, the textures and details, all of which are pure aliveness... no self apart from that. Without this 'fusing into everything' one can hardly be said to have realized non-dual, let alone anatta.

Related:Related to my previous reply... In 2006:

**Thusness**: what is the difference between "no individuality and impersonality" and the way Buddhaghosa describe no-self? (AEN: Buddhaghosa's verses can be found here - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2008/05/no-self-no-doer-conditionality.html)

**AEN**: no individuality refers to the mind realm ceasing of self-perception but does not speak of the presence of fusing into everything?

**Thusness**: not bad. :) I will add a lil more.the idea of process, change isn't inside and how non-dual is understood as a flow, that in actuality there is no 'entity', only flow, means there is no nouns but always verbs, and how non-dual is linked to it. the misconception and individuality is of taking a process and 'identifying' it as an 'entity' through confusion of language and symbolic structures.when one tries to lose individuality and say that consciousness is impersonal, there is just a snap shot of the experience....it is not a form of thorough understanding or a deep insight of the truth.so true non-dual must come from such insight as described in Buddhaghosa poem. :)i spoke many times about non-dual and said even one has entered non-dual does not necessary understand anatta and emptiness, this is what i meant. otherwise it remains as a stage that can be entered and exit,instead of a gateless gate

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11th March 2012

3rd Ch'an (Chinese Zen) Patriarch Sengtsan said in his opening verse,

*The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences. When love and hate are both absent everything becomes clear and undisguised. Make the smallest distinction, however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart. If you wish to see the truth then hold no opinion for or against. The struggle of what one likes and what one dislikes is the disease of the mind.*

This does not simply mean 'cut off all emotions'. What it really means is not choosing, and having no choice, every single manifestation is itself The Great Way. If you make the slightest distinction, then Buddha-nature and the phenomenal world becomes set infinitely apart.

As Thusness puts it,

*http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/03/mistaken-reality-of-amness.html*

*But what exactly is this "witness" we are talking about? It is the **manifestation** itself! It is the **appearance** itself! There is no Source to fall back, **the Appearance is the Source!** Including the moment to moment of thoughts. **The problem is we choose, but all is really it.** There is nothing to choose.*

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21st March 2012

Posted on facebook:

**D**: I was interested in knowing your take on "how this (LU and RT) works" when pointing directly to no self rather than the "I Am" as a first step. What then does the person unfamiliar with enlightenment or "I Am" do from that point? They're left in such a disorienting "space" is so many cases. If they investigate further from that point, or read about the "I Am", it becomes even more disjointed/disorienting.

**Me**: The point about I AM is to bring out the luminous presence, which is the essence of mind. While mind is empty of self, the essence mind is not just "nothingness", it is nothing dead or inert or insentient. The emptiness and luminosity is inseparable.

So, contrary to deadness, the essence of mind is total presence-existence-consciousness. It is just this certainty of beingness, without any thought. So in the gap between two thoughts, do you (or rather, does life) fade out of existence? No, since a palpable, undeniable, undoubtable presence-awareness is nakedly manifest.

But this sense of beingness can be falsely reified or misunderstood due to not having realized "no-self". While the experience and realization is true and important (that the mind is pure luminous presence), the views must be refined. As for whether someone who seen "no self" needs to discover I AM, it really depends, because the I Am is to bring out the luminous essence of mind.

Many people I have seen who talks about "no self" are talking about impersonality... Not even non-dual or anatta. They have not even had a direct realization of luminosity. In this case, the I AM realization is especially important, or they might realize the luminosity via realizing Thusness's Second stanza of Anatta (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html). But when you truly realize anatta, especially the 2nd stanza of anatta by Thusness, then all perceptions and sensations are already implicitly non-dual and self-luminous.

Those who previously realized I AM and later penetrate into nondual will then recognise the "same taste" of that powerful luminous presence they experienced as a formless non-conceptual thought now applies to all senses, all forms and all manifestations. So, the direct realization of non-dual luminosity is also important. So for a person who realized no-self, the view of "I AM" is disorientating, but they must be able to see that the luminous presence is of a single taste in all and every manifestation of life, vividly clear, present, yet insubstantial, self-less, and coreless. The luminosity, emptiness and activities/appearance of mind are inseparable. In actuality there is no "mind" self-entity apart from the self-luminous flow of mind-activities.

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/03/mistaken-reality-of-amness.html - ..."I AMness" is the pristine awareness. That is why it is so overwhelming. Just that there is no 'insight' into its emptiness nature.... ...When consciousness experiences the pure sense of “I AM”, overwhelmed by the transcendental thoughtless moment of Beingness, consciousness clings to that experience as its purest identity. By doing so, it subtly creates a ‘watcher’ and fails to see that the ‘Pure Sense of Existence’ is nothing but an aspect of pure consciousness relating to the thought realm. This in turn serves as the karmic condition that prevents the experience of pure consciousness that arises from other sense-objects. Extending it to the other senses, there is hearing without a hearer and seeing without a seer -- the experience of Pure Sound-Consciousness is radically different from Pure Sight-Consciousness. Sincerely, if we are able to give up ‘I’ and replaces it with “Emptiness Nature”, Consciousness is experienced as non-local. No one state is purer than the other. All is just One Taste, the manifold of Presence.

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30th March 2012

Does the realization of anatta and emptiness means complete stability of experience immediately? No. Realization is permanent, when seen can never be unseen again, but nonetheless experience may not be immediately stable. I would like to quote two persons here and later comment a bit from my experience.

**Thusness**: “Before maturity of insight, one may enter into 60-90 days of uninterrupted state of non-dual presence and suddenly sank back into a divided state of consciousness for unknown reasons. This can continue for a 2-3 cycles then insight matures and lucidity and innate freedom becomes permanent during the conscious state. Practitioner now moves from a ‘concentrative’ to an effortless mode. It no more

matters whether there is intention or no intention, whatever arises always is non-dual awareness.

In this phase, all the qualities of non-dual presence begin to come together as one; from pristineness to non-dual to oneness to spontaneity, all intertwined into one single experience. Practitioner begins to embrace himself into the Maha world of Suchness!

Now even a simple breath is like the entire universe breathing. It is no more just a liberating experience! It is Maha!

In all mundane activities,

From seeing, tasting, drinking, walking…

All is Maha!

Great and miraculous!

Happy Journey!"

"(Transcript)

**Thusness**: Ok. Non-duality is a very very unique experience. One of the most unique experience I have ever had.

**Participant 1**: I think there are different levels of it right?

**Thusness**: Uh, there are different levels of it. The finer of experience and the not so fine, the initial level of experience. In the finest level of experience you will attain a sense of total transparency. It means when you were to touch the sand, you feel the sand, you feel everything. You ask, which aspect is not the Mind? You cannot answer. There is no in-between. There is just that.

**Participant 1**: How about the initial aspect?

**Thusness**: The initial aspect is this. The initial aspect is that there is a sudden realisation of non-duality. Then you will be in a stage of probably 60 to 90 days of bliss, of joy, or rapture. These things will happen first. Then, you will suddenly feel {inaudible} the momentum is coming to work. Now, this sudden {inaudible} of non-duality or the experience of non-duality will come again probably in {inaudible} even with practise. Because it will not just stop, but it will not just continuously surface. I mean it will continue to surface, but it will take place with the momentum, that you feel a bit confused. Can you get what I mean? But, if after certain time about two, three years of continuous practise and continuous experiencing it becomes stabilised. Then it becomes very clear. Then the experience of transparency will {inaudible}. And when you experience, a person will feel radiance bright. Means when you see him, you will find radiance bright, you know?"

**Simpo**: “In my case, the stabilise realisation of No-self (anatta) came after the early/initial insight of emptiness.

Before the stablisation of no-self, there was still substantial efforting in getting into the 'view'.

The irony is that once the no-self experience is stabilised, one will wonder why did one not see it in the first place. This is because it is so direct. It is as if one is beating around the bush for years just to see the most obvious and direct. However, on hindsight, all the years of practice is really just clearing enough obscurations (habit as well as conceptual conditionings).

My feeling is that the next stage is actually about the stabilisation of emptiness.

In my experience, the initial insights will come first. Then there will be followed by cycles that will revisit these insights until a stabilisation of each insight occurs.”

In my experience, after a few months of very intense and blissful non-dual experience after non-dual and anatta realization (the initial months of experience was rather intense and blissful even throughout the rather challenging times in Basic Military Training), the non-dual luminosity and bliss starts to become a little dull, or not as intense, or as blissful. Or rather, it becomes intermittent rather than a constant flow of clarity-bliss. There are times when the intensity is there, and sometimes not so much. The insight is not lost, but sometimes I wonder why has the experience “dimmed” from the full intensity it used to be. One of the reasons is the immaturity of insight, the view has not sunk in deeply enough to uproot all our latent and subconscious conditionings. The latent tendencies are deeply rooted so never underestimate its strength that is affecting our moment to moment perception in everyday life.

Therefore there is no way to avoid this cycling and revisiting of the previous insights, it will help to plant the seed deep into our psyche and uproot all the latent tendencies of the views of inherency and duality. Right now, I can say the experience has stabilized to some extent, not due to practice but because I am no longer affected by dualistic views and tendencies. As dualistic tendencies are cleared, I no longer see any self at all, at any moment there is just this experience manifested by factors like sense faculty, objects, attention, totally exerted in one whole and complete manifestation, then utterly released upon its own inception without trace via its emptiness and impermanence. However the intensity of the experience can still be refined and this takes further practice.

The advise given to me by Thusness was to continue refining the view and meditating everyday (at least 30 minutes of quality sitting dedicated to experiencing non-dual presence). He also asked me not to engage in activities in which the ego strengthens the sense of a center (like arguing and debating in forums which I often do, oops). One must be humble, and let non-dual presence fill my entire existence, relax and let go. After which, with the help of right view, feel whatever arises as the entire universe being totally exerted in this moment of suchness. Do not hold on to anything, be it the non-dual presence, the luminosity, just simply the losing of the sense of self, the inherent center, into this total interpenetration. I must say this advise works very well.

I know many people who have undergone such phases of experience months after their initial realization. In fact I don't know of anyone who doesn't encounter such a situation for themselves. People have asked me how after their initial realization of anatta, that experience seems dulled or lost after a period of time. This entry should hopefully inspire and provide some advice on this matter. So don't feel disappointed if you felt as if your experience is lost or dulled months after the initial insight. It is all part of the process and to be expected. As Thusness said of someone in another forum, "Experience as I told you do tapper off after a 60-90 days period. This is because practitioners tend to focus on the experience rather than view after initial realization. Although he realizes the truth of anatta, the 'dualistic and inherent view' runs far deeper than we think. But he will wake up one day and everything turns effortless and natural and it should be close. The part on the total exertion is still however lacking, there is still inner holding and lingering trace of 'One Mind'."

May all attain to the great stability of the View of this always-already, spontaneously perfected non-dual and empty nature of awareness, and never to lose it again in all lives and realms and states.

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3rd April 2012

Something I wrote to someone on another forum on contemplating anatta:

The core of the matter is simply this investigation on the premise of the sense of I am, to see if there is any validity at all to the sense of self. When we use worldly parlance, we often say "I say, I saw, I thought", its like the whole world and language and thoughts itself, framed up in a dualistic worldview, is constantly reinforcing the sense that "I am". So we want to investigate this view, position, stance of "I am", to see if there is actually any substance to it at all.

Because the conceptual layer is always unknowingly reinforcing a sense of self, in order to investigate, we have to drop our conceptual thoughts with its whole layer of presumptions/conceptions and investigate our own direct experience. This is what LU, RT, Ciaran meant by "look". It is often misunderstood however. It does not mean staring blankly at one spot waiting for some magical insight to arrive. It is not concentration practice. Rather, it means to really investigate and challenge this core sense or position that "I am", "I exist" to see if there is any validity.

An advise I often give is to strip yourself of concepts and just observe nakedly and experience our sensate reality as clearly as possible. It means to see the sights, colours, shapes, forms as clearly and intensely as can be, to hear the sound as clearly and vividly as can be, to experience everything in crystal clarity. Our senses are brimming with clarity. Then, investigate for yourself, is there in this moment of experience a real self? Or is there simply the experience without an observer. In seeing, is there a self? Or is seeing simply the seen (shapes, colours and forms) without seer. Same goes for hearing, smelling, etc... Thinking...

What we felt as some solid entity at the center, or a being inside a solid entity called a body (another falsely constructed image of some solid entity with shapes and forms out of a bunch of disconnected and spontaneous sensations) gets deconstructed through insight by this kind of contemplation which investigates and challenges our baseless constructs like self, body, inside and outside, subject and object, etc etc...

When we say "me" and investigate that, don't we observe that there is simply this everchanging stream of feelings, thoughts, shapes, colours, bird chirping... If we felt there is something else, then try to pin it down and all we find are more thoughts, feelings, sensations... None of which can be pinned down as "I am", "I, me, mine". Even that sense of an observer? That too is more thoughts, sights, sounds, feelings, etc... Isn't it?

Take some time to investigate and see what comes out of it. See if there is a "you" in any shape or form.

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6th April 2012

**No-self does not imply determinism.**

As I wrote to someone:

.....

Yes but not to be mistaken that will has no part in all these. The teaching of anatta or no self does not deny will or the aggregates... The buddha teaches that a sentient being is simply a convention for five aggregates: matter/body, feelings, perception, volition, consciousness. Notice that volition is part of it. This will/volition can be directed towards a wholesome or unwholesome path. However, also remember that the five aggregates are empty of self - and are without agent. Does that mean there is no free will? In a sense yes, but neither does it imply determinism: another dualistic extreme. Free will means subjective controller determines action, determinism means objective world determines subjective experience. In reality there is no subject and object - in thinking just thought, in hearing just sound. But there are requisite conditions for every manifestation. Those conditions can be changed if there is a correct path.

A concrete example: if you ask a beginner to run 2.4km in 9 minutes with an unfit body, that is asking for the impossible. No matter how hard willed is he, he is never going to make it. Why? The current requisite conditions of his body is such that the result of running 9 minutes is impossible. Control, agency, doesn't apply when manifestation always arise due to conditions.

It however also means that if you exercise regularly for months or years, there is no reason the body (conditions) cannot be improved to the degree that running 9 mins is definitely possible. This is what I mean by working with conditions.

So those teachers who say meditation are useless are not understanding latent

tendencies and conditions. They mistook no doership with some kind of fatalism. Every proper practice has its place in working with one's conditions.

Just because there is no self, no doer, doesn't mean my body is fated to be unfit and I can't reach the 9 min. Just because I exercise regularly doesn't mean I am reinforcing the notion of self or doership. In any case, action is always without self.

It also does not mean that "will" has no place at all. "Will" is often misunderstood to be linked to a self or agent that has full control over things, whereas it is simply more manifestation and conditions. Yes, sheer will going against conditions isn't going to work – this is not understanding no-self and dependent origination. But if will is directed properly with correct understanding of no-self and conditionality, at a proper path and practice, it can lead to benefits.

That is why the first teaching of Buddha is the four noble truths: the truth of suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, the way to end suffering. This path arises as a result of his direct insight into no-self and dependent origination.

Like a doctor, you don't tell your patients "you are fated to be ill and sick and in pain, because there is no individual controller, everything is the will of God". That is nonsense. Instead, you diagnose the illness, you seek the cause of illness, you give a treatment that eliminates the cause of illness. There is no self, there is no controller, but there is conditions and manifestation and a way to treat bad conditions. This is the way of the four noble truths.

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14th April 2012

*(Excerpt from Aggi Vacchagotta Sutta)* **Buddha:**"So, Vaccha, I will now question you; reply as you see fit.

"If a fire is burning in front of you, Vaccha, would you know, 'A fire is burning in front of me'?"

"Gotama Sir, if a fire were burning in front of me, I would know, 'A fire burns in front of me.'"

"If you were asked, Vaccha, about the fire burning in front of you, 'Dependent on what, does that fire burn?', how would you reply?"

"If I were asked, Gotama Sir, 'Dependent on what, does that fire burn?', I would reply, 'The fire burns depended on sticks and dry grass.'"

"Vaccha, if the fire in front of you goes out, would you know, 'This fire in front of me has gone out'?"

"Gotama Sir, if the fire in front of me were to go out, I would certainly know, 'This fire in front of me has gone out.'"

“If you were asked, Vaccha, about the fire that has gone out, ‘In which direction did that fire go—to the East, to the West, to the North, to the South?’, how would you reply?”

“Gotama Sir, that does not apply! That fire burned dependent on sticks and dry grass; when they were used up, Gotama Sir, with nothing left to sustain it, the fire just went out.”

“Just so, Vaccha, just so it is with the Tathagata…

……

*(Quotations from Tron: Legacy)*

**Kevin Flynn:** The Miracle…You remember. Isos, isomorphic algorithms, a whole new life form.

**Sam Flynn:** And you created them? (Kevin Flynn laughs)

**Kevin Flynn:** No, no. They manifested, like a flame. They weren’t really, really from anywhere. The conditions were right, and they came into being.

Luminous - alive, cognizant, aware, alert, brilliant, sun-like, clarity, shining forth as countless shapes and forms. **Nothing can be denied.**

Empty - coreless, centerless, selfless, other-less, illusory, hollow, dream-like, like a magician's trick, paintings on water, mirage on the horizon. **Nothing can be asserted.**

….

When we look at a candle, a flame is burning brightly, flickering moment by moment, not having a fixed shape.

We may question, where does the fire come from? Does it come from north? South? East? West?

Does it come from the candle? It would appear so, but before the candle starts burning there is no fire. When the fire starts burning, it appears out of nowhere - the candle and a sudden spark ignites the fire, but the fire came from nowhere - it is merely dependently arisen, without a place of origin - entirely fresh and new.

Where is it? The fire is constantly flickering, cannot catch a location at all. Merely dependently arisen, no substantial core that can be pinned down or located. In fact - try moving your hand across the fire - it's totally hollow and transparent.

Where does it go after the fire is blown out? Does it go north, south, east, west, up or down? Doesn't apply. For what is dependently arisen, ceases upon the cessation of conditions, and is empty of an entity. The notion of an entity that persists and goes somewhere does not apply at all. Fire is empty of IT-ness. There is no fire-ness of fire.

For what dependently originates does not come into being, and what ceases upon the ending of conditions has no destination, nor can it be said that a 'thing' has been 'annihilated'. It simply means the absence of conditions for further arising.

Look at your current experience. How is it any different from flickering fire?

Isn't it the case that whatever you think, see, hear, and smell, are spontaneously appearing out of nowhere (i.e. there is no origin or source, NOT that things arise from a place that is “nowhere”, as if there is an ultimate source that is “the nothingness”, “the awareness” or any of that sort of thing)? That it is constantly flickering, unlocatable, insubstantial? That there is no destination to which things proceed to and remain - rather, they simply cease upon the parting of conditions?

If you are to pay a little more mindfulness to your experience, it will not be difficult to directly observe your experiential reality constantly dissolving moment by moment like your fingers drawing on a pond utterly vanishing without a trace upon its inception.

We however have ideas of substantial reality that exists objectively, causing obscuration and proliferation that grasps at solid self and things.

For example we imagine that there is an observer, a self, that is peering out through the eyes at an objective world. The objective world is seen to consist of solid entities and objects each with their own inherent characteristics.

We reason to ourselves that if we close our eyes and open them again, we will again see similar shapes and colours. We then reason to ourselves that these shapes and colours are inherently present as the characteristics of objects regardless of whether we are present to observe the objects.

We fail to consider that for example, dogs see no colours, beings of other realms can see something different, and if we look at the quantum level we see mostly void. We fail to consider also that 'colours, shapes, and forms' are merely our visual experience arisen due to specific causes and conditions. There is no such thing as vision without colours, shapes, and forms. And there is no colours, shapes, and forms without vision. They are synonymous. In any case, they are simply dependently arisen experiences. Our framework of there being an observer observing the world of objects are baseless, no such delineation can be found in our investigation. There is no seer that is seeing objects, nor objects that stay the same and exists apart from our observation of them. There is rather simply a wide array of appearances, which are dependently arisen but no solid entities can be posited or established whatsoever.Whatever object we investigate to see if they could be characteristics ‘belonging’ to truly existent objects are found to be more of the same hollow and substanceless, dependently arisen appearance, like an empty shell which only 'appears' but do not pertain to any true existence or core. Being dependently arisen, nothing whatsoever exhibits the characteritics of inherent existence - core-like, singular, partless, independent, unchanging. There are no objects behind the colours, shapes, forms that we experience moment to moment... nor a seer behind the seeing.

It is also not the case that objects pass through our field of awareness or experience. To say that "things arise in awareness" or "things arise from awareness" is fundamentally wrong already since it implies there is "things" that can arise and pass away within some unchanging "awareness", or FROM some ultimate source. But actually both "things" and "awareness" are merely conventions that point to a single self-luminous experience. In actuality there is no 'awareness' other than what is seen, heard, smell, taste, touched, thought, awareness is simply the self-aware, self-luminous quality of each experience, and there is no sight, sound, smell, ... etc that is not the self-luminous display of mind. In short, there is nothing apart from the suchness of every manifestation. And we also realize that there is no real origin (that appearances do not 'come from' somewhere, or come from a 'nowhere' or come from an ultimate Source or 'from awareness', but are merely dependently arisen), no real birth, no real place of abidance, no real destination or cessation (for what has never arisen). Language and thought falsely construes artificial dualities and pin down true existence of self and things. Framing our experience in these false constructs causes confusion, ignorance, clinging and suffering. Awareness is empty of any intrinsic identity - being merely a convention, like everything else are also conventionally designated without any substantial ground to be found.

Thusness: "The teachings of dependent origination, anatta, and emptiness do not require coming and going nor in and out. There is no what that comes from a where, it merely manifests when condition is. Neither is 'thought' inside, nor outside an 'entity'. It merely manifests and subsides into nowhere. This is the way it is. Empty of inherent essence".

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20th April 2012

Someone asked me if they realized no-self, what use is there for any further practice or contemplation?

My answer is this:

There is no "me" to begin with, everything has been without self - from suffering, ignorance, to wisdom and liberation. Yet, suffering is (no sufferer), the path is, no wanderer, nirvana is, no enterer. So practice goes on but without the delusion of there being a meditator. Refining of view goes on, without the delusion of self. And every moment is the actualization of the view in real-time.

But do not be mistaken that "since I realized no-self, no practice is needed" or "no meditation is needed". For merely having some realization, even of no-self, is not enough to liberate all latent tendencies and traces. For if we are honest and observe carefully, sense of self still arises, so the practice is still ongoing. So contrary to practice "reinforcing sense of self", practice done correctly is done for the purpose of liberating all sense of self and attachments.

Do not underestimate nor overlook our latent tendencies, one of the things Thusness asked me to do is to experience the power of latent tendencies, to have direct insight into it (and not just put a label "tendencies" but to really realize and experience how it affects our moment to moment living). Otherwise whatever insights we have are simply "touching the surface", shallow, and we are still far from being free of the bondage of afflictions. Do not be afflicted by "transcendental blindless" and fail to see that as Thusness puts it, our karmic propensities are as amazing as our Buddha-nature.

Traditionally speaking, someone who is at the stage of no-more-learning is an arhat, for him all defilements, latent tendencies to grasp and all remaining conceit of 'I Am' (the remnant sense of self even after realization of anatta in stream entry) have been permanently eradicated/uprooted.

In the Khemaka Sutta, a venerable monk explains how to overcome the last vestige of a sense of self that lingers despite having an initial realization, by contemplating on the rise and fall of the aggregates:
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.089.than.html

This is akin to Thusness's advise to me after my initial realization of anatta:"*Deeper clinging to a Self is not washed away with the non-dual insight. There must be further integration of the 'non-dual' experience into this arising and passing away, this impermanent nature, to dissolve the illusionary sense of self, anger, emotion, pride even the non-dual presence that we treasure so much; let whatever arises goes, be it during the waking, dreaming or deep sleep state. There will then come a time where a practitioner realizes the same 'taste' of the 3 states as there is no holding of the non-dual presence and all experiences turn natural, effortless and self-liberating."*

As can we see, this form of contemplation can remove all afflictions and defilements. For example, Thusness once informed me from his personal experience that one can overcome sexual desires after realizing/experiencing the "arising and passing away" of phenomena.

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22nd April 2012

Last year, a forummer from the NewBuddhist forum penetrated within a year the realization of I AM to non dual and anatta. He is an avid reader of my blog and writings. Thusness wrote the following pointers for him:

*There are several points that maybe of help to Taiyaki:*

*1. First there must be a deep conviction that arising does not need an essence. That view of subjective essence is simply a convenient view.*

*2. First emptying of self/Self does not necessarily lead to illusion-like experience of reality. It does however allows experience to become vivid, luminous, direct and non-dual.*

*3. First emptying may also lead a practitioner to be attached to an 'objective' world or turns physical. The 'dualistic' tendency will resurface after a period of few months so it is advisable to monitor one's progress for a few months.*

*4. Second emptying of phenomena will turn experience illusion-like but take note of how emptying of phenomena is simply extending the same "emptiness view" of Self/self.*

*5. From these experiences and realizations, contemplate what is meant by "thing", what is meant by mere construct and imputation.*

*6. "Mind and body drop" are simply dissolving of mind and body constructs. If one day the experience of anatta turns a practitioner to the attachment of an 'objective and actual' world, deconstruct "physical".*

*7. There is a relationship between "mental constructs", energy, luminosity and weight. A practitioner will experience a release of energies, freedom, clarity and feel light and weightless deconstructing 'mental constructs'.*

*8. Also understand how the maha experience of interpenetration and non-obstruction is related to deconstructions of inherent view.*

*9. No body, no mind, no dependent origination, no nothing, no something, no birth, no death. Profoundly deconstructed and emptied! Just vivid shimmering appearances as Primordial Suchness in one whole seamless unobstructed-interpenetration.*

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17th May 2012

Ilona (facebook open discussion topic): “Are you awake and how do you know?”

My reply: “Wakeful is in contrast to asleep... The experience of wakefulness is simply the absence of delusion, delusion being the grasping onto false delusional constructs and views, the sense that "I am", and that "everything is (exists)". When both subjective self and objective phenomena are deconstructed, experience is shimmering appearances, lights, sounds, colors and rays, a radiant dimensionless display without a center or reference. This is the experience of awakeness, yet it is unselfconscious of being "awake" unless it is referenced and contrasted to a previous state of ignorance.

Today I realized how different my life has become only when I suddenly remembered how I used to have great emotions in certain "negative" circumstances (arising due to

dualistic vision)... Those are gone now, replaced by the direct and immediate experience of life in its diversity, and it is only in this contrast that I recognised how much has changed."

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2nd June 2012

Like always, Ted Biringer have interesting and well written postings.

Just like to add a short comment:

*Dogen here relates nyo ("like"), to ze ("this"), evoking the familiar Zen association nyoze ("like this," "thusness"). He goes on to draw the implication that "like this" signifies not mere resemblance but the nondual identity of symbol and symbolized. He thus rejects any dualistic notion of metaphor or simile (hiyi), whereby an image points to, represents, or approximates something other than itself. Rather, for Dogen, the symbol itself is the very presence of total dynamism, i.e., it presents.*

~ Hee-Jin Kim, *Flowers of Emptiness,* note 8, p.251

I can think of one example: people liken "Buddha-nature" to be "like the moon".

In actuality, the very appearance of the moon is buddha-nature, it is not that there is some hidden thing called buddha-nature which merely resembles the moon. The moon is buddha-nature, the buddha-nature is the moon, the nondual identity of symbol and symbolized. Or as Dogen says, the moon-face buddha and sun-face buddha, the whole body is the whole moon. There is nothing hidden or latent about it, there is no hidden noumenon in which phenomenon or symbols can "point to" or "hint at". The symbol, e.g. the moon, is itself the very presence of total dynamism. Furthermore, manifestation does not 'come from' Buddha-nature, nor does Buddha-nature 'contains' manifestation, Buddha-nature is empty of a self but conventionally imputed on the "myriad forms". Likewise for Truth, Awareness, etc.

In fact everything is like this.

Scent of a flower is not scent of "a flower", the scent does not represent or approximate something other than itself but is a complete reality (well not exactly a 'reality' but rather a whole and complete manifestation/appearance which is empty and unreal) in itself: the scent IS the flower, wheel of a car is not wheel of "a car", the car IS the wheel. Wheel cannot be said to "come from a car" or "be contained by a car". The word "car" is a mere imputation, not a true reality that can be established. "Self" and aggregates are likewise.

Seen in such manner, all constructs are deconstructed and what's left is just the shimmering "dream-like" (coreless, empty, illusory), luminous appearances which is all there is, but not to be confused with a dreamy state.

Anyway this is Ted's new

post: http://dogenandtheshobogenzo.blogspot.sg/2012/06/buddha-dharma-dream-in-dream.html

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3rd June 2012

I have read many teachings on consciousness as a potentiality. Thusness told me a few weeks ago, in my own words, that to speak about Consciousness as a potentiality is ok and good (especially for beginners), but we must also proceed to understand Consciousness in terms of imputation – ultimately empty. Perhaps this is why the Buddha admonished Bhikkhu Sati for holding onto a wrong view of consciousness, and taught him a long discourse on the six consciousness ('consciousnes' is thus a mere imputation on a conglomerate of arising), each of which arising and passing according to causes and conditions. *("Haven't I taught, in various ways that consciousness is dependently arisen. Without a cause, there is no arising of consciousness." – Buddha to Sati)*

I was reflecting on the idea of "potentiality" – it used to be that consciousness was seen as the all-potential, the source and the substance of everything. Now it is seen that if anything, potentiality lies in all causes and conditions. All causes and conditions – the feet, the floor, the skin, contact, attention, etc… coming together and mysteriously manifest an awareness of touch sensation. It is not so much that everything arises "out of" some origin or source, but rather, all the causes and conditions are the potentials that manifest this pure touch consciousness. The whole universe is the potentiality.

Consciousness is the "effect", the manifestation, in which causes and conditions are the potentiality. Of course, consciousness is both effect and cause, as consciousness also serves as the condition for other manifestations so it too is part of the potentiality, yet it is entirely a causal process of causes and conditions manifesting this moment of suchness as this vivid shimmering, nothing to do with an ultimate source or origin.

It is not that there is a consciousness here that reflects and manifest objects as if it were an unchanging mirror underlying and giving rise to reflections, but rather consciousness IS the reflection – the images IS the mirror, which is the total exertion of the universe, of causality. In this, no hierarchy is set up – there is no ultimate source interacting with secondary conditions, rather, everything is transcended into suchness, which emancipates – or self-liberates, of its own accord.

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10th June 2012

Some messages from **Thusness** to me:

The next phase after realizing the purpose of two fold emptiness, you must relax into non action and experience the maha experience of suchness, where the mind, body, self are totally transcended into this oceanic pure seamless interpenetration. You do not need to concentrate or do anything...simply sit, relax, do nothing and allow natural integration of your empty view into whatever arises.

...

I do not see practice apart from realizing the essence and nature of awareness. The only difference is seeing Awareness as an ultimate essence or realizing awareness as this Seamless activity that fills the entire Universe. When we say there is no scent of a flower, the scent is the flower... .that is because the mind, body, universe are all together deconstructed into this single flow, this scent and only this... Nothing else. That is the Mind that is no mind. There is no an Ultimate Mind that transcends anything in the Buddhist enlightenment. The mind Is this very manifestation of total exertion...wholly thus. Therefore there is always no mind, always only this vibration of moving train, this cooling air of the aircon, this breath.. The question is after the 7 phases of insights can this be realized and experience and becomes the ongoing activity of practice in enlightenment and enlightenment in practice -- practice-enlightenment.

…

I have told you about the disease of non-conceptuality (see: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2011/08/disease-of-non-conceptuality.html ), you need to seek a balance. Otherwise, it will limit your progress into phase 6 and especially 7. View must be fully integrated into your practice for you to understand what the maha experience is. Many do not understand the implication of right view yet. You do not go non conceptual and realize the maha experience of suchness. It is just like how dualistic and inherent view has integrate into our moment to moment of experience, and we feel and behave the world is really dual, as if the world is really dual. If a practitioner is simply at "in hearing, only sound and no hearer", he can still get stuck at no self and simply be awed by the grandeur of the PCE. This is different from understanding the empty of self. Understanding "emptiness" requires you to understand the analogy given by the h2o YouTube (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2012/05/is-there-you.html) and more.

It also requires to penetrate into DO by deeper investigation of the nature of experience. Where does sound go? Is there a "going, coming", is there a "here and there" if sound, is there a voidness where sound return to? Then what does it mean by "no going anywhere" and seeing DO. Then we begin to understand the view of activities and actions and when we see everywhere the seemless integration and total exertions, then maha experience will become more and more obvious and effortless. At this phase there is no self, no dual... All these are already implied... They are the content of emptiness.

You should look at few aspects:

1. Seeing inherent object as a mere convention collating... If a practitioner keeps penetrating whatever arises this way, experience will turn groundless and illusion–like

2. Seeing clearly in non dual mode but deep in us realize that this is merely a dependent originated manifestation, nothing ultimate and solidly real

3. You see "no going, no coming, no here, no there" and penetrate deeply into the seamless interpenetration of activities leading to the maha experience

Until this empty nature of whatever arises is intuit in our moment to moment of experience, you can then feel the total exertion and self liberating aspect of experience.

…

**John**: What you lack now is feel with the entire body mind until body-mind is entirely forgotten, deconstructed and enter into total exertion all things. There is neither you, body, mind, environment nor super awareness... just fully open up and experience the Beauty of this total exertion of suchness non dually. No body, mind, self can still remain at pure awareness level. The measurement is to total giving up so that the experience of how immensely is this web of interpenetration is experienced as this moment of arising is important. You need to practice with the view in mind to see the interconnection, not non-conceptuality of whatever arises.

There are two practices, one is feel the intensity of this moment of arise till there is no mind, body, self… directly right into the place where there is no heat or cold**(note: see glossary)**, the intensity of our luminous essence. The other is holding the view in mind till body, mind, self, universe is being deconstructed in this immerse interconnectedness. They are different, yet both practices are equally important. One is total non conceptuality, one is full integration of the view interconnectedness. In non conceptuality of in hearing, just sound...there is no mind, no self, no hearer, just this sound. This universe is filled with the arising sound... Clear vivid and non-dual... you practice the intensity of luminous essence. But hearing sound, deep in you, you see the empty nature of arise, you see the stick, the drum, the ear drums, the sound ... This requires view... And not non conceptuality. If you continue to see this perpetually, then the mind, body, universe construct will also be dissolved and experience turn maha and dimensionless. Get it?

**AEN**: I think so. When I contemplated on d.o. There was a glimpse like all the entities deconstructed into a seamless activity.

**John**: Yes. But this is different from anatta, and the practice is different. You may not even experience non dual. But the practice must be integrated into the luminous essence. Because you cannot correctly discern the two, that is why I am pointing out to you. But ultimately all must be integrated, the view, the experience and realization

**AEN**: Oic.. does the maha eventually lead to nonconceptuality too? Maha is nonconceptual right?

**John**: No… you do not have a clear understanding. It is not important whether there is conceptuality or not. Didn't I tell you that? What is important is oneness of action, view and realization. Like you chant... everything is forgotten into the samadhi of chanting

There's something I did not discuss in this book so far. It is the discovery of 'nothingness', so called 'Entering into Nothingness' or Stage 3 in Thusness's map of awakening. There are many practitioners who enter into this state and perceive it to be an absolute. Recently, a well known teacher talked about this. This triggered some of my comments in another forum.

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**Thusness** (2008): "Associating 'death of I' with vivid luminosity of your experience is far too early. This will lead you into erroneous views because there is also the experience of practitioners by way of complete surrendering or elimination (dropping) like Taoist practitioners. An experience of deep bliss that is beyond that of what you experienced can occur. But the focus is not on luminosity but effortlessness, naturalness and spontaneity. In complete giving up, there is no 'I' ; it is also needless to know anything; in fact 'knowledge' is considered a stumbling block. The practitioner drops away mind, body, knowledge...everything. There is no insight, there is no luminosity there is only total allowing of whatever that happens, happen in its own accord. All senses including consciousness are shut and fully absorbed. Awareness of 'anything' is only after emerging from that state.

One is the experience of vivid luminosity while the other is a state of oblivion. It is therefore not appropriate to relate the complete dissolving of 'I' with what you experienced alone."

This is the description of Stage 3, which as Thusness have said is the state where even beingness or consciousness enters oblivion.

When you realize Stage 5, I.e. anatta, then there is no more hierarchy, no more making nothingness-prior-to-I-am (stressed in Nisargadatta's teachings) as the purest state.

Whether I AM, nothingness, or sensate manifestation, all are equally pure. There is no purest absolute state. This is realized only when you see that always already, in seeing just the seen, no seer. Always already, there is no I, so there is no entry and exit, 'I am' identity is not only absent in samadhi state or a purest Absolute, but is already so in all manifestations.

And yes, Thusness too have said before that Nisargadatta is describing stage 3, and leads students to I AM first then to the nothingness.

> *"On the Thusness map, I see no reason why Stage 5 and 3 couldn't happen in the reverse order.*
>
> *I say this because it may be inaccurate to imply that Mr. Massaro is "only" at Stage 3.*
>
> *My experience first confirmed that there is just experience and no observer of*

*experience "In the seeing, just the seen". From this, my mind assumed experience. It is only recently that my mind feels like it has confirmed(?) non-experience."*

Yes, there is no fixed linear way it is experienced. In Bentinho Massaro's case, his progress is from Stage 1 and 2 to 4 (One Mind) then into 3. The problem is when there is Absolutization of something as the true subject which as Thusness rightly said is due to the immaturity of insight (into anatta, into the three dharma seals, into emptiness and d.o.).

Whether it is the I AM taken as true subject, or non-dual awareness taken as true subject, or nothingness taken as true subject. (True subject as 'what I truly am', unchanging, absolute, independent)

All these means one has not arisen insight into Anatta (Stage 5). When you realize Stage 5, everything becomes flat and Nothingness is no more purer or absolute than I AM or a sight. There is no 'I' being imputed on sense perception nor on nothingness. Nothing is I, me, mine, everything is impermanent, arising and ceasing, and dependently originated. At this point, there is no more seeking after a pure subject, and the 'dispassion for consciousness' (his tiredness of experiencing) equally applies for 'dispassion for nothingness'. There is no longer *anything* (including nothing) to abide in - whether beingness, non-dual consciousness, or nothingness, everything is being self-released (not by dissociation which is dualistic) and YET everything is vividly present. As Thusness said - the one taste of oblivion and presence, vividly present and gone thoroughly.

So someone at Stage 5 may have knowledge of I AM, of non-dual consciousness, of nothingness, yet there is no hierarchy - nothing is purer than another, nothing is more 'self-less' than other as everything is empty of self, empty of I, me, mine. There is absolutely no absolute ;)

Someone realizing I AM may think - only the I AM/Eternal Witness is real and is the real self. Someone at non-dual may think, oh that was a wrong identification - consciousness has never been divided and there is no 'witness' behind experience, the one consciousness is both source and substance of all appearances. Someone experiencing nothingness may think - oh all consciousness are all mere experiences and appearances, they are not who I am, only the nothingness prior to consciousness is Absolute and what I truly am. Now I am tired of all experiences.

Then one realizes the *empty nature*, and exclaims, oh! All along there never was an I, all states are equally *empty* of a self... at this point, there is no more seeking after experiences (previously identified as I), nor seeking after nothingness (previously identified as I) which is now recognized as still another transient state - this is not about experiences, nor nothingness, NOR about transcending both, it is about realizing the empty NATURE of all states and experiences as being empty of any I, me, mine, that there is no true subject to begin with... all these are only arising and passing states - from beingness to non-dual consciousness to nothingness. There is no more crystalizing anything or nothing into an absolute. This leads to dispassion, to release.

All sensations are still implicitly non-dual (not because there is a non-dual absolute that is 'one with' sensations, but that there is no subject to begin with that could be separate from or be inseparable from these transient, passing self-luminous sensations), but nothing substantial, and auto-released.

In other words, **Thusness**: *all those practitioners even after non-dual experience and still sink back to the Subject, will have the tendency of skewing towards the stage 3.*

Also,

**AEN**: he's saying must drop off conscious presence also?

**Thusness**: Yes

**AEN**: icic..

**Thusness**: But that is not the most essential state.

**Thusness**: It is necessary.

**AEN**: necessary or not necessary?

**AEN**: oh you mean necessary but not the most essential state

**Thusness**: Yes

**AEN**: icic..

**Thusness**: That is not the absolute state

**AEN**: oic..

**Thusness**: That is just another state That is equally empty

**AEN**: icic..

**Thusness**: That too will pass due to its emptiness nature and no purer than that 'I AM' state.

(Source: 2008 conversations with Thusness, excerpts in https://www.box.com/s/f86a921dfa62ccd0ca7b )

……

What Bentinho said is still within the framework of a subjective self. When anatta is realized, then there is no state or non-state that is seen as a 'you'. So, Consciousness, previously identified as 'You' or the 'ultimate source' - is seen to be simply a state that is arising and passing, nothing ultimate or unchanging. The oblivion of nothingness, previously identified as 'You' or the 'ultimate source' - is seen to be another state that is arising and passing, which is no more absolute or essential than any other - nothing ultimate, truly existing or unchanging. There never was or is a 'You' - ever - whether in

conscious waking life (in seeing always just the seen, no seer) or in the oblivion of nothingness which is then falsely identified as the true subject due to a faulty framework. Everything arises due to conditions (including consciousness) and ceases upon the cessation of conditions, there is absolutely nothing that arises 'from' a 'source' - ultimately nothing has arisen and nothing has ceased because there isn't a 'thing' - everything is completely empty illusory, including consciousness, nothingness, beingness, etc of course.

Check out the first sutta of the middle length discourses of Buddha, MN1, including the commentary of Thanissaro Bhikkhu at the top which is well-written:
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.001.than.html

Mulapariyaya Sutta: The Root Sequence

In this sutta, the Buddha talked to those who saw infinite consciousness, nothingness, etc as the ultimate source of everything. He criticized this view and asked his students (who were previously from the Samkya lineage and were taught an ultimate source) not to view phenomena this way, and this is the ONLY discourse throughout the many hundreds whereby his students were "displeased" by his teaching (as stated there), however in time to come these students too became liberated and saw the truth in the Buddha's words for themselves.

Now, I am not saying these experiences and insights... into consciousness, nothingness, and so forth are unimportant. In fact they are valuable and important however without the proper view and realization of the twofold emptiness, we will still be as attached or binded - previously binded to form, now binded to the formless. Recently Rob Burbea's article is posted here, I scanned through the article again (as that was a long time ago) and found some things he said which I feel is relevant:
http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2009/07/realizing-nature-of-mind.html

Rob Burbea: “One time the Buddha went to a group of monks and he basically told them not to see Awareness as The Source of all things. So this sense of there being a vast awareness and everything just appears out of that and disappears back into it, beautiful as that is, he told them that’s actually not a skillful way of viewing reality. And that is a very interesting sutta, because it’s one of the only suttas where at the end it doesn’t say the monks rejoiced in his words.

This group of monks didn’t want to hear that. They were quite happy with that level of insight, lovely as it was, and it said the monks did not rejoice in the Buddha’s words. (laughter) And similarly, one runs into this as a teacher, I have to say. This level is so attractive, it has so much of the flavor of something ultimate, that often times people are unbudgeable there.

In the Dzogchen tradition, there’s a very beautiful saying – very simple but very beautiful. And it says, “trust your experience, but keep refining your view.” Trust your experience, but keep refining your view - there’s a lot of wisdom in that, a lot of wisdom. One of my teachers years ago, when I was describing some of these states to him and questioning, “Is this right? Is this real? Doesn’t seem …” And he said to me actually, “Get

attached, Rob. Get attached there, slow down, hang out." Of course, that was very surprising to hear. "Really?"

We need to actually hang out in these states, because through time they work their way into the selves and into the view, and they begin transforming the heart and transforming the view long-term. In terms of freedom, in terms of opening, in terms of love. They really have that power. So it's interesting. You get different personalities.

People who want to park the bus there, and build the house, and arrive and finish there. Not with the kind of agitated impetus to keep questioning. And other people who want to move through too quick, it's just different personalities. So one needs to get attached but not stop there. "

…

(She says she agrees with not taking 'vast awareness' as source asked about the relation of nothingness and Buddhism)

I wrote: the discourse by Buddha is called the Root Sequence. As Ven. Thanissaro pointed out, "…This school had its beginnings in the thought of Uddalaka, a ninth-century B.C. philosopher who posited a "root": an abstract principle out of which all things emanated and which was immanent in all things. Philosophers who carried on this line of thinking offered a variety of theories, based on logic and meditative experience, about the nature of the ultimate root and about the hierarchy of the emanation. Many of their theories were recorded in the Upanishads and eventually developed into the classical Samkhya system around the time of the Buddha."

In this discourse, the Buddha teaches us all dimensions of existence - from gross (material elements, human dimension, dimension of the gods, etc) - to the subtle dimension and subtlest dimension pertaining to infinite space, infinite consciousness.... and so on. Each of these dimension could be viewed wrongly via a false framework which imputes an ultimate Self, an ultimate Source, in which things emanates from. Each dimension is being refuted, being deconstructed, by the Buddha and we are told in each instance not to view them unskillfully (in terms of self, source, etc).

The vast awareness (infinite consciousness) is not the only dimension that the Buddha said we should not view as an ultimate source or a Self. After the dimension of infinite consciousness, he told us not to view the dimension of nothingness as an ultimate source or Self. After the dimension of nothingness, when the subtle trace of perception vanishes and one enters the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception (still a conditioned state), the Buddha asked us not to view such dimension as an ultimate source or Self.

And by true wisdom into the impermanent, unsatisfactory and self-less nature where pure Subjectivity is fully deconstructed, one through this right wisdom abandons all craving and attachment for everything - gross to subtle to subtlest. What is Nirvana? Nirvana is defined by Buddha to be the Cessation of Craving. It is not a form-based state, nor is it a formless state or reality, it is simply the abandonment, the termination, of

craving, proliferation, ignorance, and attachments. This unbinding, called Nirvana, is the Highest in the sense that there is nothing beyond Nirvana - but it too was also instructed by Buddha NOT to be viewed as an ultimate Source, as an ultimate Self.

So yes, "keep the experience but refine the view" is a very very apt advise. Because there is nothing that can be denied about experience - yet our view, which is dualistic and inherent, which posits an ultimate existent, ultimate Self, an ultimate source, needs to be replaced by the right view of anatta, emptiness, and dependent origination... initially it may be an intellectual understanding (just as anything else will be at the beginning) but when direct realization of right view arises, this is where a purification of view happens, and by this purification of view the termination of our fetters and afflictions can happen - fetters being the latent tendency towards grasping, craving, and identifying.

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13th June 2012

Real enlightenment is irreversible. Recently I have heard some people spouting the wrong understanding of enlightenment as a “reversible state” or a state you can shift in and out of. For example, they might say that a person may have the sudden understanding of emptiness and thus become a stream enterer or a 1st bhumi bodhisattva, but maybe another day he “lose” the insight and returned to being a normal unenlightened being. Or a person may achieve a state which is with reduced or absence of mental afflictions and grasping and therefore become a once returner, non returner, or even an arahant, or a 2nd bhumi (onwards)… but then another day maybe he lose that enlightened state and returned to being angry or bad tempered. Or that on one day one may be a liberated arahant, and another day be just another horny guy lusting for the hot model on TV.

This is wrong. Having a temporary state of clarity or calmness has nothing to do with enlightenment, which is permanent. In my experience, enlightenment is an irreversible realization, and any further shifts in terms of awakening are all permanent, the result of deep wisdom that burns away our latent tendencies or ignorance.

And it is not only I who said it: the Buddha have already addressed such wrong views more than 2500 years ago. Buddha describes liberation as "unshakeable", not a state that can fall away, that "it is not possible that the bhikhu should fall from the timeless release of mind".

Furthermore, in MN 64, the Buddha denounced the idea that enlightenment could be a temporary state by using the example of a toddler: “Malunkhyaputta, to whom do you know me preaching, the lower bonds of the sensual world in this manner. Wouldn’t the ascetics of other sects find fault with this foolish example. To a toddler, who moves about with difficulty, there is not even a self. How could a view arise about a self?”

In other words, if you say that enlightenment is simply a temporary state – without a sense of self, or without afflictions, or without thoughts, how is this any different from a

baby? The baby would have been the most enlightened person in the world if this were the case, but it is not true.

The Buddha later goes on to say, “Ananda, the learned noble disciple who has seen noble ones, and Great Men, clever in their Teaching and trained in their Teaching abides with a mind not overcome with the view of a self. He knows the escape from the arisen view of a self, as it really is. His view of the self, **fades together with the latent tendencies**.”

In other words, it is not only the temporary fading away of the sense of self, but that the “latent tendencies that give rise to the sense of self” is uprooted permanently, never to allow the sense of self to arise again. Or in the words of the Buddha, it is “destroyed at the root, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.” The Buddha explains that the removal of “fetters” is not merely the disappearance or absence of afflictions like ill will and so on. Fetter is defined by Buddha as such, "An untaught ordinary man who disregards noble ones … lives with his heart possessed and enslaved by the embodiment view, by uncertainty, by misapprehension of virtue and duty, by lust for sensuality, and by ill will, and he does not see how to escape from them when they arise; these, when they are habitual and remain uneradicated in him, are called the more immediate fetters." **Therefore, fetter does not simply mean sense of self, ill will, desire, etc as manifested, but it is that it becomes “habitual” as a latent tendency in him – and such latent tendencies, though not manifested in infants, are present even in infants as a karmic potential waiting to ripen in future. This is why a baby, despite not having lust or even a sense of self, nonetheless cannot be said to be free from fetters.**

The uprooting and permanent elimination of craving, aggression and delusion is the purpose of the dharma, and there are four progressive stages from stream entry to the state of an arahant where these afflictions are irreversibly removed by the uprooting of latent tendencies through real wisdom. When you cut off the leaves, it will still grow back, but when you uproot the plant from its roots, there is no possibility for future growth again. Likewise, afflictions and suffering may be temporarily suppressed in peak experiences or states of samadhi/absorption, but it is through awakening that they are burnt away from its foundations permanently.

I am writing this so that people do not heed the words of those ignorant of the nature of enlightenment. Real enlightenment is NOT a peak experience, it is NOT a temporary or reversible state which you can go in and out of. This is why real wisdom is important – not merely peak experiences. Only real wisdom can end afflictions permanently through the removal of ignorance.

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17th June 2012

**Buddha’s Teachings and Pragmatic Dharma**

Buddha’s wisdom is truly deep and I am spending time now to read through all his discourses. My study recommendation: start with "What The Buddha Taught" by

Walpola Rahula, then “In the Buddha’s Words”, and follow up with “The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha”, both translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi. There are other great ones from the Pali and Mahayana canon, but these few books alone should keep you busy for a while. Keep in mind: the Buddhist canon in total is 11 times the size of the Christian bible. It is unfortunate that not as many Buddhists have these suttas/sutras in hand, in comparison to Christians who all (those that I know of) seem to have a copy of the bible in their hands. I think, especially if you are Buddhist (but of course even if you are not!), there is no reason why you are not studying The Buddha’s teachings, which is the true gold standard of spiritual teachings in the world, incomparable by others indeed, and not because I am biased. Anyway, Thusness, who was able to be greatly enlightened without the personal guidance of a living teacher due to his sharp capacity and wisdom, still acknowledged the Buddha as being the sole reason why he was able to attain such deep wisdom. He attributed his wisdom to having faith in and taking Buddha’s words seriously (otherwise he would have gotten stuck in the earlier phases of insight), and he considered Buddha to be his own teacher. So,having learnt from Thusness myself, I think going to the source is a good idea, i.e. to familiarize with all the Buddha’s teachings. Thusness has collected all the four nikayas [collections] from the pali canon (majjhima nikaya, anguttara nikaya, samyutta nikaya, digha nikaya) plus some other mahayana scriptures... I think this shows his deep faith (well not exactly a mere belief-based kind of faith, but rather, a kind of confidence based on experience) in Buddha. I only have MN now (figured that by the time I finished, they may come out a newer edition, so will not buy all at once) and it already is taking me a long to read as each nikaya can be over a thousand pages.

That being said, I should also mention that I probably wouldn’t be as attracted to Buddha’s teachings if you passed me the books earlier in my path. My path was focused on Advaita (despite my being “formally” Buddhist, my studies are not restricted to Buddhism) only until more recent times (like, late 2010). I spent lots of time studying Advaita teachings – which was definitely relevant and helpful for me at that time, since that was my path – I was practicing self-inquiry for almost two years to realize the I AMness, for example. If you asked me to read the Pali canon, I would not be so interested, as the Buddha wasn’t talking so much about I AMness or self-inquiry. Then later, my interest expanded to other non-dual teachings – from neo-Advaita to Zen and Dzogchen. I was also interested in the teachings of “Actual Freedom”for a period of time in 2010. But recently, I found that the Buddha’s teachings in the scriptures resonates incredibly with my understanding and experience. So I am quite attracted to it at this moment.

Note that I am not trying to tell you which teaching is better for you as only you can know for yourself. At each particular phase of our practice, we may find certain teachings more resonating or relevant. And my advise is to follow the principles of “pragmatic dharma” – go for whatever works. If you are doing self-inquiry, studying Ramana Maharshi’s teachings is quite helpful, as I have suggested earlier. This is just an example.

**Update: Something I wrote in facebook -**

**…**from an experiential perspective, I and Thusness have very great appreciation for the original teachings of Buddha. That is, as our insights develope, we begin to appreciate more and more and see the accuracy and depth of the Buddha's teachings.

Even the teaching of anatta and dependent origination just fits so clearly in our experience.

As Thusness said in 2007:

**Thusness**: you see, it takes one to go through such phases, from "I AM" to Non-dual to isness then to the very very basic of what buddha taught...
**Thusness**: can you see that?
**Thusness**: the more one experience, the more truth one sees in what buddha taught in the most basic teaching.
**Thusness**: whatever longchen (moderator simpo) experience is not because he read what buddha taught, but because he really experience it.

.....

**Thusness**: Whenever we read the most basic teachings of Buddha, it is most profound.
**Thusness**: Don't ever say we understand it.

**Thusness**: Especially when it comes to DO.
**Thusness**: which is the most profound truth in buddhism.
**Thusness**: never say that we understand it or have experienced it.
**Thusness**: even after few years of experience in non-duality, we can't understand it.
**Thusness**: The one great zen master that came closest to it is Dogen.
**Thusness**: that sees temporality as buddha nature.
**Thusness**: that see transients as living truth of dharma and the full manifestation of buddha nature.

.....

**Thusness**: so although we may think that we have understood the 5 aggregates and 18 dhatus, we really don't
**Thusness**: it may sound simple and belongs to the basic teaching of buddhism, but the most chim (profound).
**Thusness**: you need to experience it and after many cycles of refinements to know.
**Thusness**: so don't just brush through the statements

.....

**Thusness**: the seals (the three dharmas seals - impermanence, suffering, no-self that buddha taught) is even more important than the buddha in person.
**Thusness**: even buddha when misunderstood it becomes (a deluded) sentient (being). :)

**2nd Update:**

Thusness said,

**John**: Do not always think of shortest path, [or the] highest and most direct teachings, teachings that tell us to be non-conceptual and free from views and realized our [luminous] Essence directly -- all these can be misleading and extreme... bear this in mind. By now you should have realized the importance of the basics, of going through step by step. This is having doubtless faith in the teaching [and] of returning to the basic [teachings of the Buddha] from deepening realization and experience.

When you realized from maturing your realization and deepening your experience, the basic practice becomes natural and effortless. How could it be otherwise, for Buddha only taught what he realized.

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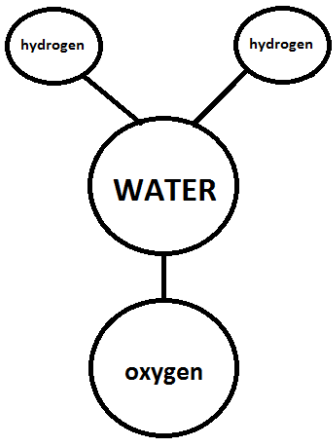
17th June 2012

**Eternalism, Nihilism and the Middle Way**

The Buddha rejected the extremes of eternalism and nihilism and taught the middle way which is free from extremes. This post examines what each of these means with pictorial aid.

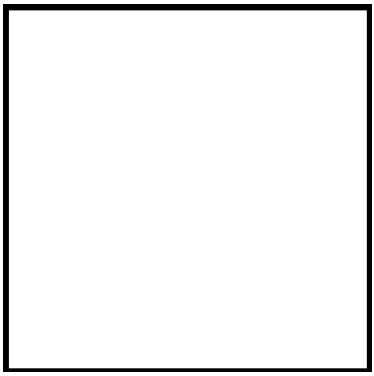
**Water**

**Eternalism**



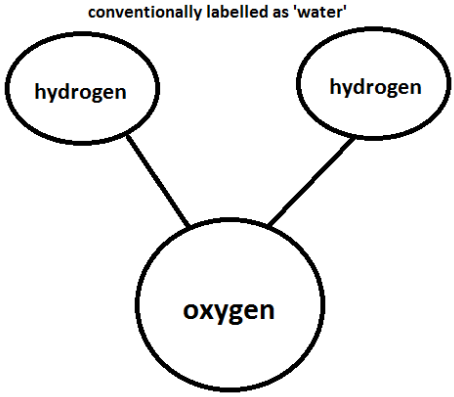

There is a water. Water truly exists. Hydrogen and oxygen are attributes of the water.

**Nihilism**



The water does not exist. OR The water that exists now annihilates later.

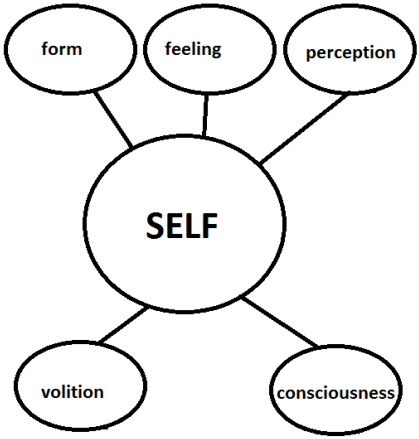
**Middle Way**




Co-dependently arisen hydrogen and oxygen are empty of water, but is conventionally called water. Hydrogen and oxygen are not attributes of an entity "water" (no such thing can be pinned down), not contained by an entity called "water", nor is there a "water" that is "made up of" hydrogen and oxygen. Rather, two hydrogen and one oxygen atoms co-dependently arising ARE what is conventionally imputed as water.

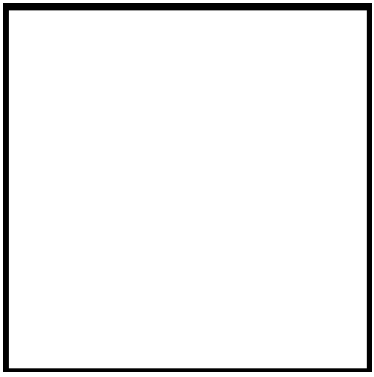
## Self

**Eternalism**



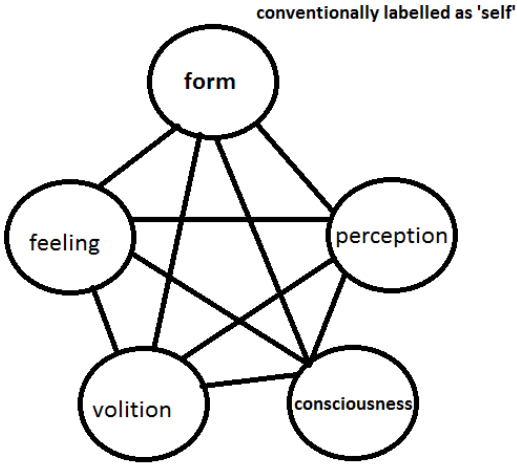

Self view is the held position that there is a self. Self truly exists. Self may be seen as attributeless (as some attributeless pure consciousness as in advaita), or a self that owns or contains attributes, or an agent that manifests, owns, observes, or controls, its aggregates. The precise view of self varies from eternal, partially eternal, to nihilistic (for a lengthy discourse by Buddha on the numerous "thicket of views", refer to http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.01.0.bodh.html). From an eternalist perspective, the self remains unchanged despite the changes in life. It remains unchanged even after bodily death. It is either seen as the unchanging self [as an individual soul], or the Self [as an infinite Self or Presence] that is unaffected by the passing aggregates or phenomena.

**Nihilism**



The self does not exist. OR The self in this life annihilates upon death. There is no karma, cause and effect, or rebirth.

**Middle Way**




Co-dependently arisen five aggregates are empty of self, but is conventionally called self. Seeing is not a self seeing, but is simply the experience being seen. Volition is not via a doer, but is simply action-activity-process, co-dependently arisen. Consciousness is not a self, it is simply auditory consciousness manifested dependent on ear, sound and attention, so on and so forth. Taste of chocolate has nothing to do with a taster but is simply the process or seamless activity of biting, tongue touching chocolate, consciousness of taste, etc.Ultimately, whatever dependently originates is also empty of any true existence (five aggregates are also empty) - but appearances are not denied.

Now replace "water" or "self" with anything - mind, matter, Buddha-nature, Truth, awareness, cars, houses, atoms, universe, etc. All applies the same way.

Diamond Sutra: "Subhuti, all dharmas are spoken of as no dharmas. Therefore they are called dharmas."

Anuradha Sutta: "And so, Anuradha — when you can't pin down the Tathagata as a truth or reality even in the present life — is it proper for you to declare, 'Friends, the Tathagata — the supreme man, the superlative man, attainer of the superlative attainment — being described, is described otherwise than with these four positions: The Tathagata exists after death, does not exist after death, both does & does not exist after death, neither exists nor does not exist after death'?"

Ted Biringer: "...According to Dogen, this “oceanic-body” does not contain the myriad forms, nor is it made up of myriad forms – it is the myriad forms themselves. The same instruction is provided at the beginning of Shobogenzo, Gabyo (pictured rice-cakes) where, he asserts that, “as all Buddhas are enlightenment” (sho, or honsho), so too, “all dharmas are enlightenment” which he says does not mean they are simply “one” nature

or mind."

Thusness (2008): The key is in "emptiness" so that there is complete non abiding and (non-)staying (thus avoiding eternalism) and "luminosity" so that there is aliveness and clarity without falling into nihilism.

Note: does that mean that conventionally self truly exists? No. Conventional truths are not in fact true nor existing but are merely deluded projections as a result of ignorance. Five aggregates are deludedly conceived as a self. Such a self may conventionally be considered true, yet there is actually no truth to it. It is merely a false name used by the enlightened for pragmatic purpose, but taken to be true and existing by the ignorant. Nagarjuna: "Since the Jina proclaims that nirvana alone is true, what wise person would not reject the rest as false?"

The diagrams are inspired by Julian Baggini's speech at Ted talk:
http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2012/05/is-there-you.html

**…..**

**Thusness commented:**

*Hi AEN,*

*The article is a great summary of the view and thanks for sharing. I have gone through several of your conversations in DHO as well as those facebook conversations you emailed to me and somehow I find that you have missed that piece of link that allows a practitioner to progress from 5 to 6 insights. It also give rise to this opportunity to emphasize once again what exactly lead to the transition of the journey and the importance of having a balance emphasis on realization, experience and view.*

*The youtube video - Is There A Real You? by Julian Baggini presents very well the view of anatta and emptiness. However you should not mix a practitioner progressing from direct non-dual realization and experience to anatta (your case in particular) and one that jumps start from having the right view. It will be apt at this point in time to ask yourself the following questions:*

*1. Will a practitioner that clearly experienced and realized "in the seen, just the seen" or "no thinker, just thoughts" also sees and understands "no self" as presented by Julian Baggini?*

*2. How will the experience of a practitioner be like without the direct experience of non-dual?*

*3. How is 1 and 2 related?*

*This is not a textbook Q&A, go through these questions with a sincere heart. We will talk about them next time we meet. :-)*

17th June 2012

**To Balance Non-Conceptuality and Right View**

Thusness commented before that Zen often (not always – but a common scene) overemphasize experience over the view, while Madhyamika students often overemphasize the view over direct experience. A balance must be struck.

Richard Herman wrote:

*Yes, it is the absolute "elimination of the background" without remainder. It is the affirmation of multiplicity, not dispersion, but multiplicity. The world references nothing but the world. Each thing is radiant expression of itself. There is no support, no ground. No awareness. No awareness.*

*"All dharmas are resolved in One Mind. One Mind resolves into...."*

*There is the radiant world. just the radiant world. No awareness.*

*That is the Abbott slapping floor with his hand. The red floor is red. Spontaneous function.*

When you ask the Zen master, Mind is Buddha, No mind – no Buddha, which is correct? The Zen master simply strikes the table with his zen stick. This is direct experience of no-mind, where mind, no-mind, etc are simply transcended into Just This – this direct experience as the transient sight, sound, etc. But this is still skewing towards the experience (of no-mind) and non-conceptuality as a practice. It does not mean insight into anatta and emptiness has arisen.

What we often do not realize is that it is the wrong view of duality and inherency that is preventing seamless and effortless non-dual experience. Without these insights, experience can hardly be effortless. This is why it is important that we not only practice non-conceptual, non-dual experience but to *realize* directly the right view (anatta and twofold emptiness), to actualize and synchronize experience with right view so that our experience and insight can progress further.

At this point I would like to quote something from Thusness, it is a post that really summarizes the problems of many people.

Thusness:

(31 October 2010)

“Hi Geis,

I 'fear' commenting about other's forum because AEN will create havoc in that forum after that... lol.

Jokes aside but I think it is still too early to say that insight of anatta has arisen. There seem to be a mixing up and a lack of clarity of the following experiences that resulted from contemplating on the topic of no-self:

1. Resting in non-conceptuality

2. Resting as an ultimate Subject or

3. Resting as mere flow of phenomenality

In case 1 practitioners see 'The seen is neither subjective nor objective.... it just IS....'

In terms of experience, practitioners will feel Universe, Life. However this is not anatta but rather the result of stripping off (deconstructing) identity and personality.

When this mode of non-conceptual perception is taken to be ultimate, the terms "What is", "Isness", "Thusness" are often taken to mean simply resting in non-conceptuality and not adding to or subtracting anything from the 'raw manifestation'. There is a side effect to such an experience. Although in non-conceptuality, non-dual is most vivid and clear, practitioners may wrongly conclude that 'concepts' are the problem because the presence of 'concepts' divides and prevent the non-dual experience. This seems logical and reasonable only to a mind that is deeply root in a subject/object dichotomy. Very quickly 'non-conceptuality' becomes an object of practice. The process of objectification is the result of the tendency in action perpetually repeating itself taking different forms like an endless loop. This can continue to the extent that a practitioner can even 'fear' to establish concepts without knowing it. They are immobilized by trying to prevent the formation of views and concepts. When we see 'suffering just IS', we must be very careful not to fall into the 'disease' of non-conceptuality.

In Case 2 it is usual that practitioners will continue to personify, reify and extrapolate a metaphysical essence in a very subtle way, almost unknowingly. This is because despite the non-dual realization, understanding is still orientated from a view that is based on subject-object dichotomy. As such it is hard to detect this tendency and practitioners continue their journey of building their understanding of 'No-Self based on Self'.

For Case 3 practitioners, they are in a better position to appreciate the doctrine of anatta. When insight of Anatta arises, all experiences become implicitly non-dual. But the insight is not simply about seeing through separateness; it is about the thorough ending of reification so that there is an instant recognition that the 'agent' is extra, in actual experience it does not exist. It is an immediate realization that experiential reality has always been so and the existence of a center, a base, a ground, a source has always been assumed. This is different from 'deconstructing of identity and personality' which is related to non-conceptuality but 'actual' seeing of the non-existence of agent in transient phenomena.

Here practitioners will not only feel universe as in case 1 but there is also an immediate experience of our birth right freedom because the agent is gone. It is important to notice that practitioners here do not mistake freedom as 'no right or wrong and remaining in a

state of primordial purity' ; they are not immobilized by non-conceptuality but is able to clearly see the 'arising and passing' of phenomena as liberating as there is no permanent agent there to 'hinder' the seeing. That is, practitioner not only realize 'what experience is' but also begin to understand the 'nature' of experience.

To mature case 3 realization, even direct experience of the absence of an agent will prove insufficient; there must also be a total new paradigm shift in terms of view; we must free ourselves from being bonded to the idea, the need, the urge and the tendency of analyzing, seeing and understanding our moment to moment of experiential reality from a source, an essence, a center, a location, an agent or a controller and rest entirely on anatta and Dependent Origination.

In my opinion, the blog that hosts the articles on "Who am I" and "Quietening the Inner Chatter" provide more in depth insights on non-duality, Anatta and Emptiness. The author demonstrates very deep clarity of 'what experience is' and the 'nature (impermanent, empty and dependent originates according to supporting conditions)' of experience.

Just my 2 cents. :-)"

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3rd July 2012

As an ego (which is just a delusional identification with a self in this body mind), "I" feel trapped in a body, a body being a victim of my circumstances, my life, my environment, in short the world is "my" jail and "I" am a victim of circumstances going against my will - not getting things I want, getting things I don't want, being in a circumstance that I don't like, parting with people or things I like, ageing, sickness, death, the list goes on... A little "me" trapped in a body, a body trapped in a world, etc... Life seen as such is experienced as full of chains, a sense of being a victim of circumstance, of having vulnerabilities and insecurities and wants and worries and sorrows.

As boundless, transparent, space-like clarity, there is no center, no edges or boundaries, no time, no distance, no locality, no jails, no binds, no chains, no free will, no determinism, no-one being victimized... Just this sensate universe as a shining radiance. No center and no edges/boundaries translates to no prison-er trapped by the walls of a jail (that which imprisons). No internal and external translates to no one inside feeling trapped in/by an external circumstance.

This is not about "thy will be done"... There is not even a need for surrender... Nor is there a someone who can surrender or a something to be surrendered to. However this transparency, this "drop-off body-mind" certainly is a release and bliss greater than surrender... A freedom even greater than the release from a physical jail. For, as this transparency, I am already free. No... As this transparency, the universe is free, freely manifesting and freely released every moment... And everything that is faced is the face of freedom.

Freedom does not come "from a situation"... the sense of boundedness is not coming from an external world or situation... It does not even come from the four walls if you

are literally living in a physical jail. If we depend on circumstances for a sense of freedom, then if good circumstances that accords with my liking comes, I feel free and at ease, but if "bad" circumstances that does not accord with my will and liking comes, I feel entrapped again and drown in sorrow and self-pity... All because there is a felt/believed sense that "I am, I exist" that could be trapped/untrapped, an imaginary center bounded by an imagined circumstance, an "I" who can get wanted/unwanted things happen "to me" against "my will".

In other words, the notion of boundedness comes from the idea of a me, a me trapped in this body, a body trapped by circumstances of a "world". Realize your true nature, cut the mentally conjured chains and be free.

And life still goes on very much the same... Enlightenment is not a solution for our day to day problems... We still have to solve these "problems" (relationship, job, financial, etc etc) with practical solutions. Many people had false hopes and expectations for "enlightenment". If we had expected "enlightenment" to one day happen and dissolve all the problems in our life, we will be sorely disappointed. But hey, at least I am living life in/as freedom instead of being a prisoner or slave of life, which means a someone who is a victim of a circumstance happening against "my will"... A "me" being trapped in a "world". Dropping this literally feels like a heavy burden has lifted off my body... In fact, there is no more felt sense of a bounded body or mind, only pure transparency as this sensate universe.

p.s. at this point, so called “practical problems” are no longer truly seen as “problems” but seen impersonally and objectively as “situations that reckons necessary, spontaneous action”. The identification or attachment to I, me, mine, gain and loss are not invested on them.

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11th July 2012

**Dropping Off Body and Mind**

Wrote for someone: Mind-body drop is not the same as dissociation... rather, there is just this tremendous aliveness of sensations (in sensing just sensations, no sensor), nothing denied or rejected, but at no time does one get trapped in a perception of "body", there is just pure transparency as disjoint and spontaneous sensations without any boundaries such as "body" and "world outside body".

Who is to say that the sensation of itch is "your body" and the sound of bird chirping is "outside my body"? The whole construct and meaning of a "body" is entirely a mental fabrication. In direct experience there is nothing of that sort... There are just sensations of equal taste.

There are two possible ways of talking about mind-body drop. There is the case that through deep meditation, through dropping of everything in a samadhi state, one drops off the sense of body into boundlessness, one forgets the self. This however is what you said - merely a transient state.

The mind-body drop I am talking about however has nothing to do with this. It is the result of the wisdom of your true nature, the deconstruction of constructs, and is now a perpetual and natural state that has never been "lost". This means everyday in every moment there is no sense of self nor a sense of body being imputed on pure sensory experience. This does not require a state of samadhi to dissolve the self or body (after certain insights).

As I wrote in another forum:

Thusness wrote an article to someone in 2007 which also mentioned about this, mind-body drop is the 2nd stage of nondual under this particular map.
http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/05/different-degrees-of-non-duality.html
(Awakening to Reality: The Different Degrees of Non-Duality)

Zen Master Dogen (and lots of zen masters) have also talked extensively about this mind-body drop off including my Taiwanese Mahayana teacher. My Taiwanese teacher equates this mind-body drop-off with liberation. While I won't exactly agree that it must equate to "liberation from samsara" as the Buddha would have it in the pali suttas, it does definitely feel liberating.

Zen Master Dogen: "To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of realization remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly." - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/genjo-koan-actualizing-fundamental.html

Something to note here is that of course, mind-body drop does not mean that if someone drop hot soup on your body you won't have physical feelings or awareness of that sense contact. Neither does it mean dissociating from the body via neti neti (not this, not that: I am not my mind, I am not my body) to some formless Self, awareness or observer. Rather, it simply means that any feeling of a body as having a substantial (with solid shape and form) and localized (in here vs out there) entity and any sense of 'me-ness' linked with "my body" is completely deconstructed and dissolved.

What is important is to realize that the "body" doesn't truly exist, it is merely a construction, a perception. And why do I say so? If you strip yourself of perceptions and investigate, there is no solid entity called body, it is just a bunch of disconnected, spontaneous and disjoint sensations arising and ceasing moment to moment - sensation of itch there, sensation of cool breeze there, and so on. Coupled with the visual image - which is just another disjoint and spontaneous sensation... Due to the view of inherent self and object, we mentally "join up" these disjoint sensations and perceptions into one solid coherent image or construct of a "solid body in here where I inhabit". In other words, we mentally construct a solid image of a "something" with solid shape and form, and we feel as if there is a "me" being in here, looking "out there". All these are just false

constructions and a bit of investigation can allow us to expose this perception as a mere delusional construct. Seeing thus, one relinquishes any sense of a body or division and simply opens up and allows the expanse of pure consciousness (which is the sensate universe/manifestation) to unfold (to forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things).

U.G. Krishnamurti spoke similarly: "Your movement of thought interferes with the process of touch, just as it does with the other senses. Anything you touch is always translated as 'hard', 'soft', 'warm', 'cold', 'wet', 'dry', and so on.

You do not realize it, but it is your thinking that creates your own body. Without this thought process there is no body consciousness -- which is to say there is no body at all. My body exists for other people; it does not exist for me; there are only isolated points of contact, impulses of touch which are not tied together by thought. So the body is not different from the objects around it; it is a set of sensations like any others. Your body does not belong to you.

Perhaps I can give you the 'feel' of this. I sleep four hours at night, no matter what time I go to bed. Then I lie in bed until morning fully awake. I don't know what is lying there in the bed; I don't know whether I'm lying on my left side or my right side -- for hours and hours I lie like this. If there is any noise outside -- a bird or something -- it just echoes in me. I listen to the "flub-dub-flub-dub" of my heart and don't know what it is. There is no body between the two sheets -- the form of the body is not there. If the question is asked, "What is in there?" there is only an awareness of the points of contact, where the body is in contact with the bed and the sheets, and where it is in contact with itself, at the crossing of the legs, for example. There are only the sensations of touch from these points of contact, and the rest of the body is not there. There is some kind of heaviness, probably the gravitational pull, something very vague. There is nothing inside which links up these things. Even if the eyes are open and looking at the whole body, there are still only the points of contact, and they have no connection with what I am looking at. If I want to try to link up these points of contact into the shape of my own body, probably I will succeed, but by the time it is completed the body is back in the same situation of different points of contact. The linkage cannot stay. It is the same sort of thing when I'm sitting or standing. There is no body.

Can you tell me how mango juice tastes? I can't. You also cannot; but you try to relive the memory of mango juice now -- you create for yourself some kind of an experience of how it tastes -- which I cannot do. I must have mango juice on my tongue -- seeing or smelling it is not enough -- in order to be able to bring that past knowledge into operation and to say "Yes, this is what mango juice tastes like." This does not mean that personal preferences and 'tastes' change. In a market my hand automatically reaches out for the same items that I have liked all my life. But because I cannot conjure up a mental experience, there can be no craving for foods which are not there.

Smell plays a greater part in your daily life than does taste. The olfactory organs are constantly open to odors. But if you do not interfere with the sense of smell, what is there is only an irritation in the nose. It makes no difference whether you are smelling

cow dung or an expensive French perfume -- you rub the nose and move on." - http://www.well.com/~jct/mystiq2.htm

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11th July 2012

Update: 1st September 2012 – original post on Thusness's advise for "total opening for whatever arises" is now merged with the larger article.

**Meditation after anatta/no-self**

Something I wrote to someone (slightly edited). She realized anatta/no-self and recently started a meditation regimen, and asked for advise. If you have some advise or anything to share, please to do so.

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Sounds good ☺How do you meditate nowadays? A proper posture is very helpful for meditative composure (see: http://www.wwzc.org/book/posture-zazen). This thread is also good, this conversation with Thusness - http://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/440368?page=1

Those who did not realize anatta will practice dualistically - via dissociation, or trying to stay or abide in a substantial/purest/background state of awareness/Self. There will be a 'something' to get back to, to abide in, to hold on to, etc.

But since you realized anatta, the above dualistic practices are naturally not suitable - it is only suitable for those who did not realize anatta, so they have no choice and their practice is still geared to being a dualistic mirror or awareness or watcher. After realization of anatta, practice becomes an effortless authentication - effortless because there is simply meeting everything directly as it arises in its suchness without any attempt to re-confirm, seek, abide, or hold on to some purest state. There is no more referencing back to a previous non-dual experience reified into an ultimate background, source, substratum, or substantial Self. There is no such clinging at all, only a natural non-dual opening to the non-dual and non-inherent luminosity of/as everything without any dualistic action or doing. It is not done with a kind of goal-aiming or goal-seeking attitude, like as if we are doing something very serious hoping to get into some higher or altered state of experience. Rather, we can think of it as like a clenched fist that is gently, and naturally, relaxing its grip, opening and releasing the butterfly which flies freely in freedom - likewise we naturally release all of our holdings - thoughts, mind, body, constrictions, contractions, sense of self/Self, etc into moment to moment direct sensate clarity/experience of all six sense doors. There is just relaxing into the natural state, into the spontaneity of what presently manifests in its deep non-dual clarity. No contrivance, attempt to control, manipulate, seek, alter, do, act, modify what manifests. Of course action can arise (so there is no meditation/post-meditation difference essentially) - but in acting it is just the action, again presenting itself naturally as clarity in action, naturally, and spontaneously (without any observer or doer).

As what Thusness told me in July 2012,

"Thusness's practice advise for me at the moment is to practice "total opening for whatever arises. Once the taste and the view seamlessly integrate, practice specific concentration, then slowly understand how consciousness works." When asked about specific concentration, he just advised me to continue the "non-dual opening" for the moment, until the view is fully integrated into moment to moment of experience, then I should start practicing concentration.

To me, non-dual opening must lead to the "transcendence" of all sense of self/Self into 'no heat or cold' (see glossary), which is to say, fully manifested as the immediate moment of manifestation or as this flow of action. No resorting or tracing back to a source/Self whatsoever.

p.s. update: Thusness just informed me that 'the place where there is no heat or cold' must be a permanent state for my practice."

You should therefore practice nondual opening in a relaxed manner... opening to everything, and being mindful or having direct awareness/perception of everything non-dually, touch the clarity of all manifestation directly. You will have better understanding of why the Buddha taught the four foundations of mindfulness - like mahasatipatthana sutta (see: http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.22.0.than.html). He did not teach people to dissociate, become a watcher, remain or abide in a background/substantial/purest Awareness, etc. Instead he always talk about mindfulness of sensations, of manifestation, only the manifestation and nothing about a self or a background like in Advaita. Why? In seeing only the seen, in hearing only the heard, as he said ( http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2010/10/my-commentary-on-bahiya-sutta.html ). Likewise in Mahasatipatthana sutta, you find the Buddha's repeated expression in the sutta of "observing the body in the body," "observing the feelings in the feelings," "observing the mind in the mind," "observing the objects of mind in the objects of mind." Why are the words, body, feelings, mind, and objects of mind repeated? Why 'observe the … IN THE ….'? It means you are living and experiencing IN and AS the sensations, and not observing the sensations in and as an observer/watcher.

The Buddha is very clear that all sensations are without self in any form whatsoever - whether as an observer, or a container, or something inhabiting forms like a soul in a body. He rejected all kinds of self-view and taught that the direct path to liberation is the practice of mindfulness as taught in Mahasatipatthana sutta. His entire path of practice is in sync with his view and realization. He did not talk about Self, he talked about the aggregates, the elements, the sensations and manifestation and their nature - empty of self, impermanent (dissolving, releasing, disjoint), unsatisfactory (ungraspable and passing - nothing is satisfying). He taught that by contemplating as such, you can gain release, liberation.

Therefore by now with your insights, you should be quite clear that the very basic teachings of Buddha are the most profound.

Since you asked for book recommends, I think books may be helpful for your practice:

Clarifying the Natural State: A Principal Guidance Manual for Mahamudra by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal

Basic Teachings of the Buddha by Glen Wallis

Essentials of Mahamudra: Looking Directly at the Mind by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche

One thing I want to add... "(release our holdings to) thoughts, mind, body, constrictions, contractions, sense of self/Self, etc into moment to moment direct sensate clarity/experience of all six sense doors." doesn't mean "dissociate from thoughts... etc". Release should be understood non-dually as well - non-dually arise, non-dually released immediately! In fact in their actual luminous and empty state, everything is self-liberating... our ignorance, attachments, sense of self blocks the wisdom that sees this.

Releasing thoughts, mind and body is not the same as trying to distant ourselves from them. Albert Hong quoted Dogen saying enlightenment is intimacy with all things. Of course, these includes everything including thoughts, mind, body, contractions, sense of self and so on... but by opening to these, all are self-released and sense of self dissolves (sense of self being itself also a form of thought, a possessive and grasping thought).

But this wont be immediately obvious - dependent on one's insights, one usually has to (in my experience this is my case as well) go through a few phases of 'letting go' which shifts and changes after the maturing of insights - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2008/09/six-stages-of-dropping.html

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13th July 2012

**Wisdom, no-self and spontaneous happening**

Many people (including myself in the past) likes to talk about spontaneous happening but without deep understanding of the nature of spontaneity (in terms of non-dual, anatta and emptiness). Even at the I AM-ness phase of insight, I talked about spontaneous happening, and this non-doership and spontaneous aspect becomes mixed up with no-self as there is no clarity at that point about what no-self in all its different faces are. This means the view is still dualistic – everything is seen to be happening on its own but there is still this subtly dualistic Witness that is watching stuff doing its own things.I have seen too many people talk about spontaneous arising without going through all the phases of insights, mistaking it as final. And some may even mimic the spontaneity and naturalness of zen masters. One can mimic naturalness but still be a slave of one's various karmic conditionings (which projects attachment to a self, to possessiveness, and all manners of related afflictions such as aversion, desire, fear etc). There must be genuineness and sincerity in one's practice – if one says "there is nothing to be done" the question should be posed "but what about the suffering that still arises"? Yes, any "doing" should not be necessary if reality is already spontaneously perfected and manifesting in naturalness, but this in itself does not address the cause of

suffering and the resolution of ignorance. There should also be no overlooking of one's karmic tendencies.Reality is already spontaneously perfected (as luminous and empty), thus any effort to construct something is artificial and counterproductive, yet undeniably ignorance (of no-self and the union of luminosity and emptiness) and suffering arises until it doesn't, so what leads to liberation? It is by the path of wisdom that ignorance and suffering is released. Many people, and teachers (especially of the neo-Advaita scene) are completely ignorant about ignorance and karmic tendencies, they may even deny them.

Indeed, the pathless path after realizing the twofold emptiness is truly spontaneous, effortless and natural, but without going through all these insights, there is no liberation.Even after an initial insight there must be a continual deepening of it until one's view is crystal clear, then the experience must be stabilized until the stream of wisdom remains uninterrupted through the cycle of day and night, 24/7, even into one's sleep. There is no compromise – as long as there is the slightest holding, clinging, attaching to a sense of self, there is no liberation – hence Ted Biringer aptly said in a commentary to the Tozan's koan, "*This is not advice to "accept" your situation, as some commentators have suggested, but a direct expression of authentic practice and enlightenment. Master Tozan is not saying, "When cold, shiver; when hot, sweat," nor is he saying, "When cold, put on a sweater; when hot, use a fan."* ***In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe.****"* So do not mistaken spontaneity, or spontaneous happening, with the realization of anatta and emptiness. Without the latter insights, there is no way we can realize the spontaneous perfection of no-self, emptiness, and self-liberation. As Paltrul Rinpoche puts it, "The mode of arising is the same as before, but there is an immense and crucial difference in the mode of liberation, and without it meditation is a path of delusion." Everything is arising spontaneously and perfected from beginning to end and perfected from beginning to end, and yet, under the spell of ignorance we suffer, and when one discovers and actualizes wisdom (rigpa), the knowledge of our true nature, in our life we find liberation. This is the crucial difference.

In another analogy: Even though the dream tiger isn't real, it can cause great fear and suffering for the dream participant, of course even the suffering and dream participant is illusory, yet by not recognizing the dream-like and empty nature, the appearance of suffering is inevitable. So everything is already empty to begin with, there needs to be the investigation and revelation into the luminous and empty nature of everything. Naturally one wakes up and there is nothing needed to be done then since it is just a dream – a shining, empty shimmering – but the "nothing needs to be done" should not be emphasized before realization, otherwise it is telling someone in deep suffering "there is nothing to be done" which is pretty pointless and doesn't help at all.

Right from the earliest teachings of Buddha, the four noble truths (suffering, cause of suffering, end of suffering and way to end suffering) and the twelve links of dependent origination beginning with "ignorance" is made abundantly clear. But this is also taught in later teachings including Dzogchen which teaches that there is one ground, two paths (wisdom [rigpa] and delusion [ma-rigpa]) and two fruits (samsara – the world of suffering, and nirvana – cessation of suffering or liberation). Deluded people think "everything is perfect, everything is complete and spontaneously arising, there is

nothing to do" but fails to see the crucial difference and effects of ignorance/attachment and wisdom/release. Worse still some people think ignorance, dualistic vision, and suffering is equivalent to the enlightened state and therefore nothing needs to be done and they are all just "spontaneously arising" and "intrinsically perfect". Such a massive self-deception cannot have been more pitiful. Although everything has the same taste (nature and essence) in the same way all waves of the ocean have the taste of saltiness, it is by no means similar in its effects and manifestation. Therefore Longchenpa warned, "In Ati these days, conceited elephants [claim] the mass of discursive concepts is awakened mind (bodhicitta); this confusion is a dimension of complete darkness, a hindrance to the meaning of the natural great perfection."

So one should go through the phases of insights and penetrate deeply into anatta, dependent origination and emptiness. Then naturally the spontaneous aspect is fully penetrated with the correct understanding. As Thusness said before in 2009, "first, be very clear of the 'no agent', as for the spontaneity, leave it to the Dependent Origination".

Non-doership is not the same as realizing no agent. Many people see that there is a Self, and yet that Self has no control over phenomena. This is my understanding in the I AMness phase of insight, for example. Or even further, the construct of personality dissolves and one feels like one is being lived by a higher power or source. But even this is not the insight or experience of anatta.

Yesterday, someone asked me "It is seen that all action is occuring spontaneously, effortlessly ...what is different? (From the realization of anatta)"

I replied:

"Hi, what you spoke of is not what I meant by anatta... perhaps this might be relevant:

(What Thusness wrote to me at my earlier phase of insight):

Also what you said about the no observer can be quite misleading. It does not mean there is 'no one doing anything' and 'everything is arising spontaneously'. You should understand anatta from below quotations taken from 'The Sun My Heart' by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh:

(Excerpt from: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2008/10/sun-of-awareness-and-river-of.html )

*"Sunshine and Green Leaves*

*"When we say I know the wind is blowing, we don't think that there is something blowing something else. "Wind' goes with 'blowing'. If there is no blowing, there is no wind. It is the same with knowing. Mind is the knower; the knower is mind. We are talking about knowing in relation to the wind. 'To know' is to know something. Knowing is inseparable from the wind. Wind and knowing are one. We can say, 'Wind,' and that is enough. The*

*presence of wind indicates the presence of knowing, and the presence of the action of blowing'."*

*"..The most universal verb is the verb 'to be'': I am, you are, the mountain is, a river is. The verb 'to be' does not express the dynamic living state of the universe. To express that we must say 'become.' These two verbs can also be used as nouns: 'being", "becoming". But being what? Becoming what? 'Becoming' means 'evolving ceaselessly', and is as universal as the verb "to be." It is not possible to express the "being" of a phenomenon and its "becoming" as if the two were independent. In the case of wind, blowing is the being and the becoming...."*

*"In any phenomena, whether psychological, physiological, or physical, there is dynamic movement, life. We can say that this movement, this life, is the universal manifestation, the most commonly recognized action of knowing. We must not regard 'knowing' as something from the outside which comes to breath life into the universe. It is the life of the universe itself. The dance and the dancer are one.""*

"On another note: In the beginning of this journal I wrote about the certainty of Beingness which is revealed very clearly after about two years of self-inquiry. It is the self-knowing certainty of Beingness, Presence, a pure sense of Existence. There is total conviction in I AM-ness. Even now this certainty of Beingness is never negated, for the luminous essence can never be negated. Even the negating is an undeniable act of luminous presence - you cannot deny the undoubtable/undeniable clear knowingness of the denying/doubting. Everything appearing IS the direct undoubtable appearance of luminous presence. The luminous Presence is in fact EVERYTHING. This is the undeniable, inescapable, clear, evident, brilliancy of beingness, knowingness, awareness, aliveness, presence, whatever you want to call it. It is just this certainty of clear presence/knowing.

Only now, this ‘Beingness’ is no longer reified into an independent, unchanging, substantial Self. Beingness is not ‘A Being’ that could be pinned down anywhere or established as some existent subject behind everything. This taste of I AM/clear Beingness and Consciousness is now implicitly present in all sensations rather than a dualistic perceiver behind sensation (ever since non-dual insight), but we also realize Beingness/Knowingness is nothing unchanging or independent or pertaining to any agency such as a being a watcher/experiencer (in anatta). Beingness is always only the sights, sounds, smells, constantly becoming, evolving ceaselessly, like what Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh said: Being IS Becoming, just as Wind IS Blowing (wind is NOT a blower as an agent or an ultimate source of blowing, rather it IS imputed upon blowing). Nothing about a reified Self or knower (yet not a denial of Self/Witness/Awareness)… for the Witness/Beingness/Awareness is ever only the process rolling, becoming, and knowing. Nothing denied, only the view has been refined. This is important as discovering something non-conceptual does not imply overcoming latent false views, including that of a Self an an eternalistic view."

18th July 2012

The image in the mirror does not truly exist, for if it were to truly exist, it could be pinned down somewhere. Would it be right to say that the image exists inside the mirror? Not quite right... For a person standing at another angle, what you see and what he sees are different. And as you move forward or backward, left to right, the reflection seems to move along.

The image of the person cannot be located or pinned down as being "inside" the mirror... Neither can it be located "inside the mind", for any mental experience too is dependently arisen. Neither is there anything in between.

So we discover that nothing at all can be pinned down anywhere... All things, phenomena, event, experiences, appearances, are mere dependent arising which are undeniably appearing luminously and vividly as mind, so cannot be established as non-existent, but when analyzed is also discovered to be an empty, coreless, unlocatable appearance coming from nowhere, abiding nowhere, going nowhere, like a magical apparition. As Delma Thassa pointed out, the sparkle of the diamond that all along was thought to be part of the diamond... Is later realized that it was never part of it.

And as Thusness pointed out, how to release the ultimate grasping through realizing the empty nature of whatever appears is important. One is the practice of luminosity and the other the release of grasping through realizing our empty nature.

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29th July 2012

I had a dream some time back of a fearsome dakini… I thought it could be Niguma (the Lady of Illusion). I must have certain karmic affinity with her. I just found this verse by her which I like:

“Like and dislike are the mind’s disease,
Certain to drown you in samsara’s sea.
Know that there is nothing here at all,
And then, my child, everything is gold.

Experience arises like magic.
If you practice like magic
You will awaken like magic
Through the power of faith.

Don’t think about your teacher or your practice.
Don’t think about what is real or not real.
Don’t think about anything at all.
Don’t control what you experience.
Just rest in how things are.”

~ Niguma

Update:
This seems like a better translation but I like both renderings:

A Song of Niguma

When one realizes that our many thoughts of anger and desire,
which churn the ocean of Samsara,
are devoid of any self-nature,
everything becomes a land of gold, my child.

When one meditates that magiclike phenomena
are all like magical illusions,
one will attain magiclike buddhahood,
[and all of the five paths and ten stages.]*
This, through the power of devotion!

Ithi

Note: This extra line occurs only in a brief history of the Shangpa tradition by Jonang Jetsun Taranatha!

Translated from the Tibetan by Sherab Drime [TSD]

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5th August 2012

Every form of clinging is a direct act of delusion. We are literally grasping after shadows, we are grasping after what is empty and ungraspable, so how is it not delusion grasping delusion? Even the most profound insight becomes another delusion if clung to. Everything is to be released… even the most vivid and clearest experience or profound luminosity, bliss or emptiness. It is auto-released via impermanence, if not obscured by delusory sense of self, grasping and action. Even 'Awareness', 'No-self', 'Emptiness', 'Enlightenment' can become some sort of a delusion if clung to. Everything in suchness is simultaneously gone… gone… gone, traceless. NO attainment! Nothing gained or accumulated at all! Only dissolve, dissolve… (but not denying vivid clarity of each instantaneous moment of total exertion)

"Wisdom is a very deep, profound knowing. It is wonderful. But you cannot stay with the truth you touched because you must be right on the flow of impermanence, constantly one with the moment. If you stay, you die; your life becomes stagnant water. So when you touch and deeply understand impermanence, don't stay with it. How do you not stay? Bounce! Touch it and bounce! To bounce is to rebound and then reflect

egolessness and emptiness in your human body and mind. If you try to stay with it you become crazy, so you cannot stay." ~ Dainin Katagiri

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9th August 2012

Dogen's teaching on Being-Time is very clear. Dogen is the favourite zen master of Thusness and myself, and in the words of Thusness, Zen Master Dogen had penetrated very deeply into anatman/anatta, sees temporality as buddha nature, see transience as the living truth of dharma and the full manifestation of buddha nature, and have deep experiential clarity on maha/dependent origination. He even told me that "if Dogen is around, you should find him". I wrote a summary for a facebook group:

"Time is just a construct like self. The notion that it takes time for me to walk from point A to B, which implies distance, space and time, deconstructs when we realize there is no atemporal abiding entity or self that is the traveller (this implies I am a truly existing atemporal self that is separate from time/the stream of transient phenomenality, which is not the case). In fact there is not even 'traveling' or 'movement' when Point A is only point A or being-time-A, point B is only point B being-time-B, each instant is whole and complete - there is nothing subjective or objective that is separate from each time-instant that abides and travels from A to B. Where time is being and being is time (things do not occur 'in' or 'pass through' time - they ARE time, as everything is irremediably temporal), there is Only being-time which is the sun and the moon and the stars, wherein there is neither an atemporal object passing through time nor an atemporal subject witnessing or passing through the passage of time and space from one point to another, and neither is it the case of one thing becoming another thing (winter is winter, spring is spring, winter does not turn into spring). Each instance of sight, sound, etc, is an entire and whole being-time independent of past and future (it occupies or IS a unique manifestation-position), yet inclusive of all causes and conditions spanning all time-space in a single moment that transcends the structures of time-object-self dichotomy. Each instant is a happening without movement. Time stops in the midst of temporality but Not by transcending to some unmoved backdrop."

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9th August 2012

**Imprinting the Seeds of Awakening**

A friend, Jui, whom I knew for about a year realized anatta yesterday and I am truly happy for him. His progress was fast, from experiencing awareness as a background self, to a self that is everything, to no-self. This must be the result of having access to right view, and he was very thankful for my sharing all these time. It reminds me of Thusness asking me many years ago to write summaries of what I have learny, despite them being still an intellectual level of understanding at that time. He told me that too is a form of diligent practice (Practice isn't just sitting all day in meditation! Even though that is part of it. Cultivation also includes studying, learning from the right sources, accumulating

merits, etc etc. It may not appear obvious immediately but all these does aid in one's spiritual development and in time its effects will show). It helped in imprinting the right understanding deep into my latent psyche. When I had certain non-dual experiences years back, he informed me it occurred so quickly due to my continuous summarizing as it would otherwise have taken many years of strong meditation practice (which I didn't have) to have these experiences, but my summarizing became a short-cut. With the right view and proper practice and investigation, direct insight will arise in due time. That being said, meditative strength still needs to be developed from long-term meditation practice.

On at least one occasion, Thusness said he was aware nothing he said will be understood by a particular group of audience he was speaking to (a three hour+ long discussion on Lankavatara Sutra). However, he spoke them nonetheless for the purpose of "imprinting". Indeed, when one has the imprints of the right dharma, it is only a matter of time when the conditions become ripe – in other words he is planting seeds of awakening in people for their benefit in the future. The Buddha is also known to repeat certain statements about dharma very repetitively to his students, also for the purpose of imprinting. Recently I read that the Buddha also taught long elaborate teachings to certain students he knew with his divine eye that they wouldn't be able to awaken in that particular lifetime, but he was aware that they had the potential to attain arahantship in the next life due to his 'imprinting' of the right knowledge deep into their consciousness, and they did become liberated as famous Buddhist masters born in the next life after the Buddha's final nirvana. Dependent origination, causes and conditions, are not limited by space and time – it spans lifetimes and transcends limitation of distance – allowing even for non-local events (including 'supernatural powers' or more recent scientific discoveries of 'quantum entanglement'*) to occur.

So what we have to be aware of is the imprinting function of consciousness. Whatever we mentally perceive forms an imprint, our tendency to attach, crave, fear, form an affection on something is also a result of imprints, our behaviour, habits and patterns of thinking are also a result of imprints, our view of self too is also a form of imprint that is only liberated by wisdom. Thusness likened it to lifting a stone from the ground, the imprint on the grass slowly lifts or fades away.

In any case, I asked Jui to write summaries and a journal of his understanding, and recent experience and realization. It will be helpful for others and for reference.

Anyway just found something Thusness said to me in 2008 while discussing the practice of Vipassana: *You have to treat (non-conceptual bare attention and mindfulness of three dharma seals) as one because without that in mind, we cannot experience emptiness. Actually even at 'I AM' level, the experience is already non conceptual and direct but they fail to realise it. This is because of the deeply held 'self'. That is why I told you to summarize non-dual and emptiness. It will not be clear if you do not how consciousness function even after non-dual experience. This emptiness and the 3 seals must be firmly established (as right view) and go hand in hand with non-dual experience. Then have non conceptual and direct experience of non-dual anatta and then emptiness and Dependent Origination. It is very difficult to experience Dependent Origination in real time. To have intuitive and direct experience that emptiness and Dependent Origination is the right*

*view of non-duality is even more difficult. The six (now seven) stages I wrote are very important and good guides and can be fully experienced."*

*Quantum Entanglement: *Whatever happened to one particle would thus immediately affect the other particle, wherever in the Universe it may be. Einstein called this "spooky action at a distance". Quantum Entanglement, is one of the greatest mystery in Physics. Based on our latest understanding, the prevailing hypothesis is that the entire Universe acts as a "whole", so everything is in balance or equilibrium, and any time the spin of one of the particles is reversed, the other entangled particle reverses its spin to retain the balance in the Universe (which is acting is a "whole") (source: innovateus.net)*

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9th August 2012

**Experience of Transparency is not the View of Emptiness**

Many people mistaken the spaciousness of awareness or the formlessness of awareness as being emptiness. All these are true experiences. But emptiness is concerning the rejection of false view, false view being the view of inherent existence. Therefore, emptiness implies the emptiness of a true existent that can be established, and likewise the other extremes of non-existence, both existence and non-existence, and neither existence nor non-existence.

On the other hand, formlessness of mind is simply an aspect of mind, it has nothing to do with Buddhist emptiness. In fact even when you realized non-duality, you see that form is equally mind as formlessness. There is no more attaching to a formless background. The idea of an ultimate formless Awareness is seen through... Forms and formless are just one taste. (But note that emptiness is not just about non-duality) Also, The Dalai Lama contrasted this "formlessness of mind" as the relative nature of mind, in contrast with the ultimate nature of mind, its emptiness. (Source: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/07/happiness-karma-and-mind.html)

This 'formless, space-consciousness' is experienced at the I AM phase of insight. It is like the space as the backdrop of everything, that Witness that is a formless spacious background.

When one gets to non-dual however, the Witness is collapsed into seamless Awareness. And as one developes this phase of insight and experience, the sense of a self can completely dissolve into transparency that is completely centerless and edgeless, encompassing and expressing itself as everything. This transparency should also not be misunderstood as Emptiness, because this is still pertaining to (a true) experience, not the realization of right view.

Emptiness the right view.Right view being the twofold emptiness. Realizing this right view neutralizes and dissolves our latent framework of grasping the self and the universe dualistically and inherently. Right view can be held intellectually (like familiarizing oneself with Madhyamika reasonings), or directly and experientially realized. So direct realization of emptiness is what I call the direct realization of right view.

For example, even someone who experienced transparency may still substantialize Awareness through the view of Awareness as substantial and inherent – unchanging, Self, independent. This is the phase of One Mind. Even though one feels like the sense of a separate self has dissolved into transparency, or that Awareness is totally transparent, seamless and boundless. Even though this is also important, it should not be mistaken as the realization of anatta or emptiness. In this case, due to false view, there is still reification.

The realization of anatta breaks the view of a Self, an agent, a watcher, an inherent view of awareness (being truly existing independently and unchangingly). Even the view of one/truly existing Awareness is deconstructed and all objects are also deconstructed. Then one only sees dharma – only ever the constituents of aggregates, elements, manifestation, processes and activities of interdependency. And even such is empty.

So next time when people talk about "Emptiness", do not always assume they are saying the same things. People at all phases of insights have different understandings of what "emptiness" means experientially. They do not necessarily refer to the same thing. Many people mistaken luminosity or an aspect of luminosity with the Buddhist truth of emptiness, they are truly different. The view of Advaita/Shentong may reify transparent Awareness into a substantial true self. Having direct realization of the luminous essence does not mean one has realized the right view of emptiness.

As Greg Goode said before:

"For those who encounter emptiness teachings after they've become familiar with awareness teachings, it's very tempting to misread the emptiness teachings by substituting terms. That is, it's very easy to misread the emptiness teachings by seeing "emptiness" on the page and thinking to yourself, "awareness, consciousness, I know what they're talking about."

Early in my own study I began with this substitution in mind. With this misreading, I found a lot in the emptiness teachings to be quite INcomprehensible! So I started again, laying aside the notion that "emptiness" and "awareness" were equivalent. I tried to let the emptiness teachings speak for themselves. I came to find that they have a subtle beauty and power, a flavor quite different from the awareness teachings. Emptiness teachings do not speak of emptiness as a true nature that underlies or supports things. Rather, it speaks of selves and things as essenceless and free."

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9th August 2012

**AEN**: Is maha like seeing everything being the dynamic state of creation of interdependency, so it is always everything coming into being in a causal process, similar to what Julian Baggini (see video: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2012/05/is-there-you.html) said: We don't discover self we are constantly creating it. All these became clearer to me in meditation this morning.

**John**: Yes and well said. Once you are sure of the view...then keep your view and refine your experience*(AEN's note: previously the emphasis and advise was the opposite, "keep the experience, refine your view")*. Always full experience till there is no heat and cold, total exertion and release.

**John**: Once one matures the 3 experiences with the help of the view, self/no self is already dropped. If you truly understand, then after this you should practice bodhisttava path right? Therefore when our Realization/experience/view have not fully mature, we will not be able to actualize the bodhisttava path

**AEN**: I see... Bodhisattva path means practice-enlightenment isn't it. Did you see I quoted something in the forum? By dogen. He said there is no salvation apart from preaching. Think its similar to what you said.

(Dogen: In the truth of Buddha and in the house of Buddha, we just illuminate the mind by seeing forms and realize the truth by hearing sounds; there is nothing else at all. A state that is like this, being already in the Buddha's truth, should preach, "To those who must be saved through this body, I will manifest at once this body and preach the Dharma." Truly, there is no preaching of Dharma without manifestation of the body, and there can be no salvation that is not the preaching of Dharma.

*Himitsu-shōbōgenzō (Secret Shōbōgenzō), Butsu-kōjō-no-ji, Gudo Nishijima & Mike (Chodo) Cross)*

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12th August 2012

It is because we do not understand dependent origination that our worldview remains stuck with positing extremes of inherent existence. This is because we do not understand, we do not have a framework that can help "explain" our experience. Because of the poverty of the mind in grasping the true nature of self and forms, we formulate constructs that categorize and attribute what we experience to an inherently existing Self, or to truly existing things, and attribute them as being noumenons existing somewhere. We also attribute that luminous clarity we experienced with a center, with a place ('here'), a locality, a time (a 'now'), and we think it is always there, truly existing, waiting for someone to reveal it. Or we attribute luminous clarity into a source that exists behind phenomena, giving rise to them while remaining unaffected.

Whilethere is no doubt that this clarity is certainly never lost or diminished or increased, but it is completely empty of a self, completely empty of any real existence that can be pinned down whatsoever, yet completely undeniable in its total exertion and intense vividness. Julian Baggini is right in saying this: "The true self as it were then, is not something that is just there for you to discover, you do not so called look into your soul to find your true self. What you are partly doing is creating your true self."

But “creating” is not done through a “creator”, nor does it mean coming into being/existence as a static “born” object (creation is merely a loose expression and not literal – there is in fact no creation as everything is simultaneously released, ceased, passing away, cast-off – hence the famous statement by Buddha, “when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one”) - it is totally exerted by all causes and conditions, it is a causal process of enacting and actualizing each manifestation, each appearance, and each appearance is already complete and whole in itself, and utterly unique (it is not an undifferentiated oneness but is simply multiplicity and myriad dharmas).

Likewise it is not that objects exist ‘outside’ waiting for us to discover, or reveal, or see, or observe them. But rather each moment of appearance, each moment of experience, is being uniquely manifested, appeared, come-into-being, via the seamless interpenetration of the universe – hearing the bird chirping is the seamless process of ear-bird-air-chirping actualizing the sound “chirp chirp”. The whole universe is “together” doing this very immediate moment of hearing. Just as my fingers, keyboard, thoughts, typing, words appearing on the screen, are all “in this together” as one seamless interpenetration of totally exerting ‘this’. Buddha-nature is this total exertion, it is not a hidden noumenon or a latent thing that ‘produces’ the myriad things, nor is it something that truly exists hidden waiting to be discovered – that is a mere dead image we form about Buddha-nature that has come to past.

It is the entire universe of complete seamless interpenetration that is ‘exerting’ Buddha-nature in a completely dynamic, ever-advancing state of self-actualizing. We are not discovering Buddha-nature so much as to be actually “creating” it every moment. Or you can say we are simultaneously discovering, renewing, creating, and casting-off Buddha-nature every moment (yet this Birth and Death IS precisely No-Birth and No-Death). This is why realization and practice is taught by Dogen to be one. You do not stop fanning yourself because the wind is constant and all-pervasive, for the all-pervasiveness of wind is expressed perfectly in the act of fanning oneself. Realization of Buddha-nature is simply this ever-advancing actualization of Buddha-nature AS the myriad dharmas, activities, action, practice, sitting in meditation, chanting, bowing, preaching, displaying compassion and kindness to others, walking, breathing, sleeping, all is simply the complete and perfect expression of enlightenment and not done as a means-to-an-end of discovering something hidden or special.Realization = Exerting = Practice. Synonymous!

Long gone are the days of sitting in stagnant waters waiting for something to show itself. *A dragon does not stay in stagnant water. The still pond cannot contain the dragon’s coils.*

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17th August 2012

**Like an illusion but not an illusion?**

To taiyaki: I think Namdrol/Malcolm was very insistent that it (what is empty) is not 'like an illusion' but really what is empty is 'illusory'. He made the comment that 'like an illusion' is still a subtle realist point of view. He has some good points there. Indeed 'like an illusion' should not be mistaken to mean something is real yet dream-like. It is pointing out that what appears is utterly empty of any real existence.

However, 'like an illusion but not an illusion' also points out that our perceptions are not something fabricated or projected in a way that they cease after 'waking up', as if when we 'wake up', we find an alternate or ultimate reality that transcends or lies beyond the appearances. There is in fact no ultimate reality beyond appearance, though there is the ultimate truth of emptiness, which is inseparable from luminous clarity and the appearances/display. Your awakening does not alter your pure sensory experience which pretty much goes on the same way (they are certainly not like a dream that disappears when you wake up), except now you are no longer projecting false imputations, and you are truly 'tasting' the vividness/luminosity of everything without any projection of self/Self.

Both points of view are valid and very much depends on what they mean by "illusions". I'd put it this way: by realizing emptiness, the illusory nature of everything is seen, but the appearance of illusions do not cease.

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17th August 2012

Thusness: *For one that still holds on to an (ontological/truly existing) essence to understand Buddhism, it will be difficult to see. This willingness to let go of Essence must come first before we can clearly see. There will definitely be a period of struggle for those that has directly realized and experienced the non duality of awareness. Therefore the focus must be this letting go... this perpetual letting go by itself of whatever ground or base or arising. Then we will not fall into the extremes.*

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19th August 2012

7/8/2012 11:20 PM Thusness: In the primordial state, everything is 浑然一体 (blended into an undifferentiated whole) - mind, body, universe… where sense of self is completely transcended into the immediate moment of suchness, or there is just the flow of action in an undifferentiated state.

Realization enables you to directly see this clearly as always so but clouded with dualistic tendency to see the world, mind, body as divided. The intensity is focusing on the essence (clarity) of mind.... it is important to understand for a practitioner to later let go of the grasping of presence and be natural. Otherwise practitioner will have sought after the state of oblivion to get beyond presence. A practitioner that releases the grasping of presence has no such issue. But to see how the grasping of ultimate One Mind is but an

attachment that prevents clear seeing and releasing is crucial. In primordial suchness, mind-body-universe is one and act as one flow but not one substance.

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19th August 2012

Dogen: “Know that in this way there are myriads of forms and hundreds of grasses in the entire earth, and yet each grass and each form itself is in the entire earth. The process of this kind is the beginning of practice. When you reach this state, you are one grass, one form; you have understanding of form and no understanding of form; you have understanding of grass and no understanding of grass. Because there is only this time, being-time is entire time. This being-grass, this being-form, both are time. At each and every moment, there are myriad beings. They are the entire universe. Reflect now whether any myriad beings or any entire universe is left out of time in nowness.”

"With going the boundless sky goes, with coming the entire earth comes. This is everyday mind."

So, Zen Master Dogen asks us to *reflect now whether any myriad beings or any entire universe is left out of time in nowness.* Lets reflect breathing for example (you can substitute breathing for anything – because anything is truly everything). Breathing is not part of the universe, it is the whole universe, as it is one seamless interpenetration in one instantaneous moment of being-time. Breathing is not a thing but the environment, the air flowing into the nostrils, the chilly sensation, the movement of the abdomen, are all one seamless flow.

It is not you breathing air as much as the air breathing you, breathing is not a part of the universe but what the whole universe is doing, breathing is the entire universe, it is one activity. Each moment is the universe. Not seeing dependent origination, we establish things as having independent, graspable existences. As a result of wrong view, we substantialize and separate "breath” from the "universe". We objectify breath as a thing independent from the rest of the universe instead of seeing the entire process in the big picture, which is simply one seamless interpenetrating universe.

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26th August 2012

Life is a big dream indeed. Fundamentally, lucid dreams should lead to a greater awareness of the dream-like, illusory, empty (yet luminous and vivid) nature of all states waking or sleeping. Recently I had a lucid dream and I wondered how can I wake up from this dream? An intuition arose: “this is simply a dream, so just examine the dream-like and empty nature of the whole dream-scape”, and as soon as I examine it, I woke up (to another dream called the waking life, haha).

This is a lesson about the blinding spell of karmic propensity and the role of insight... when we are in ignorance, it is just like a magical spell and we are being shrouded by this magical spell to perceive in a certain way (e.g. subject/object duality, inherency). Only

insight is able to penetrate and break through this magical spell or veil... there is no other way.

Recently I've been having certain reccurring experiences that Thusness said were great signs of progress - that my practice and wisdom is penetrating into sleep, and these experiences include entering into very deep and intense samadhi-like state of presence and bliss in the sleeping state, which occurred not only once for the past few days. Lucidity in sleep (like deep sleep) and dreams are occurring seemingly more often (though they have been experienced intermittently ever since two years ago). Thusness also informed me that this would not have been possible if sincerity and faith is lacking (inspite of having insights). It is just a state where the dream blanked out, and I am simply resting in a contentless pure presence that is extremely blissful.

Basically, what is occurring recently however seems to be one step further than lucid dreams (which had occurred commonly as well). Seems like the wisdom of one taste is gradually penetrating into sleep state - blissful, luminous presence, and empty. Will just let it unfold and see. I think its just the beginning of something...

Time to practice even harder and with even more sincerity!

Note: I don't do dream yoga or any sleep practices (which incl. even dzogchen guru yoga which can lead to penetrating rigpa into sleep), though I've heard and read about that from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, others. Thusness have said that that those practices that I just mentioned can speed up progress of certain experience into sleep, though it is not necessarily a 'must' for everyone, as it can slowly come as a result of deepening one's insight as well.

P.s. I found something written by Thusness in 2007: "The deep dreamless sleep is a very precious state of being, a natural samadhi of its own, a measure of accomplishment in the first complete cycle of non-dual. If conditions are understood along with our pristine nature, all 3 states flow as a single whole."

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30th August 2012

"If for a moment we are able to free ourselves from of all sort of definitions and labellings, feel the bare sensations without words, feel 'aliveness', feel 'existence' then search with our entire being its 'location'. Have the same sort of 'awakeness' for 'location' as we have for "I AM". Is impermanence a movement from here to there? If we penetrate deeply, it will reveal that there is nothing here, nothing now, nothing self, yet, there is vivid appearance. There is only always vivid appearance which is the very living presence that dependently originates whenever condition is. And what that dependently originates does not arise, does not cease, does not come, does not go." – Thusness, 2010

It is essential to investigate the whereabouts and locality of every manifestation until we have clear insight that although all thoughts and sensations, the entire field of sensate world is sparkling with an intensity, with aliveness, as consciousness, yet every activity of cognizance, as a thought, as a sensation, as anything and everything are entirely devoid

of a core that can be pinned down – there is no root, ground, core, substance whatsoever. When we investigate where a thought comes from, abides in, goes to, or any sense perception, we see that they are as illusory as a TV show. The characters in the TV show may appear to be coming from somewhere or going somewhere – but it is just a magical apparition, a play of lights and colours, just one display that is completely illusory – coming from nowhere and going from nowhere. The characters of the TV show, being mere appearances, does not go anywhere – there is no ghost climbing out of the TV like in the horror movie The Ring. This is because there is no ghost – ghost is merely an illusory appearance, an apparitional shifting of lights and colours dependent on conditions, not lasting even a moment!

All the people in the movie are just like all the appearances in life – they are all an illusory display that is empty, unlocatable and ungraspable, a mere play of conditions that ceases upon the parting of conditions (for example, when the electricity is turned off everything on screen is gone) - the display appears vividly in myriad forms and shapes but is utterly insubstantial and doesn't take root or have a place of abidance – just like drawing painting on the water or doing the colourful Tibetan sand mandalas, very vividly appearing and yet, gone in a moment! No substance was there. Just like a lucid dream – seemingly real, so vivid, so clear, and yet the dream house – has it truly arose? Where did it came from? Or just a thought magically appearing out of nowhere due to causes and conditions, but utterly ungraspable and unlocatable? No substantial reality was ever born or have taken root. There is no birth nor death. Impermanence does not move from here to there, just like drawing the letter 'Z' on water simply appears and dissolves on that very spot or moment – how can that letter 'Z' move from here to there? Just disjoint, bubble-like, ephemeral and illusory appearance. Released!

The method that led to the insight of anatta for me is to contemplate on the Bahiya Sutta. One could also contemplate on Thusness's two stanzas of anatta, it's all related. For emptiness, it was by contemplating on the Mahamudra pointers to emptiness (read Essentials of Mahamudra by Thrangu Rinpoche for this kind of approach) – investigating the origin, place of abidance and destination of thoughts and perceptions and realizing its empty, coreless, unlocatable and illusory nature. This is the nature of mind – luminous yet empty, appearing but without substance like a magic show. Then further contemplation into dependent origination leads to the Maha perception of all activity as happening as one undivided activity of the universe/causes and conditions.

So there is a path of contemplation that leads to the realization of I AMness (self-inquiry), a path that leads to realization of non-dual, a path that leads to realization of anatta, and emptiness. Do not be misled by those (particularly neo-advaitins) who say there is no path to realization. Even those who awoke spontaneously when walking in a park had done their own search, practices and contemplation even before that spontaneous awakening.

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8th September 2012

**Absolutely nothing to be denied**

Albert Hong (Taiyaki):

*Peace, joy, openness, clarity, etc. These are all delicious.*

*But may we also disturb the peace, be closed off, muddy the clarity.*

*Feel anger, fear, tiredness, depression, etc.*

*We must never deny our humanity. We must not fear getting dirty again.*

*Because tell you what. Life will always present itself. Reality is infinite potential. We must integrate all that we reject as the display of our luminous nature and through emptiness we survive.*

*And I want to assert that true freedom lies in just being human. Beyond samsara and nirvana, no where to dwell. Yet playing in the murky waters of samsara and being free in the vastness of nirvana.*

*As Dogen asserted, "Enlightenment is intimacy with all things."*

*All things.*

**Absolutely nothing to be grasped**

Everything we encounter in life consists of ephemeral, transient stories (thoughts), sensations, visions, and sounds. It is an ever-stream flow that is coreless and cannot be pinned down. Everything is unsupported, transient, flickering, disjoint display (sensations, thoughts, visions, etc) that are empty of anything whatsoever. Yet by the power of our ignorance and latent tendencies, we solidify 'things' as coherent objects, we pin them down, focus on our projected perception on such solidified images and focus on them in a way that produces passions, aggression and sorrow, leading to all kinds of fantasies and suffering.

This crystallizing of a part of sensations into 'I, me, mine' and another part into 'objects' is the source of all misery.

Self – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Mind – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Body – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Things – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Events – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Money – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Life – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Pain – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Loss – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Death – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Power – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.

Sex – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Meditative bliss states – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Samadhi states – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Amazing spiritual powers, visiting other realms, seeing visions – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Transcendental states – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.
Awareness – empty – only ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes.

A brilliant play of shapes, forms, details. Moment by moment a universe displays in a brilliant, crystal-like clarity and splendour… and poof! It is a suchness that is the epithet of the Buddha – Tathagata – thus come, thus gone.

May all be liberated as mind, liberated as things and events, liberated as arising, liberated as subsiding.

Through a period of practice-enlightenment, our projecting tendencies wind down, and the "ephemeral stories, appearance-mirages, echoes" becomes only "ephemeral appearance-mirages, echoes" - an empty-selfreleasing-bliss-clarity where not a trace of self, contraction, passion, anger or sorrow remains - utterly traceless!

Moment by moment, arbitrary thoughts and concepts made absent in a state of nakedness by relaxing into our natural state, primordial suchness shines as ordinary, mundane, yet wonderful activities, transforming the way we live our 'life' and interact with apparent 'others'.

This must not remain a concept but an ongoing practice-enlightenment!

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8th September 2012

**Ignorance and Projection**

Ignorance and projection is just like seeing an apple - whenever we see an apple we think the "seed" is "located inside the apple". Actually that is just a form of self-view (self-view is of two "levels": the view of subjective self, and the view of self in dharmas/reifing objective phenomena). In reality we are manifesting/actualizing different moments of apple by peeling away the skin, eating its flesh and finding the seed. Each stage is a clear-cut dharma position or manifestation as Dogen puts it. The seed is also a coreless, empty, dependently originated appearance rather than a truly existing thing hiding there. So it is not the case that there is an 'apple' and a 'seed hiding inside apple' - the seed is simply a particular instance of apple totally exerted from all causes and conditions, clear cut from other instances. "An apple and a seed inside apple" is simply a projection blinding us from suchness, and the nature of false projections is such that they persist stubbornly like a spell or a dream until they are exposed in a moment of clear insight. The bondage that is illusory nevertheless has an amazing power in shaping our perception and experience - it defines how we live, how we feel, how we experience, how we suffer.

Likewise due to ignorance, due to self-view, we are referencing or extrapolating moments of experience with an underlying substance, agent, perceiver, etc –the idea “experience requires an experiencer” is just like seeing the appearance of apple and linking it with the idea "the seed is inside the apple". It is precisely this idea at the back of our minds - of some substantial core, inherent existence, ground, etc that prevents us from experiencing the wholeness and completeness of an instantaneous, transient, flickering and self-luminous moment, the groundless ground of being/becoming. It sets up a something or someone to be grasped or sought, resulting in seeking, grasping, effort, deluded attempts to re-confirm a remainder, etc. It has its fundamental cause in that "idea back in the head", the view of a real existence, i.e. ignorance. That view of inherency is the cause of fabricating duality (dualistic view is a subset of inherent view), the abstracting of luminosity from an arising, and all the confusions from without beginning in samsara.

Even after initial insight, it is not necessarily the case that the bondage is immediately gone completely, though certain damage is done.

p.s. Anyway,Thusness wrote few days ago:

*"It is one thing to say and understand: "Everything is Awareness", but quite another to say and understand "Awareness is only Everything"."*

*Well said and expressed by Jax. From "Everything is Awareness" to "Awareness is only Everything" allows one to see clearly that "remainder", BUT does not eliminate that remainder.*

*A practitioner must also see what prevents that very seeing it the first place despite "nothing really new" and "decades of practices"; for that is the primary cause of the remainder and not realizing that, the cycle repeats itself.”*

Update: Life is a big dream indeed. Fundamentally, lucid dreams should lead to a greater awareness of the dream-like, illusory, empty (yet luminous and vivid) nature of all states waking or sleeping. Last month I had a lucid dream and I wondered how can I wake up from this dream? So I prayed to Thusness for guidance and immediately, an intuition arose: “this is simply a dream, so just examine the dream-like and empty nature of the whole dream-scape”, and as soon as I examine it, I woke up (to another dream called the waking life, haha).

This is a lesson about the blinding spell of karmic propensity and the role of insight... when we are in ignorance, it is just like a magical spell and we are being shrouded by this magical spell to perceive in certain way. Only insight is able to penetrate and break through this magical spell or veil... there is no other way.

Kyle Dixon (asunthatneversets) just posted something relevant: "…The process of eradicating avidyā is conceived… not as a mere stopping of thought, but as the active

realization of the opposite of what ignorance misconceives. Avidyā is not a mere absence of knowledge, but a specific misconception, and it must be removed by realization of its opposite. In this vein, Tsongkhapa says that one cannot get rid of the misconception of 'inherent existence' merely by stopping conceptuality any more than one can get rid of the idea that there is a demon in a darkened cave merely by trying not to think about it. Just as one must hold a lamp and see that there is no demon there, so the illumination of wisdom is needed to clear away the darkness of ignorance."
Napper, Elizabeth, 2003, p. 103

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18th September 2012

Attended a meeting with Thusness and a few others. What a wonderful conversation! There are so many gems in it. I will not talk about the details… But I shall mention one point: he pointed out that liberation does not require thoughtlessness or non-conceptuality. After anatta, experience naturally becomes direct, non-conceptual, luminous, etc and one may have great clarity that nirvana is the transformation of the five aggregates (skandhas) into the eighteen dhatus (pure sensory awareness devoid of mental formations). That is, to many, the maturation of the anatta experience and liberation is to transform five skandhas into eighteen dhatus, to rid ourselves of the mental formations. Indeed, the transformation of five skandhas into eighteen dhatus is quite a natural progression. Yet, Thusness pointed out that it is not necessary to be free from concepts/thoughts at all moments in order to have liberating experience (and we can't avoid thoughts since they are necessary for work and practical purposes some times). So, one must penetrate the twofold emptiness – there is no one behind, and the thought itself is dependently originated, empty, and seeing this the mind releases. Then every moment of living, even moments when engaging in thinking and complex activities, becomes a "great practice". Therefore this does not lead only to a blissful experience but also to a liberating one. Another aspect one should mature from the initial realization of anatta is the Maha experience of total exertion.

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18th September 2012

Thusness: "I have told you about the place of no heat or cold. You should first slow down your thoughts until no thought, just the sound, scent…. No thoughts, non conceptual and fully just that. Slow down your thoughts. I want you to fully practice non-conceptual experience of anatta.

You have written too much, be non-conceptual for now… Slow down and rest… Fully and completely no thought and just presence that is this arising sound.

Are you able to fully die and rest your mind completely in this moment of manifestation?"

What great advice. Indeed, I am experiencing this non-conceptual clarity, intimacy and bliss from fully experiencing whatever arises without reservation and without self (it can become particularly blissful and intense at times in states of mini absorption)… but I

have to dedicate more quality time now to this (engaging in thoughts may be inevitable when doing certain work or answering people, but even that is being let go of when the work is done).

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22nd September 2012

*Ernest asked: "Can someone explain to me the Buddhist doctrine of "dependent origination" as it applies to consciousness? Is consciousness "ultimate" (primary reality) or not? Is there any difference between "Consciousness" (capital "C" as some people use it) and "consciousness" (small "c") as it relates to "dependent origination"? Thanks.*

Ernest, I used to believe in this Awareness/consciousness distinction. Then I come to see that there is in fact no awareness behind consciousness or consciousness behind awareness... there is absolutely no self/Self, no subject, at all! No awareness as some source and substance... rather awareness is deconstructed and seen to be simply the self-luminous perceptions arising moment to moment. There is in seeing just the seen, no seer, in hearing just the heard, no hearer - and even the sense of beingness before conceptual thought arises - that too is a manifestation that dependently originates.

It may be questioned - sense consciousness comes and goes but what about the void before sense perceptions? The Awareness or Perceiver before the perceived objects arise? That is a false question with false presumptions... for if the void knows itself, then that void-cognizance itself is an arising experience, a knowing happening, it is being known and not some untouched knower/experiencer - then that 'void' would not truly be 'void' for that too is an activity of knowing and not some stand-alone unperceived subject. As someone stated, "God cannot be separated from creation, because the potential for creation is already Known." - so in fact Awareness is not some unseen source and substance giving rise to knowns, "source" is pure manifestation, there is only knowing/known without knower. What you called "source", has always been another arising manifestation. In effect everything happening is a knowing/being known, knowing cannot be separated from being known, and each 'knowns' are a specific instance of self-knowing under different conditions, there is no knower.

Then it may be questioned thus: there is this non-percipient state where even that self-knowing being fades. There is no awareness of anything, any awareness of that only comes about after emerging from that state. It is complete not knowing. But if there was "not knowing", then how could you prove there was "awareness" in such a "not knowing"? Either there is awareness - if there is awareness then that is being known even if it is not a self-conscious sort of knowing - and even this unself-conscious knowing would itself be an arising/being-known rather than some absolute untouched knower. OR there is no knowing, and if it is not knowing then again any notion of an awareness being there is mere postulation/inference. Any notions of there being some unaffected awareness that stops being aware of itself yet remaining unchanging and independent is again more postulations, mere inference. In any case, you cannot postulate some unaffected awareness that is some substance behind knowing/known. There is only manifestations moment by moment, of knowing/known without knower. And each

particular instance is unique, and arising dependent on various causes and conditions.

There are also those who say, "the evidence that awareness is constant is that whenever someone beats me while I'm asleep, immediately I wake up, so that means awareness is unaffected by the loss of consciousness and is ever-ready to come into action". Now there is no denying of awareness - but awareness in this case is still a manifestation that dependently originates! This statement does not indicate some unchanging, independent substance unaffected by manifestation or conditions. There is no manifestation-of-waking-awareness without being beaten, or when the conditions arise for there to be cognizance of dream or waking life. There is no evidence here of awareness as being some independent, unchanging substance, other than a mere inference and postulation. Just the flow of manifestation itself is self-cognizing.

Even now I still experience deep blissful Presence in deep sleep. But I do not conceive a Self out of it. That too is manifestation. Every appearance, every experience, from waking to dream to deep sleep is really our Pristine Awareness, every moment and everywhere in all its manifolds and diversities. When causes and conditions is, manifestation is, when manifestation is, Awareness is. All is the one reality.

Check this out too: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2009/06/bodhidharma-on-awareness-and-conditions.html

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23rd September 2012

Important point. Thusness (2011): “self release doesn't mean the appearance self-releases, it is the mind upon realizes the 2 fold emptiness releases itself from grasping as there is nothing to grasp either as a subject or object, inner or outer, groundless and ungraspable.”

It’s not right to say ‘things are releasing constantly and so there is nothing to be done’. Obviously, most people are living in ignorance and attachment! Wisdom releases.

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26th September 2012

(Updated: 21st October 2012)

**Total Exertion**

The other day, I asked Emanrohe about the 'talk by Zen Master Dae Kwang'. That's strange, I don't know who Zen Master Dae Kwang is but his name pops up in mind and I just typed it out, later I re-checked, the website says its Zen Master Dae Bong's talk. So I sent a second sms and told him my error, it's actually Zen Master Dae Bong's talk.

But anyway, today it turns out Zen Master Dae Kwang was indeed giving a speech.

Halfway through, the thunder started to sound.. Someone asked a question, he said "can

you hear the thunder?" *thunder claps* "that is it! that is the answer from Buddha (laughter)" And five more questions came - what is enlightened person, who can become enlightened, how to practice and become enlightened, "all dharmas return to one one returns to what?", etc.

And his answer to each question was, "did you hear the thunder?"

Then it started to rain, it got so loud that he stopped speaking and we just sat there. The rain itself becomes the dharma talk... so everyone sat there in meditation... the zen master sat very still. Just the sound of dripping rain filling the whole universe... the sound enjoying and hearing itself... that's Buddha, clear and blissful.

Then after 20 minutes he began to speak. He said you don't need to remember anything I said... the rain is the best dharma talk. So the talk ended, 15 minutes early.

It was still raining and I got a chance to chat with him a little.

I told him two years ago, I was contemplating on the Bahiya Sutta and that led to an awakening - in the seen, there is just the seen, in the heard there is just the heard, in the cognized just the cognized. When for you, Bahiya, there is in the seen just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in the cognized just the cognized, there is no you in terms of that, no you in there, no you here, and no you in-between. Just that is the end of suffering. Then I realized, oh, this entire notion of a self, a seer that is seeing the seen is entirely illusory! There is in seeing just the seen, seeing IS the seen only. No subject and object, inside or outside.

He smiled and said "Precisely! That's why I asked - did you hear the thunder?"

I said, "But I still have discursive thoughts sometimes, I feel my practice is still lacking. What do you say about it?"

He said thoughts are not a problem, it's the natural functioning of the mind - Buddha's sutras all came from his thinking. Just don't be attached to thoughts, that's all.

I asked him a few more questions... like, how long do you advise people to do meditation everyday?

He said 24 hours.

I asked, what about sitting meditation?

He said maybe 20 minutes in the morning, then the rest of the day also Just Do It.

I say in acting 100% action, no you remaining. He agreed and said no you practicing either. No inside, no outside, just do it.

I thanked him, bowed and left.

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A little background info:

Zen Master Dae Kwang is the abbot of the Kwan Um School of Zen. He is the guiding teacher of Providence Zen Center in Cumberland, Rhode Island, the head temple of our international School. He is also the teacher for Zen centers in Wisconsin and Delaware. Zen Master Dae Kwang travels widely, leading retreats throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. His interests include meditation practices common to Christianity and Buddhism. He was ordained a monk in 1987.

http://www.awaresilence.com/Zen_Teachings/Zen_Master_Dae_Kwang_Middleway.html

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I told Thusness later, he said that's the "total exertion" he talked about. He also said the insights I went through is quite compatible with their zen lineage and also it's "not easy to find a master with true insight, you should associate with him", but I said he's going back to America.

.....

**Thusness**: What is non-meditation to you? And what is non-action?

**AEN**: Non meditation is simply experiencing experience as it appears without dualistic/inherent view which is rather similar to what jax is saying I think

**Thusness**: What do you mean by experiencing experience as it appears without dualistic/inherent view? If I ask you to take a deep breath now and then breath normal, are they non-action and non-meditation?

**AEN**: Yes

**Thusness**: Why so?

**AEN**: It is just experience in its natural state, without the sense of self or dualistic action arising

**Thusness**: Natural state refers to?

**AEN**: Appearance appearing according to conditions, unmodified and unaltered by dualistic action/sense of self: Thusness: That which you are talking aboutis no-doership. What if there is intention, as in chanting?

**AEN**: There is no problem with intention, bcos that too is an arising without self... Its like total exertion in every moment, total action without self, whether chanting, walking, sitting

**Thusness**: An arising without self meaning? As in no-doership...u have to b clear...

**AEN**: There is total involvement of all conditions, just without agency. Conditions include intention

**Thusness**: Total is always void of self. When there is no gap between actor and action, that is non-action. Lot of movement in appearance but nothing truly moves. When the one who will is gone (no-will), the entire movement appears to be "your willing". It is not about no-doership and arising spontaneously but doer and deeds are refine till none in total action.

**AEN**: Yes there is no standing back watching action unfold but instead whole being is just action, no self
**Thusness**: When insight of anatta arises, the heat and cold "kill you" is the actualization non-action.

**Thusness**: Yes

**AEN**: Ic.. I think only zen emphasizes this very much. Like Zen Master Seung Sahn's tradition.

**Thusness**: Dogen

**AEN**: I see

**Thusness**: No...Theravada also when understood correctly. This total exertion is not the result of effort, but full integration of view/experience/realization. When we say this arising thought is just a thought, don't believe in the story...or this thought is empty...nothing to hold...that is only half understanding. The other half is the total exertion of this thought. All past/present/future tendencies, ignorance, wisdom is in this one thought...

**AEN**: I was reading Walpola Rahula's book ("What The Buddha Taught"). I guess he realized anatta and is very clear about this too.

From "What The Buddha Taught" by Walpola Rahula (great book, highly recommended):

"Mindfulness, or awareness, does not mean that you should think and be conscious 'I am doing this' or 'I am doing that.' No. Just the contrary. The moment you think, 'I am doing this,' you become self-conscious, and then you do not live in the action, but you live in the idea 'I am,' and consequently your work too is spoiled.

"You should forget yourself completely, and lose yourself in what you do. The moment a speaker becomes self-conscious and thinks 'I am addressing an audience,' his speech is disturbed and his trend of thought broken. But when he forgets himself in his speech, in his subject, then he is at his best, he speaks well and explains things clearly.

All great work -- artistic, poetic, intellectual or spiritual -- is produced at those moments when its creators are lost completely in their actions, when they forget themselves altogether, and are free from self-consciousness.

This mindfulness or awareness with regard to our activities, taught by the Buddha, is to live in the present moment, to live in the present action (this is also the Zen way which is based primarily on this teaching.) Here in this form of meditation, you haven't got to perform any particular action in order to develop mindfulness, but you have only to be mindful and aware of whatever you may do. You haven't got to spend one second of your precious time on this particular 'meditation': you have only to cultivate mindfulness and awareness always, day and night, with regard to all activities in your usual daily life. These two forms of 'meditation' discussed above are connected with our body."

**Thusness**: Yes...and insight of anatta opens the gate.

**AEN**: Ic.. Delma tells me today her total exertion has stabilized, “Interesting times. Nondual is becoming more and more stable. I don't understand it, but just reading your material and deeply contemplating it seems to have tremendous affect. Yesterday while driving home from work and walking to my house, there was just walking, just driving. This was is what is becoming more and more sustained.

I do follow your advice and follow the breath without counting. Then there is only breath. It's more effortless these days. So, thank you… …luminosity, but not awareness as a thing or entity. just the senses, experienced as independent streams. It's the walking experience which seems different and sustained. No one is walking. At first this would be experienced with a bit of effort, but it's becoming more natural and the feeling of it always having been this way is there."

**Thusness**: Quite good

**Thusness**: When the gap between actor and action is refined till none, that is non-action and that non-action is total action. Whether this total action is understood as the natural way will depend on whether the insight of anatta has arisen. Anatta is the insight that allows the practitioner to see clearly that this has always been the case.

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Hi James, I think after realizing anatta, the super-clarity of mindfulness becomes sort of effortless and uncontrived. Pure natural aliveness and crystal clarity in all six senses. Isn't it the case for you? So any kind of contrivance becomes counterproductive. But if you try to practice mindfulness before penetrating no-self, it is quite effortful to maintain. This is because clarity is intrinsic to mind/experience rather than being produced, only the sense of self is 'obscuring'.

Also the non-action that Thusness said is not merely 'no doer, everything just happening, just being done' but total involvement, total action, entire being is just action, so intention and effort is fully exerted to do what is being done. It is not a contrived effort like "trying to maintain a witness of what is being done", no. No contrived mindfulness is involved. I'm talking about full exertion in just doing that activity like the whole being, whole universe is fully exerting as the action, eating the apple, cleaning the stain off the

toilet. Intention is fully included/involved in that moment, rather than dissociated/a kind of "let things happen on their own".

Whole body-mind is engaged in seeing, hearing, acting: "When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body-and-mind, you grasp things directly. Unlike things and their reflections in the mirror, and unlike the moon and its reflection in the water, when one side is illumined the other side is dark." - Dogen

When there is total action, that is also non action because there is no doer-deed dichotomy, whole being is just action and there is no doer or acting or even movement.

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This morning before I woke up, I dreamt of going to the new zen center Kwan Yin Chan Lin. When I woke up I was suddenly reminded about visiting KYCL (I probably would have forgotten otherwise) and realized today is a good time to visit that place as it is Saturday and they have activities on Saturday. I have never visited it before previously (the dharma talks I attended previously were held in a tent).

When I visited that place, they told me today is the first out of the 6 lessons in the meditation course. We sat in meditation for like half an hour? Then it was followed by a dharma talk... and surprise!

Zen Master Dae Kwang was the one giving the talk. (I was wrong, he didn't go back to America after all, he is staying in Singapore for some time)

That place is a cool and nice environment: simple, clean design, very zen. Incidentally I once had this thought in the past, how would I like to design the place if I ever were to build a meditation center myself? Kwan Yin Chan Lin was exactly what I had in mind - a very clean, spacious, uncluttered, simple design.

Anyway, Zen Master Dae Kwang was giving a talk about meditation and zen, he gives us tips about practice and meditation. His talk was also about clear mind - being fully present and letting go the thoughts (but not fighting them), then seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and even thinking becomes very clear. Clear mind is your buddha nature, what is already intrinsic and complete in everyone, so we are not trying to attain anything at all. As he says: in our practice and meditation, we will NOT attain anything!

It was a nice talk.

The funny thing is, the ending words in the talk was the same as it was in my dream - something about the teachings being about your direct experience and not some (intellectual) understanding. That was followed by the nun coming and commencing the vow recitation. Just the same scene as what I saw in my dream! Hahaha...

I told Thusness immediately after that, his comment was "auspicious karmic connection".

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3rd October 2012

Thusness told me that the stream of wisdom will penetrate into the three states eventually, many years ago. For example if you keep chanting something, or if you keep playing computer games, then in the dream these things will appear. Likewise when you get acquinted with wisdom, this appears into dream and deep sleep as well. This is the flow of dependent origination – ignorance flows, wisdom also flows.

This is another dream that Thusness told me to wrote down. It happened last night.

In my dream, I was contemplating something that the Buddha said:

"Bhikkhus, when ignorance is abandoned and true knowledge has arisen in a bhikkhu, then with the fading away of ignorance and the arising of true knowledge he no longer clings to sensual pleasures, no longer clings to views, no longer clings to rules and observances, no longer clings to a doctrine of self.[11]**When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbana. He understands: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being."** (MN11: Cula-sihanada Sutta)

As I contemplated this in my dream, I saw how when there is craving, when there is agitation, when there is clinging, I could project consciousness out of my body into another place, into the sky, into another realm, into another lifetime. I saw that this is how rebirth works - craving drives the entire process of becoming!

And then I stopped this craving-conceiving-projecting, and I was back where I was - on my bed. But I am still sleeping. And I instantly entered into this incredible bliss again (this happened a few times so far) - it was sooo blissful like the last time. But this time, it lasted much longer.

I can feel my entire being, even my face, is of this intense blissful vibration. After some time which felt longer than the last time (it was quite long and I began to wonder how long it will last), then as thoughts arise, the bliss begin to lessen until I woke up from the blissful sleep samadhi.

May all beings put an end to becoming and attain the highest bliss of Nirvana.

p.s. THIS is well said --->

29. “So it was with reference to this that it was said: ‘One should not neglect wisdom, should preserve truth, should cultivate relinquishment, and should train for peace.’

30. “‘The tides of conceiving do not sweep over one who stands upon these [foundations], and when the tides of conceiving no longer sweep over him he is called a sage at peace.’ So it was said. And with reference to what was this said?

31. “Bhikkhu, ‘I am’ is a conceiving; ‘I am this’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall not be’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be possessed of form’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be formless’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be percipient’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be non-percipient’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient’ is a conceiving. Conceiving is a disease, conceiving is a tumour, conceiving is a dart. By overcoming all conceivings, bhikkhu, one is called a sage at peace. And the sage at peace is not born, does not age, does not die; he is not shaken and is not agitated. For there is nothing present in him by which he might be born. Not being born, how could he age? Not ageing, how could he die? Not dying, how could he be shaken? Not being shaken, why should he be agitated?

32. “So it was with reference to this that it was said: ‘The tides of conceiving do not sweep over one who stands upon these [foundations], and when the tides of conceiving no longer sweep over him he is called a sage at peace.’ Bhikkhu, bear in mind this brief exposition of the six elements.”

(Buddha, MN 140 Dhātuvibhanga Sutta)

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12th October 2012

**Flawed Mode of Enquiry**

I have seen that when I say "awareness/luminosity is only everything", or "sensation is self-luminous", a doubt or question may arise in some. That questioner may ask then, "What is it that knows the experience of luminosity, but yet itself is never experienced"?

This question is not at all unfamiliar to me, I spent two years in the past practicing self inquiry day and night - who am I? Who is aware? Before birth what am I? Who is dragging this corpse along? To whom is this I-thought occuring? Who is the source? Etc etc (it all comes down to who is the source?). In fact self inquiry was vital for my self-realization (the realization of I AMness).

But there are two points to this:

1. One must realize that the current way of enquiry prevents the practitioner from intuitively realizing the non-arising nature of whatever arises.

The gnosis should not be understood this way such as "beyond", "changelessness", etc - understanding this way does not mean the practitioner realizes "something" superior; instead one is falling prey to his/her existing dualistic and inherent mode of enquiry rather than truly and directly pointing the way of immense intelligence.

2. The second point is that, when all enquiries and views are exhausted, how is it understood?

In other words, the way and system of enquiry already defined what you are going to experience. Therefore the mind must realize and see the futility of such mode of enquiry and any form of establishment.

This is why self inquiry is rejected by Buddha (though I advise it for beginners as it is a very potent, powerful, and direct path to Self-Realization, it is still a provisional method that has to be dropped later for further penetration into anatta, etc) as it is based on a not-so-hidden assumption that a self must exist, so the enquiry reinforces the sense of a subjective knower, it affects and prevents the complete experience of awareness.

As Buddha said in MN2: "And what are the ideas fit for attention that he does not attend to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen fermentation of sensuality does not arise in him, and the arisen fermentation of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen fermentation of becoming does not arise in him, and arisen fermentation of becoming is abandoned; the unarisen fermentation of ignorance does not arise in him, and the arisen fermentation of ignorance is abandoned. These are the ideas fit for attention that he does not attend to. Through his attending to ideas unfit for attention and through his not attending to ideas fit for attention, both unarisen fermentations arise in him, and arisen fermentations increase.

"This is how he attends inappropriately: 'Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?' Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?'

"As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view I have a self arises in him as true & established, or the view I have no self... or the view It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self... or the view It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self... or the view It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: This very self of mine — the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions — is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will stay just as it is for eternity. This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress." Having said this, I still highly recommend self-inquiry to realize I AMness. And don't be surprised if I talk solely about self-inquiry and I AMness to certain people. Today I still tell my mother to trace all thoughts and perceptions to her Source, I am teaching her to revert her awareness to itself or to her own source to discover her Self. I will only talk about Self to certain people and not talk anything at all about anatta or even non-dual. It may sound contradictory to anatta or emptiness teachings, but nonetheless it will lead to an important realization - that is the luminous essence of mind.

As Thusness puts it in 2009, "When I talk to someone, I have specific purposes. If I want

someone to have direct experience of 'I AMness', I will want him to have vivid experience of the 'I AM' Presence, and that includes the wrong understanding of inherent existence. Just like when your teacher is teaching you algebra, he or she cannot tell you about calculus. Similarly when you learn classical physics, the teacher cannot keep telling you about relativity. There is no point to keep telling you about quantum mechanics when you are studying newtonic views, for how are you going to understand quantum mechanics? You start from the newton way of understanding gravity, then slowly followed by relativity. Similarly when you study numbers, you start with discrete numbers - there is no point teaching you decimals or the rate of change, or see things as change. You see things in discrete first. If you keep telling people about wrong stuff under differing conditions, you only confuse people. I never wanted people to understand the ultimate truth, other people will lead them to the right understand when it is appropriate. So I might talk about Advaita [e.g. I AM/One Mind realization] until the day I die, or about stage 4 to 5 insight and nothing about 6 or emptiness. The approach I employ is strictly dependently originated, it is about seeing the conditions of an individual practitioner, but whether that person understands dependent origination is another matter."

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13th October 2012

Thusness wrote to me: “Although you see how precise Theravada teaching is, your current mode of practice should be as direct and uncontrived as possible. When you see nothing behind and magical appearances too are empty, awareness is naturally lucid and free. Views and all elaborations dissolved, mind-body forgotten... just unobstructed awareness. Awareness natural and uncontrived is supreme goal. Top/bottom, inside/outside, always without center and empty (twofold emptiness), then view is fully actualized and all experiences are great liberation.”

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21st October 2012

Thusness wrote: “Your practice of entering the 3 states (waking, dream and deep sleep) seems to progress well. All the six entries and exits must be beaming bright and energetic for you now to penetrate the 3 states. In addition, your faith and merit must be there. Practice hard.”

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24th October 2012

N: My interest is in the "total exertion", I am not 100% familiar with this term as it relates to a mechanic. So... Thought arises. Only that thought. Dying to the thought. Only that experience?

My reply: Dying to sound, sight, thought, can be in a passive mode.

Total exertion is not 'things are happening spontaneously so just surrender to it'. It is total participation, involvement of intentions, thoughts, action, without a doer-deed gap, transcending self into this total participation, total action.

Also, when you start to see dependent origination, then you no longer see a solid, inherently existing universe. You see a fluid, coming-to-actualization universe, the whole universe is actualized by all the causes and conditions in which intention is also part of the process of actualizing activity.

Then, 'you', mind-body, even 'Awareness' is forgotten and actualized through this stream of dependently arisen activities, much like a view that is actualized and forgotten/transcended.

Now if you start chanting, and self, mind-body transcends into just this activity of chanting, and another person starts chanting in the same rhythm, and another, what happens? Whole universe chants in one seamless interaction, great and marvellous. Total exertion - universe-exertion, universe chanting.

I wrote this last year:

*15th January 2011*
*Just now, 'I' was singing in the dharma center along with 'others'. But actually, the fact isthat I wasn't singing, rather the universe is singing interdependently... everything is onewhole arising, arising co-dependently.*

This is the actualization of dependent origination in real time, in real life, in total exertion. This is what Zen Master Seung Sahn calls, "together action" - we must chant together, bow together, practice together.

http://www.kwanumzen.org/2011/together-action-is-not-something-we-create/

Zen Master Wu Kwang:

*"Why am I talking about this? Because of this one word, seamless. According to our teaching, our original experience is seamless. That means that name and form is always changing, but one thing remains consistent. Although you can make sandalwood into an incense stick, into a carved elephant, or into a little box, its smell is the same. Also our teaching tells us that we are originally like one big net. That means we are all interconnected, continuously, without any break or separation.*

*Together is already a pre-existing condition. We are also this wide, interconnected experience. We are all originally pulsating dynamically moment by moment, moment by moment. Together-action is not something we create. Whatever we practice as together-action is just to remind ourselves."*

To summarize: the progression is pretty much from no-self in a passive form, to no-self in activity as understood from anatta, where even 'awareness' and 'innate clarity' is being forgotten and transcended in total activity - there is just one action (no doer-deeds gap), and from that one activity into total exertion until one understands the implication of indra's net or dependent origination.This is not just "in the seen, just the seen". "Self" must be lost but the full implication of inter-action, inter-being, must be realized. This cannot be understood intellectually, one has to engage and be fully involved. When no-self is experienced this way, it is completely different from Awareness practice, and certainly no tracing back to a source - instead clarity is completely traceless in activity just like whole body-mind engaging in chanting until body-mind is transcended and forgotten into one chanting.

Also an important point as Zen Master Wu Kwang pointed out is - this total exertion, this together-action, is not something being fabricated or a state we attain, it is what is always already the case, dependent origination, inter-action, is always happening around us but we are too obscure and occupied with the sense of self to notice it.

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26th October 2012

With regards to this innate clarity that is non-dual in nature, is there anything required for you to improve anything? Isn't trying to improve like adding dirt to improve a jewel? Therefore, just relax into clarity... there is truly nothing that needs to be done, when that division is gone.

So simply fully relax without holding anything, everything is in clearest expression. When there is no self clinging, there is just the happening/clarity which is self-so, and the intensity of clarity reveals itself due to the absence of obscuration (clinging). What you call clarity is really just "the everything in clearest expression" so forget about the clarity, it is the trick of language. And what is the everything? The six streams of experience - in the seen just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in the smelled just the smelled, in the tasted just the tasted, in the touched just the touched, in the cognized/thought just the cognized/thought, and there is no you in terms of that... but there is also no more looking at no-self or clarity but only this so called "everything".

- based on something Thusness wrote, I edited and added a little.

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28th October 2012

**No Universal Mind**

Direct experience has never, ever, said that there are no other mindstreams. Only a thought which confusedly collapses objects to an inherent Mind, operating under this

delusion of an inherent Mind, will make claims like "there is no other, all is just Me".

In other words, the (substantialist) non-dual person sees subject and object as undivided, via collapsing, subsuming, all objects into a single absolute Subject/Awareness. Then they make claims like "I am you, you are me".

Realizing anatta has nothing to do however with dissolving subject into object, or object into subject, and one is free from erroneous views like "I am you, you are me". All conventional realities remain as they are - i.e. I am I, you are you. The only difference is that the inherent view is seen through. It is not that subject does not exist, or object does not exist, or Neil does not exist, but there is no inherently existing subjects and objects - subject is merely imputed conventionally upon all these transient mind-body aggregates. One merely sees through this imputation as mere imputation/mental constructs, nothing more, and this leads to the releasing of mind's holdings. So there are just many mind-body aggregates conventionally speaking, being conventionally called 'self' or 'other', but with no inherent existence or self. There is absolutely no absolute Mind/Awareness/This in which things are subsumed into. Only the assumption of a 'ghostly, hidden and inherently existing substance/self-ness' is being seen through.

So only the extra imputation is seen through and conventional truths (car, weather, self, etc) remain as they are (it's not that car, weather, and so on became one thing), experience naturally becomes direct and non-dual due to the absence of reification - in seeing just scenery, just like when you see through the word "weather", that weather-ness of weather is merely imputed on a conglomerate of everchanging clouds, rain, wind, lightning, so on and so forth. Be it subject/object/weather/computer screen/car/etc etc, it is only a matter of freeing the mind of seeing "things" existing inherently, so experience turns vivid, direct and releasing.

You also see this difference reflected in contemplative traditions that emphasize different realization. Those that emphasize only non-dual may see overarching, universal mind (Everything and everyone is just this big Me), while Buddhist traditions that emphasize realization of anatta always stress that there is no overarching, universal, subsuming-all sort of ultimate mind/awareness/source, only mindstreams, only various aggregates that are empty of self and thereby implicitly non-dual but conventionally unique. It is only a matter of realizing and freeing mind from construing and reifying. The difference is also explained in Thusness Stage 4 and 5, and in that description he also warned about holding on to the notion of a Universal Mind in stage 4.

Seeing the 'self' is only ever mere imputation on the aggregates - forms, feelings, perceptions, volition, consciousness [consciousness being of six dependently arisen kinds], all transient, flickering, dependently arisen, merely aggregated but empty of self - then one is freed from construing a self, including a universal or unified self, all the aggregates remain distinct and unique in each moment of mind, and have nothing to do with an I, me or mine. But no subsuming involved - I am I, he is he conventionally, NOT 'everything is me', 'all is one', 'we are one', etc.

29th October 2012

**Mindful Living**

Mindfulness is called by Buddha the 'direct path' for the overcoming of suffering.

True mindfulness is not a mere alertness or noticing of things as they happen, but also a full embodiment of life. Awareness must be understood in full embracement of whatever arises. The body, the sound, the heat and the cold kills all sense of duality.

Eating food, I fully embody the food I eat, as if I am the food I eat, the chewing, the tasting, the swallowing.

Walking, I fully embody the walking I walk, as if my whole being is the activity, the foot touching the ground, the stepping forward, and so on.

Sitting, I fully embody the breathe I breathe, as if my whole being is the whole breathing. This awareness encompasses as the entire body.

This is just some examples... Of course, there is no "I" to embody, the full embodiment is equivalent to zero self-ness but complete intimacy and total involvement in action.

---

16th November 2012

Wrote to Seraphis from Dharma Overground, who realized Anatta after about 20 years in the “I AM” phase:

“Good insights there Seraphis! You seem able to actualize the living experience of anatta without dwelling much into view. Your insights unfold from recognizing "the same taste" of I AM in all six entries and exits, into seeing that the very idea of abiding is a hindrance, to the doubtless realization that there never was a "This I" to abide in, and whatever arises is already free and liberating.”

“For now, you should not be distracted with stages of insights (sunyata or whatever) but be thorough and leave no trace of "I" for the willingness to let go completely (the I) has arisen. Check this out if you haven't:
http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2011/11/where-there-is-no-cold-or-heat.html

Next step is not to stagnate in no-self and engage wholly and completely into actions and activities then "satori" has no entry or exit; when the thunder claps, the whole of "satori" is actualized!”

“Mindfulness extended to everything is important as it leads to the experience of different and unique instances of consciousness arising out of different conditions

(sense faculty and sense object). This was noticed here when I was at Thai massage with my parents, then I did vipassana (direct perception, not noting), as there are lots of unique sensations/instance of consciousness due to different conditions. Then I noticed how perculiar is each manifestation (which is pure consciousness) arising upon different conditions. It is quite effortless but requires relaxing distracted mind into each spontaneous unique manifestation of consciousness upon conditions or the meeting of the dhatus. For example the consciousness of the sense of touch is very perculiar or uniquely different from a pure consciousness of sound, but always without center, division, substance or location, it is an instance of pure consciousness that liberates upon contact. Completely luminous but empty, dependently arisen, momentary and transient. Consciousness is completely inseparable from causes and conditions. This is, that is.

This also leads to the intensity of luminosity... the texture and fabric of reality (awareness), but understood from D.O. Perspective. Thusness advises me to spend quality hours without concepts, lose myself and be deep in this. Also failure to experience this intensity of luminosity, or the forms and textures of awareness, one may be prone to a form of "oneness presence" but fail to experience it as pure manifestation.

Eighteen dhatus (elements) teaching define the relation of consciousness and conditions. Consciousness is not some ultimate self or source, rather it is a manifestation, an effect, of various causes and conditions. There is no place where consciousness resides because consciousness is empty (of self) and arisen conditionally. Different conditions result in very unque instances of consciousness. For example in eighteen dhatus:

With the meeting of eye and visual object there arises visual consciousness.

This is very different from skin touching tactile object resulting in tactile consciousness. Each instant of consciousness is differentiated and is precisely "where manifestation is". Self-aware manifestation. No purest consciousness, all consciousness-es are primordially pure."

"Thusness advises that I should look at it from 2 different angles: before or after maturity of anatta. From passive moving into active mode of non-action when the insight is mature is natural. It just comes when that tendency to create any form of 'self/Self' in from the deepest level is uprooted, the flow into total movement or oneness of action (non-action) is a natural progression. That is, once 'the cause that reify and separate' is dissolved, we just wake up one day and it becomes so natural and actions are fully embraced. It is also the trigger point for the arising of deep compassion. Before that, certain practices for me like anapanasati* (breath-mindfulness) to go in tandem with the insight of anatta will help but don't rush into experience. I am also still in the midst of refining view and experience."

---

13th December 2012

**A Thousand Faces**

Every moment is an encounter of my thousand faces. The sound of thunder, every drop of rain, every heart beat, every breath, every thought. Experience, experience, experience, experience!

The manifold is the empty suchness.

---

25th January 2013

I've had many episodes in the past where I was in conscious lucid dreams, and then the lucid dreams disappeared into pure non-dual Presence, pure knowingness, and it was profoundly blissful. Very very blissful. Samadhi like.

Last night, it was like that again, except the dreams never disappeared - I was walking to my dream bathroom in profound bliss and awareness was totally transparent and non-dual - the entire dream bathroom surroundings was experienced without subject/object dichotomy, there is no sense of a center or circumference left, only vivid transparency. The entire dream quality was pervaded by transparency, clarity, bliss. And it was intensely blissful...

The difference between this and previous experiences is that in previous instances, there was a dissolution into formless pure presence, while this time it is like non-dual clear light is experienced within dreams instead of dissolution of dream.

Just a sharing. I'm not a good practitioner, this sort of thing doesn't occur on a daily basis. I'm sure many are more experienced than I am.

I told Thusness about it, he said "I understand." "It is a good sign."

.....

Dannon Flynn commented: This is the clear light of sleep. :)

.....

Found a passage from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's 'The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep'' book, it is precise in description:

*CLEAR LIGHT DREAMS*

*There is a third type of dream that occurs when one is far along the path, the clear light dream. It arises from the primordial prana in the central channel. The clear light is generally spoken of in the teachings about sleep yoga and indicates a state free from dream, thought, and image, but there is also a clear light dream in which the dreamer*

*remains in the nature of mind. This is not an easy accomplishment; the practitioner must be very stable in non-dual awareness before the clear light dream arises. Gyalshen Milu Samleg, the author of important commentaries on the Mother Tantra, wrote that he practiced consistently for nine years before he began to have clear light dreams.*

*Developing the capacity for clear light dreams is similar to developing the capacity of abiding in the non-dual presence of rigpa during the day. In the beginning, rigpa and thought seem different, so that in the experience of rigpa there is no thought, and if thought arises we are distracted and lose rigpa. But when stability in rigpa is developed, thought simply arises and dissolves without in the least obscuring rigpa; the practitioner remains in non-dual awareness. These situations are similar to learning to play the drum and bell together in ritual practice: in the beginning we can only do one at a time. If we play the bell, we lose the rhythm of the drum, and vice versa. After we are stable we can play both at the same time.*

*The clear light dream is not the same as the dream of clarity, which, while arising from deep and relatively pure aspects of the mind and generated from positive karmic traces, still takes place in duality. The clear light dream, while emerging from the karmic traces of the past, does not result in dualistic experience. The practitioner does not reconstitute as an observing subject in relation to the dream as an object, nor as a subject in the world of the dream, but abides wholly integrated with non-dual rigpa.*

*The differences in the three kinds of dreams may seem subtle. Samsaric dream arises from the individual's karmic traces and emotions, and all content of the dream is formed by those traces and emotions. The dream of clarity includes more objective knowledge, which arises from collective karmic traces and is available to consciousness when it is not entangled in personal karmic traces. The consciousness is then not bound by space and time and personal history, and the dreamer can meet with real beings, receive teachings from real teachers, and find information helpful to others as well as to him or herself.*

*The clear light dream is not defined by the content of the dream, but is a clear light dream because there is no subjective dreamer or dream ego, nor any self in a dualistic relationship with the dream or the dream content. Although a dream arises, it is an activity of the mind that does not disturb the practitioner's stability in clear light.*

*.....*

*"Although we define sleep as unconsciousness, the darkness and experiential blankness are not the essence of sleep. For the pure awareness that is our basis there is no sleep. When not afflicted with obscurations, dreams, or thoughts, the moving mind dissolves into the nature of mind; then, rather than the sleep of ignorance, clarity, peacefulness, and bliss arise. When we develop the ability to abide in that awareness we find that sleep is luminous. This luminosity is the clear light. It is our true nature.*

*As explained in previous chapters, dreams arise from karmic traces. I used the analogy of light being projected through film to make movies, where the karmic traces are the photographs, awareness is the light that illuminates them, and the dreams are projected*

*on the base (kunzhi*). Dream yoga develops lucidity in relationship to the dream images. But in sleep yoga there is no film and no projection. Sleep yoga is imageless. The practice is the direct recognition of awareness by awareness, light illuminating itself. It is luminosity without images of any kind. Later, when stability in the clear light is developed, even dream images will not distract the practitioner, and the dream period of sleep will also occur in the clear light. These dreams are then called clear light dreams, which are different than dreams of clarity. In clear light dreams, the clear light is not obscured.*

*We lose the real sense of the clear light as soon as we conceptualize it or try to imagine it. There is neither subject nor object in the clear light. If there is any identification with a subject, then there is no entry into the clear light. Actually, nothing "enters" the clear light: the clear light is the base recognizing itself. There is neither "you" nor "it." Using dualistic language to describe the non- dual necessarily results in paradox. The only way to know the clear light is to know it directly."*

.....

I have lots of dreams of clarity as well (just had another one yesterday as well)... though they often tell me very helpful information about my practise, sometimes involve receiving teachings from teachers, and sometimes it shows future events which are very accurate, but there is not that sort of non-dual lucidity of clear light to those dreams.

....

Yes! I woke up very refreshed today as well.

> The number of hours of sleep also decrease and you begin the day beaming with energy and radiance. Just as Thusness in 2007:
>
> **Thusness**: for non-dual experiencer where there is complete letting go of the illusionary self, there is tremendous progress and if night they are able to, is there real progress?
>
> **Thusness**: then they complete the first cycle.
>
> **AEN**: what you mean by first cycle
>
> **Thusness**: almost 'be' in all 3 stages (waking, dream, deep sleep)
>
> **AEN**: oic
>
> **AEN**: wat you mean by cycles
>
> **Thusness**: when you have a very deep sleep, what happened next morning?
>
> **AEN**: very awake?
>
> **Thusness**: what else?'

**AEN**: mind is clear?

**AEN**: dunno

**Thusness**: continue ...right

**AEN**: the mind becomes less active?

**Thusness**: awake, clear, fresh, energetic, vibrant

**Thusness**: aren't that the seven factors?

**AEN**: oic..

**AEN**: ya

**Thusness**: for a non-dual experiencer, the next day is even so.

**Thusness**: the intensity is even more fantastic

**Thusness**: if this is continuously sustained, will the sleep naturally be shortened?

**AEN**: ya

**Thusness**: isn't it natural?

**AEN**: yes

**Thusness**: isn't the seven factors of enlightenment maintained?

**AEN**: ya

**Thusness**: so know that what is right and correctly discerned.

**Thusness**: buddha's depth of clarity is unsurpassed

**Thusness**: we cannot compare one that has reached that stage of clarity

.....

**Thusness**: and later stage when meditation is stabilize using non-dual and the door of impermanence, then there will be deep sleep with absolutely no problem but the no. of sleeping hours naturally lessen.

**Thusness**: and there is no problem like her case.

**Thusness**: but that is not a problem becoz of deep rest and sleep and allowing our emptiness to manifest.

**Thusness**: we will feel radiance bright instead of zoombieness....hehehe

.....

Just found a passage in 2006 where Thusness described what I experienced. And he is very right in pointing out the vast difference between 1) maintaining a state of witnessing awareness in sleep, which is dualistic, or 2) lucid dream, as compared to 3) non-dual knowing in dream and sleep.

**John**: the strength in the waking state of total presence is the experience of all physical phenomenon arising as pure awareness

**John**: but when in dreams, such experience must sustain

**John**: that is instead of the physical appearance of phenomenon arising, it is symbolic apperance of arising as the manifestation of pure awareness.

**John**: not a form of intellectual knowledge

**John**: just like the experience of anatta in waking state, the same experience extended to dreamstate.

**John**: it is entirely different.

**John**: it is difficult for me to tell u.

**John**: when one experience the experience of no-self during waking state, one experience total nothingness and absolute transparency but has no single doubt that all and everything is awareness.

**John**: means he is completely clear yet totally transparent

**John**: in dreams, it is difficult to maintain totally no-self and the symbols as pure awareness

**John**: that is very different from being aware in dreams

**John**: this is dualistic still in dream state.

**John**: that experience of anatta in waking state is not being experienced in dream state.

**John**: this is different from being aware in dreams like an observer.

**John**: one step higher than lucid dreams

**John**: you get what i mean or not?

...

**John**: and most ppl mistaken it as maintaining presence and awareness in dreams as in the form of passive witness

...

**John**: that is maintaining presence

**John**: not sustaining the experience of anatta

**John**: the total transparency but as everything

**AEN**: icic

**AEN**: but anatta is also presence isnt it?

**John**: anatta is the experience of total presence

**AEN**: oic then wats the difference between maintain presence and anatta

**John**: in total different forms every moment

**John**: no... anatta is the experience of total presence.

**John**: manifesting in different forms from moment to moment. It is the experience of total and absolute transparency, without boundary and limit.

**John**: total vividness and clarity.

**John**: absolute transparency is difficult to maintain and can only result from increasing loosening of the bond i told u. Not the result of effort.

**John**: that is why this state must be completely and fully stabilized during waking state.

**John**: total transparent awareness is experiencing everything as awareness.

**John**: and during dreamstate this is the case too.

**John**: this is very difficult to achieve. Not maintaining wakefulness and a sense of presence during the 3 states.

---

30th March 2013

After maturing the insight of anatta, the natural and immediate experience is total exertion. It is an intuitive experience. In hearing, there is only sound. But it is not just the non-dual experience of sound, it also has this flavor of the entire movement, a total activity, and that becomes natural. One starts to see whole universe involved in the activity. The one begins to feel net of indra in real time.

---

9th April 2013

> *Daniel M. Ingram:*
>
> *It is interesting that in another thread the was the assertion that MCTB whatever was about the first meaning of emptiness, rather than what your quote defines as both.*

*Just to be clear:*

*When I mean empty, I also mean without boundary, without inside and outside*

*I also mean the direct immediate experience in its unprocessed or raw form. I also mean the total dissolution of the sense of a perceiver.*

*I also mean no active agent.*

*I also mean that nothing is stable, including space and time.*

*I also mean that all is bare, shifting, empty sensate experience, causal, happening according to the basic laws of the universe, naturally, on its own.*

*I also would say that there is no boundary or differentiation between the sense doors at they occur, nor between body and mind, nor between manifestation and awareness, nor between this and that, beyond those ordinarily used for communication and discriminating function, but these are not the essential nature of experience, just part of it as sensations when they occur.*

*Nor can one find any here that is stable, nor a now that is stable, nor a knower, nor an investigator, nor any practitioner, nor any attainer.*

*When I talk of an integrated transient, natural, causal, luminous experience field, this sounds to me exactly like your "All collapse into a single sphere of natural presence and spontaneous simplicity."*

*I see no obvious difference either in theory or in actual practice.*

*Thoughts?*

What you said is all very resonating here.

However, I see emptiness of subjective self and emptiness of objects as two distinct realization. One may penetrate the subject, agent, perceiver, source, etc... and yet conceive of things appearing as 'outside'. Well experientially, without a perceiver, there is no sense of an inside and outside and experience is just 'in seeing only scenery', however it may still seem that the things in scenery exist 'outside' on its own.

Does seeing through the subjective self lead to seeing everything as 'mere appearance' or 'just experience'? Not necessarily. Things can still appear to be external to mind/awareness/experience after no-self. This is not just a matter of no subject/object duality in experience. The experience may already be non-dual, but subtle dualistic view can still distort perception.

The realization of emptiness is something intimate and non-intellectual. That is to say, understanding the theory of anatta doctrinally is not the same as actually realizing and experiencing it, the same goes for twofold emptiness.

Investigating into thoughts and perceptions, looking for the origin, location, core, and ceasing of phenomena, it may be suddenly realized that everything is an unborn and unoriginated appearance that is illusory like a magical apparition (without a magician as there is no self/Self). Non-arising and non-ceasing. It is not that everything is subsumed into a changeless/deathless Self or Mind (that view is seen through in anatta), it is that "mind", even though empty of self and seen as mere mental activities, that manifesting activities is further penetrated to be empty. Everything is mere appearance/mind/experience/empty and non-arising. Contemplating on thoughts and perceptions this way and the resultant insight happened after reading an instruction from Mahamudra.

One can also try an experiment such as taking a small mirror and tilt it to an angle that reflects one light source from above at you. Then, noticing that depending on which eye you use to look (without even needing to close your eye), you can see that light at the top, or bottom (or another location) of the surface of the mirror and if you use both eyes you see two lights on the surface. Is there inherently one light at the top, at the bottom, or two lights? This is not to be answered intellectually like, "it's all empty" or a "yes and no" answer. It is being contemplated until intuitive insight of dependent origination and a conviction and experience of everything as an empty coreless illusion/appearance arises. There is a deconstruction of externality/objectivity into an immediate taste, just like in anatta realization there is a deconstruction of subjectivity into a non-dual luminous taste of 'just sensation'. This must arise as a taste and not a logic, then bliss and wonder and release will arise. This 'experiment' arose spontaneously and led to to an experience so I am sharing this from experience.

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23rd April 2013

Excerpt from something I wrote in reply to someone.

From my experience the experiences of sleep are simply a natural flow of wisdom into sleep state... also if your nondual luminosity is intense in daily life it also enters into sleep. In summary there are a few types of dream experiences I've had.

1) karmic dreams, relating to karmic seeds and tendencies, usually affected by daily life activities or emotions and so on
2) dreams of clarity, which often shows very accurate information about future events, and sometimes involves visiting or receiving teachings from spiritual teachers/buddhas/masters and receiving teachings, and other spontaneous insightful knowledge is being imparted to oneself in various ways, for example during a period of time in army around the time of my realization of anatta, my dreams were in synchronicity with Thusness's prayers and dreams and I dreamt what he wanted me to practice
3) lucid dream, which has different degrees - whether one is able to control dream or

not,
4) hypnogogic states, where thoughts project into vivid hyper-real experience of sights and sounds that are life-like, visions and places become life-like as if you are there, also if you think of a song it will manifest as the entire audible experience with such clarity that you wonder how come you can remember every note and lyrics in sleep even clearer than in waking state
5) a non-dual state of pure presence and bliss, very intense presence and bliss absorption, pure awareness without any other objects (formless state)
6) non-dual dream, in which awareness is completely transparent, clear, centerless, borderless, blissful, brilliant, appearing as mere shapes and forms of dream environment but without much karmic content and stories...

Thing to take note: lucid dream is not the same as the last two as lucid dream is still usually dual with a sense of an observer, while not in 5 and 6. Dreams of clarity and other useful sleep events usually occur for me near waking. In 5) its totally formless except sheer presence and bliss, sort of like deep sleep state where all contents and dreams have dissolved... there may also be a sense of becoming absorbed into the heart center. At first I was curious about this and later found out that in tibetan texts it is described that in state of sleep and death, the winds enter the heart chakra followed by the revelation of clear light. Also, 6) can be experienced even in other sleep states including states like sleep paralysis... then fear and projection can dissolve into bliss and transparency. This happened to me a few times. Each time fear is transcended into non-dual bliss and transparency.

p.s. This just happened few days ago again in what appeared to be sleep paralysis, awareness stands out and expands into boundlessness and there is a floaty sensation."

It seems that only the Tibetan Buddhist tradition places much emphasis on the sleep state and has tradition and great resources of literature and yogic instructions pertaining to sleep. These two books helped me to get a better understanding and perspective of some of my sleep experiences:

Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu
The Tibetan Yogas Of Dream And Sleep by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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25th May 2013

I wrote this in Facebook in reply to a friend Din Robinson to whom Thusness wrote his "7 stages of experience" (originally 6) in 2006:

Din: "as soon as you take any action or any need for training, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space, not that there's any wrong with that!"

My reply:

This is not true. This is as ridiculous as saying "as long as you take any action to keep fit,

such as going to gym, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

or

"as long as you take any action to pass your exams, such as studying hard, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

or

"as long as you take any action to survive, such as eating and sleeping, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

or

"as long as you take any action to cure your disease, such as seeing the doctor, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

No-self/Anatta is not about denying thinking, action, carrying water and chopping wood... and this is the key difference between genuine anatta insight from dualistic conceptual understanding. The very notion that "action" and "intention" implies, or necessitates, an "actor", and therefore for non-action the intentions and actions must also cease, is precisely using dualistic thinking to understanding anatta...

Action never required a self (in fact there never was a self or a doer apart from action to begin with: only a delusion of one), and action does not need to perpetuate the myth of a self. The myth of a self is not exactly dependent on action or lack thereof. Sure, action that arises out of the dualistic sense of actor/act where there is an "I" trying to modify or achieve "that" is a form of action produced by ignorance. But not all actions necessarily arise out of an underlying sense of duality. If all actions arise out of a sense of duality, then after awakening one will just die as he cannot even feed himself.

When one is operating with a dualistic way of understanding, one thinks that action implies a self that is doing an act, and one thinks that non-action implies that the self ends with the action. But genuine insight into non-action is simply the realization that never was there a real actor behind action, so there is always in acting just that action - whole being is only the total exertion of action, and this is always already the case but not realized. That is true non-action - there is no subject (actor) performing an act (object).

Futhermore: The myth of a self is not dependent on practice and lack thereof. (Oh but, 'right practice' and 'contemplation' does a lot to deconstruct that myth!) The myth of a self is however dependent on ignorance, and only wisdom ends that ignorance, just like turning on the lights lead to the natural cessation of irrational fear and thinking of monster in the dark room by a child.

There is always only action without a doer. No doer does not deny action, it denies

agency, and realization of such leads to the direct, immediate, experience of total exertion/total action where doer/deed is refined till none in one whole movement. There is nothing passive about non-action. Non-action is simply action without self/Self. All actions performed without sense of self/Self is in fact non-action. Without the subjective pole (actor), the objective pole in contrast to the subject (being acted upon) is also automatically negated. Yet clearly, the total exertion - pure action... goes on.

Dogen calls this practice-enlightenment. You do not practice For enlightenment (as some future goal separated from you). Your very practice of actualizing insight of anatta itself is practice-enlightenment. Sitting down is practice is actualization is Buddha-nature is enlightenment. Shitting too can be practice/actualization and that very act is Buddha-nature is enlightenment. Your very practice/actualization/act of just sitting, hearing the wind blowing, sight of scenery, walking on the street, chop wood carry water (without any delusion of self/Self) - that itself is practice-actualization-enlightenment, that is the total exertion where entire being is just entire sound, entire scenery, entire action.. This is non-dual practice and non-dual action.

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25th July 2013

**The World of Avatamsaka**

In my experience in the world of Maha, instead of feeling like a separate entity interacting with objects... it's a whole universe acting... not a sense that I am talking to you. It is a dimension of interdependence, a whole activity seamlessly dependently originating that is occurring... and this activity is great, boundless and marvelous.

Yesterday I woke up from a state of deep bliss again... before I woke up I felt I was leaving my body and entering into Buddha's pure land... then suddenly I entered into that dimension, where although I don't have clear memories of having any visions, it felt like the presence of all Buddhas in the universe and I were so seamlessly interconnected in maha suchness. A thought arose then that all the buddhas/universes exist in a single atom, in a single mindstream. (Sort of like in the net of indra way) I felt empowered in a way. It was a very blissful state and I awoke from that state... at around 3.45am.

I haven't really read Avatamsaka Sutra but somehow when I woke up I was reminded of it... made me interested to look into it. Today I found something from internet called the world of Avatamsaka.

"Flower Store World
The entire cosmos, consisting of worlds upon worlds ad infinitum, as described in the Avatamsaka Sutra. It is the realm of Vairocana Buddha, the transcendental aspect of Buddha Shakyamuni and of all Buddhas. The Saha World, the Western Pure Land and, for that matter, all lands and realms are within the Flower Store World."

***Q: What is Total Exertion?***

Total exertion is complete nondual action (total exertion of intention and action, complete action without doer-deed gap) + this deep sense of interconnectedness.

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13th August 2013

**Blowing is The Wind**

A few months back I was discussing with my friend. Slightly edited.

V: "...there is somewhere a One Thinker (of thought)"

Me: "A thinker is thinking a thought" is simply a construct of a faulty framework and view of inherent and dualistic self. Just like language is structured in a way that it often requires subject-action-object predicates, making us to say things like "the wind is blowing", "I am thinking a thought"... but is there really a truly existing and independent thing called "the wind" that "is blowing" or is "wind" and "blowing" simply two words referring to a single activity? Likewise is there truly an "I" that is "thinking, a thought" or is "I", "thinking", and "thought" three different labels imputed on a single activity? Seer, seeing and seen are just a conventional view... they only appear as separate, independent existences due to ignorance but such a view does not tally with reality.

River is flowing doesn't mean there is an independent thing called "river" that is "flowing", it actually means river IS the flowing and apart from the flowing there is no river... just conventional labels applied to a single activity. Wind is blowing means wind IS the blowing and apart from blowing there is no other wind... seeing the scenery means seeing IS the seen/scenery and apart from that seen/scenery there is no other seeing (nor a separate seer), there is no other consciousness apart from the specific manifest experience - seen/heard/sensed/smelled/touched/cognized. Mere conventions applied to a single activity, appearing to co-locate with each other in an independent and separate manner due to a distorted view that causes us to misperceive reality in a fundamental way, just like mis-perceiving a rope as a snake. Once we see that there isn't anything that 'nouns' point to than pure action/activity, then the verb alone is sufficient - 'blowing', 'flowing', 'thinking', 'seeing' - which is none other than the seen, thought, etc. There is no 'you', 'seer', 'thinker' apart from seeing which is sight, hearing which is sound, etc.

When we directly contemplate, investigate and challenge our view of 'seer-seeing-seen' and see that in the seen is merely the seen - that seeing is simply the seen and seen is just the seeing without any seer apart, that there is no other consciousness apart from the 'mere seen/mere cognized', a permanent quantum shift of perception takes place. When this is directly realized in one's experience and not merely understood inferentially, any delusion of agency (doer, controller, feeler), subject-object/perceiver-perceived gaps, divisions are seen through, the gapless/undivided self-clarity of experience without an agent, center or boundaries simply shines vividly in its raw, direct, unfiltered purity, and just that is free and liberating in itself. Later comes this seeing - the mind, the body, the breathing, the environment, in seamless exertion!

V: "Yes... only verbs... This is a great pointer!!!! Wow!!! Thank you Soh! I will sit with that pointer! It is so powerful! It is blowing my "mind" ! How could there ever be a story only with verbs? Yes! Yes! That's it! A verb can't "build" a self. Thank you so much!!!!!"

---

6th September 2013

**Dharma Body**

We might feel that our body is moving through the universe... then we might realize that body is not 'our' nor is it 'other', in fact there's no 'body' other than felt sensations, perceptions and actions (movement, etc)... and this sensation-perception-action is not in any way limited... for where does body end and the world begin? Where can we divide an inner into an outer? Not me, not mine of bodily aggregates leads to the dropping of a presupposed 'me/mine' grasping, reference and boundaries not in a dissociative way but rather leading to complete intimacy with the whole field of Dharma. Is body 'me' or 'mine' or ever just part of the world/universe/environment or better yet - just the Dharma* in a whole interconnected movement?

(Note: Dharma as simply a unit of experience dependently originating - not implying any inherently existing material universe [as the universe/dharma body here is seen as marvelous activities/phenomena dependently originating seamlessly without center or boundaries], nor is this dharma body in any sense a subjective body at all [if it is subjectively self-existent then causes and conditions will not be incorporated nor necessary for any given manifestation])

I was suddenly reminded of a term used by Thusness many years ago, "Dharma Body". Here I do not dissociate from my body as 'other'... in fact all bodily sensations and movement are felt in crystal clarity and intimacy... Yet, no more intimate than the trees and the sky and the buildings, which are all the Dharma Body in action... all functioning together as much as two legs are functioning together in an activity called walking.

Yes... when I move this body (actually take the "I" out - body is just this movement without I), it is this whole hands swinging-legs moving-heads turning-scenery appearing and shifting all in one interconnected activity, and this "environment"/scenery is also the movement of body as much as moving legs are considered the movement of body. It is all the Dharma Body in action and complete intimacy.
Update: elaborated on how the Dharma Body is neither an inherently existing object nor a subject to clarify due to noticed tendency to misunderstand what I mean.

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23rd September 2013

Before I woke up I dreamt that I was in my mother's car and she was driving me around, and she said something like there is only one sound. This struck me as peculiar, but almost instantly I was led to see how all the sense doors are just one door. Suddenly a shift of perception took place and everything seen and felt is just the whole universe, the whole field of experience as one seamlessly integrated form that is great, marvelous

and boundless, without any sense of an observer - there is only just that integrated form vividly happening right there, all happening while I know that it is a dream. It became very blissful. After that I woke up.

---

1st November 2013

Wrote to someone:

Yes, that is the beginning and the essential practice throughout one's spiritual journey. Be diligent in feeeeeling the very Presence of your Consciousness, the very realness of Existence, of luminosity.... until Consciousness in its glory and bliss draws complete attention onto itself without any extra thoughts.

For me I started with self-inquiry but it depends on whether you like to take up this path. It can lead to direct realization of one's luminous essence. There will come a time when there is direct realization of the Luminous Essence, the very Pure Presence or Consciousness itself that is more real, more certain and undeniable than anything. You have touch the very core of your Existence, Being, Consciousness itself.

When there is complete certainty of Pure Beingness, continue to practice mindful awareness of every single sensation until you realize the same taste of Pure Consciousness and bliss in every single sensate experience until everything is seen as pure gapless radiance-bliss.

Then hopefully with direct contemplation into no-self and bahiya sutta, there will be a breakthrough into the seal-insight of anatta: always already, in hearing just sound hearing (hearing is the sound!) never a hearer, so complete, so gapless, the entirety of your reality (except there is no 'you') is fully just sound... in seeing only always just scenery, never a you seeing or seer... your entire reality is only and completely this whole universe (experiential universe, a.k.a. the seamless total exertion of seeing-hearing-smelling-tasting-touching-thinking as one whole marvellous limitless foreground activity giving its best to make this entirety) seeing itself, tasting itself, touching itself.

It's like the behind is totally lost (it never existed! but certainly was a very strong delusion until seen through) and what's left is only the limitless and brilliant in front which is your entire reality but there is no more in front or behind or up or down because there is no more a reference of a center or a boundary.

Sorry if this sounds confusing... I'm sure you will come to see it in time Happy journey.

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3rd November 2013

**Total Exertion of Karmic Tendencies**

Karmic propensity is the whole of one's experiential reality. If one feels like a changeless witness, that experience of feeling like a changeless witness IS that propensity in action, in experience... if one is seeing fully that there's only transience (the radiant flow of sights/sounds/smells/taste/touch/thoughts), that is the actualization of wisdom (of anatta).

If one sees manifestation but appears solid, that's also the view of latent tendency, that view of inherent existence in action. That very feeling of concreteness IS karmic tendency. If one sees this very presence (of any experience - sight, sound, smell, etc) is empty of any it-ness, concreteness, solidity, apparent yet empty, that very vision itself is the actualization of wisdom, it is the total exertion of wisdom, it IS wisdom. Or as Dzogchen puts it - those very five elements (space, wind, fire, water, earth) are wisdoms by nature, so experienced in its actual state, is that actualization of wisdom.

In a way, the view is the experience... every samsaric experience is the total exertion of ignorance along with the 12 links in a single moment. Occasionally ignorant view is forgotten in a peak experience, such a cessation is however non-analytical and merely a passing state, as the conditions for the re-emergence of ignorance and afflictions have not been cut off from its roots. Only the analytical cessation resulting from penetrative prajna wisdom of twofold emptiness can lead to a permanent and quantum shift of perception away from ignorance, what Lankavatara Sutra calls the "turning-about" in the deepest seat of consciousness (but again this deepest seat is not somewhere else but fully manifesting!).

So the karmic tendency, and wisdom, you've been searching for has never been elsewhere but is staring right in your face as your experiential reality all along! Funny how one doesn't see that. That very activity that is mentally fabricated but appearing real as one's only experiential reality at that given moment, just that is the spell of karmic tendency. That activity that is (experienced/seen as) luminous and empty as one's only experiential reality at that given moment is the wisdom.

I remember when Ciaran (of Ruthless Truth) saw the real fiction of self (a process of creative imagination brought into real life, a real creation based on an imaginary character) he wrote that it was a "zen on drugs" moment. Yeah, I can see why he said that!

Thusness commented, "Very good, so the dreams in dreams (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com.au/2012/06/buddha-dharma-dream-in-dream.html). Otherwise you are seeing clarity as empty and tendencies as inherent... hiding somewhere."

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25th November 2013

**Jackson Peterson**

I would say that enlightenment has little to do with one's intuitive understanding regarding the "just seen", "just heard" etc. That is really just meant to be a training to

get beyond conceptualizing immediate sensory and mental arisings. Enlightenment is the wisdom of knowing what is "knowing". Knowing the full range depths of that "aware-knowing", leads to the unfolding of infinite wisdom and compassion. All the rest is a circus side-show and distraction...

Chris Kepinski likes this.

**Piotr Ludwiński** "Just seen" as prescribed and described here is in most cases adressing essence of what you call "knowing". It's not about training but realizing there never was "knower" "knowing" "known" split in reality. In other words; subject is always absent and spiritual "growth" of pracitcioner does not change this. "Knowing" as inherent abiding faculty is also always absent. Knowing "is" known and vice versa without any separate or non-separate knower. It's not training. It's nature of reality at all times.

**Jackson Peterson** I disagree Piotr Ludwiński, the "knowingness" is not a knower or a known. It is the very vividness that permits the "just seen" and the "just heard". We know about the immediacy of the perception, but not what is sentience. Sentience is not "just the seeing" and the "just the heard". Sentience is an infinite depth of omniscience that pervades all phenomena, and phenomena are its luster. To know the Dharmakaya is to know pure Sentience. The universe is simply the Mind of Clear Light expressing Itself.The expression is secondary and impermanent, whereas the Mind of Clear Light is permanent. In profound mystic revelation this can become known directly.

**Soh Wei Yu** In anatta the infinite depth of knowing is realized to be just the perception in its complete vividness. The gapless immediacy of perception is its knowingness without a knower. Knowing does not give rise to perception knowing is just perception

….

**Jackson Peterson** Soh Wei Yu, when you are "seeing just the seeing" and "hearing just the heard", is your awareness penetrating through and beyond the heard and seen into infinite space revealing the empty and transparent nature of the "seen" and the "heard"?

**Soh Wei Yu** Is this necessary unless one is seeing "something" extra, isn't thought already transparent and empty? Isn't sound already transparent and empty? Aren't dancing sensations already always transparent and empty?

**Jackson Peterson** Yes ! But are they dancing about in a vast and transparent dimension of pure consciousness?

**Piotr Ludwiński** This thread make me sad about how people are obsessed with concepts.

**Jackson Peterson** Concepts are also the Dharmakaya...

**Soh Wei Yu** No sensations are not dancing about in a vast and transparent dimension

of pure consciousness. The vast transparent dimension of pure conscious sensations are dancing about.

**Din Robinson** there is no subject
just IS

**Din Robinson** you know, a little humility can go a long way,
no one really knows what's going on,
and that, to me, is the closest to stillness or emptiness, there IS
when nothing is being claimed (to be true)

**Jackson Peterson** Nicely expressed Soh Wei Yu!

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27th November 2013

Albert Hong

I'd like to talk about the dream-like nature of reality. No appearance ever amounts to anything and no appearance references anything other than itself as the full dynamic exertion of becoming.

On one level this is disheartening and on another its tremendous freedom.

**Piotr Ludwiński** If appearance cannot reference other then how could it reference itself?

**Albert Hong** Becoming without being. Appearance-emptiness.

All fancy words.

**Tan Jui Horng** Still hurts like mad when I stub my toe against the bedpost though.

**Albert Hong** Yeah but it never lasts.

**Stephen Metcalf** I am on the tremendous freedom side. And yes about the toe!

**Kyle Dixon** Inspired by the quote you shared earlier?

"My form appeared like a dream to sentient beings who are like a dream. I taught them dreamlike teaching to attain dreamlike enlightenment."

- Lord Buddha | Supreme Jewel Mound

**Kyle Dixon** Albert took John Ahn and I on a wild car ride in a dream the other night.

**Soh Wei Yu** Nice.. looking at a reflected image on a mirror an the sceneries outside the mirror we may think one is unreal one is real... one is reflection one is truly there... but when we investigate further we find both to be completely equivalent... selfreferencing/referenceless reflections, dreams, echoes, mirages

**Jackson Peterson** I am not following "not referencing". Here it's seen that each appearance is referencing the inter-dependent totality including the supports that are not appearing, like gravity or sub-conscious conditioning. Like Blake's: "Seeing an entire universe in a grain of sand" or Indra's Net where everything is reflected in everything.

**Soh Wei Yu** Harry Rice:

"The Indra's Net metaphor is often misinterpreted to suggest that each jewel in the net reflects all of the other jewels in the net. Nice, but not right. Each jewel is ONLY the reflection of all of the other jewels. It has no inherent essence. It is empty."

**Soh Wei Yu** Not referencing means no core

**John Tan** Yes nice. Concisely and aptly expressed!

**Arthur Deller** Nice re-iteration of Indra's Net. That left me stupid, for a moment.

**Jackson Peterson** I don't think the notion of a holographic universe is quite the same. Appearances aren't mere reflections rather they are an inter-dependent flashing forth of all points of time.

**Soh Wei Yu** That is true but conventionally. Ultimately there are no points of time. There is only conventional points of time. Just like there is ultimately no (inherently/changelessly/independently existing) being but a conventionally designated being (such as jackson, buddha, etc)

**Soh Wei Yu** But you are right appearances arent reflections of something else they are total exertions. They are only reflections in the sense that they are empty appearances completely equivalent to reflections mirages and dreams, I.e. empty yet appearing, appearing yet empty.

**Soh Wei** Yu We think objects exist inherently out there but we do not think objects exist inherently in the reflections of a mirror. But in actuality everything we experience is mere reflections (not of something - there is no something apart from those reflections)

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1st January 2014

Stian: "In Gnosis there are no appearances (but don't mistake that for void-extinction-nothingness-blank)."

No, in direct Gnosis here, emptiness is seen directly as the non-arising taste of appearance that is all vivid thoughts and sense perceptions - completely equivalent to a magician's trick, mirage, and so on, without coming from anywhere, abiding anywhere, ceasing anywhere, utterly unfindable and unlocatable, and without duration of arising/abiding/ceasing.

An "emptiness" divorced from appearance is simply an intellectual (in fact, incorrect) understanding of emptiness. Emptiness is the nature of appearance - being completely devoid of substance (just as Buddha described), illusory (just as Buddha described with so many analogies), and non-arising. It is precisely by realizing emptiness that everything becomes actualized with the taste of being mere-appearance, like a reflection.

The problem is that you are denying appearance. But my insight and experience does not deny appearance. Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form. i.e. Appearance is Emptiness, Emptiness is Appearance. Only the deluded cognition/appearance ceases in wisdom, not the appearance that is wisdom-display. We simply realize and actualize the true nature of phenomena/appearance/elements/etc to be inseparable luminosity and emptiness.

And as Malcolm said:

"I would not put it this way because it make it seems like the five elements are extraneous to wisdom. They are not. The nature of the five elements is wisdom. It is like

the front and back of one's hand. You only have one hand, but it appears differently based on perceiving its front or its back. As Magnus implies, it is when we rectify our perception of the elements that they then appear as wisdom.

Also the cause of ignorance is the wisdom of the basis itself. So vidyā becomes avidyā, lights become elements, and so forth simply due to our ingrained traces of ignorance built up over countless lifetimes.

In order to reveal the wisdom light that is the empty substance of the universe and living beings, we have to purify our perception of our personal elements. This is done through togal or klong sde practice."

"The elements are wisdom, they simply are not recognized as such. There is a Bon logic text, very nice, that proves appearances are dharmakāya. The objection is raised, if appearances are dharmakāya why isn't everyone liberated instantly? The answer is that those who recognize appearances as dharmakāya are liberated instantly since instant liberation is as desiderata. Those who are not liberated instantly are those who have not recognized appearances as dharmakāya.

Upon what does recognition of appearances as dharmakāya depend? Introduction. Without having been introduced to appearances as dharmakāya, one will not recognize appearances as dharmakāya, just as if one has been sent into a crowd to find a person one has not met, even when one sees them face to face they are not recognized.

So the elements are wisdom. Vidyā and avidyā is the deciding factor in recognition. That recognition depends on an introduction, just as our recognition of a face in the crowd depends upon whether we have been introduced to that face or not."

http://www.bodhionline.org/ViewArticle.asp?id=144 -

Khenpo Tsultrim Rinpoche:

(Excerpt)

In the first verse, which explains the view of Mahamudra, Milarepa sings:

Do you know what appearances are like?
If you don’t know what appearances are like
Whatever appears is an appearance
Not realized, they are samsara
Realized, they are Dharmakaya
When appearances as Dharmakaya shine
There’s no other view to look for
There’s no other view to find

Milarepa first questions Loton when he sings, “Do you know what appearances are

like?" In other words: Do you know what the nature of these appearances is that you take to be real? Do you know that you are attached to them as real? Then Milarepa answers the question by saying that, for those who are not realized, whatever appears in samsara and nirvana appears as samsara. However, for those who are realized, who recognize that while a thing appears, it is empty, and while it is empty it appears—all appearances are the Dharmakaya, appearance and emptiness undifferentiable.

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2nd January 2014

Thusness said:

Hi Kyle,

Actually I am saying instead of attempting to deconstruct endlessly, why not resolved that that pure experience itself is empty and non-arising.

In hearing, there is only sound. This clear clean and pure sound, treat and see it as the X (treat and see it like an imputation/conventional designation as you explained), empty and non-arising.

In seeing, just scenery, just this clear clean and lurid scenery. Where is this scenery? Inside, outside, other's mind or our mind? Unfindable but nonetheless appears vibrantly.

This arising thought, this dancing sensation, this passing scent, all share the same taste. All experiences are like that -- like mirages and rainbows, illusory and non-arising, they are free from the 4 extremes.

Resolved that all experiences are non-arising then pure sensory experiences and conventional constructs will be of equal taste. Realize this to be the nature of experience and illusory appearances will taste magic and vajra (indestructible)! Groundless and naturally releasing!

Just my 2 cents of blah blah blah in new year.

Happy New Year, Kyle.

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**The Movie of Isness**

January 12, 2014

In deep contemplation, it can become apparent in direct experience and insight that all appearances are merely appearances, nothing arising or staying or ceasing... there is no actual birth of anything. Just like no matter what images appear on the movie or in a dream it will never amount to anything more than an appearance, without anything that truly come into existence. This is different from resolving non-arising through being-time. Lastly it is not that things are mental projections but that they are dependent arising.. what dependently originates is empty and nonarising appearance... momentary suchness, but still as vivid.

It is with some reluctance that I'm sharing this... I'm afraid that writing this might be a disservice to readers. I shall refrain from posting and discussing further about this. I do not wish this to become merely something to talk about, it has to be seen in direct taste and insight... so that one knows what the experience is like and what the realization is. Spouting big words or philosophizing about this do not mean anything.

9th May 2014

Many people think that somehow the “I AM realization” is a state of delusion. Some seem to think that it is what the Tibetans call the state of “alaya” (a dull, deluded state prior to gross manifest thinking). All these are erroneous notions.

Realization of I AM is the realization of unfabricated Awareness. It is a non-dual foreground realization of Presence but only in the Mind/non-conceptual thought realm and not yet extended to all senses (means even if all five senses are shut, there is a pure non-dual Presence/Awareness that is Mind itself). It only becomes a dualistic background as an afterthought of that realization, when the karmic propensities of Self

kicks in to grasp at an image of a prior non-dual Presence turning it into a dualistic background due to the poverty of one's inherent and dualistic view. It is a foreground PCE devolving into an ASC (using AF terms) with an ultimate identity.

As Thusness said to me in 2011:

**Thusness**: what is "I AM" is it a pce?
is there emotion
is there feeling
is there thought
is there divison or complete stillness?
in hearing there is just sound, just this complete, direct clarity of sound! so what is "I AM"?

**Soh Wei Yu**: it is the same just that pure non conceptual thought

**Thusness**: is there 'being'?

**Soh Wei Yu**: no, an ultimate identity is created as an after thought

**Thusness**: indeed it is the mis-interpretation after that
experience that is causing the confusion
that experience itself is pure conscious experience
there is nothing that is impure
that is why it is a sense of pure existence
it is only mistaken due to the 'wrong view'
so it is a pure conscious experience in thought.

**Soh Wei Yu**: oic..

**Thusness**: not sound, taste, touch...etc

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10th May 2014

**Dharma Connection**

I had a shift today in which my level of integration into mundane activities has just surpassed anything I've experienced before yet I fully understand it is just a beginning, after which I wrote to Thusness:

"im learning to engage in daily life in complete dispassion and engagement without self.. just one activity at a time. i think piotr said being busy is no excuse for not practicing.. and in between one's activities one should practice etc... i fully agree and i think not only that, the main practice is really in the busy-ness itself, in the full engagement of studying exam, doing work, the messiness of one's daily life if we cannot integrate that then what we only have is brief periods of peace and peak experience... daily life becomes segmented every moment detecting and dropping fetters in activities is the practice..

dropping in meditation is the easy part. opening unreservedly in the midst of all activities... from day to sleep..."

Thusness replied, "Dharma is always in all these mundane activities...it is not just a daily matter...talk when you are back. To have your insights and realizations fully integrated and actualized in these activities is what your Teacher Chen and lzls been trying to advice you also. To spend and donate using your parents money is not your generosity ...as I told....lol

Love and let go...earn and give

Leaving no trace is noble and wisdom. Not to over claim when you are still young..."

**I said**: "hahahaha now i see how silly when i told you recently that my daily life lack of time is a hindrance to dharma practice (a statement I made last month that would seem sad and tragic only yesterday became totally silly after today:

"I wonder how can one really practice if ones schedule is just busy from morning to night.. think its harmful for spiritual practice")

**Thusness**: "Yes it is exactly where your dharma practice should be...lol

My neck pain is also dharma practice.

Donation is dharma practice so is business and entertainment ... Lol

Otherwise you will not understand the anatta in the 6 paramitas...it is great actualization of anatta."

**Piotr Ludwiński**
its hard isn it

but how we can expect not being overwhelmed by death and bardo if we are overwhelmed by just living having food, having water and clothes

**Soh Wei Yu**
its hard until it gets easier... like learning to ride bcycle

btw i love what you quoted from chnn.. if you dun have time for practice then you have time for distraction.
Top of Form

…

**Alan** wrote: “haha yes... sometimes life is so busy with work, studies, etc and we neglected what we should do or ought to do... We give ourselves many excuses...

Sometimes mindfulness also lapses... i often feel it's helpful to reflect what happened, try to constantly recall, remind, to get rid of habitual tendencies.

try looking at old people as deva messagers
look at pleasant looking people
tasting nice or lousy food - craving and aversion of taste lol
meeting good friends - pleasant feelings arising in me
seeing unpleasant people - aversion or sometimes ill-will arise in me

mindfulness can be really intriguing lol"

**I replied**: "Yes its so important.. so many excuses... the excuses being part of habitual tendencies, part of delusion, part of our fantasies (about what practice should be and about a particular state of experience etc).

Daily life is really where the practice truly lies. Where we let habitual tendencies liberate.

Another point I should note is that as Thusness said just now, "Yes but writing about activities not at the right timing is not a good advice imo

Have the insights then actualize them."

The insights, seeing one's true nature, realizing anatta and emptiness, these are vital for integration otherwise there is no basis for our liberation much less liberation in activity.

Nonetheless after that insight, a leap has to be made... I was suddenly reminded of the zen ox herding picture. The description in the 9th oxherding picture is similar to anatta (at least in the commentary I read), but for a long time I couldn't understand why does the 10th picture need a separate picture.

Now I understood.. it opens up a whole new phase of practice for me. This is why I told Thusness that this deserves a posting.. haha. Its really about entering the market place and dirtying your hands!

p.s. the 10th oxherding picture is not buddhahood, its only really the beginning... it has infinite depths and I'm only beginning

Similar examples are given in Five Ranks of Tozan

p.s. I kind of like the original poems and commentaries by Zen Master Kubota too:

9th oxherding: http://www.sanbo-zen.org/cow09_e.html

10th oxherding: http://www.sanbo-zen.org/cow10_e.html

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13th May 2014

**The Path of Anatta**

Posted by: Wei Yu

Thusness wrote to me yesterday:

"In my opinion many of our great aspirations and high views turn empty talks easily.

After the direct insight of anatta, it opens the gate that allows one to experience effortlessly all sensations that arise without duality, without fear, without doership and without ownership. Many are unable to see the "why"s and "how" of "directness", so don't waste your insights that have given the opportunity in this life.

Train yourself to do that with sincerity and dedication first. Then you will be fully in touch with your original purity; you will be genuinely in touch with peace and openness."

More later:

"If we want to experience fully and have genuine peace, be very sincere in sensing all your sensations for pretense, blames, rejections and contractions... ...don't rush... slow down your thoughts and scan all your sensations for these... see all these traces... see all these come from the "I"s and "mine"s... develop a strong willingness to let go with your insights of anatta. If you can for a brief moment be free from the conceit of I, the craving of mine and the background of I AM, that moment you are respectable even to the gods.

I do not want you to get into too high views and lose touch with genuine and simple practice."

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Thusness, 2007:

(5:29 PM) Thusness: what are the 3 characteristics *(of self-liberation)*?
(5:29 PM) AEN: impermanence, suffering, no self ?
(5:29 PM) Thusness: nope
(5:29 PM) Thusness: i just told you the other day
(5:30 PM) Thusness: completely non-dual and transparent.
(5:30 PM) Thusness: Completely fearless
(5:30 PM) Thusness: completely non-attached

(5:30 PM) Thusness: so if a person after the experience of no-self, and is able to attain this 3 characteristics
(5:31 PM) Thusness: then his hui geng (wisdom root) is truly deep
(5:31 PM) Thusness: da geng qi (superior capacity)
(5:32 PM) Thusness: means the enlightenment of non-dual of our nature leads directly to self liberation
(5:32 PM) Thusness: that is because the 'sense of self' is completely eliminated from 7th
(5:32 PM) Thusness: and karmic propensities become self liberated

Even after initial realization of anatta, we have to continue practicing and meditating until these three aspects are perfected.

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7th June 2014

Realizing anatta does not mean that at once you will overcome all sense of grasping and mine-making. Although after realization of anatta there is no longer the grasping at a "background I" or agency, it does not mean there is no grasping at other aspects like 'mine' or clinging to forms of thought patterns.

I remember Newbuddhist Richard said that his grasping is not so much about a transcendental Self but the pains he felt as a father caring for his son when his son got bullied etc.

As for me, although I have not faced such things yet (as I am not a father), I still think my anatta need to complement with shamatha and dispassion and letting go to overcome all thought patterns. Even if the universe is about to end... hopefully, may I experience release.

Something Thusness wrote years ago concerning the difference between I-making and mine-making:

Hi Simpo,

How have you been getting on? I am planning for my retirement.

I think after stabilizing non-dual experience and maturing the insight of anatta, practice must turn towards 'self-releasing' and 'dispassion' rather than intensifying 'non-dual' luminosity. Although being bare in attention or naked in awareness will help in dissolving the sense of 'I' and division, we must also look into dissolving the sense of 'mine'. In my opinion, dissolving of the sense of 'I' does not equate to dissolving the sense of 'mine' and attachment to possessions can still be strong even after very stable non-dual experience. This is because the former realization only manages to eliminate the dualistic tendency while the latter requires us to embody and actualize the right view of 'emptiness'. Very seldom do we realize it has a lot to do with our 'view' that we

hold in our deep most consciousness. We must allow our luminous essence to meet differing conditions to realise the latent deep. All our body cells are imprinted and hardwired to 'hold'. Not to under-estimate it.

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21st June 2014

**My Thoughts on The Four Noble Truths**

(Picture: Buddha teaching a discourse on the four noble truths, turning the wheel of dharma for the first time after his awakening to his five ex-ascetic companions, who later became Arahants who put an end to suffering)

Also related topic: Early Buddhism's Model of Awakening

Buddha:

25 (5) The Destruction of the Taints

"Bhikkhus, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and does not see. For one who knows what, for one who sees what, does the destruction of the taints come about? The destruction of the taints comes about for one who knows and sees: 'This is suffering'; for one who knows and sees: 'This is the origin of suffering'; for one who knows and sees: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; for one who knows and sees: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' It is for one who knows thus, for one who sees thus, that the destruction of the taints comes about.
"Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: 'This is suffering.'… An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'"

- http://www.wisdompubs.org/book/connected-discourses-buddha/selections/connected-discourses-part-v-kotigama

....

"The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha), monks, is this: Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, association with the unpleasant is suffering, dissociation from the pleasant is suffering, not to receive what one desires is suffering — in brief the five aggregates subject to grasping are suffering.

"The Noble Truth of the Origin (cause) of Suffering is this: It is this craving (thirst) which produces re-becoming (rebirth) accompanied by passionate greed, and finding fresh delight now here, and now there, namely craving for sense pleasure, craving for existence and craving for non-existence (self-annihilation).

"The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is this: It is the complete cessation of that very craving, giving it up, relinquishing it, liberating oneself from it, and detaching oneself from it.

"The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering is this: It is the Noble Eightfold Path, and nothing else, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.[2]

- Partial excerpt from http://www.accesstoinsight.org/.../sn56/sn56.011.piya.html

What interests me nowadays is not free will/no free will, effort/effortless, sudden/gradual, atman, The Absolute, etc. I am not interested in them anymore. What interests me nowadays is the complete and total termination of the taints, clinging, karmic propensities, the complete and total termination of suffering. And talking about the illusoriness of burning fire on an intellectual level when you are on fire isn't going to work. Neither is denying it. The point is to put out the fire. (I'd be very surprised if someone whose clothes catches fire would continue ranting on and on about how the fire is not real or how there is actually no clothes and no fire and just sit around.. haha)

Fire burn, ouch, pours water on it. That is direct path and actualization. Noble eightfold path. That is true spontaneous activity of awakening. Not denying and being deluded about one's condition (the truth and cause of suffering)... or ranting on about spontaneity or how fires are naturally happening. That only goes on due to our complete ignorance of our afflictions. And it is precisely because we are literally aflame, that we should practice with utter urgency to put an end to suffering, like our heads are on fire. If we even truly have an inkling, or even a glimpse, into our true predicament, into the four noble truths, our entire approach to our path will become totally different.

In fact, given this urgency and predicament, all the side-issues are naturally cast aside (just like when your clothes are on fire you have no time to think about whether there is free will to put out the fire etc, or whether putting out the flame is a sudden or gradual thing, or whether we should put out the flame when its illusory, or whether putting out fire should be an effortless happening or effortful - as these are quite irrelevant, or about residing as a background unaffected Absolute which is ultimately an illusion),

instead, there is just total exertion and engagement in actualization of right view and right practice, that's all. Otherwise we are like what the Buddha gave in an analogy - someone struck with a poisoned arrow trying to inquire all sorts of things about the shooter, arrow, etc, while slowly dying due to not seeking treatment.

This might put off many readers but I'm going to say it anyway: screw all neo-Advaitish 'no-practice' talk, screw all FB debates that have nothing to do with putting out fire. No wonder Buddha preferred to maintain noble silence many times. Lets just practice like our heads are on fire. Longchenpa says, "To reject practice by saying 'it is conceptual!' is the path of fools. A tendency of the inexperienced & something to be avoided."

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SN 35.28
PTS: S iv 19
CDB ii 1143
Adittapariyaya Sutta: The Fire Sermon
translated from the Pali by
Thanissaro Bhikkhu
© 1993
Alternate translation: Ñanamoli
Alternate format: [SuttaReadings.net icon]

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in Gaya, at Gaya Head, with 1,000 monks. There he addressed the monks:

"Monks, the All is aflame. What All is aflame? The eye is aflame. Forms are aflame. Consciousness at the eye is aflame. Contact at the eye is aflame. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye — experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain — that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I tell you, with birth, aging &death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs.

"The ear is aflame. Sounds are aflame...

"The nose is aflame. Aromas are aflame...

"The tongue is aflame. Flavors are aflame...

"The body is aflame. Tactile sensations are aflame...

"The intellect is aflame. Ideas are aflame. Consciousness at the intellect is aflame. Contact at the intellect is aflame. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect — experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain — that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I say, with birth, aging & death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs.

"Seeing thus, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with the eye, disenchanted with forms, disenchanted with consciousness at the eye, disenchanted with contact at the eye. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye, experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain: With that, too, he grows disenchanted.

"He grows disenchanted with the ear...

"He grows disenchanted with the nose...

"He grows disenchanted with the tongue...

"He grows disenchanted with the body...

"He grows disenchanted with the intellect, disenchanted with ideas, disenchanted with consciousness at the intellect, disenchanted with contact at the intellect. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect, experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain: He grows disenchanted with that too. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is fully released. With full release, there is the knowledge, 'Fully released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted at his words. And while this explanation was being given, the hearts of the 1,000 monks, through no clinging (not being sustained), were fully released from fermentation/effluents.

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22nd June 2014

**How Experiential Realization Helps in Liberation**

*Sam said...*

*"What interests me nowadays is the complete and total termination of the taints, clinging, karmic propensities, the complete and total termination of suffering."*

*I totally agree. I hope to see your future posts regarding this and how the experiences and realizations so far have been or will be useful for this.*

This post is written to address the blog comment above in the topic My Thoughts on The Four Noble Truths. Readers should look into that post first to get the context for this posting.

First of all we have to understand that taints, clinging, karmic propensities are empty. But it is not empty in the sense of being non-existent, rather, it is empty of inherent existence due to dependent origination. For example we may think that craving exists somewhere in our 'minds' that we must somehow 'get rid of it'. This is having an inherent view. This is like looking into the mirror and trying to destroy the person appearing in the mirror by punching the mirror and cracking the mirror in order to "destroy the person inside the mirror" (as if there is a person living inherently inside the mirror, where in reality what's reflected is a dependently originating, non-arising appearance). That would be totally silly, and likewise trying to destroy afflictive emotions conceived as inherently existing somewhere "in us" without discerning its causes and conditions would be totally silly. If you want to remove the reflection, you have to discern the whole chain of dependencies which leads to that, and those afflictive causes are to be remedied. To have insight into the emptiness and dependent origination of our afflictive condition is to realize the Total Exertion of Karmic Tendencies

Likewise, thankfully our suffering is not inherently existing but arises due to dependent origination, and what is arising is fundamentally non-arising and free from extremes. Precisely because of this, we can discern the whole chain of dependent origination whereby ignorance depends on taints, taints dependents on ignorance, setting the whole chain of suffering. If we understand this, we don't focus our efforts on the wrong place. Things don't exist inherently - they manifest due to dependent origination, and when the causes and conditions are present, no effort or will can prevent them from arising, that is the nature of manifestation. If we fail to understand emptiness in the context of dependent origination, we will fall into a non-Buddhist or nihilistic version of emptiness, and it will not liberate us.

In the path of Buddhadharma, since we understand dependencies, we do not attempt to get rid of afflictive emotions by hard will, or by dissociation (which strengthens the fundamental delusion of an inherently existing subject and an inherently existing object), or other ways based on the view of inherent existence - which is akin to punching the mirror to get rid of the reflection. At the same time, we are not saying "they are purely an illusion, nothing to work on" (let's try that tactic when your clothes catch fire!). What we're saying is that by directly penetrating the dependent origination and emptiness of taints, precisely because they are illusory and not inherently existing, we can understand the necessity to apply the right remedy which cuts the basis for suffering (the 12 links from ignorance... to death). What path? The engagement in right view and right practice, in which integral conduct allows the arising of integral samadhi which allows the arising of integral wisdom, which results in the cessation of ignorance and the chains. With the arising of wisdom, the chain of afflictive dependent origination

is released.

As Nagarjuna pointed out, it is precisely because of emptiness that the soteriological values of Buddhadharma can work at all. This is nicely explained in http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-PHIL/ew103934.htm :

(Excerpt)

Nagarjuna's Critique of the Dharma

In chapter XXIV of the Karikas, Nagarjuna continues his attack on the Abhidharma philosophers by analyzing the Four Noble Truths, and argues that-like causality, impermanence, suffering, and bondage-they, too, are "empty." The problem of this chapter needs to be seen against the background of the preceding section. If the Abhidharma views of causality are "empty," as Nagarjuna says they are, and if causality is a central feature of Buddhist praxis, then Nagarjuna seems to undermine everything that is vital to Buddhism. He begins chapter XXIV by expressing the Abhidharma position in the following way:

If all of this is empty,
Neither arising nor ceasing,
Then for you, it follows that
The Four Noble Truths do ont exist.

If the Four Noble Truths do not exist,
Then knowledge, abandonment,
Meditation and manifestation
Will be completely impossible.

p.571

If these things do not exist,
The four fruits will not arise.
Without the four fruits, there will be no attainers of the fruits.
Nor will there be the faithful.

If so, the spiritual community will not exist.
Nor will the eight kinds of person.
If the Four Noble Truths do not exists,
There will be no true Dharma.

If there is no doctrine and spiritual community,
How can there be a Buddha?
If emptiness is conceived in this way,
The three jewels are contradicted.
(Garfield 1995, p.67)

In the passages above, the Abhidharma opponent is saying that if Nagarjuna is right about "emptiness," then the very practices that make Buddhism soteriologically efficacious will be destroyed. That is, if it is true that the Four Noble Truths are "empty," then there is no such thing as the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, no such thing as impermanence, "non-self," and nirvana, and the practices that supposedly lead to liberation will be destroyed. Nagarjuna responds to the opponent by saying that he has misunderstood "emptiness":

We say that this understanding of yours
Of emptiness and purpose of emptiness
And of the significance of emptiness is incorrect.
As a consequence you are harmed by it.
(Garfield 1995, p.68)

Because the opponent has taken "emptiness" to signify the nonexistence of the Four Noble Truths, he is "harmed by it"-in other words, he sees "emptiness" as destructive. But his reason for thinking of "emptiness" in this way is that he thinks that a "correct" meditation on causality, the aggregates, and the Four Noble Truths is necessary for liberation.

Nagarjuna responds to this assumption by reversing the tables and saying, in effect, that it is not "emptiness" that destroys practice, but the very idea that such things as causality, the aggregates, and the Four Noble Truths are "inherent," essential, or necessary:

If you perceive the existence of all things
In terms of svabhava,
Then this perception of all things
Will be without the perception of causes and conditions.

Effects and causes
And agent and action
And conditions and arising and ceasing
And effects will be rendered impossible.
(Garfield 1995, p.69)

p.572

Nagarjuna goes on to say that the reason essences militate against causal conditions, arising, ceasing, agency, and so forth is that the idea of essence entails independence, and if things are by nature independent then it is impossible for them to interact causally. If this is true then there is no "dependent arising," and without "dependent arising" it is impossible to make sense of the ability to cultivate a virtuous life. In other words, without the process of change the whole idea of cultivating the "fruits" of a Buddhist life is rendered nonsensical. Nagarjuna responds by saying that Buddhist praxis must be "empty" if we are to make any sense of the Four Noble Truths:

If dependent arising is denied,
Emptiness itself is rejected.
This would contradict
All of the worldly conventions.

If emptiness is rejected,
No action will be appropriate.
There would be action which did not begin,
And there would be agent without action.

If there is svabhava, the whole world
Will be unarising, unceasing,
And static. The entire phenomenal world
Would be immutable.

If it (the world) were not empty,
Then action would be without profit.
The act of ending suffering and
Abandoning misery and defilement would not exist.
(Garfield 1995, p.72)

Nagarjuna has thus shifted the debate. Whereas the Abhidharma thinker begins with the assumption that a "correct" meditation on the Dharma is a necessary prerequisite for liberation, Nagarjuna undercuts this by saying that if one takes the Dharma as essential, that is, as necessary, then the very essence of Buddhism is undermined. Like the first chapter on causation, Nagarjuna is reminding the Abhidharma philosophers here about nonattachment. The Four Noble Truths are supposed to be medicinal "rafts" that help specific sentient beings overcome their attachments, but if one becomes attached to the practices of nonattachment then one has missed the entire point of Buddhism. Thus, Nagarjuna says that the Dharma-which includes causation, impermanence, suffering, bondage, and liberation-is "empty."

Now, after the awakening of twofold emptiness, we simply engage and meet conditions to allow the latent tendencies to self-liberate without modification. Practice becomes practice-enlightenment, where every engagement in daily activities becomes an opportunity to release our deeply held clinging - I, me, mine, inherent existence. (Practice-enlightenment is a term in Soto Zen to denote the path as the actualization of one's wisdom, so one's practice is no longer 'for' enlightenment but an 'actualization' of enlightenment in every mundane activities from sitting to walking to talking.. etc)

For example when I talk with people, there is no I, no others, only the situation and activity that is totally exerted... no clinging to center, self, mine... this allows the afflictions to dissolve. This is only possible after anatta and emptiness, if we merely rest in clarity of 'Awareness', it would not be sufficient to dissolve the bonds.

To understand why insights into anatta and emptiness help we have to understand that

all our afflictions are rooted in the view of an inherently existing I, me, mine, in inherently existing self and things and ownership. For example if someone's child is lost or dies, you may not feel mentally afflicted, but when it comes to your sons and daughters, you may feel afflicted, because there is ownership, I and mine making involved, which results in holding onto someone as 'dear to me'.

To address this question more thoroughly let me just quote some people including myself here:

"We cannot get rid of suffering by saying, "I will not suffer." We cannot eliminate attachment by saying, "I will not be attached to anything," nor eliminate aggression by saying, "I will never become angry." Yet, we do want to get rid of suffering and the disturbing emotions that are the immediate cause of suffering.
The Buddha taught that to eliminate these states, which are really the results of the primary confusion of our belief in a personal self, we must get rid of the fundamental cause.
But we cannot simply say, "I will not believe in the personal self." The only way to eliminate suffering is to actually recognize the experience of a self as a misconception, which we do by proving directly to ourselves that there is no such personal self. We must actually realise this. Once we do, then automatically the misconception of a self and our fixation on that "self" will disappear.
Only by directly experiencing selflessness can we end the process of confused projection. This is why the Buddha emphasized meditation on selflessness or egolessness. However, to meditate on egolessness, we must undertake a process that begins with a conceptual understanding of egolessness; then, based on that understanding, there can be meditation, and finally realization."

- Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Pointing Out the Dharmakaya

"Though worldly beings cultivate meditative stabilization,
They do not destroy the discrimination of self.
They are greatly disturbed by the return of afflictive emotions,
As was the case of the cultivation of meditative stabilization by Udraka.

If phenomena are individually analyzed as selfless
And what has been analyzed is meditated upon,
That is the cause for attaining the fruit, nirvana.
Through any other cause one does not go to peace..."

- King of Meditative Stabilizations Sutra

"Monks, when a monk’s mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, his mind is rid of “I-making” and “mine-making” with regard to this conscious body and externally with regard to all representations, and has transcended conceit, is at peace, and is well liberated."

- AN 7.49 Dutiyasaññā Sutta

"When our own self is involved, we emphasize that connection: now it is "*my* body," "*my* stuff," "*my* friends," or "*my* car." We exaggerate the object's attractiveness, obscuring its faults and disadvantages, and become attached to it as helpful in acquiring pleasure, whereby we are forcibly led into lust, as if by a ring in our nose. We might also exaggerate the object's attractiveness, making something minor into a big defect, ignoring its better qualities, and now we view the object as interference with our pleasure, being led into hatred, again as if by a ring in our nose. Even if the object does not seem to be either agreeable or disagreeable but just an ordinary thing in the middle, ignorance continues to pervail, although in this case it does not generate desire or hatred. As the Indian scholar-yogi Nagarjuna says in his *Sixty Stanza Reasoning:*

*How could great poisonous afflictive emotions not arise*
*In those whose minds are based on inherent existence?*
*Even when an object is ordinary, their minds*
*Are grasped by the snake of destructive emotions.*
Cruder conceptions of "I" and "mine" evoke grosser destructive emotions, such as arrogance and belligerance, making trouble for yourself, your community, and even your nation. These misconceptions need to be identified by watching your own mind.

As the Indian thinker and yogi Dharmakirti says in his exposition of Buddhist thinking:

*In one who exaggerates self*
*There is always adherence to "I."*
*Through that adherence there is attachment to pleasure.*
*Through attachment disadvantages are obscured.*
*And advantages seen, whereby there is strong attachment,*
*And objects that are "mine" are taken up as means*
*of achieving pleasure.*
*Hence, as long as there is attraction to self,*
*So long do you revolve in cyclic existence."*

- H.H. Dalai Lama, "How to See Yourself as You Really Are"Also in 2009:

**Thusness**: though anatta is a seal, it also requires one to arise the insight to feel liberated.
**Thusness**: when a practitioner realizes the anatta nature of manifestation, at that moment without the sense of observer, there is no negative emotions.
**Thusness**: there is only vivid sensation of the all arising as presence

**Thusness**: when you are angry, it is a split
**Thusness**: when you realized its anatta nature, there is just vivid clarity of all the bodily sensations
even when there is an arising thought of something bad, it dissolves with no involvement in the content
**Thusness**: to be angry, a 'someone' must come into the content
**Thusness**: when there is no involvement of the extra agent, there is only recoiling and

self liberations
**Thusness**: one should differentiate arising thought from the active involvement of the content
**Thusness**: a practitioner that realizes anatta is only involved fully in the vivid presence of the action, phenomena but not getting lost in content

Kyle also informed me last year:

"...The anatta definitely severed many emotional afflictions, for the most part I don't have negative emotions anymore. And either the anatta or the strict shamatha training has resulted in stable shamatha where thoughts have little effect and are diminished by the force of clarity. I'm also able to control them, stopping them for any amount of desired time etc. but I understand that isn't what is important.
Can I fully open to whatever arises I would say yes. I understand that every instance of experience is fully appearing to itself as the radiance of clarity, yet timelessly disjointed and unsubstantiated.."

And I wrote last year:

"I remember Kyle telling me how since the realization of anatta it has severed many emotional afflictions, for the most part he doesn't have negative emotions anymore. In my experience this has also been the case. It wasn't always the case as I used to be capable of anger, throwing temper, and so on. This just doesn't happen nowadays... since anatta I've noticed large chunks of emotional afflictions not just anger has sort of disappeared.

It's like the habitual way of seeing and relating with the world through dualistic and inherent view as independent, separate beings interacting with independent, separate others along with its stories have disappeared. There is just impersonal and totally exerted actions and experiences experienced in vivid clarity, without needing to leave traces.

So perhaps the most ultimate advice for overcoming afflictions is: work hard contemplating and practicing insight and calm-abiding in tandem, those can really make permanent changes to your patterns of emotional afflictions that are not meagre."

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11th July 2014

Insight Diagnosis Simplified

Inspired by Kenneth Folk's "An Idiots Guide to Dharma Diagnosis". My attempt to summarize some of the insights and experiences I've gone through. Also do note that there is no strictly fixed linear way of progression - the insights/experiences can unfold in somewhat different order for different people.

(Realization+Experience) Non-doership: No control or doership over things, everything is spontaneously happening on its own without effort. Does serious damage to notions of free will. When one sees through the notion of 'self as doer', one realizes freedom does not lie in 'free will' but lies in releasing sense of doership/control which is a subtle aversion going against the flow of happening, contraction, sense of self, holding. One finds joy, freedom and release from 'let live' and 'surrendering'.

(Experience) I AM: I have a glimpse of myself as a sense of changeless Beingness or Awareness or Witness behind everything.

(Realization) I AM: I am EXISTENCE! Doubtless certainty. Sat-chit-ananda: beingness-consciousness-bliss. I am the ground of Being out of which everything emerges. Self-Realization.
(Deconstruction+Experience) Impersonality: I am the one divine life living myself in the body, no different from the life expressing in the trees, in the other human being, or spinning the planet. Dissolving 'self' into a state clean of ego/personal self, not-mine sort of sensation. God-Realization.
(Experience) Intensity of luminosity: Wow, amazing, the textures of touch, the taste of food, the colours and shapes so wonderfully alive and intense!

(Realization/Experience) One Mind: I am this boundless space of awareness, and all forms/thoughts/perceptions are indistinguishable from that field, no inside/outside. Subject-Object inseparability. All is Mind/Self/Awareness/etc.

(Experience) No Mind: Only sound. Only sight. Vividly manifest without background or any sense of self/Self. (Not even a greater 'awareness' being inseparable from forms) This state has the same effect as 'intensity of luminosity' except that all sense of a perceiver is obliterated, i.e. no 'you' looking out from your body at the 'scenery' but only brilliant scenery.

(Deconstruction+Realization+Experience) Anatta: There never is/was a Source/Awareness/Self/Agent/Perceiver/Controller apart from manifestation! In seeing just the seen, no seer. Not only no self but no Self (caps) exists behind phenomena. No Subject. After *realization* of Anatta as the Nature of experience (empty of background subject), the experience of No-Mind becomes an effortless natural state rather than peak experience. Then one sees that no-mind is both wonderful and yet nothing special, as it simply is the natural state of phenomena when released from the extra imputation of Self/observer behind it, it is experienced as the ordinary state of phenomena rather than the 'Wow' factor accompanied by peak No Mind experiences prior to Anatta.

(Deconstruction+Realization+Experience) Mind-body drop: No shapes/boundaries of body, just centerless boundless vibrating energies! Body/self/things as an imputation dissolves through deconstructive insight.

(Deconstruction+Realization+Experience) Groundlessness: No persisting ground, no Here/Now, no coordinating agent, disjoint bubble-like self-releasing thought!

(Deconstruction+Realization+Experience) Maha +A: Totality (dependencies) walking, breathing, seamless process. Mind-body drop transforms into Dharma Body. Six senses reconstruct into one suchness, whole universe in an atom, all nodes in one indra's node.

(Deconstruction+Realization+Experience) Karmic Propensities: Karmic propensities are never hidden, totally exerted! Feel the realness of the amazing creation of the Subject/Object fiction manifesting as one's given experiential reality. Realize the 12 afflictive links of dependent origination where ignorance manifests the whole mass of grasping and suffering.

(Realization+Experience) Emptiness -A: Directly tasting thought/perceptions as clarity without background as basis, further penetrate its nature, that very appearance which dependently originates has never arisen, like a dream or reflection, like a burning flame.

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15th July 2014

**Self-Release**

By 'self-release', I'm not talking about a 'self' that is experiencing its own 'release'. On a conventional level we can talk about that -- for example, a Buddha or an arahant is one who experiences his own release. But at the same time a Buddha or an arahant already realizes that there is in fact no actually existing self behind anything. So what is release in that case? It is really just the release of clinging, of the sense of self, of mental afflictions (passion, aggression, delusion), and all thoughts, perceptions, experiences are released on the spot through lack of reification. Therefore it should be noted that 'self-release' is used here in that sense, not in the sense that there is a 'you' becoming liberated. Also because I do not represent Dzogchen teachings, but merely my own experience, I try to avoid using the term ‘self-liberation’.

This 'release' is actually felt in every cell of the body so to speak - for example, having walked 24km or 72km with a 20kg load on one's back and finally putting it down (perhaps only people who went through army like me knows how that feels but anyway...), what release! Just because there is no self doesn't deny the experience of release (even though that too is empty), it just means there is no self who is experiencing or doing the release.

Now, just like the example above, the Dharma as taught by the Buddha is meant for release, but in this case the release of the mind. In the MN30, the Culasaropama Sutta, The Buddha states: "So this holy life, brahmin, does not have gain, honour, and renown for its benefit, or the attainment of virtue for its benefit, or the attainment of concentration for its benefit, or knowledge and vision for its benefit. But it is this unshakeable deliverance of mind that is the goal of this holy life, it heartwood, and its end." Ven. Thanissaro translates 'deliverance of mind' as 'awareness-release'.

The big question then is, how does mind releases?

As a method of practice, many teachings/teachers teaches us to just let thoughts and perceptions come and go without grasping them. As a practice that is OK -- but that is not the fundamental, definitive path of releasing thoughts and perceptions, and the sense of self. Usually, because of our strong dualistic tendencies, at the beginning it would be impossible not to fall into a situation where we feel ourselves to be the perceiver of our thoughts, and so the practice here is still somewhat dissociative - there is someone who can watch thoughts come and go or let go of thoughts or remain unaffected by them. When we become 'aware' or 'mindful', we feel ourselves to be on the alert as the aware watcher. But all these are really just forms of clinging in disguise of letting go. There is dualistic action involved - either I try to dissociate or get rid of thoughts - which is a subtler form of dualistic aggression appearing as 'letting go', or I grab onto them, which is a form of craving, or I remain as some unattached observer unaffected by thoughts or ignoring the comings and goings of thoughts, which is a form of dualistic ignorance and is also by definition 'dissociation'.

But it is ok for one's practice to be dualistic at first, because there is no way we can be 'non-dual' at the beginning of our practice. Telling someone about emptiness and nondual at the beginning of one's path may help direct one towards wisdom at least on an intellectual level, but not so much experientially, because karmic propensities are strong. So at first we have no choice but to practice dualistically. No choice because our karmic propensities which manifest this dualistic situation is driven by afflictive dependencies and ignorance, and is not a matter of free will - like anything really, everything manifests dependently and not through agency or control.

However, although one may practice mindfulness this way, if at the same time we have the right pointers and right view -- no-self, emptiness, D.O., and through one's own contemplations, eventually when the conditions ripen we will experience a breakthrough into the definitive path of release. Otherwise, if we merely have a practice but lack the right view, even when we awaken to a non-conceptual direct taste of Presence or Aware-clarity, it is often moulded into an Eternal Witness or an ultimate source and substratum expressing itself in all forms, which are subtler forms of 'spiritual bondage' or sense of self, which is not the definitive sort of awakening or liberation in Buddhadharma. This is why in Buddhadharma, the Buddha says that Right View is the forerunner of the noble eightfold path, it is in some ways even more important than all the other practices.

The definitive path of release starts with the realization that a seer, perceiver, controller or even a seeing, awareness etc has never existed as a self residing as the background of perception. Then one sees the true face of awareness has always been just manifestation empty of being some hidden unmanifest hidden ghostly unchanging independent self existing in and of itself, that in seeing theres just the seen without seer, there is no consciousness or seeing besides manifestation, perception naturally reveals itself in a nondual, self-luminous, direct fashion via the release of a center/agent vantagepoint. The imputation of a self or subject or inherent awareness dissolves into direct taste of transient manifestation. One can have peak experiences of no mind even before realization of anatta as an always already so dharma seal, but it will not be effortless and perpetual until after realization. Practice turns from dissociation with

thoughts and perception to endless opening and letting sound/sight/etc 'kill you', and this is bliss.

Then after anatta we look at the thought itself or sensation or sound and realize that like a reflection that dependently originates in fact never arose, never came into existence. Then presence/reflection is experienced as illusory uncreated and deathless via its lack of inherency. Then thought self releases as there is no chaining and no identity that succeeds from moment to moment. Everything self liberates from tasting all phenomena as unborn.

As I paraphrased Thusness many years ago, "On the most direct path, there is no one to let go and no-thing to be let go of and hence no 'how to let go'. Reality is 'letting go' at all moments. There is only what arises and subsides (self-liberates) every moment according to conditions, luminous-empty phenomena roll on with no one at the center that can seek nor distant himself (since there is no 'self') from the self-knowing transience." This direct path of self-release via non-action is only suitable for those actualizing twofold emptiness in all perceptions, otherwise it becomes the path of self-deluded slackers wallowing in deluded thoughts thinking it is liberation, the worst possible path. This is where Longchenpa warned, "*In Ati these days, conceited elephants [claim] the mass of discursive concepts is awakened mind (bodhicitta); this confusion is a dimension of complete darkness, a hindrance to the meaning of the natural great perfection."* I might add that this problem is not limited to 'Dzogchen' or 'Ati' practitioners.

Contrary to what the way it is often taught, what I and Thusness have experienced is that the key to release is not via resting in a state of naked Awareness/clarity. Nor is it by subsuming object into subject or subject into object, one may experience non-division of subject and object in this way but it is not the same as releasing the reification of inherency of subject and inherency of object through emptiness and non-subsuming. Therefore when we talk about the non-duality of subject and object, we should be mindful that there is a difference between non-division and noninherency of those poles, they are different insights and have different impacts in one's experience.

Clarity/manifestation self liberates through discerning empty nature otherwise one resorts to dissociation and attempting to abide in a deemed purest state due to view of inherency. Worse still some book I read mistook self liberation as residing as an unaffected background of awareness while waves of thoughts arise and subside back to the sea. That is bondage in disguise of liberation. In truth anatta liberates background (releases the sense of a self residing as the background of experience) and twofold emptiness liberates foreground (even our non-conceptual pure sensory experiences, and all other experiences). Otherwise what liberation is there?

Another thing I should add is that the insight into the 2nd stanza of Anatta will lead a practitioner to direct apprehension of non-dual luminosity as 'mere scenery, mere scent, mere ...' all the actual stuff of the moment presenting in all its vividness and aliveness. However if one merely skews towards this aspect of anatta, the practice will be to ground in the Here/Now, in the vivid non-dual luminosity of things without any sense of self. But this is still not the same as what Thusness and I call experiencing the self-

release of the natural state.

As Thusness asked me in 2011, "Now, experiencing no-mind through focused attention is different from experiencing no-mind in a disjoint and unsupported manner. What is the difference?" I replied, "Focus attention still has some level of effort because there is a need to sustain the ground... no mind in a disjoint and unsupported manner is just constant opening and releasing without effort and without ground." Thusness replied, "well said..." After integrating the first stanza of anatta, groundlessness and emptiness/corelessness of all phenomena, the practice is no longer trying to hold on to or sustain anything, instead there is an effortless integration into the natural state -- all phenomena self-appearing without arising through dependent origination, and releasing on its own accord without a trace. This is why luminosity is blissful but does not liberate, emptiness does, however they they should be integrated.

Actually this is really just a beginning, not to be mistaken as some sort of pseudo-finality in one's practice. And I have merely summarized very shortly what is actually much more subtle. When we say "emptiness that releases"... we should not just limit our application of emptiness just to self, or to a particular aspect of phenomena. When we apply the deconstruction and emptiness to mind-body, we experience the release of mind-body drop. When we further apply emptiness and realize groundlessness or emptiness of a here/now, the here/now is released and the disjoint and releasing aspect becomes more apparent.

In fact, we can apply emptiness to all areas of life, for example, even in economics.

As Thusness just wrote, "Money is dependent on its parts -- coins and paper and in the broader definition of money, visas and cheques.

Money is dependent on relations when extending beyond national boundaries in exchanges rates and interest rates.

Money is dependent on time, the time value of money.

Money is dependent on its functionality as medium of exchange, purge of this functionality; it is just paper can serve as a “pretty paper boat”.

Therefore money is empty!"

"Here is the essential meaning of resolution in openness:
Coming from nowhere, abiding nowhere and going nowhere,
External events, unoriginated visions in empty space, are ineffable;
Internal events, arising and releasing simultaneously,
Like a bird's flight-path in the sky, are inscrutable."

Longchenpa”

Question: “Thank you. Please could you explain further the non-arising of perception? What is meant by "never came to existence"?”

My reply: “We think that things we see are somehow created or comes into existence. But if we look into a mirror, is the reflection of a person implying that something or someone is created or born in the mirror? No, it is a dependently originated reflection, and what dependently originates is a momentary reflection without any core, substance, and has never arisen, will never abide (like a water-moon does not mean a moon is currently 'abiding' inside the water), will never cease. Appearances are unborn.

A monkey looking into the water may try to catch the moon inside the water. But in actual case it is a phantasm. For example when you walk across a pool of water, it seems like the reflection of the moon is 'following you'. The reflection therefore is a total exertion along with your movement and all other dependencies, and are fundamentally empty. This means it never resided in a single place in the first place, nor is there even an 'it'. A D.O. reflection never arises, never abides, never ceases.”

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16th July 2014

**The Pathologies of Insights**

Writing this article has been on my to-do list for a few months but I couldn't do it due to exams and workload. Now I'm having a short holiday so I think I should quickly get this typed out.

There is a kind of pathology or danger in various kinds of insights because they are partial and one may not have yet seen the complete picture. As you may have seen in my recent discussions, the pathology or danger in non-doership is that one will fall into a kind of extreme deterministic thinking - that somehow because there is no doer, nothing can/should be done about things. This leads to a very passive attitude to things, or rather, one is restricted to experiencing no-self in a passive way (of merely letting experience happen in non-doership), one which prevents the experience of non-dual in action/activities via complete non-dual engagement, involvement, incorporating intentions, and later going into total exertion. (Also non-doership does not imply one has arisen non-dual insight)

Furthermore, someone who had some insight into the non-division of subject and object can fall into the extremes of subsuming (either object into subject like certain forms of traditional and neo Vedanta, or subsuming subject into object like Actualism), and via subsuming all phenomena into pure subjectivity, end up with an extreme notion of solipsism (the view that there is no others, only me).

Then there is the often mentioned-by-me (and Thusness) "disease of non-conceptuality". And finally -- blindness to karmic propensities, the afflictive actions and conditioning arising out of delusional framework of inherency and subject/object.

As I pasted some days back an excerpt from Thusness from one year ago on the disease of non-doership:

"John Tan: Nihilistic tendencies arise when the insight of anatta is skewed towards the no-doership aspect. The happening by itself must be correctly understood. It appears that things are accomplished by doing nothing but in actual case it is things get done due to ripening of action and conditions.

So the lack of self-nature does not imply nothing needs be done or nothing can be done. That is one extreme. At the other end of extreme is the self-nature of perfect control of what one wills, one gets. Both are seen to be false. Action + conditions leads to effect.

And I just wrote:

"What you said is not completely wrong but can be misleading unless you understand 'nature' as 'dependent origination' (replying to a post about anger, killing, suffering being the expression of nature instead of a self). Which is to say, it is not fate, or some sort of outside determinism, nor is it spontaneous arising without causes, but simply dependencies playing out here.

For example, torturing people is the result of ignorance, aggression, etc etc. There are various causes and conditions as listed in the twelve links of dependent arising. And it is not something that is fixed. By engaging in dharma practice we deal with the afflictions and liberate them. Four noble truths are like what doctor does - diagnosis, cause, relief, cure. Four noble truths are completely in alignment with "no self, dependent origination". It would be erroneous if a doctor realizes there is no self, therefore, thinks that all diseases are 'just as it is' and should not or cannot be dealt with. They should be dealt with. But they are dealt with not via the attempting to exert control or hard will via by the false notion of agency (sickness can't be cured merely by trying to will or control it out of existence - there are so many dependencies involved). They are dealt with via seeing its dependent origination and treating its dependent origination in a non-inherent way.

Now in the case of 'torturing', if someone practices metta, it can help (or if you prefer, leave out the 'someone' -- 'practicing metta can help'). Then when fundamental delusion is cleared, aggression can no longer arise. There is nobody controlling anger, anger arise whether one wants to or not -- yet it can be treated by applying the right antidote (e.g. metta) or actualizing wisdom so that it releases (e.g. anatta, twofold emptiness), just like diseases happen whether one wants to or not -- yet there is medicine, cure. There is suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the path that ends suffering."

Thusness then added on:

"“There is nobody controlling anger, anger arise whether one wants to or not”

Maybe sees it this way:

There is no one controlling anger, anger arises due to dependent origination.

With ignorance comes attachment. When attachment meets its secondary conditions, anger arises. Without secondary conditions, anger does not arise. Although it does not arise, it will not cease to arise unless the primary cause is severed. Here the appearance of “spontaneous arising” is seen from the perspective of DO.

Seeing this way, there is anatta; there is dependent origination; there is mindfulness of the cause of anger, the conditions, the cure and the ending of it. There is no bypassing as in “nothing needs be done”, albeit no-self."

...

Now.. there is another pathology which actually is the main one I wanted to address in this post.

On solipsism, as pointed out by Thusness before based on his own experience (that is, he too faced this tendency of solipsism after an initial breakthrough to nondual over a decade ago), the danger of someone going into nondual or even emptiness without the taste of total interpenetration is that one can easily fall into the extremes of solipsism. If we are directly experiencing our reality like in Vipassana, what we see are endless dependencies - seamless and intricate, in such a case there is no danger of falling into the view of solipsism.

As I wrote in my article Dharma Body last year: "...(Note: Dharma as simply a unit of experience dependently originating - not implying any inherently existing material universe [as the universe/dharma body here is seen as marvelous activities/phenomena dependently originating seamlessly without center or boundaries], nor is this dharma body in any sense a subjective body at all [if it is subjectively self-existent then causes and conditions will not be incorporated nor necessary for any given manifestation])..." - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2013/09/dharma-body.html

Also, as Piotr shared last month, "...what Soh told me in the past, if we apply Buddha's deconstruction from sound example from sutra, then clarity I call visual form right now of this laptop, letters is no more "mine" than any of secondary conditions right now, and Buddha's teaching about not-mine and other teachings sealed possibility of solipsism permanently for me. Somehow [solipsism] for me its non-issue lol "

He's referring to what I told him many months ago:

"Thusness wrote "you see, when we say there is no self or other, we can still not see in terms of DO."

I commented: this is very important.. and lately I'm seeing it more as well. To overcome all sense of I, me, and even mine, D.O. has to step in. Many people talk about no I, no background, but still there is sense of mine... and there are also those that say everything is 'the manifestation of my mind or my nature'.. that is subtly subsuming everything to mind. Even if there is no duality.

In dependent origination you totally see the entire formation of interdependencies... not in words but directly taste the totality of its workings forming every moment of experience. When the drum beat sounds you don't see it as just 'the manifestation of my mind' but you see it as the person hitting, the drum, the vibration, the ears etc... all in total exertion... how can that have anything to do with I or mine? It is not 'mine' anymore than it is the person hitting, the drum's, the vibration's... etc. It is not only that there is no hearer behind sound... not only no I but no mine at all.. the sound itself does not belong to anyone... it is the entire universe in total exertion so to speak.. but it is not understood in logic. You have to see the whole process and interdependencies directly. Breathing is like this... walking is like this... every action every experience is like this. This is the path to dissolve I, me, mine... only through D.O. is the release thorough.

Not 'everything is just consciousness' or 'everything is my consciousness'... consciousness isn't that special or important. It does not have a special, independent, ontological status. Rather it is the interdependencies the workings of D.O. through which that moment of consciousness/experience is in total exertion. The true turning point is when mind is completely separated from mine.. I, me, mine.. the dualistic and inherent tendency must be dissolved and replaced with the wisdom of D.O."

Some conversations with Thusness back in 2012 are quite illuminating on this subject:

**John**: To me is just is "AEN" an eternal being...that's all. No denial of AEN as a conventional self

**John**: All is just him is an inference too. There is no other is also an assumption
**AEN**: That's what I said lol
**AEN**: He didn't see it
**John**: But other mindstreams is a more valid assumption. Don't you think so?
**John**: And verifiable
**AEN**: Yeah

**John**: Whatever in conventional reality still remain, only that reification is seen through. Get it?
**John**: The centre is seen through be it "subject" or "object", they are imputed mental constructs.
**John**: Only the additional "ghostly something" is seen through
**AEN**: Ic..
**John**: Not construing and reifying. Nothing that "subject" does not exist.
**John**: Get it?
**John**: This seeing through itself led to implicit non-dual experience
**AEN**: "Nothing that "subject" does not exist." - what you mean?
**John**: Not "subject" or "object" does not exist.
**John**: Or dissolving object into subject or subject into object...etc

**AEN**: Ic..
**John**: That "extra" imputation is seen through.
**AEN**: Oic

**John**: are you clear? Conventional reality still remain as it is.
**John**: Btw focus more on practice in releasing any holdings....do not keep engaging on all these.
**AEN**: Ic.. Conventional reality are just names imposed on non-inherent aggregates right
**John**: Yes
**John**: That led to releasing of the mind from holding...no subsuming of anything
**John**: What you wrote is unclear
**John**: Do you get what I mean?
**AEN**: Yeah
**John**: Doesn't mean AEN does not exist...lol
**John**: Or I m you or you are me
**John**: Just not construing and reifying
**AEN**: Ic..
**AEN**: Nondual is collapsing objects to self, thus I am you
**AEN**: Anatta simply sees through reification, but conventionally I am I, you are you
**John**: Or collapsing subject into object
**AEN**: Ic..
**John**: Yes
**John**: you are still unclear about this and mixed up
**John**: Seeing through the reification of "subject", "object", "self", "now", "here"
**John**: Get it?
**John**: Seeing through "self" led to implicit non-dual experience
**John**: Coz experience turns direct without reification
**John**: In seeing, just scenery
**John**: Like you see through the word "weather"
**John**: That weather-ness
**John**: Be it subject/object/weather/...etc
**John**: That is mind free of seeing "things" existing inherently
**John**: Experience turns vivid direct and releasing
**John**: But I don't want you to keep participating idle talk and neglect practice...always over emphasizing unnecessarily
**John**: What happens to experience?
**AEN**: you mean after anatta? Direct, luminous, but no ground of abiding (like some inherent awareness)
**John**: And what do you mean by that?
**AEN**: Means there are only transient six sense streams experience, in seen just seen, etc
**AEN**: Nothing extra
**John**: Six stream experiences is just a convenient raft
**John**: Nothing ultimate
**John**: Not only must you see that there is no Seer + seeing + seen...u must see the immerse connectedness

...

Then, there is another disease after one has some non-conceptual direct realization -- be it I AMness or some sort of non-dual insight, one has a direct taste of pristine, unsullied Awareness or Presence. One's practice then becomes based on that direct taste, that

taste is only present when one is bare, naked and non-conceptual.

Furthermore, one may find that 'thoughts' is a source of much misery and confusion, and think that the goal of practice is therefore to completely strip off all thoughts. These practitioners could not find a resolution to these confusion and so they resorted to practice of non-conceptuality and naked awareness (however if they did realize anatta and emptiness, these confusions will dissolve but not via grasping to a state of non-conceptuality). Actually, suffering and confused thoughts are the result of a more fundamental underlying cause -- delusion, view of inherency, and so it is more important to resolve those fundamental underlying causes that causes grasping.

As I often quoted from Thusness in this article on the disease of non-conceptuality: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2011/08/disease-of-non-conceptuality.html

Excerpt: "In case 1 practitioners see 'The seen is neither subjective nor objective.... it just IS....'
In terms of experience, practitioners will feel Universe, Life. However this is not anatta but rather the result of stripping off (deconstructing) identity and personality.

When this mode of non-conceptual perception is taken to be ultimate, the terms "What is", "Isness", "Thusness" are often taken to mean simply resting in non-conceptuality and not adding to or subtracting anything from the 'raw manifestation'. There is a side effect to such an experience. Although in non-conceptuality, non-dual is most vivid and clear, practitioners may wrongly conclude that 'concepts' are the problem because the presence of 'concepts' divides and prevent the non-dual experience. This seems logical and reasonable only to a mind that is deeply root in a subject/object dichotomy. Very quickly 'non-conceptuality' becomes an object of practice. The process of objectification is the result of the tendency in action perpetually repeating itself taking different forms like an endless loop. This can continue to the extent that a practitioner can even 'fear' to establish concepts without knowing it. They are immobilized by trying to prevent the formation of views and concepts. When we see 'suffering just IS', we must be very careful not to fall into the 'disease' of non-conceptuality."

What these practitioners fail to understand that the key to release does not lie in trying to sustain a state of non-conceptuality or naked awareness, but in releasing the various bonds of consciousness that reifies self and phenomena. Very soon, non-conceptuality itself becomes one's new bondage and attachment. Non-conceptual experience isn't itself a problem, but attachment to it or treating as a be-all end-all of practice is problematic.

In fact, non-conceptual experience should be complemented with right view, and at the beginning even a conceptual understanding of right view can be very helpful, as it serves as a condition for direct realization of emptiness. As Thusness also wrote, "...The journey of emptying also convinces me the importance of having the right view of Emptiness even though it is only an intellectual grasped initially. Non-conceptuality has its associated diseases…lol…therefore I always advocate not falling to conceptuality and yet not ignoring conceptuality. That is, strict non-conceptuality is not necessary, only that

habitual pattern of reification needs be severed..." - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2014/07/a-and-emptiness.html

Only after deepening of insights do we realize, it is the realization and actualization of twofold emptiness that is the definitive path of self-release/liberation. This is discussed more indepth in my previous article, "Self-Release".

Then comes the fourth pathology -- blindness to karmic propensities.

What is karmic propensities? Kyle Dixon wrote: "...the very act of 'holding' or grasping is another factor which reifies a subject relating to objects. For the very act of 'holding' presupposes something to be held and a subject to hold it, and that activity in and of itself implies these two. The action or activity literally creates the illusion of a subject-object dichotomy, and if that illusion is not seen for what it is, then the entire process runs away with itself, becoming an intricate and delusional structure of habitual tendencies which are conventionally referred to as a 'self'. Again, there is no self contained therein, within, or apart from that activity, but the delusion surrounding that activity cannot see that in the absence of insight which reveals it to be so.

For example, if we were to say there is only unpleasant emotions and no entity which is feeling those emotions; emptiness would argue that those emotions are still arising due to either accepting or rejecting. The very act of accepting and/or rejecting presupposes something to be accepted or rejected, and the very act itself (along with the presupposition the action is based upon) is precisely what the entity is. The entity cannot be found apart from that action, and ultimately the so-called entity cannot be found within that action either, but under the sway of delusion this is not apparent. That is what the notion of karma truly is: 'action', but it is delusional action which is predicated upon the misunderstanding that the apparent dependencies and relationships between subjects and objects, or objects and objects etc., is valid. So emptiness seeks to penetrate these subtle assumptions, presuppositions, conditioning behaviors and so on by revealing the unreality of the factors they are based upon. It is a very thorough and comprehensive process, which is also very liberating. If done skillfully it utterly exhausts these subtle tendencies and neuroses, and with the pacification of those tendencies, the illusion of the entity which can exist or not exist is also pacified..." - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com.au/2014/06/self-as-karmic-tendencies.html

Overwhelmed by a partial insight -- be it non-doership, or I AMness, or usually One Mind, one clings to the 'Absolute' and neglects the 'relative'. This can happen when one fails to see the total exertion of karmic propensities from moment to moment - manifest completely as traces of clinging and identification in various forms.

Zen priest/teacher Alex Weith also talks about the stagnating waters (emphasis added): "...The problem is that we still maintain a subtle duality between what we know ourself to be, a pure non-dual awareness that is not a thing, and our daily existence often marked by self-contractions. Hoping to get more and more identified with pure non-dual awareness, we may train concentration, try to hold on to the event of awakening reifying an experience, ***or rationalize the whole thing to conclude that self-

contraction is not a problem and that suffering is not suffering because our true nature is ultimately beyond suffering. This explains why I got stuck in what Zen calls "stagnating waters" for about a year.***

This is however not seen as a problem in other traditions such as Advaita Vedanta where the One Mind is identified with the Brahman that contains and manifests the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep within itself, yet remains untouched by its dreamlike manifestation..."

Also, others may also say things like "suffering is awareness, contraction is awareness" etc etc -- skewing towards the aspect of non-dual luminous clarity that is never lost. Sure -- luminous clarity is never lost, and is manifest in every single manifestation, but no matter how clear that clarity is, it will never release suffering. Your mindstream has always been luminously clear but still you have been lost in samsara for beginningless lifetimes undergoing tremendous and countless sufferings. What good is that? Realizing non-dual luminosity is not enough. As discussed earlier, it is not the definitive path of release. And although even suffering and emotions are by nature luminous and empty, if we do not realize and actualize this luminous yet empty nature (note: not just 'luminous clarity' but more importantly the 'empty' nature) which releases those afflictions, then we are simply mouthing high views and deluded concepts.

Often coming together with this pathology of blindness to karmic propensities is the "I got it syndrome", which is to say, they think whatever they realize is complete or is perfect. Every insight can have that effect -- the realization of I AMness may result in a deceptive thought "this is it, this is liberation, enlightenment" etc. The realization of One Mind, pure transparency, etc, can also result in that effect. In truth, one is still far from total release and realization. Even if one has realized twofold emptiness, one is far from full actualization, which explains for the relative difference between the 1st bhumi Bodhisattva (who realized emptiness) and the 11th/13th/16th bhumi corresponding to Buddhahood. I must say, I am far from full Buddhahood, and I doubt anyone I know is anywhere close to full Buddhahood yet (although a number of people I personally know have begun the definitive path of release). It is always good to keep this in mind and be humble about one's practice and achievements.

However, it is unfortunate that very often, people who have not even realized emptiness (but may have realized the aspect of unconditioned Clarity/Awareness) can often be tricked into thinking of himself as "I got it". Even the neo-Advaitin/Zen teacher Adyashanti have made a related remark, "Whenever you touch upon a deep truth, suchness of reality, your true nature, each aspect feels like it's total and complete and all-inclusive at that moment. So that's why teachers have a very hard time getting through to people when they have an initial experience of anything because if it's an initial experience of reality it feels totally complete and there is a certain innate confidence that arises within you. Not an egoic confidence but a confidence that comes from reality." I will also add, very often that experiential confidence does in fact translate into an egoic kind of confidence. The "I got it syndrome" translates into "I know it all syndrome", so one has effectively shut down from further learning and practice.

Yet another neo-Advaitin teacher Vishrant said in a talk where he described 'awareness of awareness' as merely a kindergarten stage of awakening, "the teachers that are flying in and out and telling people they are awake are actually misleading people. The terrible side of that is when somebody is told they are awake, the ego grasps it and says, 'I am awake', and then stop seeking, and then these people stop looking because they think they've already found. So it cuts off their chances for ongoing awakening. It's very sad."

If even these neo-Advaitin teachers are clear about this pitfall, so much more must Buddhists (and other traditions like traditional Advaita) take heed and be aware of our kleshas!

If we are clear about our many faces of karmic propensities, we will know the path ahead. If we are ignorant of them, or in denial of them, or cling to the Absolute, then there is no way we will ever experience its release. There is no way, no chance at all, for someone ignorant of their karmic propensities or the four noble truths to experience Nirvana. They are not even on the path towards its release because they do not even see the afflictions/propensities, nor the cause of the afflictions, nor the end or path that ends afflictions.

Very often if one is blind to karmic propensities, one can also fall into a nihilistic attitude -- a denial or rejection of a path, or a denial or rejection of suffering, afflictions, etc.

First we need to know the faces of self/Self, I, me, mine, inherency. Then we need to scan our entire body mind for any clinging and contraction and grasping... fully touch the dharma of clinging and afflictions. This is a moment to moment practice.. very often various afflictions only manifest in the presence of secondary conditions (the primary condition is ignorance). Get intimate with afflictions, with karmic propensities, with delusion. It's ok.. you won't be harmed as there never was a you separate from these afflictions anyway, so any sort of avoidance or dissociation is simply another form of delusion and affliction. But through wisdom into its true (luminous and empty) nature they are allowed to release.

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25th July 2014

Most people say they are mindful of the arising and passing of phenomena, but it is nothing close to direct realization. Direct realization of impermanence is linked to direct realization of anatta and the eye of wisdom that apprehends impermanence *directly* that is the dharma eye.

Wisdom here is not a subject-object relationship -- i.e. not a someone being 'aware' of something. It is really just the experience itself dawning in its true nature (as opposed to being misperceived by delusion), self-revealed, self-aware, by being itself. The eye of wisdom knows impermanence by being-realizing impermanence, it is not a separate knower. This wisdom-realization that directly apprehends impermanence non-dually is true wisdom. Anything else is nothing direct, it cannot be called a realization. For example, 'noting' things as impermanent is not direct realization -- as there is still a

sense of standing back and acknowledging things are impermanence.

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25th July 2014

**John Tan**: Hi Justin Chapweske,

Don't say that...I am merely blahing…really.....just some casual sharing…

To me,

A shift from conceptuality to non-conceptuality is not freedom.

A shift from appearance to clarity/awareness is not freedom.

A shift from the conditioned to the unconditioned is not freedom.

It is simply a movement from one extreme to another extreme, they came from the same cause that "blinds and binds".

The "lack of linking essence" however is a precious insight and provides the foundation that led to a further refinement of one's understanding of empty and non-arising wisdom that allows one to release from oscillating both poles.

Taking the attempt to sustain Awareness 24/7 for example,

The wisdom that releases is not to sustain or affirm an Awareness in the 3 states.

In sleeping, it is not to maintain the light of awareness in sleep but rather to release one from the grasping tendencies so that one relaxes into the natural condition of "sleeping" -- in sleeping, sleep.

In dreaming, it is not to maintain the light of awareness in dreams but rather to release one from the grasping tendencies into the natural condition of "dreams", so the grasping tendencies isn't present in dreams.

Let unbinding be unbinding. One does not unbind so as to affirm clarity; if we hold on too tightly to clarity, we may not be able to fully appreciate and intuit the quintessence of unbinding wisdom. The wisdom of unbinding releases one to the natural state of what is, be it clarity or appearance, be it waking, dreaming or sleeping.

**Soh Wei Yu**: I think it is important to understand the context of what John Tan is saying, i.e. why is he telling us to separate Presence and the 2 Fold Emptiness?

This is important because if we do not separate them, then emptiness becomes a form of affirming negation. It becomes no different from the Advaita's neti neti technique of dissociating from phenomena to realize the substrate of Pure Consciousness. It is using negation to affirm Awareness.

Emptiness is not like that. Emptiness of inherent existence applies to every phenomena, to self, and also to Awareness. By realizing the emptiness of inherent existence in all these, Self, Awareness, Phenomena are released. There is not a denial of Awareness but a release from reifying and clinging to Awareness. It is a non-affirming negation.

This is why we must let unbinding be unbinding, let clarity be clarity. Experience both, then unbind clarity.

**Justin Chapweske:** Soh Wei Yu - what do you mean by "then unbind clarity"?

**Soh Wei Yu:** For example, having an image of clarity as something always so inherently and changelessly -- so that one tries to abide in that 24/7 through returning again and again to the captured image of awareness. That is caging clarity, and prevents release into the 'natural state' of whatever is when condition is. Some people may try to sustain a state of witnessing throughout sleep, which is not releasing into the natural state and having deep attachment to a particular face of clarity seen to be inherent, so one wants to hold on to it and wants to 'be' that particular state all the time. This causes insomnia as a lot of energy is tied up in holding onto a deemed purest state of clarity due to attachment. One tries to transcend the three states (or 'be the transcedent turiya beyond all states') rather than let each condition be, or be each condition, or allow it to reveal its true face and nature.

Unbind clarity means release the caging or fixating of clarity into something. Fixating on a particular face of clarity. As I said years ago after a meditation, "Every moment is an encounter of my thousand faces. The sound of thunder, every drop of rain, every heart beat, every breath, every thought. Experience, experience, experience, experience!" -- https://www.facebook.com/notes/soh-wei-yu/a-thousand-faces/10152352904760226 . The same goes to sleeping, dying, etc. Thusness also said to Goose recently: "Empty clarity has a thousand faces, every face is brilliance and new."

**John Tan**

Don't cage mind's clarity into anything...after your insights, mature by tasting it.

Fully empty in both background and foreground. Self sprung appearance is lucid and empty.

It is just one great open spaciousness of empty evanescence appearances.

Holographic voidness

If self sprung appearance is natural and liberating but lack a reverence and compassionate heart, then you must practice metta.

**Taste the Breadth and Depth of Empty Clarity**

Thusness wrote to me:

Taste the breadth and depth of empty clarity.

Free this immediate experience from all definitions;

Free this immediate experience from all boundaries;

Free this immediate experience from all inherent solidity;

Without the ghost image of a backdrop and absence of essence in the foreground, then whatever arises is free and liberating.

Spontaneous and naturally perfected.

You can only recognize the taste, never fixate any idea or image of instant presence

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28th July 2014

Question: Soh, how do you regard the five skandhas (skandhas: aggregates; five skandhas: form, feelings, perceptions, volition, consciousness)

Reply: To be realized as they are. We do not realize and experience the five skandhas for what they are because we relate to them in terms of conceived inherent self and things, subject and object. That is why pointers like Bahiya Sutta leads realizing no behind self/agent/seer besides the seen/heard/cognized, otherwise nothing direct. When insight of anatta arises, the aggregates are self-seen. Then you can look into its impermamence and unsatisfactoriness as well. Then apply emptiness to all constructs and objects (but this must not be done only at a mental/intellect level otherwise one falls into what Thusness calls “fake vipassana”, but rather, through applying this insight of anatta in direct vipassana, there is both the realizing/piercing through of deluded constructs and the releasing into direct touch of energies/sensations free from imputation).

e.g.

"We may think we can touch a visible object, but when there is "touching", what appears? It may be hardness, softness, heat, cold, motion or pressure. A visible object, that which appears through the eye door, can't be touched, it can only be seen. When a visible object is touched, it becomes a tangible object appearing through the sense-door of the body, being a completely different experience from that of a visible object. Seeing and touching can't appear at the same time; they appear one at a time, at different moments.

It is the elements of mind which may connect up the two experiences to relate to a certain thing, but again that process of nama is another series of different "conditioned realities" arising and falling away one at a time; it is not Self. When we touch a table it is not the table which appears, but a tangible object or an experience of hardness, etc. At the moment hardness appears, there is only hardness and the "experience of hardness"; there is no table in hardness, there is no Self in hardness. If the rupa which appears is not realised as it is, (i.e., not Self) one is bound to cling to it as happening to him.

We may think of the concept "table", but thinking and formulating concepts are different conditioned phenomena altogether from those of hardness and the experience of hardness, etc.

If there is no mindfulness of the characteristics of nama (feeling, perception, thinking, mental moods, and consciousness) as they arise one at a time, we fall into the delusion of a Self who experiences. Rupas arise through the body senses---eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. Namas arise only through the mind-door. They are all conditioned and not Self. If one still thinks it is "I" who experiences these phenomena of matter and mind, he has still not developed any insight."

(Quotation: Breaking Through the Self Delusion by Yogavacara Rahula Bhikkhu)

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29th July 2014

The more one practices the more one sees the interdependence of the seven factors of awakening:

Mindfulness (sati)
Keen investigation of the dhamma (dhammavicaya)[3]
Energy (viriya)
Rapture or happiness (piti)
Calm (passaddhi)
Concentration (samadhi)
Equanimity (upekkha)

There is an order to it. Because of mindfulness, there is keen investigation of dharma, because of that there is energy, because of that there is rapture, because of rapture there is calm (stilling of mental and bodily formations), because of calm there is concentration, because of concentration there is equanimity (no push/pull towards things, due to strong concentration, lacking which there is no equanimity).

The factors can lead to realization and realization can strengthen the factors. The factors can arise spontaneously due to actualizing the insights.

Even now the rapture is experienced.. but not full blown jhana (here's a good article on jhana: http://www.leighb.com/jhana2a.htm). However, when mindfulness sensitive to rapture is practiced in meditation and hindrances are cleared the bliss will intensify. (Related entry in e-book: "30th April 2011 entry: Breathing is Bliss") Also I experience very intense bliss in sleep states.. just woke up from super intense bliss sleep state which lasted maybe half an hour.

At first there may be shallow waves of rapturous energy, but in certain states of meditation or sleep, the rapture can intensify 10 times or 20 times. Then by zooming

into the bliss it naturally intensifies -- being mindfully aware, sensitive to rapture as instructed by Buddha in the Anapanasati Sutta. At that point, every reminder/remembrance of dharma, including no-self and emptiness, also intensifies that rapturous energy.

Every sensation is actualized naturally with insight and total exertion. But continue to keep mindfulness in the forefront as any hindrances and mental impurities creeping back in will result in the wholesome mental/experiential factors (the energies of bliss, clarity, calmness) reducing or subsiding. At any moment, simply return mindfulness sensitive to the wholesome qualities back. In such a case the seven factors of awakening reinforces each other.

What should we be mindful of?

Excerpts from http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.118.than.html

Mindfulness of In-&-Out Breathing

"Now how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit?

"There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore.[1] Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

"[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.'[2] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' [4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.'[3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

"[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.' [6] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.' [7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.'[4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.' [8] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.'

"[9] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.' [10] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in satisfying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out satisfying the mind.' [11] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.' [12] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.'[5]

"[13] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.' [14] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion [literally, fading].' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.' [15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'

"This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit.

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9th August 2014

**The Benefits and Limitations of Teachers and Lineages**

Tom Radcliffe said that realization would be impossible without the direct guidance of a living teacher and lineage.

I replied with a long post on my opinions on lineage and teachers based on my experience:

"There are actually exceptional people who did not rely on teachers to come to the realization of anatta/emptiness/D.O. etc. Thusness is an example of such a person -- he awakened through contemplating on the Buddha's teachings and the texts of certain ancient masters. Having said that, his capacity of wisdom is probably much higher and students like me could never have awakened by myself without relying on a real life teacher. So the advise that one should find a good teacher still stands, just that there are some rare exceptions to the rule.

Though I find the guidance of teachers to be valuable in leading towards a foundation in practice, I also find that it can be limiting. Therefore I do not recommend focusing on only one teacher's teaching completely but have a more broad/widened understanding and knowledge of dharma while at the same time still working with those teachers. (From my observations as over the years I have met with many teachers in various traditions, all of whom have sort of acknowledged my insights/realizations/experience in one way or another.)

For example most Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers I have personally encountered or had experiences with were were limited to the "I AM" (Eternal Witness) and "One Mind" (substantial nondualism where subject/object are undivided) perspective. So they can only guide their students to that realization. That is definitely useful, but a lot more insights need to unfold IMO. But some students are stuck due to some blind faith or devotion to certain teachers, for example Thusness had some trouble at the beginning trying to bring out 'Simpo' (a friend of mine) from the I AM realization into deeper realization like nondual, anatta, D.O. and emptiness at the beginning, because of his great faith or devotion to a particular teacher who was very much into the I AM. This is

where faith to a teacher, or the teacher of the student, can become a great limitation for that student. But fortunately, Simpo did eventually come to experience the truth that Thusness was pointing out to him, and later came to deeply appreciate the subtleties of the Buddhadharma. I myself have been in a sort of similar situation before but I digress, and so has many others that I've seen.

Then there are teachers like Daniel Ingram, whose insights into anatta etc and their practice advices I greatly appreciate, nevertheless would consider themselves (and people like me) as having attained arahantship due to their vastly different interpretations of the models of enlightement. Daniel Ingram, if you do not know who he is, is a qualified lineaged teacher from a well known Mahasi Sayadaw Vipassana tradition and given permission to teach from their lineage teachers.

If I had believed their claim that I have attained arahantship, it may have led me to a place of complacency -- feeling I'm done, done with the path/whatever. And in a way I can definitely see how that can manifest -- because the insights I've experienced have a sense of unshakeable stability as I pointed out before. But fortunately, I have come to see like Yor Sunyata, both from my own experience -- both of experiencing the wisdom that led to freedom from afflictions in daily life as well as even in states of dream, dreamless and sleep paralysis, as well as the insight into the total exertion of karmic propensities itself -- as well as the traditional suttas, that the other fetters or afflictions can and do cease further on in one's path. Therefore I am convinced, I am confident, that the freedom-from-fetter model as advertised by the Buddha is valid just-as-it-is rather than 'unrealistic' (as some teachers like Daniel and many others might think), and there is in fact still a long way to go to full awakening/liberation.

You said, "I think many people stop short of the goal due to not having a way to examine the current state of affairs and this is where a teacher and study is helpful." -- yes it is very easy for some unlearned run-off-the-mill person who have no access to maps, to teachers, etc, to mistake whatever they experience for enlightenment. Some people may even think their LSD experience or whatever was enlightenment, or mistaking A&P with enlightenment, etc. If they have an experienced teacher or mentor, those good advisers can certainly cut the bullshit out of the student easily than have them stuck in whatever place for a long time. While that you said is true, it can also be true, as in the example I gave above, that "many people stop short of the goal due to HAVING examined the current state of affairs with a TEACHER according to their (teacher's) maps". That teacher may consider himself, or be considered by others to be arahants, but doesn't in any way necessarily means that what they have attained is truly what the Buddha had in mind about "Arahants".

This is why, while one should definitely work with teachers, at the same time, one should learn the Buddha's teachings, scriptures, and judge teachings according to them. The Buddha made it very clear that his words must take precedence over any monk's (or any practitioners' or teachers') words. For example,

"In Anguttara Nikaya Sutta 4.180, the Buddha taught the great authorities. He advised that when any monk says that such and such are the teachings of the Buddha, we should, without scorning or welcoming his words compare those words with the Suttas

and Vinaya. If they are not in accordance with the Suttas and Vinaya, we should reject them."

"To some of you, Ānanda, it may occur thus: 'The words of the Teacher have ended, there is a Teacher no longer'. But it should not, Ānanda, be so considered. Indeed, Ānanda, that which I have taught and made known to you as the Dhamma and the Vinaya will be your Teacher after my passing away."

-- Mahāparinibbāna Sutta

"If he does not teach according to the words of the Buddha

even if he is a guru, one should remain indifferent. "

-- Sakya Pandita

Also as the Buddha stated in http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/40a.16-Ahita-Thera-S-a5.88-piya.pdf -- even famous teachers may have wrong views.

This is where Refuge in the Three Jewels become very important -- because we should not rely on on our own ideas of the dharma, nor even what some other teachers might say about enlightenment, but rather we rely on the Buddha himself -- the perfectly enlightened one -- and the Dharma he taught as contained in the scriptures, and the Sangha -- which in this case refers to the Arya sangha -- the sangha of the awakened noble ones that realized the Buddha's dharma. We rely on their teachings and dharma.

Having said that, I am not suggesting that one must find a fully awakened or liberated or perfect-in-every-way teacher. What if one never finds one in the world? A good teacher is imo, someone who can lead you to the next step. If you are finding I AM realization, then a teacher that can lead you to that is a good teacher, even if it is not the Buddhist sort of enlightenment. Then you can move on to other teachings and practices. That's fine. Learn from them, but don't be limited by them.

As I mentioned in this group before, one day many years ago I felt great despair at the thought of not having found any teacher that I feel could lead me forward in my practice swiftly to full awakening, "why isn't there someone like a Buddha or fully awakened being nowadays that I could learn from and quickly lead me to complete liberation?" There was a sense of disappointment as I felt my insights have already surpassed those teachers I have met (with the exception of a few like Thusness -- whose continued guidance I was greatly indebted to, and without which I could not have seen the subtlety of Buddhadharma). Then, I fell asleep... I had a dream of clarity. In that dream, I went up an elevator to a place, where every single person I met had the face of my teacher! The same face.

Then even in that dream itself, I suddenly understood: every person, every thing, every event, is your teacher! The whole universe is your teacher. We should practice with that mindset. First of all, it humbles oneself because of a change of perspective in how we relate to the universe, secondly, one expands one's attitude of "who I can learn from" from a narrow minded idealized vision of what a teacher should be, to the whole

universe. Every person or thing in the universe, even from their mistakes etc, can become your teacher. We should be grateful for every single teacher, even the person who taught you how to tie your shoe laces."

Tom Radcliffe said, "There are no exceptional people - at least I've never met one."

I replied, "I've only met one person who realized anatta/emptiness/D.O. without living teachers to point it out to him -- Thusness. However, as pointed out, he also had teachers (mainly not from the Buddhist tradition) before he encountered the Buddhadharma. Also, he took refuge with his father under H.H.Sakya Trizin, however, he does not practice Vajrayana.

On another point... I think I haven't shared about this before... but I might take this opportunity to share. Some of my experience with working with lineage teachings.

I was from very young being introduced to Dharma in Ren Cheng Buddhism under Venerable Shen Kai (I took refuge when I was 2 and started attending classes at 12). He passed away in 1996 but we have access to his writings in written form and recorded forms. His dharma successor, Missionary Chen Ming An had been teaching his dharma since, and we also have a local dharma teacher Li Zhu Lao Shi who has been guiding us. Ven. Shen Kai hold the Linji Ch'an lineage (also the more commonly known Ven. Sheng Yen was his dharma brother, both studied under Ch'an Master Dongchu), however, Ven. Shen Kai do not call 'Ren Cheng Buddhism', 'Ch'an' but integrates its teachings with it. It can be considered to be a new school of Buddhism.

The perspective of Ren Cheng is (like many other Chinese Mahayana teachers) to emphasize on 'Yi Men Shen Ru' which is to focus on one dharma door and enter deeply. Otherwise, according to this perspective, one may be looking through the various doors but never get into the center of that building. There is very great devotion and faith among the followers in the teacher of the tradition. Having a teacher or master in a lineage allows a student to have access to a large pool of teachings which are highly consistent -- than for example, asking a total beginner to search from piles of often contradictory or confusing teachings by different teachers and different writings, not knowing where to start. As Missionary Chen Ming An personally told me when I conversed with him for about an hour the last time, the good thing about lineage and lineage Master is that such a teacher can distill the countless sutra teachings into an essential path for the practitioner. Otherwise how does the practitioner know what or how to apply the teachings?

Working with a teacher also means intimate guidance which definitely helps a lot with one's own practice and understanding. While I find that focusing on a lineage/tradition/teacher may be important at a beginning, it can also become restrictive later. This is because it prevents broadening of one's dharma knowledge by focusing exclusively on the teachings of one particular lineage or teacher. Therefore, another perspective from the Tibetan side is equally valid IMO -- that one should be like a bee, happily collecting nectar from different flowers. Then there is also a potential problem: one may become like some run-off-the-mill Buddhists going to countless initiations here and there, collecting 'teachings' and 'initiations' but never being able to apply any of them in practice. Those are two extremes we should avoid IMO -- being

restricted, or practicing spiritual materialism and making a junk shop out of a huge collection of dharma.

Back to what I was saying... The teachings taught in RC has been to put the Buddhadharma in a plain, practical way for lay people to understand and apply them in their daily life. It is certainly useful in that way and has attracted a huge following. The emphasis of the teachings is on grounding one's practice and awareness and insights in one's daily living, in the midst of the daily encounters and interactions, which I do find to be quite important (in fact even more so recently). I find that their teachings have given me some grounding and basic knowledge in the Buddhadharma. It was very useful in pointing a person to path that leads to spiritual progress rather than being misdirected or misled in many possible ways. The pointers to Awareness and the path of practice based on that direct realization of Awareness was pretty clear, direct and straightforward. This can lead to some fundamental insights and realizations. It is also the teachings in RC that started my whole spiritual path to begin with. So in many ways I am also indebted to the teachings in RC.

At the same time, their teaching was pretty much restricted to the Awareness teachings perspective. That is, the I AM/Eternal Witness and One Mind perspective. [Update 2022: I can confirm that Li Zhu Lao Shi's understanding is no longer at the level of I AM and she has realised anatta over the years.] If I focused exclusively on their teachings that may be the limit of my insights and progress. In 2009 the local dharma teacher advised me to stop going to online forums -- or actually, to solely focus on studying the tradition's teaching. I think there are some valid reasons to it -- for example, a dharma teacher may be worried that I may be influenced by 'wrong views' from my exposure to the views and teachings posted online.

However, to the contrary, because I did not restrict myself to the teachings or opinions of certain traditions, I could study the dharma and have my own understanding outside the authority/'jurisdiction' of any particular traditions. And as a result, I have found that my understanding of dharma has expanded, and I have come to my own understanding and conclusions based on the teachings of the Buddha and many other teachers and guides. I studied the suttas -- read the whole of Majjhima Nikaya and a few other suttas books. [Update 2022: Later on I also read many Mahayana and Vajrayana texts and sutras] I found that self-study to be invaluable to one's understanding and practice of dharma. I have also met and conversed with a number of teachers from various traditions -- Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. And although I have not conversed with non-Buddhist teachers, for a time in the past I was also very much into Advaita Vedanta.

Also, very fortunately, over the years, Thusness have been instilling right view in me, so that while I was contemplating on the Bahiya Sutta one day, realization of anatta manifested. And then there were other breakthroughs and insights since.

So... working with a teacher in a lineage has its own benefits and limitations. In my opinion, lineage is by no means a magical pill that bestows full realization or Buddhahood, but it can often lead to a good foundation. Then at some point, having a certain grounding, one should progress oneself."

17th August 2014

**The Path of Uncontrivance**

The path of anatta and emptiness is truly the path of total uncontrivance. Isn't it so? If in our mind we have an image of what awareness, or what our practice should be like, there will be contrivance -- trying to get back to a supposed inherent space of awareness, background, etc, or what we think awareness is or should be based on a captured memory -- we will unconsciously contrive to get back to a 'state', except we don't see it as a state, we don't see the contrivance involved -- we see it as inherently existing changeless Self -- inherently so.

In anatta, truly there is zero movement -- the zero movement is not to rest in a state of immutable 'Being' which is still a form of grasping and caging of clarity. The zero movement is from not moving a step away from the spontaneous manifestation of transience, not holding back, no essence or substance hiding anywhere. Because there is absolutely no changeless self/Self behind anything, there is absolutely no fixed manner awareness/experience is, everything is absolutely fluid and vanishing and there is constant renewal. Every moment is utterly new and completely unpredictable, therefore naturally there is resting in the unpredictable spontaneity of appearance/manifestation/activity rather than with something familiar -- holding back to something familiar is merely clinging to a reification based on memory. We don't fixate on something transcending waking, dream and deep sleep, we simply let waking be waking, dream be dream, deep sleep be deep sleep, in its actual condition or luminous-wisdom-display. The qualities of deep and intense clarity, transparency, bliss, naturally manifest without contrivance in spontaneous manifestation without any trace of self/Self. If we try to contrive a state of clarity, if we try to contrive the spaciousness, the transparency, the bliss, that won't do -- we are merely caging clarity, holding back to a self.

And we don't let the luminous-wisdom-display blind us from afflictive dependent origination. What is this karmic propensities? It is really just your very face -- experience -- as it is! There is nothing beyond, behind, or within karmic propensities -- the very delusionally shaped experience. It's like seeing those picture puzzles, at first it seems like black random shapes, yes? And then suddenly you saw "aha! there's a cow in there" and from then on, you cannot unsee that cow anymore. It's no longer black random shapes, there's clearly a cow very prominently shown in the picture. Now, this analogy has been used as representing 'awakening' -- a sudden shift of perception from ignorance to wisdom, seeing things as it is. However, this analogy is also perfect for the total exertion of karmic propensities.

Whereas previously you see a rope, suddenly rope becomes 'meaningful', now you see it as a snake, and it seemingly can't be unseen. Your mental conditioning has shaped the way you perceive and experience those 'black, random colours' into something truly solid and inherently existing in a certain manner. It is a magical 'creation' of a new experiential reality, the total exertion of our mental conditioning. That is like our delusional vision of self and inherent existence. It is our very experience itself shaped by

karmic propensities into our very apparent reality. That is how delusion and karmic propensities manifest in our experience -- there is nothing hiding behind our experience influencing experience (some people may believe there is a hidden 'subconscious' pulling the strings on experience) or inside the very delusional appearance -- and just that is the total exertion of our afflicted conditionings. And this is no different from emptiness of self, the subject, where it is seen there is no inherent self/awareness/subject behind or within or beyond the very manifestation... but emptiness of self can be applied to all other things including 'karmic propensities'.

And likewise there is nothing behind, beyond, nor arising, abiding, and ceasing in the pure luminous-wisdom-display of our pure sensory experience. All things are ultimately empty of inherent existence, or real arising, and simultaneously its emptiness of inherent existence allows us to see its conventional reality that is the total exertion of all conditions. The two truths are inseparable, what dependently originates is fundamentally non-arising, and the emptiness of something reveals its conventional reality. When we have the view of the inseparability of two truths, to see the total exertion of appearance is also to see its non-arising, to see its fundamental non-arising is to see the very appearance as mere appearance of total exertion without anything created or existing behind/beyond/within the appearance. Though sometimes we skew towards one side of the two truths.

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19/12/2014

Two-Way Dependency/Dependent Designation

Also see: What Buddha Taught about Consciousness
Emptiness as Unity

John Tan

12:14am

Now in hearing, there is only sound. In total exertion, not only the ears heard, the eyes, the hair, the entire body hears...there is no eye, no ear, no body...all six entries are one function and even that act of hearing is profoundly deconstructed.

Or let's say just anatta, in hearing there is only sound. If you search for

"sound", you can never find it. If you try to find the line of demarcation

that separates sound and the conditions that give rise to it, can you find that line?

Soh

12:19am

nope

John Tan

12:23am

In non-conceptual mode of anatta, just a dimensionless sphere of clear "tingsss" and even saying that is too much. Is there separation of the bell, the ear, the stick, the air...etc? All is profoundly exerted into the suchness beyond speech. However when you expressed conventionally, must you not see the dependent arising, the causal dependencies?

Soh

12:25am

oic..

yea

John Tan

12:25am

So you must know at the ultimate it is expressed as if there is no sound, no conditions but at the conventional it is expressed as Dependent Origination.

Therefore if one does not see Dependent Origination, he will not see the ultimate correctly. To teach emptiness is to to see Dependent Origination and to see Dependent Origination is to see emptiness. Appears therefore empty, empty therefore appears. There is no emptiness without appearance and no appearances that is not empty.

John Tan
1:02am

Just read Greg's comments. He pointed one imp point that is mutual dependency. In Prasangika, this mutual dependency is quite unique and important but not in the sense that they affect or produce each other but they (cause and effect) are mutually dependent for their conventional existence. For example we normally think sound is causally dependent on its causes and conditions for its arising but in Prasangika, sound is dependent on its conditions and the conditions are also dependent on sound for their existence. Why so? This is important to understand total exertion.

Soh
1:16am

its like without sunlight, the sun would not be the sun... sunlight makes sun what it is conventionally.. sound actualizes a bell, and blowing wind actualizes a fan
John Tan
1:22am
John Tan

(thumbs up)
Soh
1:27am

interesting.. if we think of computer screen as an entity, then the images on the screen and the screen is only a one way dependency. the images are dependent on the screen and the screen is not dependent on the images... the screen will always be the screen (until it gets 'destroyed') and the images come and go, shows on and off. but seeing the lack of intrinsic existence of screen and image... then its like water pouring into water, screen and image co-emerge in total exertion... its not youtube happening on a screen... the screen is manifested through youtube and it is youtube-screen. the same goes for consciousness... thats why buddha said consciousness is reckoned by its conditions (reference: http://www.leighb.com/mn38.htm)...

(comments by Soh: The same can be said in many other examples: Plane and Flying (we may think of 'flying' as something that 'plane' is 'doing', but what does the co-emergence of plane and flying and the lack of intrinsic identity of both tells us?), Subject-Action-Object, etc...)
John Tan
1:37am

Well said. The heart of total exertion and emptiness...feel it. you are beginning to bring the taste of total exertion into "view". Even in conventionality and conceptuality, the experience of "water pouring water" in meditative equipoise can b brought into actual taste. +A and -A can b integrated.
Soh
1:38am

oic..

p.s. This excerpt by Dogen is worth repeating: “Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise

the sails and row with the pole. Although you row, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat no one could ride. But you ride in the boat and your riding makes the boat what it is. Investigate such a moment."

Also, अष्टावक्र शान्ति posted nice quotes from Dalai Lama:

"Something is not a cause in and of itself; it is named a "cause" in relation to its effect. Here the effect does not occur before its cause, and its cause does not come into being after its effect; it is in thinking of its future effect that we designate something as a cause. This is dependent-arising in the sense of dependent designation." - H.H Dalai Lama

"But when you take it further, the dependent-arising of cause and effect comes because of dependent designation, which itself indicates that cause and effect do not have their own being; if they did have their own being, they would not have to be dependently designated." - H.H Dalai Lama

HHDL's explanation on dependent designation is very clear! Funny how I didn't see it in the past though I read through his book before:

https://books.google.com.au/books?id=kqvlPsyV33IC&pg=PA190&lpg=PA190#v=onepage&q&f=false
Dependent Designation is a key teaching of Madhyamika:

"Whatever is dependently co-arisen
That is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation
Is itself the middle way.
Something that is not dependently arisen,
Such a thing does not exist.
Therefore a non-empty thing
Does not exist. "

-- Nagarjuna

.....

Wrote more: 21/12/2014: Water pouring into water may be understood as mere non-division of subject and object, in fact you hear descriptions of how the realization of Atman-Brahman is like pouring a drop of water into the great ocean, and so on.

However, the water pouring into water in Madhyamika has a more subtle meaning. The subject and object, realization and object of realization, etc etc is released like water pouring into water. This means seeing the selflessness, the emptiness of self and object, screen and images, plane and flying, car/driver/driving, etc etc leads to the taste of empty and non-dual seamless exertion.

For example now you no longer see yourself as an independent driver existing independent of the driving (driver is dependently designated in dependence of driving and car), driving a car which is mistakenly seen to exist independent of the driver and driving. Neither are you saying the driver collapses into the car or the car collapses into the driver. Rather, by seeing how driver, car and driving are dependent and empty, then car, driver, driving, environment 'melts' into empty, non-dual seamless exertion. Your riding makes the boat what it is.

In this case, subject and object are non-dual like Advaita but not really the same in view, because you are not collapsing one pole to another but releasing them into non-obstruction.

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https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/adrqp1/what_does_nagarjuna_mean_when_he_says_causes/

Posted by
u/ChanCakes

1 day ago

**What does Nagarjuna mean when he says causes depends on effects?**
Question

He seems to mean this in more than just referential way as in “East land” cannot exist without “Westland” where the notions of Eastland and Westland cannot exist without each area but the area can. So Eastland physically can exist without Westland but it’s referential name cannot.

But Nagarjuna seems to suggest the cause itself cannot exist without the effect. Could someone explain this please? Are there any texts/commentaries which go in-depth about this?

Thanks.

level 1

krodha (Kyle Dixon)

12 points · 21 hours ago

But Nagarjuna seems to suggest the cause itself cannot exist without the effect. Could someone explain this please? Are there any texts/commentaries which go in-depth about this?

Nāgārjuna gives the example of a parent and child. The parent creates the child, but the child also creates the parent.

The cause [parent] cannot be established without the effect [child].

In Madhyamaka, causes and effects are interchangeable and bilateral. Every cause is an effect and every effect a cause.

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1/10/2014

A zillion words from the past Buddhas amount to nothing but dead words, this book included. How can you find the essence of total exertion from these? Sometimes we become robots repeating things we hear… but there must be something more.

Room is hot, whole body is the burning!

Feel it, live it without second thought.

Then express from the state of fresh creativity.

This burning heat is the full expression. This shines brighter than a zillion words do.

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09/01/2015

Thusness had a casual discussion with me regarding the various phases of seeing through intrinsic-ness in experience:

Realizing the nature (i.e. non-arising, empty nature) of clarity is not the same as realizing clarity. Anatta can lead one to experience whatever arises/appearance as presence.

Presence is part of the journey. The practitioner goes through anatta and realizes what we called presence is just appearance. Then he must start looking at absence. There are at least 4 levels of seeing through intrinsic-ness or the realizing of absence and anatta is just the beginning.

1. The emptiness (i.e. non-existence of a) background

2. Seeing foreground appearance as empty like mist or shimmering paint in

the pond but appearance is seen as arising, abiding and ceasing.

3. Seeing absence in vivid presence... means in clear vivid non-dual

appearance, realize it is never there at all. At this phase, there must

be complete conviction without the slightest doubt from logical

analysis in understanding why it is "never there". The article where I

asked you what is second fold... non-Arisen emptiness. (link: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2013/04/daniel-post-on-anattaemptiness.html)

4. Turn insight of non-arisen in 3 into a taste, otherwise the 2 mindstreams cannot become one... that is, mind stream of dependent arising and emptiness are like what Tsongkhapa said "mutually exclusive", no way to become one unless one reaches Buddhahood. This is because we do not know the key is in recognizing the taste of absence (i.e translate the logical and inferring consciousness into a taste).

...

It is fully and vividly present and in the midst of this clear presence/appearance, it is realized as absence. That is why there is no arising, abiding and ceasing - non-arisen.

When you hear music and just music, there is no hearer... no hearer is anatta (lvl 1), the beautiful music in clean transparency is non-dual appearance... when absence is seen only when music disappears like a disappearing mist then it is phase 2. If it is clearly heard in non-dual mode and simultaneously realized to be absence (without the music disappearing) then it is phase 3. Then entire being will be pervaded with deep sense of illusion-like spaciousness.

But all these are just -A. Next is to look at +A. It is exactly the same again but this round non-conceptual appearance and dependent arising is brought to be seen and understood at the conventional level.

So it is understanding the nature of experience...not just directly experiencing awareness.

After this practice is no practice... just complete non-dual releasing... natural and spontaneous. When essencelessness is thoroughly seen through, the way of practice can only be spontaneous presence and natural perfection. Essence/inherent is what that

prevents one from being natural and spontaneous. But don't link it to Dzogchen... all these about spontaneous presence and natural perfection is simply thoroughness of knowing the habit and many faces of inherent tendencies... may be completely different from Dzogchen spontaneous presence.

So do you know why it must be in a state of non-dual presence...?

"Then at this moment of appreciating maha suchness of the breath, the sensations, the entire scenery, the entire world…

Understand that they are Empty!

Experience the magnificence then deeply understand that they are empty but this Emptiness has nothing to do with deconstruction nor reification nor do I mean they are simply impermanent. So what is this Emptiness I am referring to?"

It must be vividly present with all magnificence... why? Because if it is gone then it is not the phase 3 absence.

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10/01/2015

This is a clarification to the previous post, Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness

David replied to me:

The singularity of seeing is self evident. The absence of a seer naturally gives rise to the absence of an object (of seeing), the knowing of which is clarity itself.

2 hrs · Like

I (Soh) replied:

David what you're writing is more about non-dual awareness. But there can be different phases in seeing the nature of non-dual awareness.

Non-dual awareness can reveal everything to be Mind as subject-object dichotomy is deconstructed, but this Mind may be seen to be changeless and inherently existing, which is the substantial nondualism of One Mind. Therefore it is said there is no objects, everything is Self/Awareness/etc. The reflection is none other than the mirror, yet the mirror is not its reflections. This is not yet understanding anatta.

Then it can be realized that 'awareness' is none other than the transience, the manifestation, that there is really no inherently existing/changeless Awareness containing, subsuming, or even 'being inseparable with' manifestation, just like the word

'weather' does not exist as something that contains or subsumes the rain and wind and clouds but is merely a convention collating them, empty of being something in itself.

That, is anatta, and any sense of self/Self behind manifestation is seen through. And this is case 1) -- the emptiness of a background. Then one can proceed on to 2), where by zooming into the impermanence and insubstantiality of pure clarity/manifestation, one tastes the shimmering appearance to be fluxing wave-like or cloud-like or water-painting-like patterns, or like what I scribbled down during a journey: "everything is so pure, clean, unfiltered, manifest, clear, just that sensation... consciousness forms/"modulates" (not exactly a good word) like cloud patterns, insubstantial... appears and disappears like a mist".

3) emptiness is directly realized to be the true nature of clarity/manifestation not by zooming into impermanence, but by contemplating Dependent Origination and suddenly it is realized how appearances, like mirror reflections that appear dependently, is really never there. (For example sometimes two of the same faces appear on the 'same mirror' at different locations depending on which eye you use to look at it, which again is due to dependent origination) And what dependently originates is fundamentally non-arising -- uncreated, unborn, never abiding and never ceasing. Zooming into impermanence is unable to remove the fundamental inherent view of seeing 'arising/abiding/ceasing', however it does lead to a taste of the whole field as being insubstantial.

This is where in my previous post it's stated, "But even when it is realized that there isn't any awareness/observer besides the sensations and manifestation and there is no more sense of duality, one still has yet to penetrate 2 folds. The "absence/emptiness" of appearance/sensations/dharma will still be understood as some ultimate true existence (sensations) undergoing the phase of arising, abiding and ceasing in a flickering instant. The depth of 2-fold emptiness in terms of insights and actual taste will not be there. Spaciousness and Illusion-like emptiness will not permeate one's entire being in actual experience."

Now, in Phase 3, that instant of clarity is realized to be non-arising not by seeing how they momentarily manifests/shimmers for an instant and subsides, but the very presence itself is absence, non-arising, unborn, uncreated, like mirror reflection... the taste of illusory is present in the clarity/appearance without its disappearance, and the illusion of something going through arising/abiding/ceasing is seen through.

4) The realization of non-arising results in an actual taste of everything being illusory appearances, yet it is not like the sort of 'everything is just an illusion, the only reality is Mind/Brahman/Awareness' kind of substantialist view, rather, it is the very vivid non-dual presence itself that we're talking, the very non-dual and luminous display which in all its intense wonder and clarity, is empty and illusory. This is the 'yogic view' of the two truths as one, absence and presence.

.....

David: "The singularity of seeing is self evident" doesn't necessarily assume, Mind, background, or Awareness for that matter. The functioning itself doesn't necessarily lead to, arise in, or come from anything.

January 10 at 12:05pm · Unlike · 3

Soh: Yes.. of course you're not referring to Awareness as a background or one mind haha... that's very clear from your writings previously. But just shedding some clarity on the differences..

January 10 at 12:06pm · Edited · Like · 3

David: Much appreciated too.....

January 10 at 12:07pm · Like

David: Only concepts appear and disappear, while the field is always packed and constantly 'modulating' (not exactly a bad word, Soh:)). It's never not packed, Empty yet full. How can emptiness feel full? How can it not? Thoughts stop in their tracks when it's seen there's nothing happening apart from what's happening. Questions? There's no room for them.

20 hrs · Like · 2

Neony: Straight..no chaser

16 hrs · Like

Soh: Yet what's happening dependently is nothing happening... just like movie or mirror reflections

12 hrs · Edited · Like

Soh: Emptiness here is not about seeing 'nothing besides happening'... that is just anatta, the first aspect.

9 hrs · Like

Soh: For example, Phase 1 will not result in illusion-like spaciousness. More likely it will result in experiencing foreground as real and magnificent.

9 hrs · Edited · Like

Neony: Please tell me what you mean by 'foreground' and (I suppose) 'background' Soh . I think you did elsewhere, but I can't find it again. Thanks.

7 hrs · Like

Albert: in anatta the witness is seen through so you get foreground PCE as your experience. That could mean a sense of continual nowness as the very sound, smell, taste, thought, sensation, color.

so the collapse of the background leaves the foreground because we still reify a ground. or rather we reify the aliveness and brightness of the present arising.

7 hrs · Like

Albert: i suppose it doesn't even have to be a witness. it could be a sense of background or container. a sense of a reference point here relating to whats out there or even in here based on being another thing.

in an experiential sense it is the bounceback that occurs when we place attention on anything. for instance we hear a sound and instantly there is a bounce back to some vague background where we relate the sound from. and thus construct the hearer.

7 hrs · Like

Neony: PCE??? Albert

7 hrs · Like

Albert: in any case there has to be a union of seeing A+ (positive emptiness aka do) and A- (negative emptiness aka absence).

So that means the very appearance-presencing of say a red water bottle is due to causes and conditions in direct experience. Eye meeting form equals the very appearance.

Which is exactly the absence of presence.

OR one can go about it the other way in which one tries to find an abiding principle and finds a lack and thus concludes its dependent arisen.

Both are used until they are seen to be exactly the same thing

7 hrs · Like

Albert: a pce is a pure consciousness experience.

it is the non-conceptual experience of the immediacy of the present arising. THIS color. THIS sound. This sensation. Absolutely no witness or watcher.

but its a peak experience that people chase without any consideration of how it came about.

the insight into anatta makes the pce mode of experience natural.

7 hrs · Like

Albert: and what is meant by consciousness is appearance. just to be clear.

7 hrs · Like

Neony: Thanks. That's what I call 'Straight, no chaser'.

7 hrs · Edited · Like

Albert: Yes. I think its also called no mind in zen. It's quite easy to move into so to speak if we emphasize not knowing and stick with the bare attention towards appearance.

This would also be the peak of shamatha practice in which directness and simplicity is the goal.

What prevents the pce as a natural state is the self. So simply if we examine where the self is in relationship to say the act of seeing we find a lack and automatically it cuts into a pce.

its almost as if the energy is spent so much on maintaining a sense of self or witness that once that assumption is seen to be false the energy is freed. so in that sense there is no longer a filter with experience. but experience has always been bare, non-conceptual, and vividly present. we just never related to it in such directness. and in fact we couldn't.

7 hrs · Like · 2

David:  Maintaining self might as well be the definition of work. All other work doesn't compare once it's seen what it takes to maintain this fiction.

6 hrs · Edited · Like · 2

Albert: yes its a lot of work. self and suffering is something we do. it isn't something done to us. we are active agents in our hell making.

if we cannot see through the assumptions present then all we can do is study habit and create wholesome habits.

but fundamentally its all bullshit.

6 hrs · Like

David: " Phase 1 will not result in illusion-like spaciousness. More likely it

will result in experiencing foreground as real and magnificent."....This was very true for me. It was as if the foreground had finally become real, so to speak, almost too real. There was this sense that the absence of a background had given life to the foreground.

6 hrs · Like

David: Fluidity, Illusion-like spaciousness, follows the realization that only pure functioning is what's happening. Knowing this verbing without object or subject eliminates the tendency towards reification. Singular functioning without agent, when realized with absolute conviction, is literally mind blowing. There are no longer 'things' which last, no source, no background. The ground has literally dropped out along with any question of how this might be happening or not happening. The brilliance of suchness lies in the fact it doesn't last.

5 hrs · Like · 2

John Tan (Thusness): Hi David,

Not only that it does not last and is insubstantial but it is non-arisen.

Anatta sees through the self (background) and with that freedom from the layer that obscures, everything becomes magnificently clear and real.

However when we attempt to further deconstruct the foreground appearance, for example, looking clearly at a red flower, where is this "redness" of the flower?

Outside? Inside? My consciousness or Soh's consciousness or dog's consciousness?

So clear, vivid and undeniable yet was never truly there. How does what that was "never truly there" disappear?

Likewise for sound. Hit a bell - Tingsss..non-dually clear and undeniable. Where is this crystal clear sound? Outside? Inside? Soh's consciousness, Albert's consciousness, dog's consciousness? No one sentient being hears the same "tingsss"...

Look at everything around...so vivid and lurid...touch anything...so solid and undeniable...when seen with DO, every intrinsic characteristic can never be found despite being fully present!

Same applies to sensations, colors, shapes, scent, sound, thoughts...all experiences are like that...empty and non-arising.

So when background self is negated, foreground appearances become magnificently real, it does not become illusion-like.

What is the actual taste of negating "A" from the "(inherent) existence" of A?

Only when foreground appearances are negated of it's existence, then experience becomes illusion-like...it cannot be otherwise. For everything clearly appears but when seen with the eyes of dependent arising, it is never truly there...it is just illusion-like (not that it wants to b named that way)

Seeing dependent arising is amazing!

Whatever appears is non-arisen; indestructible by being not real and phenomena links without being "connected".

Everything simply turns magic!

Good night!

4 hrs · Edited · Unlike · 4

David:  Beautifully said John. Thank you.

4 hrs · Like · 1

---

18/3/2015

I had an intense peak experience recently, which I revisited some aspects of my previous realizations/experience.

There is a vast impersonal natural intelligence which is living you, or rather, it IS this life, this breathing, this walking, this drinking... this life of the universe, of the earth spinning, .... all an interconnected play of Dharma, of total life, intelligence, and awareness. The only blockage is simply this sense of an 'I', someone who controls will and dictates actions in life.

If you think that I am sounding like an advocate of 'God', I have to reiterate that this so called 'God' or intelligent Mind is empty of its own existence apart from Dharma, is not something changeless and independent, and is not some sort of source acting behind the scenes or pulling the strings. Because this vast impersonal intelligence is so magnificent, powerful and impersonal, it can give the impression that we are all just the dream or expression of a Universal Mind of God, and if we follow this 'personification' and 'reification' we may start to think whether we are living in a matrix, a dream of Shiva for no other reason than his own enjoyment. But we are not the play or lila of a Brahman, there is no need to personify or reify this at all. This intelligence IS the miracle of manifestation. The divine has no face of its own, and yet every face is the face of divinity. There is no I, no perceiver, or a controller of this spontaneous intelligent happening. Living this is living in complete ecstasy and joy born of this total intelligence, life and clarity.

I just found something by Daniel Ingram which pretty much describes it nicely:

"Thus, sensations of effort are just sensations of effort, but imply no fundamental split off entity that is making this effort. It is just a natural product of the interdependent universe. Just so, the sense of a will is replaced with a mysterious sense of absolutely natural causality and a natural, creative “intelligence” that operates in all of this, though the sensations that make up the sense of will continue as before. This is what is meant in the teachings of the twelve links of dependent origination when it says, “With the complete cessation of [fundamental] ignorance, volitional formations cease.” Similarly, sensations of intimacy are just sensations of intimacy and simply imply proximity rather than a separate self. Those of third path know this to some degree, and those of second path can look into this to try to attain the understanding of third path. Arahats have fully understood this."

(note: his definition of 'Arahat' is different from the suttas definition)

Also in moments of peak experience, I see we have to overcome the habitual tendencies of distracted thoughts... means we must be able to completely silent our mind and be able to have no thoughts at all to fully experience the fullness and presence of our six senses without a single trace of thought or sense of self... the trees, the sky, the breeze, everything in its complete intensity without thoughts. I'm not saying thought must be stopped at all moments, but like Eckhart Tolle said, after awakening 90% of his (unnecessary) thoughts just disappeared and thats what make a difference to his life. Without this we will not be able to feel the intensity of total Presence. So meditate and do yoga. Realization alone is insufficient without shamatha. Yes, you can experience anatta even when there are wandering thoughts because it is always already so, but one can never fully appreciate the Presence, total life, intelligence and awareness... it is a whole different level.

In other words: thoughts are ok, but you must have 'mastery' over them. Means unnecessary thoughts do not arise.

05/07/2016

Someone posted a picture:

Someone replied:

I can say for certain: Practice looks nothing like this photo you posted :)

I commented:

Practice does not look 'like' this photo. Practice is this photo as actualized... free from subject and object, desires, hopes and fears. Also the stain on the wall, too, and the smell when entering the toilet, the sensations of sitting on the toilet bowl, etc.

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22/11/2017

Non-Meditation and Daily Activities

Wrote a comment to someone posting about non-meditation who emphasized the point "How ridiculous and deluded to think that practices, meditation, study or realizations can improve the perfect awareness that is always what you already are."

I wrote:

"On the one extreme is the view that through practices one can somehow reach Buddha-nature in the future, which comes with the sense of distance, time, separation, and sense of self. Buddha-nature is all-pervasive and whole in its immediacy, how can it be reached in the future through practice?

On the other extreme is of a static, immobile Buddha-nature separate from the ordinary activities of sitting, walking, sleeping, chopping wood and carrying water. Nothing is clearer and more direct than these simple activities when subject and object is severed. We walk not in order to achieve enlightenment but as a manifestation of our true

nature.

When sitting, sitting is sitting, not me sitting. Recently I visited a Zen master. He asked a group of students, (pointing at a bell) what is this? Some said it's a bell, he replied you are attached to name and form. If you only hit the floor or remain mute, he says you are attached to emptiness. I simply picked it up and rang it. He said "Correct!" So, a "zen" answer will be just ring it -- there is just the ringing, no subject and object, only spontaneous action, only sound. Non-meditation and non-practice is not lazing all day doing nothing, but severing the delusion of subject and object. When the gap between actor and action is refined till none, that is non-action, non-meditation and that non-action is at the same time total action.

In that act of ringing, is the ringing, and mind two or one? Again if we say they are one or two, we fall into dualism or concepts. Just ring it - that's enough. That total action reveals the true face of mind, the true face of the bell, the true face of ringing. If there is still a sense of an actor achieving a goal through an action, that is not non-meditation or practice-enlightenment.

Dogen:

"Zen master Baoche of Mt. Mayu was fanning himself. A monk approached and said, "Master, the nature of wind is permanent and there is no place it does not reach. When, then, do you fan yourself?"

"Although you understand that the nature of the wind is permanent," Baoche replied, "you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere."

"What is the meaning of its reaching everywhere?" asked the monk again. The master just kept fanning himself. The monk bowed deeply.

The actualization of the buddha-dharma, the vital path of its correct transmission, is like this. If you say that you do not need to fan yourself because the nature of wind is permanent and you can have wind without fanning, you will understand neither permanence nor the nature of wind. The nature of wind is permanent; because of that, the wind of the buddha's house brings forth the gold of the earth and makes fragrant the cream of the long river."

....

A monk said to Chao Chou, “I have just entered this monastery. Please teach me.”
Chao Chou said, “Have you eaten your rice gruel?”
The monk said, “Yes, I have.”
Chao Chou said, “Wash your bowl.”
The monk understood."

---

8th November 2017

“To find a buddha, all you have to do is see your nature. Your nature is the buddha. And the buddha is the person who's free, free of plans, free of cares. If you don't see your nature and run around all day looking somewhere else, you'll never find a buddha. The truth is there's nothing to find. Life and death are important. Don't suffer them in vain. There's no advantage in deceiving yourself. Even if you have mountains of jewels and as many servants as there are grains of sand along the Ganges, you see them when your eyes are open. But what about when your eyes are shut? You should realize that everything you see is like a dream or illusion.

Buddha is Sanskrit for what you call aware, miraculously aware. Responding, perceiving, arching your brows, blinking your eyes, moving your hands and feet, it's all your miraculously aware nature. And this nature is the mind. And the mind is the buddha. And the buddha is the path. And the path is zen. But the word zen is one that remains a puzzle to both mortals and sages. Seeing your nature is zen. Unless you see your nature, it's not zen.”

Bodhidharma (440-528)

16th November 2017

Dependent Designation and Non-Duality

Wrote on facebook:

Without awareness there can be no objects, (there is no “unheard sound”) and without objects there can be no awareness, (seeing is dependently designated with “sight”) not because there are two distinctly existing things depending or interacting with each other but because they are merely dependently designated and have no existence of its own to speak of. For example you cannot speak of a sun without sunlight or a computer screen without the images, they are dependently designated and without any intrinsic existence. Just like a computer screen that doesn’t display images is not a computer screen, a knowing is labelled as such in dependence on the known, so both subject and object are severed - nondual clarity is vividly presencing as all appearances without needing to collapse subject into object or object into subject.

There is no denial of knowing known or “you” like there is no need to deny a conventional car. But if “you” or “knowing known” is just a label for vroomyumouch, just like car is merely imputed based on the parts and functions, then there is also no intrinsically (independent, changelessly) existing “you” or “car”. So you or car is not denied but simply a convenient label, so you can still use conventions but are not bound by them, just like when you talk about weather you don’t think of an entity but directly experience the rain falling wind blowing clouds forming and parting and so forth. When we say sensing we don’t get bound by subject action or object but directly sense the coolness, heat, softness and so forth.

The realisation of true mind, the luminous vivid presence is also important. But mind is no mind - empty of intrinsically existing entity. And being empty of mind, it is as dogen said,

“And just what is this wondrously pure, bright mind? It is the great earth with its mountains and rivers, along with the sun, the moon, and all the stars.”

....

Objects are merely conventionally and dependently designated as such. It cannot be understood apart from or excluding other conventions that make them meaningful otherwise it becomes erroneous (the same goes for everything - from self, to cars, to awareness, to whatever). A sound is not an object besides hearing, besides awareness - there is no such thing as an unheard sound. This part I believe you agree, the other part

however in Buddhadharma's emptiness teaching is that awareness is also dependently designated in relation to what's experienced. So it's a two-way dependence unlike the one way dependence in Advaita. Hearer and hearing is only meaningful in reference to sound (and vice versa) - in truth there is no hearer, no hearing, no sound, the bell ringing has no subject or object -- direct immediacy of just this awareness as ringing.

But you'll interject, what about the formless consciousness that underlies and exists beneath, and in the absence of, thoughts and sensations? That pure infinite formless sense of Existence which is a mere formless sense that I AM? I too have realised that through self-inquiry a long time ago. But now I see that too is also another manifestation of consciousness, another face of Presence, no more and no less Presence than a sound, a sight, etc. It cannot be understood apart from manifestation, and apart from the conditions that defines it.

...

In my experience, manifestation is limitless. When walking, it's not legs walking, the entirety of everything is walking. Any sort of abiding, be it in the fiction of a subject or an object, even in a grasped image of 'infinite formless consciousness', is still limitations

...

You're saying there is an ocean independent of its wave (a limitation) reflecting back on itself without investment in wave. I'm saying the wave is none other than the entirety of the ocean, including the conditions that makes it wave - the wind, etc

To me, the latter is 'more' 'limitless'

---

18th November 2017

Anatta and Pure Presence

Someone told me about having been through insights of no self and then progressing to a realisation of the ground of being.

I replied:

Hi ____

Thanks for the sharing.

This is the I AM realization. Had that realisation after contemplating Before birth, who am I? For two years. It's an important realization. Many people had insights into certain aspects of no self, impersonality, and "dry non dual experience" without doubtless realization of Presence. Therefore I AM realisation is a progression for them.

Similarly in Zen, asking who am I is to directly experience presence. How about asking a koan of what is the cup? What is the chirping bird, the thunder clap? What is its purpose?

When I talked about anatta, it is a direct insight of Presence and recognizing what we called background presence, is in the forms and colours, sounds and sensations, clean and pure. Authentication is be authenticated by all things. Also there is no presence other than that. What we call background is really just an image of foreground Presence, even when Presence is assuming its subtle formless all pervasiveness.

However due to ignorance, we have a very inherent and dual view, if we do see through the nature of presence, the mind continues to be influenced by dualistic and inherent tendencies. Many teach to overcome it through mere non conceptuality but this is highly misleading.

Thusness also wrote:

The anatta I realized is quite unique. It is not just a realization of no-self. But it must first have an intuitive insight of Presence. Otherwise will have to reverse the phases of insights

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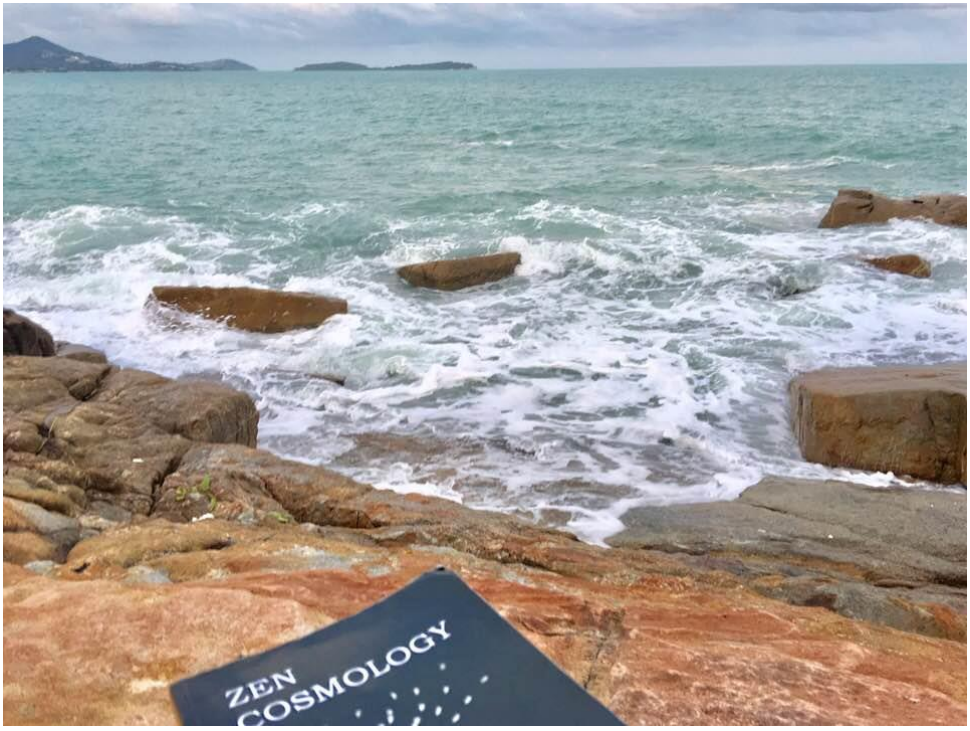
29th November 2017

Nothing other than the sun, the moon, and the stars




“Buddha - mind - *is* (not, ‘is like’) mountains, rivers, and the earth, the sun, moon, and stars. Mind *is* houses and streets, animals, guns, plants, thoughts, bombs, corpses, laughter, and cancers. Mind *is* all particular dharmas as they are; *particular* dharmas. All particular dharmas *are* this mind *as it is; this* mind. This tree *is* the mind *as it is*, the mind *as it is*, is all dharmas, hence *is* this tree. That this tree is mind ‘as it is,’ means mind only exists *as mind* by virtue of this tree existing *as this tree*. Because this tree *is* mind ‘as it is,’ it actually goes too far to say ‘is mind,’ and is more accurate to simply say ‘this tree.’

As Dogen puts it:

‘Mind as mountains, rivers, and the earth is nothing other than mountains, rivers, and the earth. There are no additional waves or surf, no wind or smoke. Mind as the sun, the moon, and the stars is nothing other than the sun, the moon, and the stars.’

Shobogenzo, Soku-shin-ze-butsu”

From Zen Cosmology: Dogen’s Contribution to the Search for a New Worldview by Ted Biringer

Also,

Dogen:

Mind is skin, flesh, bones and marrow. Mind is taking up a flower and smiling. There is having mind and having no mind... Blue, yellow, red, and white are mind. Long, short, square, and round are mind. The coming and going of birth and death are mind. Year, month, day, and hour are mind. The coming and going of birth and death are mind. Water, foam, splash, and flame are mind. Spring flowers and autumn moon are mind. All things that arise and fall away are mind.

Comments:

The quote above from Zen Cosmology is useful for those who are stuck in 'One Mind'. The urge to retain an image of the luminescence of mind is dissolved by realizing that mind is none other than the self-luminosity of the ten thousand things. Therefore "Mind as mountains, rivers, and the earth is nothing other than mountains, rivers, and the earth." -- no more subsuming everything to be "contained by Mind" despite experiencing Mind as being nondual with everything (a subtle referencing back of non-dual experience to the source and substance underlying all), only ongoing actualization of myriad phenomena 'advancing into novelty'.

Before birth, I AM - mere conscious-existence-bliss. Before ten thousand things, I AM, but that too is later seen to be simply one aspect of the ten thousand things. If one holds onto one 'face of Presence' (the formless, shining void aspect of mind) you fail to see the manifold textures, forms and colors are simply different faces of Presence.

Zen is about directly touching one's heart and mind, and that begins with the I AM realization. But soon it becomes a dead image of some static background. If instead we can penetrate by insight into anatta and forego all dead or 'ghostly' images and directly taste the Heart in every manifestation and exertion, everything reveals itself to be one seamless aliveness and intelligence.

Also see: Exertion that is neither self-imposed nor imposed by others

---

25th December 2017

Three Kinds of Non-Dual

Someone wrote:

I generally like your posts

But why not stop here at the first sentence..?

Realize Anatta...!

Your next line
:
Self- luminous thought
Sight
And Sound does it...!

If you've got there
What need for analysis..

I replied:

Anatta does not necessarily result in the realization of emptiness-appearance, it leads to vividness of forms without a background. At this point 'awareness' is realized to be none other than manifestation. Everything becomes hyper real and vivid and alive without an observer, or seer. But there may be no insight into dependencies or the emptiness of phenomena.

By seeing dependencies of whatever appears, one sees the absence of intrinsic existence of a phenomena and the seamless exertion of a phenomena.

...

The dissolution of subject object/observer-observed division leads to hyper vividness of phenomena - sights, sounds etc are the very vividness of mind, the nondual aspect of luminous clarity, but not necessarily the empty nature of mind/phenomena. Subject object division dissolved can end up in 1) subsuming everything into Awareness, which still leaves traces of ‘nondual Awareness’ by not seeing its empty nature clearly, subsuming all into pure subjectivity like Vedanta 2) dissolving subjectivity completely but falling into subtle reification of aggregates/world/actual flesh and blood body, like actual freedom teachings, 3) empty clarity and total exertion. Mahamudra and dzogchen teachings stress more on the empty clarity aspect and Soto Zen ala dogen stresses more on total exertion aspect.

Nondual clarity and emptiness should be complemented for further refinement. There are two aspects to emptiness/dependent origination in direct experience, the illusion like taste of non-arising phenomena and the total exertion of a given phenomenon. Both

require penetrating insights into dependent origination.

A (any given phenomenon) is not A (empty) but the whole universe as A (total exertion). When seeing the moon reflection on the water, the whole sky, moon, mind, body, self, eyes, seeing, transcended (not A) and exerted as moon reflection (therefore A). Through deep wisdom into dependent origination/emptiness, in the ongoing actualisation of mere appearance, existence is negated without thinking, appearance is realized to be empty and self liberated on the spot.

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25th December 2017

What is Total Exertion?

Someone wrote: what does the 'total exertion' term mean, where does it come from?

I replied,

It's from dogen. Wrote this some months back:

"Total exertion is direct realization of each manifest activity as arising with all conditions in seamless interdependency, where one feels that the whole universe is giving its best to make this moment possible.

I started having glimpses and insights into this about one or two years after my initial realisation of anatta (the direct realisation and penetration of the false dichotomy of subject-action-object through contemplating the verse in Bahiya Sutta) back in 2010. Anatta demolishes the background subject so that there is only the entirety of manifestation, and then you may penetrate further -- this entirety of manifestation is a seamless activity with no self-nature anywhere. When I experienced this I called it the "dharma body". When walking not only are the legs walking, the whole universe is walking, the whole universe is your body. To put it in laymen's term, it's like the universe as your body (but the word universe doesn't really capture the dynamic, interdependent and empty nature of it well).

Let me give you an example. Recently, I was sitting in meditation with my sister. Then as usual I entered into a blissful state. In that state, I saw that it's not me sitting here, like there is no I, no sister, no baby, etc, but it's really all these factors that is "meditating" plus much more... all the way back to the time of the Buddha! The living presence of Buddha and its sangha and the whole lineage is right here, same time and in communion. This breath is the universe. Suddenly some passages by Dogen made perfect sense*

Also, I just visited a Zen temple earlier today to meditate. Something that the novice monk said after the meditation struck me - chanting as "together action". He didn't elaborate what he meant by that but I intuited its meaning and purpose. To me what this means is this - when we practice as a community, we are enacting "together action" so that it is not you that is chanting but the chanting as a whole arising seamlessly that is chanting. But "together action" is in fact every moment! This breath is together action with all the conditions, the whole community and lineage. Carrying your meditation cushion and waiting for your turn to place that cushion back to its original place -- together action, not 'you' action.

Walking on the street, you look at the traffic and maneuver your way to reach your destination, the traffic and people walking are as much an inseparable part of the activity which you call 'your walking', each moment of walking is doing together action with all conditions. The same for driving a car. If you lose the "zone", if you get distracted and are not practicing "together action", watch out! Lives can be lost.

When you are walking in the park, the legs moving arise in tandem with the whole universe moving. The tree in front is manifesting the way it is in accord with all other conditions like the wind, light, the way I am moving and looking, etc. The tree has no tree-ness in itself or apart from me and I have no me-ness apart from the interplay that is manifesting the tree. When I see and interact with others, it's not I interacting with others as I and others are empty and dissolved in the interplay. Truly it is like a node of Indra reflecting all other nodes, each node is not other than all others nodes, there is neither self nor others.

'Self' and 'others' are learnt and is a result of the ignorance of our true nature. The structures of language or convention posits that when we encounter something it is always 'I' am touching/encountering a 'thing' as if there is a real subject interacting with an object. I am I and interacting or talking with a real other as discrete entities.

Although in actual experience it's just all conditions in total exertion but when spoken in language it appears separate. The structure of language is dualistic.. which is not a problem in itself when taken conventionally or as dependent designation but instead we wrongly reified them into things with its own existence in and of themselves.

*e.g.,

The Buddhas and Ancestors manifest before our very eyes whenever we respectfully serve the Buddhas and Ancestors by bringing Them up through our presenting of Their story. They are not limited simply to some past, present, or future time, for They have

undoubtedly gone beyond even ‘going beyond Buddha’.

Shobogenzo, Busso, Hubert Nearman

The robe of the right transmission of the buddhas and patriarchs is not arbitrarily transmitted from buddha to buddha. It is the robe transmitted from the former buddha to the later buddha, and from the ancient buddha to the contemporaneous buddha. In order to transform the Way, to transform the buddha, and to transform the past, present, and future, there is a right transmission from past to present, from present to future, from present to past, from past to past, from present to present, from future to future, from future to present, and from future to past. It is the right transmission only between a buddha and a buddha.

- Dogen”

“Yes, it is a word used by Dogen, ippo-gujin.

David Loy:

"...These techniques are used to exemplify his notion of ippo-gujin, 'the total exertion of a single dharma.' This key term embodies his dynamic understanding of interpenetration, according to which each dharma in the universe is both cause and effect of all other dharmas. This interfusion means that the life of one dharma becomes the life of all dharmas, so that (as Zen masters like to say), *this* is the only thing in the whole universe!"”

**Thusness replied:**

Wei Yu,

Well quoted, well written and well expressed! So much to my liking that I have to say something 🤣🤣.
Let’s visit our last discussion. As i said,

There is no self, only a sense of self.

No seer, only a sense of seer.

Therefore no conflict with your direct insight of anatta.

The SENSE of self is designated as “seer” that dependently originates when forms vividly appears due to the karmic tendencies of ignorance. Ascribing the phenomena “seen” to a non-existing seer, is the action, the act of seeing.

Ignorance is not "inability to know". Instead it is a very deep form inherent and dualistic knowing that sees in the karmic pattern of seer-seeing-seen.

Now the question:

Is there a need to exhaust this karmic pattern of seer-seeing-seen by pacifying conceptualization?

If so then the practice of anatta to empty clarity:

1. In seeing, just the seen. No seer.
2. In seeing, always only the seen. Therefore no seeing.
3. In the seen, just the seen.
Where is the seen?
Where is this vivid lurid scenery?
No where to b found,
Spontaneous, empty and non-arisen.

So how does total exertion step in?

If there is no need to exhaust karmic patterning, then how should you practice?

**I replied:** The solidifying of what’s sensed into something truly there is a total exertion of karmic tendency, the appearance can seem very real but actually nothing real.

The sense of standing on this side as a seer is likewise itself the total exertion of karmic tendency, an activity and not an actual entity behind anything.

Seer and seen, grasper and grasped, liberated not through pacifying conceptualization but seeing the absence and total exertion of all afflicted and non afflicted phenomena.

**Thusness:**

Well said.

The self designated upon the aggregates was never there but felt to b solidly there.

"Here" that is so undeniably "here" is nothing "here". Only sensations and thoughts forming the impression of being “solidly here".

As for this:

"Seer and seen, grasper and grasped, liberated not through pacifying conceptualization but seeing the absence and total exertion of all afflicted and non afflicted phenomena."

Imo, buddhism non-dual is not the union of subject-object or seer is the seen but freedom from extremes.

It liberates seer from seer and seen from seen by seeing dependent arising.

Also,

The afflictive chain is released by the pacification of mental proliferation but not through dry non-conceptuality. Like what you said can b by:

1. Direct insight of anatta into empty clarity.

2. Total exertion.
However in total exertion, doing away with self is not necessary. It is fully embraced and fully authenticated by 10 thousand things. Most of your articles seem quite persistent in trying to get rid of “self” even when expressing total exertion. In total exertion, emptiness and endless dependencies of dharma (including self) are a given otherwise total exertion is not possible. Every dharma is purified by its own endless dependencies.

Your expression of timelessness of total exertion is precious. The moment Dogen writes and the moment you realise is one exertion. Transmission is indeed heart to heart, timeless and intimate!

And

3. Persistently seeing of whatever arises dependently is free from extremes will eventually free the mind. Consistently seeing neither self nor no-self, neither arise nor not-arise, breaks the chain of mental proliferation.

Self and the ten thousands things,
Neither one nor many.
Not one, therefore no self nature.
Not two, therefore seamless.

One line of reasoning,
freedom from 2 extremes.
Dependent arising is the king of reasoning.

---

04/02/2018

Actualizing Form

In a previous post:

Conrad Goehausen: Yes, calm awareness, which is not a technique, but an aspect of our original nature.

Soh Wei Yu: Conrad Goehausen I think you have mistaken a formless awareness as a background reality as your true nature. That is dualistic. Have you realized your true nature as green grass without background?

Conrad Goehausen: Soh Wei Yu No, formless awareness is simply one aspect of our true nature. We are both formless and with form, and both, and neither.

---

My response:

From your post I gather you had non-dual experience. But the "I AM both formless and with form" -- the identification of I AM is the problem of all problems.

Just now I meditated. Thoughts subside, only leaving calm awareness, beingness, presence, bliss. But if I identify this as what I truly am -- the pure formless presence, changeless, inherently existing, then when forms and sounds arises, there is grasping at a dead image of what "awareness" is -- formless, calm, unaffected, behind all the noise.

In the realization of anatta, one realizes that "Presence" never existed in such a way - as an inherently existing, changeless Self, independent of all conditions, separate, or acting with agency. (A hearer is hearing a sound, or a seer is seeing a scenery) Instead, in hearing, there is always only sound, never a hearer, and sound arises as pure presence. There is no 'presence' in and of itself, no background, only foreground manifestation. In seeing, there is always only scenery, no seer. In meditation with eyes closed and senses shut, Presence manifests as formless presence-bliss. But that too is what is 'manifesting' at that moment. By grasping at it and imputing inherent existing, we grasp at a dead image and do not taste Presence as the manifold. Instead we are subtly referencing back

to a background, which is effortful. In truth the 'background' does not exist, there is ever always foreground Presence, knowingness is always cognized and formation, even in formless presence. Imputing an unseen, unheard, uncognized are simply mind projections or imputations of intrinsic existence.

For example, after my meditation that I described earlier, where all that is left is calm awareness, my iPhone timer starts ringing. If I identify as formless awareness, then there is a distancing from the sound of ringing, there is no actualization of ringing as pure presence. Presence has no existence in and of itself apart from what is manifesting at that moment. When iPhone rings, consciousness is none other than that ringing.

You may then think "ok, so consciousness is a mirror, whatever comes it reflects, calm state comes it reflects calm state, no senses it reflects blank, iPhone ringing it reflects iPhone."

But that too is an illusion. Consciousness does not 'reflect' phenomena, it is phenomena, which manifests in dependence on conditions. Consciousness by nature manifests in dependence on conditions, not as a reflector, but as manifestation itself.

Anatta insight is direct insight into how Awareness is completely empty of its own intrinsic existence like there is no “weather” becoming or modulating into rain or wind. Weather doesn’t exist other than a conventional label based on those activities, as the basis of designation.

Therefore in the act of meditation itself, we are simply actualizing AS the particular experience we call 'sitting'. We are thus solely sitting. In sitting only sitting, not a 'me' sitting. Or rather, in sitting, universe is sitting, the activity of sitting is the actualization of the universe. When iPhone rings, just that ringing is the actualization of practice-enlightenment. When we open eyes, just the forms appearing is the dynamic ongoing actualization of practice-enlightenment, or buddha-nature.

We are not sitting to get to a state of experience, or get back to or sink back to a dead image of what we feel 'Presence' is, but simply actualizing any and all particular manifestations of that moment.

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07/02/2018

Merely Labelled

Based on something I wrote to someone:

Whatever you call or vividly feel to be Awareness has always been based on a cognized manifestation of clarity. And not some changeless ontological background. Or rather

Awareness is always experienced, what is unexperiencable or thought to be an unseen source of experience is really a fabrication of inherent existence out of luminous experience. See for yourself if this is true.

When we say "weather" is a label or imputation based on the everchanging clouds rolling by, wind blowing, rain falling and so forth, we are not really saying "weather" is a concept therefore go beyond concepts and realize reality as it is. That's not my point. The point is really that what we think or feel to be weather is really just something imputed based on the dynamic unfolding that I mentioned. That there never was a 'weather' that could exist in and of itself, apart from that basis -- it cannot be found to be an entity in itself apart from, nor within, that basis, but is designated in dependence on it.

So when we say 'merely labelled' we are not just saying 'go beyond the labels or concepts of awareness, weather, self and things' but rather it's that very real and vivid sense of what we call Awareness (although when uninvestigated is felt to be a changeless ontological source or background of phenomena) is really only based on the dynamic unfolding 'presencing' - manifesting experience, seen, sensed, touched, smelled, tasted, cognized, in whatever form manifestation takes place, even if it is 'formless presence' it is simply formless presence as cognized. And what feels to be one's very real 'cognizer' is really also just another imputation out of or depending on a cognized moment of 'presence-awareness' which when the quality of 'luminous clarity' is abstracted out of that luminous moment of manifestation turns into a sense of a cognizer.

We should understand dependent designation this way. What we feel to be very real, intimate, 'self' is dependently designated as such. Not saying that 'self' is a mere thought or label and therefore unimportant, go beyond thought... Not saying that 'seeing' is a mere label or 'hearing' is a mere label therefore go beyond that but that 'seeing' is really 'merely' designated (or felt to be a reality as such) based on vivid colours as its basis. When investigated, it cannot be found to exist inherently, either apart from them nor within them. The sense of self is really 'imputed' based on the aggregates just like 'weather' is imputed on.... and as such, no self-existing agent, entity, or weather could exist or perceive or act upon its own aggregates or experiences as it simply has no self-existence nor the capacity of agency.

.....

Later, writing to Din Robinson who wrote

"resting as pure awareness is the final lie

there's no one that needs to do anything"

I wrote:

I agree that resting in pure awareness is a lie.

Not because there is no one that needs to do anything but because “Awareness” is merely designated/imputed on manifest self-luminous experience which is always manifesting afresh and spontaneously without a background self/Self to rest back in.

And then a moment of self luminous experience is captured and fabricated into a background. Then comes the effort to rest or sink back into what one feels “Awareness” to be.

Not realising Awareness has no intrinsic existence or identity than whatever is manifesting.

Knowingness is always seen, smelt, heard, sensed, cognized. What is thought to be an unseen unexperiencable source or background of experience is simply a fabricated/abstracted/extracted image of inherent existence out of, or based on, a self luminous experience. There never was a background whatsoever.

Even a pure sense of formless Beingness is simply what’s experienced or cognized in that moment of direct taste or experience as a foreground nondual experience. And no more special or ultimate than any other self luminous experience or forms, always a taste of nondual foreground presence, as sound, sights, smells... in all its vivid aliveness.

Awareness is always based on an experience just like “weather” is imputed as such based on manifest conditions like wind blowing cloud forming rain falling and so forth. There is no weather apart or within them but merely designated in dependence on a valid basis of designation. Just like awareness.

Awareness has no one true face of its own but countless faces. Grasping at a one true face of Awareness to “rest in” is simply grasping at a dead and fabricated image of a prior experience of presence captured by the mind and fabricated into some changeless independently existing background.

When that delusion of “awareness as background or inherently existing” is seen through by realising in seeing always just scenery without seer, then naturally one is Always touching, seeing, hearing, Presence-Awareness as forms. A dynamic actualization of spontaneous action, manifestation, rather than a resting state.

16th March 2018

Daniel Ingram on What is Awakening, and would he trade it for anything else?

If someone talks about an experience he/she had and then lost it, that's not (the true, deep) awakening... As many teachers put it, it's the great samadhi without entry and exit.

John Tan: There is no entry and exit. Especially for no-self. Why is there no entry and exit?
Me (Soh): Anatta (no-self) is always so, not a stage to attain. So it's about realisation and shift of perception.
John Tan: Yes 👉👍

As John also used to say to someone else, "Insight that 'anatta' is a seal and not a stage must arise to further progress into the 'effortless' mode. That is, anatta is the ground of all experiences and has always been so, no I. In seeing, always only seen, in hearing always only sound and in thinking, always only thoughts. No effort required and never was there an 'I'."

---

Here's a description by Daniel Ingram of what is awakening, also an interesting comment about whether he would trade it for anything else. It's a good description which resonates with my experience.

“Since the topic has come up so often and been so bandied about so many times by so many people, let me state here what I mean by 4th path, regardless of what anyone else means by it. It has the following qualities:

1) Utter centerlessness: no watcher, no sense of a watcher, no subtle watcher, no possibility of a watcher. This is immediately obvious just as color is to a man with good eyesight as the old saying goes. Thus, anything and everything simply and obviously manifest just where they are. No phenomena observe any others and never did or could.

2) Utter agencylessness: meaning no agency, no sense of doing, no sense of doer, no sense that there could be any agent or doer, no way to find anything that seems to be in control at all. Whatever effort or intent or anything like that that arises does so naturally, causally, inevitably, as it always actually did. This is immediately obvious, though not always the forefront of attention.

3) No cycles change or stages or states or anything else like that do anything to this direct comprehension of simple truths at all.

4) There is no deepening in it to do. The understanding stands on its own and holds up over cycles, moods, years, etc and doesn't change at all. I have nothing to add to my initial assessment of it from 9 years ago.

5) There is nothing subtle about it: anything and everything that arises exhibits these same qualities directly, clearly. When I was third path, particularly late in it, those things that didn't exhibit these qualities were exceedingly subtle, and trying to find the gaps in the thing was exceedingly difficult and took years and many cycles. I had periods from weeks to months where it felt done and then some subtle exception would show up and I would realize I was wrong yet again, so this is natural and understandable, and if someone claims 4th as I define it here and later says they got it wrong, have sympathy for them, as this territory is not easy and can easily fool people, as it did me many, many times over about 5 years or so. However, 4th, as I term it, ended that and 9 years later that same thing holds, which is a very long time in this business.

There are other aspects that may be of value to discuss at some other time, but those are a great place to start for those who wish to claim this. If you truly have those, then perhaps we can talk about a few other points that are less central and essential.

Now, how there can still be affect (though quite modified in many ways) when there is centerlessness and agencylessness, this is a mystery to the AF kids and to me as well, and that brings me to my next point: there seems to be areas of development depending on what you look for and aim for that may arise independently, and not everything seems to come as a package necessarily. Those things are what I looked for really hard for about 7 years, and that is what I found. Now I find that the interest in the unraveling of what drives that residual affect is arising, and so that investigation happens on its own also.

Perhaps people will find this helpful in some way."

...

"Well, these debates go on and on and on.

A few simple points:

I still very much recommend my criteria as helpfully posted above. They have merit and value, and achieving those really shifts reality to something much better, having myself

tried the before and after, I can tell you that from my point of view there is nothing more important that I achieved and attained than the total elimination of all sense of doer, watcher, controller, center point, observer, etc. True and total elimination of duality was a massive step up from the near total elimination of it: no comparison at all. It is hard to imagine that anyone else wouldn't value it the same way I do, but then tastes differ.

There are many axes of development: insight, concentration (and it has many axes within it), morality (an endless festival of axes to develop, including emotional and psychological health). Insight stands alone in that it is all basically towards one goal, and that goal does transform the relationship to all of the rest of it in ways that provide global improvement at the core sensate and paradigmatic levels of intrinsic processing. The rest are all also important, but nothing does what that does.

I really appreciate the chapter in Chögyam Trungpa's Journey Without Goal about the Five Buddha Families. This is a video of that chapter by the crazy old dead perverted but helpful genius himself: The Five Buddha Families

His embracing of the wide range of experience in all its human glory is so valuable, and that helped empower me to really take on everything that was going on in my experience. I still must warn against the limited emotional range models and what they can do to practice: beware becoming like those who follow those: so many complexities occur.

Is my emotional life transformed by my insights? Vastly transformed, no question.

Do I still manifest all the standard emotions: definitely, and some even more strongly than I did before.

Is there vastly less suffering in them as a result of their happening totally on their own just like qualities of space? Absolutely.

Is this anything like the disconnect feared by a poster above? Not in the least: there is no disconnection, because there is no longer any imagined thing to be disconnected.

The field lights up itself totally, without division, without restraint, without any barrier or gap, so disconnection is impossible. Does really honestly feeling what is going on help with emotional transformation more than models that imply that we shouldn't feel what we are feeling? I definitely think so.

Would I trade this for anything? Maybe world peace, but I would have to think about it.

Until then, this totally rocks, and missing out on it would be barking crazy from my point of view.

Best wishes, and practice well,

Daniel"

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21/03/2018

Consciousness is Just the Appearing

Someone wrote:

Most practitioners think experiences are appearing TO their consciousness instead of seeing experiences are how their consciousness is appearing.

I wrote back:

Most practitioners think experiences are appearing TO or even WITHIN their consciousness instead of seeing consciousness is JUST the appearing.

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29/05/2018

Blue sky, green trees

I wrote:

Blue sky. Green trees fluttering. Just that, nothing else. Vivid, alive, and illusory. Enjoy your weekends.

31Angelo Gerangelo, Alejandro Serrano and 29 others

*Comments*

André A. Pais We could even say, "blue expanse, swaying green"... 😊😊

Soh Wei Yu Yes... been thinking my expression doesn't sound right as it seems to imply object and characteristics. Your expression is more accurate 🙂😉

Tan Jui Horng But why not further reduce blue and green?

Soh Wei Yu Tan Jui Horng there is nothing further to deconstruct in the actualization of empty non-arisen suchness or emptiness as form

André A. Pais Tan, we can reduce it by saying that "blue expanse" is actually beyond the concept or label "blue" or "expansive". Other than that, "blueness" is a mere occurrence, non-conceptual perception, beyond labels, separation, reification, etc.

Tan Jui Horng Soh Wei Yu Does that mean blue and green cannot be deconstructed?

I am asking only because I am wondering that while Andre's expression is more correct, it is still not completely correct, and requires further explanation like his answer to me.

But I suppose that is the problem of expressing something in language. At a certain point we either become unintelligible or end up with a 1000 word explanation of what blue sky and green trees really mean.

Tan Jui Horng André A. Pais Thanks. Although I guess that would be a mouthful. Perhaps the only appropriate reaction to seeing blue sky and green trees is to smile and enjoy.

Jackson Peterson Oy, why bicker over words, yet words still appearing, thoughts arising, blue skies, green leaves... all movements like wind...

John Tan Jui Horng, why do we de-construct and how do we know we are on the right direction using deconstruction and when will it end?

John Tan Wei Yu, why do you say no further decosntruction is needed?

Soh Wei Yu John Tan self (background) and phenomena (foreground) to which characteristics belong are constructs, when they dissolve then illusory appearance are tasted as empty suchness without reference points or sense that things exist somewhere and belong to something, illusory like mirage

Soh Wei Yu If you look at the sun and then look away from it, certain colours from the “sun” still overlay the rest of the visual field. Colours do not belong to subject Nor object but arise in dependence on conditionality. They do not arise nor exist anywhere but appears as mere appearances and illusions (but vividly clear)

John Tan Yes Wei Yu, you described your experiences but you did not answer why no further de-construction is needed.

Soh Wei Yu Direct taste of empty suchness transcends mental constructs and is the termination of linguistic description or the serene coming to rest of the manifold of named things as described by Nagarjuna.

“Professor Ram Chandra Pandey and Mañju translates it thus : “I pay respect to the best among speakers who, having attained Enlightenment, has taught relative origination

(Pratītyasamutpāda) which is no-cessation, no-origination, no- annihilation, no-abiding, no-one-thing, no-many-thing, no-coming-in, no-going-out; being the termination of linguistic description (Prapañcopashamam), it is the good (Shivam) [Ram Candra Pandey & Mañju, 1999, pp.1]. Mervyn Sprung in collaboration with T.R.V. Murti and U.S. Vyas has translated it thus: “Neither perishing nor arising in time neither terminable nor eternal, neither self-identical nor variant in form, neither coming nor going, such is the true way of things (Pratītyasamutpāda), the serene coming to rest of the manifold of the named things (Prapañcopashamam), as taught by the perfectly Enlightened One whom I honor as the best of all teachers.” [Mervyn Sprung in collaboration with TRV Murti and U.S. Vyas, 1979, pp.32-33].”

John Tan "Direct taste of empty suchness transcends mental constructs and is the termination of linguistic description or the serene coming to rest of the manifold of named things as described by Nagarjuna."

If that is the case, why not just b raw in attention or simply cease conceptuality or naked in Awareness then there are also no named things or mental constructs.

Soh Wei Yu Because mental construct is not mere gross conceptuality. For example gross conceptuality may dissolve but the background Witness still seem eternal and dualistic and very real

Tan Jui Horng Hello John, as far as I know,

1. We deconstruct to know what the nature of our experience really is. If we don't then we are just like most people living in delusion which inevitably causes greed and hatred. At a certain point if we don't examine and deconstruct we may find ourself clinging to "bare" perception, which is not enough because the empty nature of perception is not realized.

2. We know we are on the right direction... if we check back with the Buddha's discourses? He already did the work so we don't end up with infinite deconstruction, which is what I remember seeing some people comment on the possible downsides of deconstructing experience. There should not be any gross/subtle clinging to the aggregates nor (Buddha forbid) objects that make up our experience. This one should need a strong moment to moment mindfulness and honesty.

3. I don't know actually. There seems to be a lot that can be deconstructed. Does the deconstruction end when we see the aggregates are also empty? As per the heart sutra. But there are still things like "presence", time, etc. I am confused about this.

For your critiques, admonishments, and answers please.

André A. Pais "self (background) and phenomena (foreground) to which characteristics [supposedly] belong are constructs"

That's a great way to put it. There is no possessor of characteristics (beyond the apparent characteristics), nor perceiver of perceptions. There is nothing behind appearances (our eyes), nor beyond them (as a conceptual possessor of said characteristics).

Richard Cooper Why deconstruct if the blue sky and green trees are effortless ?

John Tan Hi Jui Horng,

Thks for the detailed reply, I din expect that 😆😝. My questions were triggered by the conversations between u, Soh and Andre.
Seeing reality through reified constructs are like attempting to understand wind by stopping moving air.

In the process the mind gets confused that "wind" has it own existent and can stand apart from "moving air".

Deconstruction is simply to fix this issue by realizing that "wind" standing apart is like "rabbit horns" and therefore needs to b seen through. It is empty and non-arisen (by using Buddhist terms).

Soh's expression of "blue sky and green trees fluttering" is to convey the experience free from reified constructs, that is "feeling the moving air" directly.

My question to Soh is he is talking about the experience, not answering your question of why no further deconstruction is needed, that is, only the reified construct "wind" needs to b deconstructed, not the "moving air" that is felt directly.

In summary, I m just being a busy body, nothing intense 🤣🤣.

Tan Jui Horng Thank you for your answer John, how about Andre's "blue expanse, swaying green"? On one hand I feel it is valid, just that the statement itself, if I don't know that Andre has valid and good insight and realizations, would also contain reified constructs (blue and green)?

...or are they actually not constructs?

Expressions of experience in words always perplex me...

John Tan Jui Horng, if looking beyond words into the experience directly, both are ok.

Only sense of attachment of wanting too much to express that freedom from the objects for Andre. Just my opinion, don't take it too seriously.😆😝

Tan Jui Horng Thank you John 🙂:)

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05/06/2018

Soh Wei Yu shared a post.

Both are exaggerations.

4Jake Casavant, Ian Reclusado and 2 others

6 Comments

*Comments*

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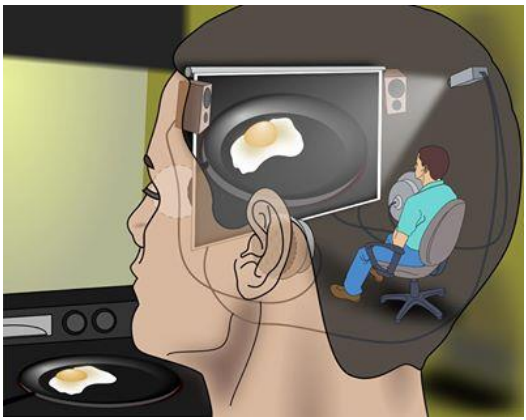
  Soh Wei Yu What it actually is:

5

William Lim But I've been chopping wood and carrying water everyday? Am I awakened already?

Soh Wei Yu No. That picture above doesn't represent most people. Most people are like this

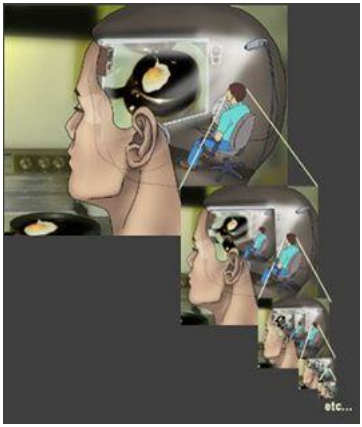


7

William Lim Nice! Where do you get the image from?

Soh Wei Yu Google image “Cartesian dualism” lol

William Lim




10/06/2018

Airplane and Flying

I wrote on a discussion:

The so called "Absolute" is really just another label for "relative manifestation" just like "Weather" is just a label for clouds forming and parting, wind blowing, the blue sky. All of these are just appearances and then a label "Weather" is applied. There is no Weather entity existing in and of itself that could either be separate from, nor encompass, all these phenomena.

Just as airplane is just a label applied in the same way to the activity of flying, and so forth, wind is also a label applied in the same way to blowing, 'Awareness' is applied in the same way to momentary manifestation. And just as it's not the case that winter 'becomes' spring, there is no 'airplane' that existed before that later 'does the flying', or a 'weather' that later 'becomes clouds and wind blowing' or 'a blue sky' that 'becomes clouds'. All these are just appearances abiding in their dharma positions.

Stationary airplane is stationary airplane, moving airplane is moving airplane, but then view of inherency and duality makes it appear as if there is a prior entity, a 'background agent', causing the airplane to move, as if there is an airplane that exists behind that movement causing the movement, or a wind existing behind blowing causing the blowing, or a consciousness existing behind manifestation causing them. It's just a snapshot of a previous state of 'airplane' or 'consciousness' being reified into an agent but there is no such thing.

Hence Alan Watts said, "Thus what we call the agent behind the action is simply the prior or relatively more constant state of the same action: when a man runs we have a "manning-running" over and above a simple "manning." Furthermore, it is only a somewhat clumsy convenience to say that present events are moved or caused by past events, for we are actually talking about earlier and later stages of the same event. "

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23rd June 2018

Affirming Dependencies

Lack of inherent existence affirms dependencies, or the heap of dependencies. In the state of actualizing anatta (the background self, or seer-seeing-seen, or a standalone Clarity or Presence is seen through into pure taste of mere manifestation) where bliss and clarity is intense and Presence stands out as everything intensely, realize that this Presence/Presencing is a heap or collection of activities-dependencies, so the non-inherent existence way of seeing 'mere name' actualises or affirms pure presence as dependencies. It can be anything manifesting at that moment, the whole universe is

involved in giving rise to a given activity or moment, for example if you are singing in a group then "each person" is contributing to that activity and the entirety of Presence is that dependencies. Without deep experience of anatta, one cannot appreciate this. Then even after that, contemplate and deepen one's view even more.

This "mere name" way of seeing all and any given imputed entities/selves/phenomena allows us to penetrate into the true nature of appearance as seamlessly arising in dependence but not truly arising (not coming into being by its own power but more like reflections of moon on water).

...

There's two modes of perception. The wrong mode of perception is seeing something as having solid inherent existence or as totally non existent. The other mode is seeing the pure appearances as dependent reflections but this pure appearances doesn't "exist by way of inherent existence" but as dependencies. Conventions also do not refer to inherent existence but only appears via dependencies.

Shadow is not same or different from sunlight. Without sunlight there is no shadow, but neither exists by itself. We cannot say that sunlight or shadow does not exist. But the "actual condition" of shadow is that it is only established conventionally in relation to sunlight (conditions).

Sunlight/shadow supports and is supported by all other conditions. A conventional phenomena cannot manifest, support or be supported by other conditions if it truly exists on its own.

If we say sunlight is same or different from shadow, then we are seeing from the viewpoint of inherent existence and fail to see its manifestation is inseparable from its dependencies, in terms of conditions and designation. If sunlight does not exist then neither could shadow. If there were inherent existence of either shadow or sunlight, or that they are same or different, then shadow could not appear as there will be no sunlight that supports shadow. The emptiness of inherent existence affirms dependencies and the way things are via dependencies. The lack of inherent existence reveals that appearances and conventions only arise in relation and dependencies.

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02/07/2018

Luminosity vs Clarity

Also see: The Sun Does Not Rise or Set
The Unbounded Field of Awareness
Jax's Message
Fully Experience All-Is-Mind by Realizing No-Mind and Conditionality

Someone asked me about luminosity. I said it is not simply a state of heightened clarity or mindfulness, but like touching the very heart of your being, your reality, your very essence without a shadow of doubt. It is a radiant, shining core of Presence-Awareness, or Existence itself. It is the More Real than Real. It can be from a question of "Who am I?" followed by a sudden realization. And then with further insights you touch the very life, the very heart, of everything. Everything comes alive. First as the innermost 'You', then later when the centerpoint is dropped (seen through -- there is no 'The Center') every 'point' is equally so, every point is A 'center', in every encounter, form, sound and activity.

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02/07/2018

Anatta and Cessation of Thoughts

"The association of anatta (no-self) to the cessation of thoughts is a due to a lack of insight that anatta is a seal, not a stage of attainment. In thinking there are always only thoughts, no thinker. In fact it is the realization that the continual arising and ceasing of thoughts without a thinker that is precious. The 2 important qualities that must be experienced are non-dual and spontaneity. Thoughts can slow down or even completely ceased but it has nothing to do with the insight of anatta."

- Thusness, 2009

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02/07/2018

A comment about Zen's Ten Oxherding Pictures

**Tenth Oxherding Picture**

Barefooted and naked of breast, I mingle with the people of the world.
My clothes are ragged and dust-laden, and I am ever blissful.
I use no magic to extend my life;
Now, before me, the dead trees become alive.
Comment: Inside my gate, a thousand sages do not know me. The beauty of my garden is invisible. Why should one search for the footprints of the patriarchs? I go to the market place with my wine bottle and return home with my staff. I visit the wine shop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes enlightened.

(Introduction and verse by 12th century Chinese Rinzai Chán (Zen) master Kuòān Shīyuǎn (廓庵師遠, Jp. Kaku-an Shi-en))

https://terebess.hu/english/bulls.html
Good commentary: https://terebess.hu/english/oxherding.html

**My comments:**

Based on the commentary, it is pretty clear that Ninth Oxherding is the realization of anatta (the original poem of ninth oxherding describes the experience of no mind but not very clear about anatta, the path is presented as I AM realization to non dual to no mind), and Tenth Oxherding is the actualization of anatta in daily life.

Tenth oxherding is not really an end, just the beginning of the endless pathless path of dynamic practice-enlightenment or practice-actualization. The commentary sounds a little misleading as if one has reached the end. Dogen is clearer on this regard:

To study the Buddha Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things,

your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of enlightenment remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly.

Another comment:

The ninth oxherding poem gives me the impression that the author has spent a lot of effort and time trying to return to or abide in the Source after the initial I AM realization and then the substantialist nondual phases, before realizing the direct path is to forget and dissolve oneself in vivid manifestation. (Much like many others, including Thusness himself, have spent years or over a decade getting stuck at a background source and other substantialist phases)

The ninth stage verse: 返本還源：返本還源已費功，爭如直下似盲聾，庵中不見庵前物，水自茫茫花自紅。

(English translation taken from website:

*Having come back to the origin and returned to the source, you see that you have expended efforts in vain.*
*What could be superior to becoming blind and deaf in this very moment?*
*Inside the hermitage, you do not see what is in front of the hermitage.*
*The water flows of itself and the flowers are naturally red.*)

I personally think the first sentence might be better translated as "[The very attempt to] return to the Source is already an effort in vain."

The second sentence tries to convey the directness and immediacy of the direct path, (my translation:) "Better to directly [and immediately] be as if blind and deaf"

I agree it's unnecessary to waste so much time going through all the oxherding stages 3-8 for too long getting trapped with a ridgepole (a center, a background source) and getting tied or trying to hang onto it for years or decades. I AM is a crucial realization to acquint yourself with that direct taste of Pure Presence. Once realized, rather than reifying false view (enhancing the view of reality/awareness being an unchanging Self, independent, separate, having agency, etc) and getting stuck in a formless background or even substantial nondual for decades one should boldly move on and bring that taste to the foreground and mature it in terms of impersonality, nondual, intensity of luminosity, effortlessness, seeing through and dissolving the need to return, re-confirm and abide. Then finally through contemplation with certain pointers like anatta verses or the Bahiya Sutta, a breakthrough into realization of anatta and effortless actualization will follow.But the original author of the oxherding poems failed to bring out the gist of

the realization that will make "no-mind" effortless.

And as Thusness said 12 years back,

"But what exactly is this “witness” we are talking about? It is the manifestation itself! It is the appearance itself! There is no Source to fall back, the Appearance is the Source! Including the moment to moment of thoughts. The problem is we choose, but all is really it. There is nothing to choose.

There is no mirror reflecting
All along manifestation alone is.
The one hand claps
Everything IS!"

"The manifestation is the source, spend not even a moment of thought for the source."
- https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../mistaken...

Which the commentary is clear in elucidating this insight.

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04/07/2018

Actual Freedom and the Immediate Radiance in the Transience

I was having a conversation with someone today (he had some history with various practices, vipassana, actual freedom, and recently came across a famous Thai ajahn, etc) who shared about an experience of dissolving into centerless space. I told him what I call anatta is not just being centerless, it is the effulgence and radiance of the transience. That is, regardless of any realization of no-self, and no matter how centerless one feels or how centerless is one's experience of awareness and so forth... still, anything short of direct realization of the radiance or luminosity as the very stuff of transiency is still not what I call the realization of anatta. (And that too is also just an aspect of anatta, and furthermore not yet into the twofold emptying)

Was reminded of a conversation with Thusness back in Aug 2010 and found some excerpts from the Actual Freedom site:

"(12:22 AM) Thusness: for u, you will not be clear now... what Richard taught has some problem...that focus is in the experience
u should focus on the realization
(12:22 AM) Thusness: the pce is what i told u, bring what you experience into the

foreground
(12:23 AM) Thusness: Richard has a very important realization.
(12:24 AM) Thusness: that is, he is able to realize the immediate radiance in the transience
(12:25 AM) AEN: this is like your second point of anatta in the anatta article?
(12:25 AM) Thusness: yes
(12:26 AM) Thusness: there is nothing to argue, it is obvious and clear.
(12:27 AM) Thusness: however i do not want to focus on the experience
(12:27 AM) Thusness: you need to go through a period of frustration first"

From the Actual Freedom site:
http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/…/selecte…/sc-relativism.htm
RESPONDENT: How do the qualities of 'splendour and brilliance' present themselves AS splendour and brilliance?
RICHARD: Directly ... as splendour and brilliance are intrinsic to the properties of this actual world they present themselves openly where apperception is operating: everything is literally bright, shining, vivid, intense, sparkling, luminous, lustrous, scintillating and coruscating in all its vitality here in this actual world.
.....
RICHARD: As I understand it (I am not a scientist nor have any scientific training) a photometer can measure how bright or brilliant something is in a more precise, reliable and universal way than the eye can sensately determine ... and one can then talk about the brilliance of that something if one wishes to convey to another what one is experiencing (the word comes from the French 'briller' meaning 'shine').
• 'brilliance: brilliant quality; intense or sparkling brightness, radiance, or splendour; an instance of this'. (© Oxford Dictionary).
As for the splendour of something (the word comes from the Latin 'spendere' meaning 'be bright; shine') ... it is related to a brilliant display:
• 'splendour: 1. great or dazzling brightness, brilliance. 2. magnificence; sumptuous or ornate display; impressive or imposing character; a magnificent feature, object, etc. 3. distinction, eminence, glory'. (© Oxford Dictionary).
Therefore, when I wrote that 'as [the qualities of] splendour and brilliance are intrinsic to the properties of this actual world' and that 'they present themselves openly where apperception is operating' I am reporting that literally everything is 'bright, shining, vivid, intense, sparkling, luminous, lustrous, scintillating and coruscating in all its vitality here in this actual world' ... thus it is not the imposition of subjective attributes (which phrase may very well equate to what you called 'internal percepts' in the previous e-mail) that I am talking about.
Rather it is the absence of such subjectively imposed attributes – due to the absence of identity – which reveals the world as-it-is.
...

RESPONDENT: This is what I meant in my question 'present themselves AS splendour and brilliance?'
RICHARD: Okay ... incidentally, I do not go about seeing things in terms of their properties, qualities or values (such classifications never occur to me other than when having a discussion such as this) ... I simply delight in the wonder of it all and marvel in the amazing display.
Once experienced apperceptively – as in a pure consciousness experience (PCE) – one will never again settle for second-best.
http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/…/selected…/sc-sensation.htm
RICHARD: Yes ... 'how amazing' indeed, eh? I am particularly pleased to see you say that you had a 'clear and unequivocal PCE' as, of course, I have no way of ascertaining the intrinsic quality of what any body experiences other than what they describe – and I have no intention of setting myself up to be to arbiter of another's experience anyway – so I cannot adjudge the exact nature of what you experienced. The rule of thumb is to ask oneself: is this it; is this the ultimate; is this the utter fulfilment and total contentment; is this my destiny; is this how I would want to live for the remainder of my life ... and so on. It is up to each and every person to decide for themselves what it is that they want ... as I oft-times say: it is your life you are living and only you get to reap the rewards and pay the consequences for any action or inaction you may or may not do. [...]
Having said that, and I am not inferring anything either way by what I am writing here, it may or may not be relevant to report that one must be most particular to not confuse an excellence experience with a perfection experience ... and the most outstanding distinction in the excellence experience is the marked absence of what I call the 'magical' element. This is where time has no duration as the normal 'now' and 'then' and space has no distance as the normal 'here' and 'there' and form has no distinction as the normal 'was' and 'will be' ... there is only this moment in eternal time at this place in infinite space as this flesh and blood body being apperceptively aware (a three hundred and sixty degree awareness, as it were). Everything and everyone is transparently and sparklingly obvious, up-front and out-in-the open ... there is nowhere to hide and no reason to hide as there is no 'me' to hide. One is totally exposed and open to the universe: already always just here right now ... actually in time and actually in space as actual form. This apperception (selfless awareness) is an unmediated perspicacity wherein one is this universe experiencing itself as a sensate and reflective human being; as such the universe is stunningly aware of its own infinitude.
In a PCE one is fully immersed in the infinitude of this fairy-tale-like actual world with its sensuous quality of magical perfection and purity where everything and everyone has a lustre, a brilliance, a vividness, an intensity and a marvellous, wondrous, scintillating vitality that makes everything alive and sparkling ... even the very earth beneath one's feet. The rocks, the concrete buildings, a piece of paper ... literally everything is as if it were alive (a rock is not, of course, alive as humans are, or as animals are, or as trees

are). This 'aliveness' is the very actuality of all existence – the actualness of everything and everyone – for one is not living in an inert universe.
It is one's destiny to be living the utter peace of the perfection of the purity welling endlessly as the infinitude this eternal, infinite and perpetual universe actually is.
...
http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/…/selected…/sc-sensation.htm
RICHARD: Put simply: as there is no (subjective) experiencer there is no separation ... no 'inner world'/'outer world'.
RESPONDENT: If the images (presumably) are identical in quality, do you see them differently (e.g. in terms of clarity)?
RICHARD: Yes ... and just as the moving picture is visually brilliant, vivid, sparkling, so too is the sound track aurally rich, vibrant, resonant.
...
• [Richard]: 'The whole point of actualism is the direct experience of actuality: as this flesh and blood body only what one is (what not 'who') is these eyes seeing, these ears hearing, this tongue tasting, this skin touching and this nose smelling – and no separative identity (no 'I'/ 'me') means no separation – whereas 'I'/ 'me', a psychological/ psychic entity, am inside the body busily creating an inner world and an outer world and looking out through 'my' eyes upon 'my' outer world as if looking out through a window, listening to 'my' outer world through 'my' ears as if they were microphones, tasting 'my' outer world through 'my' tongue, touching 'my' outer world through 'my' skin and smelling 'my' outer world through 'my' nose ... plus adding all kinds of emotional/ psychological baggage to what is otherwise the bare sensory experience of the flesh and blood body'.
...
• [Richard]: 'I am speaking of the immediate perception, of this body and that body and every body and of the mountains and the streams and of the trees and the flowers and of the clouds in the sky by day and the stars in the firmament by night and so on and so on ad infinitum, without the affective faculty existent operating ... which reveals actuality in all its purity and perfection. This applies not only to ocular perception but also to cutaneous perception, to gustatory perception, to olfactory perception, to aural perception ... and even to proprioceptive perception, for that matter. There is no mystery where there is such direct perception of actuality as described ... all is laid open, as it already always has been open just here right now all along, because nothing is ever hidden. One walks through the world in wide-eyed wonder simply marvelling at being here doing this business called being alive on this verdant and azure paradise called planet earth. This is what innocence looks like'.
As immediate, direct perception (sensuous perception) does not involve either the affective faculty or the cognitive function the thinker ('I' as ego) and the feeler ('me' as soul) do not get a look-in ... hence I call this direct perception 'apperception' (perception unmediated by either 'self' or 'Self'). Thus what I am is this flesh and blood body being

apperceptively aware (sans 'I' as ego and 'me' as soul) ... which means that the actuality of the physical can indeed be known, each moment again, day after day.
I do not know if I can put it more briefly or succinctly than this.

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19/07/2018

Like Rainbow, Like Space

Thusness:

Christian, I see all phenomena like rainbow, they appear but are empty. Neither exist nor not exist, they are free from extremes.

As for the word "exist", I reserve it for "svabhāva". To exist is to possess essence or substance. Essence means phenomenon possessing characteristic or not brought about by causal process or capable of standing by itself. Substance means irreducible constituents of reality can be found.

...

Yes Christian, I understand. Whether it is expressed as "exist conventionally but ultimately empty" or "appear but are empty" is simply a matter of flavour.

What is important is the taste of seeing conventional things as empty till one's entire body-mind is pervaded with emptiness - like space, free and unobstructed.

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25/07/2018

The Key Towards Pure Knowingness

"The key towards pure knowingness is to bring the taste of presence into the 6 entries and exits. So that what is seen, heard, touched, tasted are pervaded by a deep sense of crystal, radiance and transparency. This requires seeing through the center." - Thusness

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22/08/2018

What is the Awakened State like Experientially?

A friend (without much spiritual background) asked me recently what's the difference between my experience and his experience. What does awakening entail, experientially? In order words, what is the feeling of it like? (Note that I am recalling from that conversation, this isn't the exact words)

I answered: Here there is a complete absence of any sense of sense of self, body, sense faculties, objects, boundaries, and an absence of any sense of locality. Whereas those are present in experience for you.

For example when I'm driving the car, there is no sense at all of being a driver located in the driver seat. The whole infinite field (including trees, roads and traffic lights) is simply experiencing itself and reacting seamlessly and spontaneously with no sense of distance (no sense of a me here encountering and reacting to things 'out there'). Presencing (vivid experience) "stands out" as the "concrete textures and details" of everything when not a trace of self remains. Everything shimmers with a vivid intensity of pure aliveness and presence.

He asked: If you don't experience locality, why do you like to travel to different places? Doesn't non locality mean you can teleport anywhere since you are not located or fixed anywhere? Since you are nowhere and already everywhere, why do you need to travel? Why did you visit a music festival (Tomorrowland) in your recent trip to Europe?

I answered: I still enjoy experiencing new stuff sometimes. Non locality is not teleportation, it means there is no locality or reference point to which a fixed subject (experiencer/self) or an object exists. Appearance 'knows' from itself without a knower behind. It does not mean that because there is no self besides everything that appears, I am everywhere in the world all at once, like including Antarctica. Specific appearances only appear in the presence of specific conditions. Ever-fresh phenomenal appearances manifest due to certain conditions including travel, etc. The experience of a music festival requires conditions like international DJs playing music, the communal setting of massive numbers of people coming together, so on and so forth.

(And even those appearances cannot be pinned down as "it is here" or "it is there" as they are simply and merely appearing due to conditions, like reflections of a moon on water. There is no intrinsic existence of a phenomenal appearance to be found.

But as Thusness said, "When you are luminous and transparent, don't think of dependent origination or emptiness, that is post-equipoise. When hearing sound, like the sound of flowing water and chirping bird, it is as if you are there. It should be non-conceptual, no sense of body or me, transparent, as if the sensations stand out. You must always have some quality time into this state of anatta. Means you cannot keep losing yourself in verbal thoughts, you got to have quality hours dedicated to relaxation and experience fully without self, without reservation.")

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Fearless Samadhi

Also see: Excerpts from the Jewel Mirror Samadhi
The Path of Anatta

Someone asked me to explain the paragraph, "...Lastly what that is 'unborn, pristine and luminous' cannot be "dependent and inseparable from the transient" appears sound only logically but not experientially. It will first seem illogical and unnatural to accept such an idea, but when the tendency to dualify and solidify experience subsides, then scenery, taste, scent, sound, breathe, the sensation of our feet touching the ground…all arising will help lighten this psychological pain. Therefore fearlessly, unreservedly and completely open to whatever arises."

I wrote:

There can be the false misconception that awareness is inherently existing and distinct from transient experience. This is dualistic and tends to solidify the subject/object structure, the sense that I am I and experience is apart from myself.
In sleep paralysis, for example, there can be a situation where there is deep fear due to the sense of an intruder or some fearful 'other'. But in my experience, if there is recognition of the nondual and empty nature of mind/experience, there is liberation in that very instant.
In my previous four times I had sleep paralysis (and I haven't had any recently), each time the structure of subject/object is dissolved in transparent bliss and boundless clarity. The sense of myself being here facing a fearful 'other' or intruder completely dissolves naturally into boundless bliss and presence even as it arises. I no longer get locked in that fearful situation.
There is complete fearless dissolving into whatever appears, seen, heard, smelled, etc. And you will love to dissolve, to die, in a sense, without resistance, without choosing to be in another situation. This very situation, condition, appearance, whatever it is, is your nature, empty-clarity.
And this is why in the "Tibetan Book of the Dead", there is an emphasis on the recognition of whatever deities - wrathful and peaceful, as simply a display of your own state, your own nature, essence and energy. They are not apart from yourself, so do not fear them, but recognise them as your very Presence.

Soh Wei Yu From the Tibetan Book of the Dead, translated with commentary by Francesca Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa

"O child, whatever you see, however terrifying it is, recognize it as your own projection;

recognize it as the luminosity, the natural radiance of your own mind. If you recognize in this way, you will become a buddha at that very moment, there is no doubt. What is called perfect instantaneous enlightenment will arise on the spot. Remember!

...At that moment do not be afraid of the yellow light, luminous and clear, sharp and bright, but recognize it as wisdom. Let your mind rest in it, relaxed, in a state of nonaction, and be drawn to it with longing. If you recognize it as the natural radiance of your own mind, even though you do not feel devotion and do not say the inspiration-prayer, all the forms and lights and rays will merge inseparably with you, and you will attain enlightenment...

~ Padmasambhava"

"May the element of space not rise up as an
enemy,
may I see the Realm of the blue buddha.
May the element of water not rise up as enemy,
may I see the realm of the white buddha.
May the element of earth not rise up as an
enemy,
may I see the realm of the yellow buddha.
May the element of fire not rise up as an
enemy,
may I see the realm of the red buddha.
May the element of air not rise up as an enemy.
may I see the realm of the green buddha.
May the rainbow of the elements not rise up as
enemies,
may I see the realms of all the buddhas.
May the sounds, lights and rays not rise up as
enemies,
may I see the infinite realms of the Peaceful
and Wrathful Ones.
May I know all the sounds as my own sound,
may I know all the lights as my own light,
may I know all the rays as my own ray.
May I spontaneously know the bardo as myself,
may I attain the realms of the three kāyas.

...When the journey of my life has reached its
end,

and since no relatives go with me from this world
I wander in the bardo state alone,
may the peaceful and wrathful buddhas send out the power of their compassion
and clear away the dense darkness of ignorance
.
When parted from beloved friends, wandering alone,
my own projections' empty forms appear,
may the buddhas send out the power of their compassion
so that the bardo's terrors do not come
.
When the five luminous lights of wisdom shine,
fearlessly may I recognize myself;
when the forms of the peaceful and wrathful ones appear,
fearless and confident may I recognize the bardo
.
When I suffer through the power of evil karma,
may the peaceful and wrathful buddhas clear away suffering;
when the sound of dharmatā roars like a thousand thunders,
may it be transformed into the sound of mahāyāna teaching
.
When I follow my karma, without a refuge,
may the peaceful and wrathful buddhas be my refuge;
when I suffer the karma of unconscious tendencies,
may the samādhi of bliss and luminosity arise
. "

Homage to Padmasambhava 🙏🙏

p.s. I am far from what is stated in the book, but I see the importance of this. Constant recognition in all states is considered perfect Buddhahood.

Soh Wei Yu Haven't had the sleep paralysis intruder sort of experience for some time.

Well I just had it in sleep, was waking out of a lucid dream and then the sense of intruder came and a very loud scream was heard. Sounds like a nightmare. But throughout it I was fearlessly dissolving into the experience and sensation of it and the whole field of experience arises as clarity and bliss. No fear. Then I woke up.

Soh Wei Yu A sense of compassion also arose then, "if that intruder presence is really a ghost or spirit (and not merely my projection), may it be free and liberated"

Soh Wei Yu I should make a disclaimer that I am not fearless yet. If hugging saint Amma really did this knowingly and without hesitation, knowing she could contract leprosy from this act, then she is more fearless than me.

https://www.facebook.com/716058944/posts/10156716404233945/

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Thusness, 2007:

(5:29 PM) Thusness: what are the 3 characteristics *(of self-liberation)*?
(5:29 PM) AEN: impermanence, suffering, no self ?
(5:29 PM) Thusness: nope
(5:29 PM) Thusness: i just told you the other day
(5:30 PM) Thusness: completely non-dual and transparent.
(5:30 PM) Thusness: Completely fearless
(5:30 PM) Thusness: completely non-attached
(5:30 PM) Thusness: so if a person after the experience of no-self, and is able to attain this 3 characteristics
(5:31 PM) Thusness: then his hui geng (wisdom root) is truly deep
(5:31 PM) Thusness: da geng qi (superior capacity)
(5:32 PM) Thusness: means the enlightenment of non-dual of our nature leads directly to self liberation
(5:32 PM) Thusness: that is because the 'sense of self' is completely eliminated from 7th
(5:32 PM) Thusness: and karmic propensities become self liberated

Even after initial realization of anatta, we have to continue practicing and meditating until these three aspects are perfected.

26/08/2018

Insight Absorption

Thusness wrote in 2006:

14/06/2006

Reply part 1:

Is Absorption not aware of other things? This is difficult to say. Although many articles and books about mindfulness seem to suggest that it is so, this is not necessarily true when we progress towards the more subtle experience. Clarity can come a time where it is so clear that it is an absorption, it is a sort of Insight-Absorption but It is different from absorption derived from concentration. It is clarity absorption where it touches the heart of 'things', that is itself. For example being taste itself, it is absorbed yet completely clear. This is truly blissful and beyond description. I have not come across any book touching this yet and I hope Toni's new book can write something about it. 🙂

Reply part 2:

The AMness can be said to be a form of absorption where the object of concentration is the Self. It can be a question "Who am I" that leads one to the experience of the subject-object becoming one. Till a point the practitioner simply experiences a pure sense of existence. However such mode of experience has no understanding of its luminous clarity and its nature as anatta. The key point about mindful awareness is there is no keeping of the mind on anything and by not resting on anything, it fuses into everything; therefore it cannot be concentrated; rather it is to relax into nothingness empty of self, empty of any artificial doing so that the natural luminosity can take its own course. There is no focusing, there is only allowing the mirror bright clarity to shine with it natural radiance. In essence there is no one there, only the phenomenon arising and ceasing telling their stories.

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26/08/2018

Psychedelics and Buddhist Practice?

An article has caused much commotion online so I added my 2 cents when it surfaced on a discussion thread. (Article: The New Wave of Psychedelics in Buddhist Practice - Lion's Roar)

I wrote:

Psychedelics can induce mystical experience and some spiritual realizations. Most people who do them at low doses will not have such experiences, and the higher doses naturally come with more risks. As Alan Watts said, even his initial experiences with LSD were of a "visual" or "aesthetic" kind -- pretty interesting but not anything profound, and he could not grasp any spiritual significance to psychedelics. Later on however, he did successfully experience classical mystical experiences (deeper experiential insights into anatta/total exertion) and realizations through the use of LSD once he figured out how it could be used, even though he already realized anatta even before psychedelic use. (A good article by him: http://www.psychedelic-library.org/alchemy.htm) Tommy McNally also deepened his insights into anatta through the use of LSD (https://www.dharmaoverground.org/discussion/-/message_boards/message/3074604). Otherwise, a high dose can also easily result in a kind of life changing transformation moment or spiritual Self-realization.

For example, Ram Dass and many others had described the I AM realization as being induced through the use of psilocybin or magic mushrooms. Leo from Actualized.org realized the I AM/God/Infinite Consciousness in a 5-MeO-DMT trip. I AM realization is a direct realization of Pure Presence as a pure sense of Existence which is then reified into the Eternal Witness or an eternal Self or Atman-Brahman prior to deepening insights into non-dual and anatta. A direct realization and taste of luminous Presence does not necessarily eliminate ignorance, the reification of luminous Presence into an ultimate Self. It is simply a glimpse of the luminous clarity aspect of our buddha-nature, but not its empty nature.

The experience of radiance presence, with its intensity, be it through psychedelics or meditation, can in fact be the cause of the formation of proliferation. This itself will not liberate you from samsara. Therefore having right view and meditating on right view is more important than all those mystical experiences attained through psychedelics, samatha and jhanic practices. However that does not mean presence is not important, it is and always is, but that is not the cause of liberation. It can be extremely blissful, clean, radiance, because consciousness expands... Or altered state. But that is different from wisdom.

So, I must say that psychedelics by themselves does not necessarily enhance "Buddhist practice". It can give you a glimpse of something profound, although not always. It can lead to certain breakthroughs but in terms of the Buddhist path of eliminating all emotional and cognitive obscurations, the only way is through the practice of insight and tranquility in tandem.

I am personally not against the use of psychedelics but its limitations and dangers should also be understood.

PW: *Does repeated ayahuasca use help accelerate understanding along with practice of self inquiry?*

Me: It really depends on individuals. Most people who've done psychedelics don't have any major profound or permanent breakthroughs apart from fleeting peak experiences. And if people do it low dose, it's probably just another cool visual effect sort of experience. David Carse (author of Perfect Brilliant Stillness) seems to have a profound non-dual breakthrough (comments: One Mind level of realization) from ayahuasca in an experience he later called "The Jungle". Also, Ram Dass had his moment of Self-Realization through magic mushrooms, and Alan Watts wrote about how he had deepened experiential insights through the use of LSD, and many others.
Some people are strictly against psychedelics, some people are pro-psychedelics. I think I'm in the middle. There are pros and cons, benefits and dangers. You have to gauge your own condition for yourself and be aware of the laws, only some countries in the world legalises psychedelics.

Are psychedelics necessary? No. I attained my core insights not through psychedelics but by my own contemplation. I do not advise or promote psychedelics as a contemplative tool, but many people will do it anyway (except in Singapore where I live, it is a 'police state' that works -- it is basically the most crime free nation in the world, and the borders are heavily controlled, so most Singaporeans don't do drugs here).

Psychedelics can sometimes enhance one's contemplative process, and deepen some of the insights one already has, or even provide some fresh insights and realizations, and release certain karmic conditioning/traumas/etc (this is why science is finding it a promising treatment for depression, PTSD, etc). But it should not be the sole and only tool one uses and one should thread carefully.

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p.s. an interesting article from Sam Harris, author of "Waking Up": Drugs and the Meaning of Life

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01/09/2018

Spiritual Awakening and the Aid of Technology

I've come to learn this week that Pam Tan just had a breakthrough awakening. I've been expecting that, as I felt she was close. She is the fifth Singaporean that has spiritually awakened (by awakened here I mean at least the realization of anatta) after encountering me, John or our blog (and there are about 20 others from other countries that have also awakened to anatta/emptiness in part through the influence of our blog or conversations -- but I am not a guru or teacher, and ultimately all awakenings comes from one's own potentiality, contemplation and investigation more than an external source or trigger). I am going to share excerpts about it in the next post, with her permissions.

This brings the lofty ideals of "awakening" from the realm of stories and myths back to earth. It's the tangible, normal folks like you and me, who achieve awakening. And very much as it should be -- after all, examples were given in "The Supreme Source: The Fundamental Tantra of Dzogchen Semde Kunjed Gyalpo" of how some of the Dzogchen masters were prostitutes who nevertheless awakened through receiving intimate pith instructions from their masters. Furthermore the Zen teachings always emphasize how spirituality or spiritual awakening is never separate from the mundane and ordinary life of "chop wood, carry water". And Kunjed Gyalpo tells us, "Seek the location of the heart essence through phenomena that derive from it and come to appreciate it through the skillful means of not conceptualizing in any way whatsoever. Since the heart essence occurs naturally, dharmakaya is not elsewhere." Nirvana is after-all, samsara rightly seen. It is never about separating yourself or becoming distant and aloof from the nitty gritty of daily lives but rather, the complete gapless/undivided engagement and spontaneous living where even the term 'intimacy' no longer quite apply any longer (who is being intimate with what?)

Awakening is our birthright, our buddha-nature (potentiality for awakening) is never sealed off from anyone nor is it ever the province of an elite group of people. For as Padmasambhava also stated, "If he practices, then even a cowherd can realize liberation. Even though he does not know the explanation, he can systematically establish himself in the experience of it." So as I just told another friend I met a few days back, you must trust in your own capacity.

Spiritual awakening used to be relegated to great yogis residing in far off remote places very distant from the lives of ordinary city folks, such that most people will never believe that it is accessible or relevant to the ordinary lay people like you and me. I believe this perception or stereotype will certainly change as time passes.

Technologies allow for new possibilities never existing before in history, such as the exchanges between supportive adventurers on the path across thousands of miles, or even become a platform for a gathering of strong practitioners at various stages and from various traditions and backgrounds. Technology provides a fertile ground for cross-

cultural, cross-traditional exchanges that may foster deeper understandings and fruitful discussions. Add to that, a growing number of people seem to be adapting to a "pragmatic dharma" (refer to Daniel Ingram's writings on this) attitude of open sharing from their experiences, transcending old dogmas and taboos surrounding the topic of spiritual awakening.

In contrast, people living just 50 or 100 years ago aren't nearly as connected to others today, and genuine spiritual teachers (much less truly attained and realized spiritual masters) and teachings and fellowships may be limited to certain localities and may be hard to come by. Today, a truly realized spiritual master may be a Skype call away even if he/she lives in another country. Nowadays, you can have an equivalent of Nalanda library available through a mouse-click away, or the entire Buddhist canon available on your iPad, thanks also to translators at foundations like 84000.co. Also, as John commented before, many practitioners in olden times may not have very strong view due to the lack of easy access to written spiritual texts or scriptures (even though they may be very dedicated, disciplined and sincere, perhaps more so than modern day people). So consider ourselves to be very fortunate.

More people are now able to read up and get connected with spiritual resources and fellowships with the help of an open internet which brings entire libraries of information to their fingertips. This is certainly not a replacement for a face-to-face spiritual community or teacher which always remains important and most valuable, but at least more people are becoming aware and have a huge resource available to their aid and have more directions.

May the growing awareness of this potentiality - the innate potentiality to awaken to our true nature, spread like wildfire in time to come for the benefit of all motherly sentient beings. And may technology continue to evolve and become an even greater aid for our spiritual advancements.

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08/09/2018

Quotes by Dogen

André A. Pais
September 5 at 7:50 AM ·

"To carry yourself forward and experience myriad things is delusion. That myriad things come forth and experience themselves is awakening."
"To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things,

your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of realization remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly."
- Dogen

—
I absolutely adore this! Anyone knows any more gems from Dogen..?

John Tan Another quote from Dogen to balance and see the other side of emptiness.

“Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise the sails and you steer. Although you maneuver the sail and the pole, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat you couldn’t ride. But you ride in the boat, and your riding makes the boat what it is. Investigate a moment such as this. At just such a moment, there is nothing but the world of the boat. The sky, the water, and the shore are all the boat’s world, which is not the same as a world that is not the boat’s. Thus you make birth what it is; you make birth your birth. When you ride in a boat, your body, mind, and environs together are the undivided activity of the boat. The entire earth and the entire sky are both the undivided activity of the boat. Thus birth is nothing but you; you are nothing but birth.”

- Dogen

3

Gilbert Schultz You get what he is getting at. Yeah.

André A. Pais Gilbert Schultz what is he getting at?

Gilbert Schultz The immediacy is all there is.

John Tan In walking, there is no one walking. The hands swing and legs move; the nose breathes, the heart beats and the path walks itself. The air, the hands, the legs and the path all went beyond their designations into the action of walking. No one and the mere action of walking, what is the relationship?

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13/09/2018

Post-Anatta

“Post anatta, what you need is to be fully open like space. Centerless, natural, completely non-dual. This is because you (are) fully just the everchanging phenomena, so there is no keeping of anything.”

~ Thusness

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17/09/2018

Presence and the Nature of Presence

(Wrote this after a clear insight arose)

No behind, presence as form is anatta
Presence-as-form is merely appearing, nothing there, that's emptiness (the nature of Presence)

...

Not only no who, but truly no it, no there, no here, no now, no when, no where, no arising, no ceasing, no abiding or place of abidance. Coming to rest in the nature of presence with no place to rest, whole field of spontaneous illusory display emerges as empty-clarity-bliss.

...

Soh Wei Yu I really like a statement by Jang-gya, “appearance negates existence”

Stian Gudmundsen Høiland Say some more about that Soh?

Soh Wei Yu It starts with the very vivid "Presence" (or you can call it Awareness or Clarity) that is simply shining as the very vividness of forms, sounds, thoughts, whatever appears, as the subject/object or perceiver/perceived dichotomy has collapsed into a non-conceptual experience of the vividness of whatever manifests with zero sense of distance. There is no more standalone Presence or Awareness or Clarity in anatta. The illusion of a background Self/Mind has been penetrated. Even so, the very empty nature of 'foreground Presence' may not yet reveal itself initially.

Let's say you're looking at the floor, or a table, or whatever it is. It seems very solid and real, but then upon some investigation it's realised to be merely appearing without substance or essence, and that happens to be the very nature of Presence -- vividly appearing according to conditions but completely empty of anything 'there', empty of an 'it-ness' or 'floor-ness' or any sort of substance. Basically it's sort of like suddenly an apparent figure you've been looking at or talking to is suddenly realised to be literally a hologram. The very nature of Presence as merely appearing without substance basically negates the extreme of existence.

For me the nature of Presence reveals in a more experiential sort of examination rather than through analytical reasonings. Like what Thusness wrote in his article http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../on-anatta... "On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection",

"If we observe thought and ask where does thought arise, how does it arise, what is ‘thought’ like. 'Thought' will reveal its nature is empty -- vividly present yet completely un-locatable. It is very important not to infer, think or conceptualise but feel with our entire being this ‘ungraspability’ and 'unlocatability'. It seems to reside 'somewhere' but there is no way to locate it. It is just an impression of somewhere "there" but never "there". Similarly “here-ness” and “now-ness” are merely impressions formed by sensations, aggregates of causes and conditions, nothing inherently ‘there’; equally empty like ‘selfness’."

Soh Wei Yu That said not everyone uses or likes the term "Presence". Tsongkhapa doesn't use that term. You can substitute that for other terms like "dharma" etc, it's just the empty and luminously clear nature of the display.

Foreground emptying has this taste where appearance negates existence.

…

I was asked what is the direct insight of emptiness.

I wrote:

The insight is how presence/appearance appears yet never truly exists (i.e. by way of inherent existence), like truly there... instead it's just mere substanceless appearance. Instead of essence, we see dependent origination.

It's an insight into seeing how 'essence' does not apply, not only to background/self but to foreground/presence/phenomena, therefore arising/abiding/ceasing also don't apply.

Because of this, there's no way to locate or pin down anything anywhere, therefore all the where, now, here, there don't apply, as pinning down something as 'there' requires the essence view.

It is not just an experience of all reality as 'dream-like' (this experience can arise by linking what appears to one's radiance) but a direct insight that overturns the wrong view of phenomena as having essence in the same manner as the direct insight into anatta overturns the wrong view of self or consciousness as having essence existing by its own side.

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18/09/2018

Putting Mind to Standstill

John Tan Geo, I think it is not just about putting mind to a rest as certain specific insights regarding the ultimate nature of mind and phenomena need to arise. Putting the reasoning mind to a standstill can have several outcomes:

1. A dull state of non-conceptuality.

2. A taste of Presence but not necessarily free from duality.

3. Perceiver seen as perceived. Subsuming all as Mind.

4. Both perceiver and perceived are liberated by realising they are empty; what appears is free from elaboration. Boundless and spontaneous, naturally perfected.

Seeing the emptiness and dependent arising of “this” and “that” relates to 4 imo.

03/10/2018

Persisting Non-Duality

Someone wrote in DharmaOverground: "So lately I have been listening to a few Sam Harris conversations about his new book coming out called Waking Up. What he seems to be saying is that you can experience non-duality or no-self during meditation, but then that experience goes away. You can then bring it back up again in a later meditation, when you are again analyzing (trying to find the self) and not finding it. He says some people can live their whole life with a no-self experience.

My question is when you reach stream entry, is that just a momentary glimpse into no-self that then fades away? Is 4th path the experience of non-duality that is present at all times? While before that you have seen non-duality, but it's not always there unless you look for it? "

I replied: "I am not impressed with Sam Harris's depth of insight, which is not to say that his book was uninteresting. But he has clearly not realized 4th path yet. Yes in short, non-duality is the natural state all the time at 4th path. Anatta and non-duality is always already so, so it is a matter of how deeply this 'always already so' truth is seen and sinked in. There's no more entering nor exiting a state of non-duality when the realization has settled down.

Speaking from experience here, as I have attained MCTB 4th path, Seventh Stage of the Thusness Seven Stages, Tenth Stage of the Ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen, etc.

p.s. Daniel himself wrote, 'Finally, the Wisdom Eye cycles and insight cycles all converge, and the thing stays open from then on, which is to say that at that point it all seems the same whether or not the eye is open, which it actually was. That being seen, nothing can erode or disturb the centerlessness of perspective, and life goes on.', 'All these years later the field has never destabilized again, the wobble never recurred, and things never un-synced. I knew when it happened that my vipassana quest was over. I had the answer I sought, and it has held up, event after event, challenge after challenge, cycle after cycle.'"

Another person wrote:

"(long post)...That's because, reality is already Mind— your mind, right now. Perhaps you are not ready to hear this, but this is the nondual section, after all..."

I wrote:

"Interesting post, I would only add that this is to be extended to all sensory experiences, all colors, all sounds, all sensations.

For example, hear the arising of any sound attentively. Without Awareness (as some background), what is that? Hear attentively... how clear and vivid... hear the tone, the 'texture and fabric', that is mind. The 'texture and fabric' of sound. That too is Mind and no other. That is true non-duality :)" (Also it's to be seen that Mind is empty, and Mind-as-form is empty)

André A. Pais Tenth oxherding pic? Isn't that buddhahood??

Soh Wei Yu The author didn't state that. Here's a good site on the oxherding poems and a good commentary:

https://terebess.hu/english/oxherding.html

I call 9th oxherding picture the realization and 10th the actualization

2

André A. Pais Soh Wei Yu but isn't the 10th pic, by definition, buddhahood? Otherwise, zen is left without it...

And are you claiming to have attained it?

Soh Wei Yu No. The author is simply presenting his own journey.

André A. Pais Soh Wei Yu who's the author? Isn't you speaking?

André A. Pais You mean no to buddhahood, or no to you claiming it?

Soh Wei Yu I mean the Ten Oxherding Pictures are not talking about Buddhahood nor does it explicitly refer to it as such, but simply the experiential account of the journey of the author -- who is a Zen master of the 12th Century. Like Thusness 7 stages is an account of Thusness, etc. In fact they are quite similar. That 12th century Zen Master got stuck in the I AM and One Mind stages for a long time.

André A. Pais Soh Wei Yu it seems rather implied though.

Soh Wei Yu It is a purely experiential account like the 7 stages and no reference to attainment of 'Buddhahood' is mentioned in his poems.

Better luck with Mahamudra Four Yogas as there are direct correlates by many Mahamudra masters with the bhumi systems

Robert Dominik Im not that familiar with Mahamudra but they are often equated with four Contemplations of Dzogchen Semde. These are more related to how meditation progresses from Shamatha through Vipassana. That said Dzogchen has the bar set pretty high - it is said that one needs to go through the bardo while alive to reach Buddhahood. And it makes sense. Nonconceptual insight regarding appearances and thoughts even at subtle levels does not dismantle karmic vision so it does not allow one to completely go beyond figures and shapes. Walls are still experienced as solid when somebody hits them with their hand. One is still bound by attachement to food. I agree with thay. Saying that Ingram's stage is final would turn Buddhism into subtler form of psychology but the extraordinary claim of complete release from cyclic existence would be unfounded.

Soh Wei Yu "Nonconceptual insight regarding appearances and thoughts even at subtle levels does not dismantle karmic vision so it does not allow one to completely go beyond figures and shapes. Walls are still experienced as solid when somebody hits them with their hand"

Actually non-conceptual insight does (in fact insight is the most crucial factor followed by its actualization), it's just a matter of how deep it has sinked in and how much obcurations has been released. When it is fully done, that's Greater Non Meditation. I think Daniel's 4th Path may have some similarities with Medium One Taste

Tyler Jones Soh Wei Yu, this is something I have wanted to ask you and John Tan about for a long time. In the Tibetan tradition, a distinction is made in all schools between what an Arya sees in equipoise and what an Arya sees post equipoise. In that tradition, an Arya for whom what is seen in equipoise is still seen post equipoise is a Buddha (although not necessarily a Supreme Nirmanakaya Buddha who is turning the wheel). Correct me if you understand the Tibetan tradition differently. I have always wondered if this wasn't relaxing the criteria for Buddhahood a bit, especially seeing as in early Mahayana tenth Bhumi was the same as being a Supreme Nirmanakaya, and there was no other, lesser meaning of Buddhahood. Even in the Suttas, the anatta was permanently realized at Stream entry, and the rest of the path to arhatship was exhausting taints.

So when you say your experience is anatta/emptiness all the time, do you experience a difference between equipoise and post equipose? If not, was there at some point or was it a permanent shift from the first time seeing it? And what do you perceive the work still to be done is?

2

Soh Wei Yu There can a period of instability in the beginning but didnt last long for me. I think the Mahamudra Four Yogas are a good presentation of the path. In it, equipoise and postequipoise start to converge at One Taste but all obscurations are only released fully at Greater Non Meditation. The work is done only when one reaches Greater Non Meditation which is Buddhahood, which the book says is actually pretty rare (even the great Masters usually reach a lesser level of Non Meditation)

As I posted this excerpt last month:

Actually completely separating postequipoise and equipoise is a little misleading after anatta and emptiness. It should be seen as a union. There is no entry and exit after that

http://promienie.net/.../books/mahamudra_the-moonlight.pdf

See Mahamudra the Moonlight by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal:

Thus, at the one-pointed stage, there exists a possibility of losing the meditation every time through a lapse of mindfulness. When mindfulness is revitalized, the stream of meditation is re-established, but true meditation will not emerge here.

At the nondiscriminatory stage there exists a possibility of losing the meditation through a lapse of mindfulness. But once mindfulness is revitalized, meditation capable of perceiving the nonarising [emptiness] of all things will emerge.

At the stage of one flavor there is no possibility of interruption in the meditation, since the stream consciousness of realization continues during postabsorption, even in the absence of sustained mindfulness. A possibility exists that the meditator will gain insight into the unity of appearance and emptiness through perfect mindfulness.

At the nonmeditation stage, from the moment mindfulness dawns, there is no separation between the meditator and meditation as a complete cycle of awareness. Because it encompasses every sensory appearance and every mental cognition, there is no need to realize the meditation anew.

6. The difference between absorption and postabsorption
Je Gomchung comments:
At the one-pointed stage there arise
Both appropriate equipoise and postequipoise.
At the nondiscriminatory stage there arise

Differentiable equipoise and postequipoise.
At the stage of one flavor there emerges
The union of equipoise and postequipoise.
At the stage of nonmeditation
There is an all-round absorption.
...
Je Gomchung comments:
In the one-pointed stage one will possibly lose the meditation
And will not realize it exactly.
In the nondiscriminatory stage one will possibly lose the meditation,
But one will [again] realize it.
In the stage of one flavor one will not lose the meditation
And one will realize it.
In the nonmeditation stage one will transcend
The loss and realization of meditation.
...

On the lower level of the one-flavor yoga, the meditator realizes the essential nature of phenomena as primal purity. Yet there still remains the clinging to his own consciousness of certainty and to the inner sensations [arising from meditative absorption]. During a period of postabsorption the meditator might find himself ill at ease when he attempts to transform each of the six sensory experiences, which are violently disturbed by external and internal conditions, into sublime experience. He will occasionally perceive a solid appearance of duality. Because of its impact on his deeper psyche, his dreams will be briefly influenced by his mental delusion and attachment. He will experience a sublime sensation of the inseparable blend of his body, mind, and appearance.

However, there is a possibility of his losing the vigor of appreciation with respect to the law of cause and effect and also of his faith and compassion diminishing. On the average level of one flavor, the meditator will achieve inner release from his inborn clinging to dualities such as realization and realizer, experience and experiencer. He will cut the root of that dualistic clinging to perception and perceiver. Besides, the meditator, during the period of postabsorption, will not experience much solid clinging to duality, while the delusion in his dreams will also diminish. It is said that such a meditator will gain suffificient inner power capable of helping or harming his fellow beings.207

On the great level of one flavor, the meditator will realize nondual awareness, detached from any mental clinging, which lasts throughout the cycle of a day and night. This realized state cognizes all diverse appearances as the manifestation of the unceasing power of mind's primordial purity and evenness. He will also achieve a perfect union of absorption and postabsorption, which will continue, like the flow of a river. Thus, while absorbed in nondual awareness, he will cognize the inner sensations of a few indeterminable appearances with some degree of clarity. During his postabsorptive consciousness he will perceive appearances in the manner of seeing an ephemeral illusion, which is just a vision of emptiness. Even though such postabsorptive perception is detached from any clinging, it will occasionally contain some subtle dualistic appearance originating from the stream-consciousness of the meditator. He will either have some uninterrupted and lucid dreams without any attachment or else will not dream. At this stage the meditator will acquire some power of supernormal cognition and will receive prophetic directions from his yidam and ākiñ. In addition, his jealousy will clear completely.

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05/10/2018

[One's Own Self State]

Every dependent arising is an invocation.
Every dependent arising is an empowerment.
Every dependent arising is a blessing.
Nothing truly arise.
Nothing truly cease.
All phenomena are one's own self state.
Accept all fully, completely and unreservedly.
Homage to all arisings.
Homage to Bodhichitta.

~ Thusness, 2014

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07/10/2018

[Quotes of Shunryu Suzuki]

“When we practice zazen our mind always follows our breathing. When we inhale, the air comes into the inner world. When we exhale, the air goes out to the outer world. The inner world is limitless, and the outer world is also limitless. We say “inner world” or “outer world,” but actually there is just one whole world. In this limitless world, our throat is like a swinging door. The air comes in and goes out like someone passing through a swinging door. If you think, “I breathe,” the “I” is extra. There is no you to say “I.” What we call “I” is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and when we exhale. It just moves; that is all. When your mind is pure and calm enough to follow this movement, there is nothing: no “I,” no world, no mind nor body; just a swinging door.”

“Wherever you are, you are one with clouds

and one with sun and the stars you see.
You are one with everything.
This is more true than I can say,
and more true than you can hear.”

“When you bow, you should just bow; when you sit, you should just sit; when you eat, you should just eat. If you do this, the universal nature is there. In Japanese we call it ichigyo-zammai, or ‘one act samadhi.’ Zammai (or samadhi) is ‘concentration.’ Ichigyo is ‘one practice.’ ”

“Doing something is expressing our own nature.”

“There are, strictly speaking, no enlightened people, there is only enlightened activity.”

“When you do something,
you should burn yourself up completely,
like a good bonfire,
leaving no trace of yourself.”

“When you listen to someone, you should give up all your preconceived ideas and your subjective opinions; you should just listen to him, just observe what his way is. We put very little emphasis on right and wrong or good and bad. We just see things as they are with him, and accept them. This is how we communicate with each other. Usually when you listen to some statement, you hear it as a kind of echo of yourself. You are actually listening to your own opinion. If it agrees with your opinion you may accept it, but if it does not, you will reject it or you may not even really hear it.”

“If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything,
it is open to everything.
In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities,
but in the experts mind there are few.”

“There is also the real secret of the arts:
always be a beginner.”

“The world is its own magic.”

“Zen is not some fancy, special art of living.
Our teaching is just to live, always in reality,
in its exact sense.
To make our effort, moment after moment, is our way.”

Source: Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind

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08/10/2018

Soh Wei Yu Joel Agee I think it should be a natural state for you too.

Lately the intensity here seems to be intensifying even further and whole body mind universe is a sphere of boundless light as manifestation, the textures and details of the moment

2

Soh Wei Yu Was jogging just now and this boundless light (empty-clarity as the whole infinite field of manifestation) just keeps intensifying and intensifying into complete stunning brilliance, and had this out of body feel -- which is not a dissociated state (i can no longer experience subject/object dualistic state nor dissociation, nondual is always experienced here) but like a dispersing into the infinite field, and yet this is not mere mind-body drop as mind-body drop is already my ever-present state for many years.

4

The Unbounded Field of Awareness

Thusness, 2013:

"there is a very intense and much deeper state i assure u...but there is clear understanding that the manifestation is it....however awareness is like an unbounded and limitless expanse field. The luminosity is intensely clear. The experience is like Non-Dual Awareness broke lose and exist as a unbounded FIELD

There is a difference in seeing sound and a hearer and realizing sound as awareness itself. You cannot focus and there cannot be any sense of effort
there cannot be any sense of boundaries. Just itself. You must be very very stable and mature in the anatta state, and you cannot be in an enclosed room...

It is the effortlessness and crystal clear transparency and intensity of luminosity... but duality must no more trouble the practitioner, phenomena is clearly understood as the radiance...so nothing is obscuring then in total effortless and emanation arises and the expanse just continues"

On how this differs from one mind:

"one mind is subsuming, therefore there is a sense of dual. In this case there isn't.

It is like a drop of water landed on the surface of a clear ocean. the nature of water and ocean are one and the same...nothing containing anything. When sounds and music arise...they are like water and waves in ocean...everything is it"

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18/10/2018

Non-Doing and Actualization

"People that have gone into the nihilistic understanding of 'non-doing' ended up in a mess. You see those having right understanding of 'non-doing' are free, yet you see

discipline, focus and peace in them.

Like just sitting and walking... ...in whatever they endeavor. Fully anatta."

~ Thusness

"Peace is every step.
The shining red sun is my heart.
Each flower smiles with me.
How green, how fresh all that grows.
How cool the wind blows.
Peace is every step.
It turns the endless path to joy."

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

"Oprah Winfrey: Already just being in your presence for a short time, I feel less stressed than I did when I started out the day, because you have such a peaceful aura that follows you and that you carry with yourself. Are you always this content and peaceful?

Thich Nhat Hanh: This is my training, this is my practice, to live every moment like that. Relaxed, dwelling peacefully in the present moment, and respond to events with compassion."

"This is most difficult as it is actualization. Insight is just (the) beginning. If you simply just base on insight and do not actualize your insight in practice meeting situations, you will not have genuine and deep understanding."

~ Thusness

.....

Richard Cooper I think nihilistic beliefs need to explored like any others in order to find how they mislead and are belief rather than actuality.

I don't really understand why there is a need for actualisation unless insight hasn't really penetrated and is still intellectual/abstract. Is it to do with habitual responses ?

Soh Wei Yu You see all the nihilistic beliefs spouted by people that advocate no practices since 'you are already what you seek', etc, usually in the neo-Advaita circle but not limited to it. There's a bunch of unhelpful bullshit out there and this article by Daniel M.

Ingram illustrates the problems and limitations with such views succinctly - a must read: https://www.mctb.org/.../the-nothing-to-do-and-you-are.../

As for actualization, Daniel also wrote this -- despite stating this his realization of MCTB 4th path since 2003 has withstood all trials and challenges and remains completely stable since (same as my experience for almost 8 years now), in his own words: "any sense of a this-and-that is fundamentally completely uprooted at the perceptual level (not that ordinary discrimination doesn't function as before), and that this holds up over the long-haul, meaning off-retreat and for years in the face of the strongest vicissitudes of life, across insight cycles, across jhanas and other shifts, and is the only and default perceptual mode at all times when there are any sensations of any kind occurring."

Still, there is still lots of integration in life --

"Accurately qualifying and quantifying depths of realization is a perpetually difficult business. In my own practice, I have noticed that realizations which occurred many years ago continue to percolate, continue to change how this Daniel operates, continue to benefit from cushion time and attention to dharma teachings and other practices, continue to benefit from interaction with other dharma practitioners and other social interactions, and seem to have no obvious endpoint in terms of how far they can go to gradually transform this organism. I have also mostly lived the life of a householder, being in graduate school and working at a professional job for most of my adult life except when on retreat. While caring for patients clearly has dharmic aspects to it, providing many opportunities to learn about suffering and to try to do something about it, there are those who have chosen lives dedicated to meditation and the reclusive life, and that causality can be significant." - https://www.mctb.org/.../depths-of-realization-and.../

mctb.org

The "Nothing To Do" and "You Are Already There" Schools

Richard Cooper Thanks. It sounds to me like the difficulty those people have is an inability to recognise, question and explore their beliefs.

Seems like having the right attitude helps with actualisation too. I hope I am fortunate enough to have the right attitude !

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20/10/2018

Bahiya Sutta, Dispassion and Spontaneous Perfection

Just some random short notes I have been wanting to jot down, reflecting my current understanding as experiential insight deepens in my practice.

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Many people mistaken letting go and dispassion in terms of dissociation (a subject 'letting go' and 'standing back' from object). This is not true letting go or dispassion.

'In the seen just the seen' with no 'you in terms of that' is true dispassion. It is the state where each sound, each color, each sensation is happening on its own, manifests on its own as its own radiance, and yet there is completely no additional fabrication, or whatever kind of identity in relation to that. This complete emptiness of any kind of identity and clinging or subject-object relation in relation to 'in the seen just the seen', 'in the heard just the heard' is true dispassion.

A dissociated state is just another form of grasping, attachment. It is attaching at 'something' or 'someone' being more true and real than the rest of the field.

....

There's absolutely no need to attempt to bring anything whatsoever, presence, witnessing, whatever, into sleep or any states (waking, dreaming, and deep sleep). Any dualistic effort is a form of doing. Bringing in a watcher is karma. All dharmas, all phenomena, are fundamentally quiescent as nirvana, fundamentally non-arising and naturally manifesting as one's own state of radiance. Therefore true practice is resting in the natural, spontaneous perfection of luminosity and emptiness. Practice becomes dynamic rather than technique-bound as the spontaneous unfolding or self-arising of all displays, activities, sounds, colors, sensations, gets auto-actualized as the wisdom of luminous-emptiness. Everything arises as the state of meditation, which is non-meditation. Yet this requires anatta and emptiness as pre-requisite.

Therefore, it is always the eventuality of every practitioner to discover that spontaneous perfection is the only course of liberation. Yet one must also be wary of falling into a nihilistic extreme of interpreting non-action as not needing practice or effort. We still have to meditate, but this meditation becomes directionless (or more accurately, aimlessness and wishlessness -- one of the three doors of liberation) and without subject-object (I'm here, trying to get 'there') but immediate practice-enlightenment or instant actualization in every encounter or activity, sitting, walking, working, encountering people. This effort is not the same as the dualistic effort of trying to attain a result in the future, or trying to sustain a subject/object structure by bringing in a dualistic form of watching.

There can and should be effort and focus in practice, but this effort and focus is applied in a way that completely dissolves the subject/object structure rather than retain or strengthen it, for example when being mindful of the breathing, the breathing is its own attention and awareness, there is no dualistic attempt to 'shine the spotlight of awareness on an object or a subject'. Effort and focus, and effortlessness becomes one. This is why Dogen's teachings are very useful here to counteract the nihilism of the wrongful understanding of non-action. The kind of "doing" or "action" we should be rid of is not "don't have to make any effort" but "not being affected by results/gain/loss", for it is the attachment to the results that are karmic. Each step, each breath, becomes the ends rather than the means -- it is the actualization of enlightenment/Buddha-nature rather than a means to get enlightenment in the future.

And this, also happens to be true non-meditation and non-action, beyond the sense of there being a meditator-meditation and actor-action.
"One time, Huineng, old Buddha of Caoxi, asked a monk, "do you depend upon practice and enlightenment?."

The monk replied,

"It's not that there is no practice and no enlightenment. Its just that it's not possible to divide them".

This being so, know that the undividedness of practice and enlightenment is itself the Buddha ancestors.

A walk with Dogen into our time xxv

The Essential Dogen: Writings of the Great Zen Master"

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21/10/2018

Importance of Energy Practices/Yoga

Thusness wrote years back:

Yes you should learn slowly and safely...no need to rush...half a year you will see the effect. My sensations are very powerful now...I want to focus my this technique for few months ... Anatta is very strong nowadays ... Wonder y...lol In addition to insights, the body has some serious obstruction that prevents full blown experience of no-self. When the intensity of sensation is strong, the transparency + insights of Anatta become very powerful and obvious...the natural intensity of sensations helps one to lose all sense of

self too... Soh Wei Yu 9/14, 3:22pm Soh Wei Yu Intensity of sensations come from energy practice? Thusness: Yes

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24/10/2018

[The Sun Does Not Rise or Set]

It's not often that I get to walk in dark places in Singapore, there's street lights everywhere. Yesterday I was walking somewhere that was dark and yet the light of boundless presence was so dazzling. Truly, there can be no darkness when your whole body-mind-universe is light, the light that 'outshines' all lights and darknesses, and yet is also none other than the lights and darknesses, the sounds and the silence.

Was reminded of a verse in the Upanishads, "Verily, for him who thus knows this Brahma—Upanishad, the sun does not rise or set. For him it is day for ever."

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22/01/2019

[Fearing No-Self]

Leander: "*Thanks for all the answers, it means a lot to me and makes it a lot more bearable already.*

*@An Eternal Now: ive read the first link. Suzanne Segals story and the two types of nondual contemplation after I AM.*
*i have to admit that just reading the contemplation spikes some panic in me because it implys i have to go further into no-mans land. Things like "theres no seer, just seeing". it makes me feel even less existent. As if thats the missing nail in the coffin to destroy me once and for all."*

Fear and panic arises due to the misconception that 'I' have existed in the first place and has to dissolve. This is a misunderstanding. There is no 'I' behind the seeing which is none other than colors, no 'I' or 'hearer' that is behind the hearing which is none other than sounds. Nothing needs to dissolve, it is seen through and realized to be always already the case. You think that hearing and seeing is the job of an agent, a perceiver, a doer, and you are some detached perceiver, but in reality scenery sees and sound hears. The agent never was. It only appears to be real, and while the delusion is there, the appearance is very strong and hypnotic. There is a constant self-refencing, a tiresome and tedious process of referencing every experience back to a presumed agent out of ignorance, from 'just the seen' to 'I see'. The seeing/colors, hearing/sounds, action/activity happen first, followed by an unnecessary self-referencing to an imaginary agent. This sense of being a self, an agent, a perceiver, a doer, can however be

challenged, investigated, and seen through. With the illusion seen through, the process of self-making naturally stops, it is not so much that a self is destroyed as it was never truly there. Nothing is lost, and in losing an illusion you 'gain' the world.

The old Zen koan goes:

The man sitting atop the hundred foot pole:
Though he's gained entry, this is not yet the real.
Atop the hundred foot pole, he should step forward:
The universe in all directions is the whole body.

Nothing is destroyed any more than seeing through the belief in the real existence of santa claus actually destroys some santa claus. You just wake up to reality. Oh, life is happening brilliantly without a center, without the need for the fiction of a center, and life is much more marvellous, wondrous, alive, boundless and free than the tiresome and fearful holding and grasping on to an unnecessary self-contraction and imagined entity and all the related sufferings. It's like holding on to hot charcoal and yet strangely not willing to release it due to fear of the unknown. Once the illusion is seen through and released there is a sense of freedom, release and fearlessness in facing life (see: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/08/fearless-samadhi.html )

Then there is no fear as this is realized to be always already the case. The notion that 'I' had existed at the center, experiencing and coordinating everything is unnecessary and unfounded. The absence of self and agent is also experienced positively as everything is brilliantly alive and self-luminous, the quality of 'witnessing' which was once seen as a background observer now is felt as a quality of everything revealing itself to itself. The seeing is seen-seeing, colors and sounds and sensations are just felt vividly where they are instead of being experienced from some vantagepoint of self. It is not a static state of detached uninvolvement in life, there is complete engagement and intimacy in all actions, chop wood, carry water.

What is called pure consciousness experience becomes effortless and natural: http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/library/topics/pce.htm , and in this state there can be no dissociation. If you do not experience the aspect of intense luminosity then joy and liveliness will not be felt (see: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/11/the-importance-of-luminosity.html ) The intimacy is not the intimacy of two entities meeting each other but the sense of gaplessness, when hearing a sound the sound is as if 'you', closer than your breath, when seeing the blue sky the blue sky is as if 'you', closer than your heartbeat. Everything is alive and vivid. So how can there be dissociation and derealization?

For a theoretical understanding of no-self also see
http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_baggini_is_there_a_real_you

For the experiential insights into no-self/anatta refer to On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

*William Jeffery Pratt:*

*Dear AEN,*

*Poignant and veracious.*

*Yet, the organism that hasn't awakened and the awakened organism will both automatically recoil when it unknowingly touches a red hot fire.*

The recoiling as a pure bodily function and activity will happen spontaneously without self-referencing. It is necessary and useful for the survival of this organism, be it awakened or not. It does not come with the kind of self-contraction and fear and grasping before awakening.

Some people will have glimpses of this 'spontaneous happening' even without realizing anatta. For example they may wake up from sleep and experience the body coughing by itself, too fast before the sense of self kicks in as they just woke up (the structures of subject/object, identity, selfing, takes some time to kick in after arousing from sleep). But then the sense of a detached observer then quickly kicks in, and there's a sense "oh I was just watching this thing, the body is doing its thing and I'm not the doer, I am the watcher". This is an experience of non-doership but NOT what I call realization of anatta, therefore dissociation still happens. Most people who have certain glimpses of non-self are talking about an experience of non-doership, which is not necessarily a non-dual experience, or a peak experience of PCE, but even if he/she experiences a PCE it is still not what I call the realization of anatta. Even one realizes non-dual luminosity as always undivided, they may still fall into the case of Thusness Stage 4 - subject/object non-division rather than realizing true anatta or no-subject of Thusness Stage 5 - Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment

As I often said (elsewhere) - for 8 years now, there has not been the slightest sense of agency, an agent, or subject/object division in any situation. Non-doership, no agent, and no subject-object division (vivid non-dual luminosity) all at once. Spontaneous and effortlessly so as a natural state. The aspect of no agent must be clear, not just non-doership, and not just subject/object non-division or non-dual luminosity either.

Like seeing a picture puzzle, once you see it and the insight stabilizes, you can't unsee it even if you want to.

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23/01/2019

Syncing +A and -A, Unity of Two Truths

At some point, after getting familiarized with the realization and experience of +A and -A, during meditation or practice the experiential taste suddenly syncs into one. That is, the taste of total exertion where a given phenomenon is a seamless exertion with all other interconnected phenomenon, and the non-arising, illusory nature of presencing syncs into one.

Dependent arising thus non-arising, non-arising thus dependent arising.

This is to see the unity of the two truths from the perspective of experiential insight.

When this is, that is. Neither this nor that arises. Dharma is - illusory, unborn, indestructible, and seamlessly connected, great and boundless activity.

While writing this I was reminded of this video - maybe not saying exactly the same thing as what I'm saying, but nonetheless a good video:

And as Thusness pointed out, what I just wrote is similar to what the Chinese text I showed him previously was saying:

http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_48e6b1250100ecmf.html

色不自色，由心故色，心不自心，由色故心
(2009-06-16 23:47:38)
标签：自心/学人/达摩祖师/血脉论/杂谈

达摩祖师《血脉论》中说：“色不自色，由心故色，心不自心，由色故心。”
也就是说色不是单独存在的，对应于心，才显现出色。心不是单独的存在，对应于色，才显现出心的存在。着两个是互为依存，互为显现的。
色毕竟空，也就是说没有色的存在了，心也就失去了显现的对立面，心也就不存在了。这就是佛陀告诉学人，凡所有相，皆是虚妄。不可以以为相是真实，相的当下就是即灭相。如果坚信不疑，则心自息。而达于无心。
心不自心，由色故心，就是说心的本身就是即灭相。没有一个心的实体存在。是由

于见相而显现出心的存在。如果当下无心，色便失掉对立的显现。故而佛说：“见诸相非相，即见如来。”如来者，无所从来，亦无所去，无相貌，无方所。毕竟空不可得。故而祖师讲：忘境犹易，忘心至难，众生不敢忘心，恐落于无捞摸处。现在的学人，执着有个心的存在。实际上这个心也是毕竟空,不可得

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05/02/2019

Actualization in Mundane Life and Encounters

**Someone wrote:**

If I'm alone in the forest, or my room, I find that anatta comes more naturally. The presence of other people takes me "away" from the view of "mere luminous activities".

But I've seen through it a couple of times (which feels rather peculiar), removing the personal aspect of the appearance of another person.

Any thoughts or suggestions on this?

**I wrote:**

The penetration of wisdom into all activities and the three states takes practice, so you might need to give yourself some time.

As practice progress, anatta and not only anatta but maha total exertion becomes natural. There must also be a certain degree of fearlessness (for boundless opening without reservation to any given situation/encounters) and non-attachment, then let this penetrate into sleep, then even if you face "monsters" (enough to scare the shit out of ordinary people), such experiences can transform into nondual bliss and clarity as I wrote in fearless samadhi https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../fearless... , otherwise there can be a habitual self-contraction. The Tibetans describe this as not letting the appearances turn into 'enemies' or 'others' but rather recognizing all appearances to be one's empty radiance, this is important even in death and bardo.

...

Soh Wei YuSunday, April 21, 2013 at 11:38pm UTC+10

facing all kinds of stuff in life and yet experiencing the three characteristics of self-liberation like you said, "non-duality, non-attachment and fearlessness" is how i understand dong zhong xiu (practice amidst movement) now

John TanSunday, April 21, 2013 at 11:39pm UTC+10

yes but with the direct and intuitive knowledge that there is no you facing anything, it is

the entire universe facing it. it is like all the phases of your insights actualized in this conventional world.

means when say talking to my children, it is neither me nor him....it is one activity. like i talk to you, it does not mean that soh does not exist. it is just no thusness or soh, only the question on hand that makes up the situation... or when you talking to your teacher, no teacher or student relationship...just a single activity...get it?

teacher is not teacher, student not student...teacher becomes the student, the student becomes the teacher, the teacher is the teacher, the student is the student, no teacher, no student...all as one activity...

everything interpenetrates, everything interdefines, there is no everything... when eyes are open...the spontaneous presence of scenery...no seer, no seeing, no seen...seer is the seeing is the seen...just this, the entire movement.

this must be your moment to moment encounter in mundane activity. deconstruct self, deconstruct physical, deconstruct external, deconstruct internal...be free from all arbitrary definitions and stories...then whatever experience is neither physical nor mental nor spiritual...just direct, non-conceptual as it is state of self arising... be free from all arbitrary thoughts and definitions...don't let 'yourself' be troubled by all these so that this activity is unobstructed and uncontrived in clean purity...then experience will be transparent and total.

...

He wrote: Soh Wei Yu thank you. I find John's words there particularly poignant! 🙏 This investigation of anatta with others is getting interesting... Thank you all for the input. ❤️

I wrote further: “Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise the sails and row with the pole. Although you row, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat no one could ride. But you ride in the boat and your riding makes the boat what it is. Investigate such a moment.”

- Dogen

(+A)

When you cook, there is no self that cooks, only the activity of cooking. The hands moves, the utensils act, the water boils, the potatoes peels …here there is no room for simplicity or complications, the “kitchen” went beyond it’s own imputation and dissolved into the activity of cooking and the universe is fully engaged in this cooking.

(-A)

30 years of practice and 23 years of kitchen life is like a passing thought.

How heavy is this thought?

The whereabouts of this thought?

Tastes the nature of this thought.

It never truly arises.

~ Thusness

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17/02/2019

**The Transient Universe has a Heart**

I mentioned earlier that I will write something about dull nondual experience and realising the Presence or the Heart.

There is something tremendously alive, intelligent, a quality of pure Presence and that is nothing inert but intensely luminous (not in the sutric definition of purity and emptiness) but in the sense that the intensity of our cognizant mind evokes the sense of powerful radiance and illumination but without any separation between an illuminator and the illuminated, with absolutely no agent/perceiver/doer involved. It can evoke the sense of a radiance that is so intense that it completely outshines all visual darkness of night and brightness of the sun. This Presence is mystically alive, wondrous and magnificent, “more real than real”, and the complete opposite of an inert or merely some dull state of non conceptuality and absorption.

This outshining of Presence-Awareness is not about some hidden invisible background existing behind manifestation (which will be perceived this way at the I AM stage) but is vividly manifest or “Presencing” (Presencing is a better word than Presence as it is not a static background or entity and none other than the dynamic stuff of transience) as the very “realness” or “vividness” of any appearance/display, color, sound, scent, touch, taste, thought, as if everything comes alive and there is something very wonderful and beautiful about it. The brilliant light of Presence-Awareness is none other than the body-mind-universe which when deconstructed and freed from self/Self/physicality is experienced as spheres of vivid light, colors, sounds, and sensations.

This luminosity is also not merely a heightened state of clarity as I explained:

http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/07/luminosity-vs-clarity.html

“Someone asked me about luminosity. I said it is not simply a state of heightened clarity or mindfulness, but like touching the very heart of your being, your reality, your very essence without a shadow of doubt. It is a radiant, shining core of Presence-Awareness, or Existence itself. It is the More Real than Real. It can be from a question of "Who am I?" followed by a sudden realization. And then with further insights you touch the very life, the very heart, of everything. Everything comes alive. First as the innermost 'You', then later when the centerpoint is dropped (seen through -- there is no 'The Center') every 'point' is equally so, every point is A 'center', in every encounter, form, sound and activity.”

There is a wide variety of methods to bring oneself to an abrupt stoppage of concepts and a face to face encounter of Pure Presence. All sorts of ways actually, some are safer and some are a bit more risky. For example Thusness, I, Ramana Maharshi, Ch'an Master Hsu Yun and many others have awakened through self-enquiry and we are exponents of the method of self-enquiry. Sim Pern Chong awakened to the I AM through breath meditation. Some get awakened through a mere pointing out by a teacher. Some awakened through yogic, tantric, kundalini paths. Ram Dass, David Carse and others have had their initial realization of the Heart-essence through the use of psychedelic

drugs like magic mushrooms, ayahuasca, 5-MEO-DMT, LSD, and so on. (I am not advocating the use of drugs here, just stating that some people have used them with such results) There are many other methods and koans I did not mention.

And yet, many have awakened through a simple shout by a Zen Master or a Dzogchen Master. A sudden unexpected KATZ! or a PHAT! of a Zen and Dzogchen master brings one into the immediate thoughtless face-to-face encounter of the luminous heart-essence. At that moment, you just shift out from all that nonsense and garbage in your head into just that instance of being blanked out into Presence. It is not an inert trance but an alert, alive and yet thoughtless state of Presence. Try it!

But whatever method one uses to introduce that initial glimpse and taste of Presence, it is always through the deepening of insight into non-dual anatta that brings that taste to effortless uncontrivance and full-blown maturity in all encounters and manifestations.

So when one has access to a state of nondual, one should ask whether it is dull and inert or suffused with a powerful sense of Presence. After anatta this Presence is no longer seen as a background but vividly shining forth as the manifold dynamic and seamlessly interconnected display, and the play of dharma and dependent origination is something which is alive, not just inert and mechanistic as someone wrote. All the qualities of I AM - infinite like space, powerful Presence, Luminosity, Clarity, Vitality and Intelligence are effortlessly experienced without contrivance, and furthermore no longer seen as something hidden behind but fully manifested from moment to moment activity and the sense of cosmic Impersonality which was once experienced as being lived through a reified cosmic intelligence is now experienced as the total exertion where a single activity is the exertion of the Whole - an activity that is seamlessly connected and coordinated with the entire Whole, a spontaneous exertion of the Whole of seamless dependencies. In other words all the taste of Presence similar to the I AM, including all the four aspects of I AM and the experience of anatta as requisites are fully present in the experience of Maha suchness, which is an experience of greatness beyond measure, where even a single breath feels cosmic and limitless.

"The purpose of anatta is to have full blown experience of the heart -- boundlessly, completely, non-dually and non-locally. Re-read what I wrote to Jax.

In every situations, in all conditions, in all events. It is to eliminate unnecessary contrivity so that our essence can be expressed without obscuration.

Jax wants to point to the heart but is unable to express in a non-dual way... for in duality, the essence cannot be realized. All dualistic interpretation are mind made. You know the smile of Mahākāśyapa? Can you touch the heart of that smile even 2500 yrs later?

One must lose all mind and body by feeling with entire mind and body this essence which is 心 (Mind). Yet 心 (Mind) too is 不可得 (ungraspable/unobtainable).. The purpose is not to deny 心 (Mind) but rather not to place any limitations or duality so that 心 (Mind) can fully manifest.

Therefore without understanding 缘 (conditions)，is to limit 心 (Mind). without understanding 缘 (conditions)，is to place limitation in its manifestations. You must fully experience 心 (Mind) by realizing 无心 (No-Mind) and fully embrace the wisdom of 不可得 (ungraspable/unobtainable)." - John Tan/Thusness, 2014

17/02/2019

**Dependent Formation, No Coming and Going, Release**

Just like a movie, appearances are dependently originating as formation like burning flames and bubbles without anything coming or going, completely essenceless. Appearances are completely empty and non arising by nature. Seeing this alone liberates. There is no persisting Essence or self/Self anywhere, only dependent formations. Nothing is there, void of substance yet appearing like flames and bubbles. As with a movie, any sense of something or someone coming from here or going there is wrong. It is because we fail to see the nature of dharma (phenomena) as dependent formation that we conceive of phenomena as having essences, as having a life of their own, that could come and go, arise, abide and cease on its own. Has the burning flame came from somewhere, arise, abide, and cease, or is merely an empty dependent formation? You may not attribute some essence to characters in the movie coming from somewhere and going somewhere, but you attribute this to things and persons in real life. Rather see that all phenomena are like burning flame or bubble that manifest on conditions and cease upon cessation or conditions but without anything coming or going, arising or ceasing. If you try to find where they abide, where they go and come from, nothing whatsoever can be found. Appearing but nothing “there”.

Do you say the flame has some Essence that has gone somewhere else when ceased? Do you say some Essence has arrived from somewhere when fire starts burning? No, just dependent formations. All afflictive and non afflictive phenomena roll on in dependence without a persisting Essence, agent, or medium. Yet based on yesterday’s events, certain thoughts or actions take place today, as the continuity of the chain of dependencies. Still it is dependent formation, no self/Self involved.

Clinging and afflictions subside in actualizing this as there cannot be any sort of grasping at what is completely without Essence or self-existence. But this liberation does not come from the illusion-like experience but from the complete release of any notion of Essence.. the taste is illusion like but it is the release of Essence that is liberating. Just like it is not the experience of PCE/pure consciousness experience or a state of no-mind (which can simply be peak experiences) that liberates but the release of self/Self from realization of anatta that is liberating.

Seeing this requires us to see the right relationship between experience, view and realization, and not skewing to one aspect.

20 March 2019

[The Magical Fairytale-like Wonderland and Paradise of this Verdant Earth Free from Affective Emotions, Reactions and Sufferings]

Picture: Hawaii

Just now while jogging.. while looking at the trees I suddenly recalled some of my peak experiences of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) many years ago, even before anatta was realized in 2010.. (although anatta realization was a crucial key that made this all effortless and natural) the wow factor that arise from the marveling at the wondrous and magical quality of everything and it occurred to me that the wondrous and magical quality is very much present as every vivid actuality of all forms even now except without the aspect of astonishment as it has become a natural quality of experience. It is all so naturally magical, marvelous, and wondrous like I am literally living in a paradise, but without any 'fireworks' or sense that some special event is happening. It is an all-encompassing (and non-metaphysical/non-ontological/non-subjective) Pristine/Pure Awareness completely devoid of a center or boundary, devoid of a self/Self/agent/perceiver/doer/be-er radiating as none other than the very textures and colors and sounds and sensations from moment to moment. The actuality of everything, trees, sky, ground, people, things and events, are revealed in each moment as magical, wonderful, marvelous, alive and vivid beyond description as in being magical and wondrous like actually living in a fairy-tale like paradise without the slightest trace of a self/Self, agent, doer, be-er, being, or the slightest division of a subject and object.

Everything (colors/smells/sounds/sensations/touch/thoughts) has a sparkling intensity and brilliance of aliveness that simply stands out.

People not familiar might on first glance think I am describing some special altered state of consciousness unnaturally induced through the ingestion of a psychedelic drug or through some intensive meditative or yogic technique, but I can assure you this is now my everyday and every moment sober, natural, spontaneous and effortless state of experience.

This aspect of a PCE or an Actual Freedom is quite well described by the Actual Freedom teachings (which I have been revisiting recently while helping to write the Awakening to Reality guide), except I would not make ontological statements about the physical universe as I do not have notions of inherent existence with regards to a physical universe out there. The infinitude (boundlessness) of the universe participating in this very spontaneous breathing and activity is experientially actualized as a state of total exertion, with no sense of solidity or inherency involved, therefore I am free from any such views as rejected by the Buddha in the Culamalunkya Sutta as I do not make ontological assertions of some eternal and infinite universe that inherently exists out there, nor is there the slightest sense that a soul exists at all.

Then it also occurred to me that those very familiar with anatta shouldn't be unfamiliar with total exertion and conditionality (though the view aspect of dependent origination seems missing in teachings like AF), for there is thoroughgoing and cosmic relativity (as in a completely seamless activity that is conventionally expressed as relative origination) in anatta without the slightest trace of an Absolute. It is in this sense of total exertion and thoroughgoing relativity and exertion where the entire universe is participating in every single activity including jogging and breathing, that teachings like Hua-Yen makes sense, however I have to say that I do not have the slightest trace of a metaphysical reality, a noumenon, a Being or a framework of that sort in my consciousness, as my state of consciousness is constantly completely devoid of a self or a Self. And this is why when writings surface recently about noumenon/phenomenon, being, etc, I have to say, those terms resonate with my earlier stages of realisation but my current state is nothing of that kind, there is nothing like that in anatta.

A thought did cross my mind just now -- if Actual Freedom's Richard reads Zen Master Dogen's teachings, he might find some of them resonating, but I did not find any reference to Zen Master Dogen's works in Actual Freedom's website. E.g. http://dogenandtheshobogenzo.blogspot.com/2010/08/existence-time-emptiness-of-what.html , also among many things Soto Zen (Dogen's lineage teachers) teachers write, Shinshu Roberts wrote the following, "Since our activity is not a progression from

delusion to enlightenment made solely by the independent self, Dogen defines the first thought of practice as 'immediate present ultimate Dharma' or genjokoan: the presence and perfection of all dharmas as they are in the here-and-now.'

Hee-Jin Kim further explains the meaning of genjokoan: 'It does not suggest an evolutionary ascent from hidden-ness to manifestation, or from imperfection to perfection, or conversely, an emanational descent from one to many, or from reality to appearance. Rather, things, events, beings are already unmistakably what they truly are; what is more, they are vibrant, transparent, and bright in their as-they-are-ness.'"

This state of consciousness is devoid of affective emotional imposition on the purity and perfection of the experience. Everything is clean, perfect, wonderful, marvelous and alive, without the additional layer of obscurity that consists of the solidifying of a self/Self with its incumbent habitual (or what Richard calls "instinctual") affective reactions, emotional reactions. For example just now while listening to the baby crying, the crying is incredibly "actual" just as the trees and rivers and buildings are "actual" - not in the sense that they are felt as solid, physical and inherently existing, but "actual" in the sense of vividly manifesting in a completely "pristine" and "unsullied" state, the complete actuality of sound unobscured by any trace of emotional or mental reactions, in actual fact completely unsullied by the slightest trace of subjectivity -- only the crying just as it is, vividly heard, with no self/Self or passions or aversions whatsoever.

And this is how the teachings of Buddha in Bahiya Sutta, and its related Malunkyaputta Sutta leads to complete liberation --

"Then, Malunkyaputta, with regard to phenomena to be seen, heard, sensed, or cognized: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. 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 cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Malunkyaputta, 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 yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

"Knowing an idea — mindfulness lapsed — attending to the theme of 'endearing,' impassioned in mind, one feels and remains fastened there. One's feelings, born of the idea, grow numerous, Greed & annoyance injure one's mind. Thus amassing stress, one is said to be far from Unbinding. Not impassioned with forms — seeing a form with mindfulness firm — dispassioned in mind, one knows and doesn't remain fastened there. While one is seeing a form — and even experiencing feeling — it falls away and

doesn't accumulate. Thus one fares mindfully. Thus not amassing stress, one is said to be in the presence of Unbinding."

- https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN35_95.html

As a sidenote, I am very blissful these days (not the sort of 'emotional' bliss that is contaminated by self/Self, but always a radiant joyfulness springing up spontaneously as a natural ongoing delightfulness of no-self/no-Self, happy and delightful and smiling very often), today even more so.

....

Update:

Some of my descriptions from related discussions:

"Strong and vivid radiance..

Even now the smell of food is standing out in intensity

...[sights have a] HD hypervivid quality...

...Actually more accurate description is magical and marvellous colors (as in the vivid 'textures' of what's called trees, sky, houses, people, streets, etc), sounds (as in the vivid 'textures' of a bird chirping, sound of traffic, etc), scents (as in the aromas of food, and plants, etc), etc. Complete perfection with a stark intensity...

Yet feels completely natural. Without slightest sense of distance or self/Self, even the tiniest details becomes starkly clear

This sense of perfection and magical radiance of everything is still there even when I'm physically tired and lack sleep on the previous night

By magical what I mean is a sense that there's something very magnificent, almost like beauty but it is not beauty vs ugly and is not at all a subjectively imposed or affective feeling of beauty, but a sense of perfection.. like I look at the fly crawling on my skin, the fly is so completely perfect, like part of the paradise (note: this is different from Thusness's usage of the term 'magical')

Like a ball of radiance, except radiance as none other than the boundless world of forms, colors, textures and sounds, that is the very radiance, for it is the world that is the radiance and nothing else. Not a subjective radiance standing apart from forms.

There is nothing subjectively imposed here.. when I say "sense of perfection" that is already not quite accurate as it conveys some subjectively imposed interpretation of

perfection.. rather it is the world that is the perfection and each moment carries the flavor of perfection

Perfection being merely a qualitative description of the pristine state of consciousness/radiant forms, not an affective feeling of "it is perfect" but neither is it an objective characteristic of some inherently existing object (there is neither subject nor object as subject and object is conceptual)

But this state of consciousness is not just heightened clarity... it's like even the trees swaying is marvelously and magically alive and life reveals its significance and meaning all around. I think this is what Richard calls "meaning of life".

The emotional model of AF makes some sense"

...

Driving around Singapore, it feels like I am experiencing Singapore for the first time.

...
I would also just like to add that this luminosity has always been experienced since anatta 8 years back and as glimpses even before anatta realization, but it's getting more intense after a few events these days. Or as John Tan (Thusness) suggest, some overcoming of the center. He told me he actually expected that I'll experience this a long time ago, but I was late by 2 years from his expectation

...

[9:40 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Now I'm walking.. absolutely no self /Self/agency at all.. and the pce [i.e. the vivid radiance of anatta that 'makes' everything like a wondrous paradise is now my unbroken state] is still there as before but the main characteristic that stands out now is not the radiance but the walking is just infinitude of the universe as the seamless activity.. in the absence of an agent/self/Self there is just this

[9:42 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: [And also the experience comes with a] Very still mind.. except when writing this

[9:42 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Yes don't focus, relax and be light. No self, no center. Don't over do. Learn a somatic technique.

[9:52 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: yea this cosmic sense of centerless ness is different from focused kind of pce.. it's like pce is already natural here and makes no sense to

focus more.. the cosmic sense of Maha does not require focusing but complete opening without self/Self/agent... it created no tension in my head at all

[9:55 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Yes

[9:57 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Just centerless and without background, light and immense. No focus no concentration. Natural and free.

[9:57 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: And master a somatic technique to release your body and any form of energy imbalance.

...

“Arthur Deller not that it needs a name but that’s what I call interpenetration. What is so beautiful about this is that, like other realization “stages” or fundamental shifts in experiential insight, it is seen to be more primary, natural and spontaneous than what came before. Before meaning sense gates as separate from one another even if explored directly and non conceptually as pristine, complete, self releasing phenomena. As this interpenetration becomes more and more “just the way it is” it also becomes more intuitively clear that it is uncaused, free and spontaneous. Here a great relaxation is possible. Practice of vigilance gives way to immersion and unfettered enjoyment, but without contraction. That last part is important. Before a thorough examination of the vivid, all encompassing, no-remainder nature of each sense gate (including consciousness), what we think of relaxation is still intertwined with subtle avoidance mechanisms. So then relaxation is related to personal will more than a natural expression of harmonization with the flow of phenomonality (no-gap).” - Angelo Gerangelo

...

[8/4/19, 7:19:55 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Btw the other day I was investigating fear.. then I saw how fear is tied to the sense of self that feels like its existence needs to be protected.. but upon investigating that sense of self is completely seen to be a complete delusional fabrication without basis and then released. It seems to improve my fearlessness...
...Also just now I see that everything is total exertion.. even looking at the patch of grass is the body mind universe in total exertion.. so the infinitude should be tasted as a natural state in each moment

[9/4/19, 7:25:01 AM] John Tan: Yes contemplation is a good practice but more importantly is to arise the willinglessness to let go.  Not through analysis alone but recognition of the energetic pattern of attachment.

Actually anatta itself is sufficient to dissolve fear,  just how deep the insight goes.  Ignorance manifests as attachment but it is difficult to uproot as seeing through is only at the surface compare to the aeon lives of attachments and we constantly re-enforce such view.  Wrong view and attachments beget each other and one attachment leads to another endlessly.  The "willingness" that let go must arise to directly feel the afflictive chain as a form of energetic pattern, analysis itself is insufficient.

[9/4/19, 8:02:54 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..

[10/4/19, 3:28:33 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I looked down from tall building over railing.. not much fear.. maybe initially a slight body sensation but nothing like before.. maybe if someone push me I might.. stopped looking after people come out of bunk and I don't want to look funny 🤣

[10/4/19, 3:29:37 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I like to just stand there looking at the scenery... stillness, boundlessness, trees and horizon

...

"I" am my emotions and fears and the emotions and fears are "me" in the same way that the aggregates are collated into a Self by imputation.. even as there is no agent for any arising including the sense of self which occurs by dependent arising.

The sense of self and emotions and fears as a protective mechanism is not necessary for the optimum functioning of life.. it has served its purpose. Seeing this there is another level of release which seems like a veil has lifted.. there is now a stillness

There is a sense of deep stillness that is the character of the universe.. even as activities, sounds, people walking and everything is happening, everything feels very still. Amidst the centerlessness and boundlessness there is a stillness.. both in the sense of silence and the sense that there is no sense of movement.

Just sitting on the bed... seeing the ceiling, the link door, the fan whirling sound... all these simple things are delightful without any other entertainments. And even seeing the fan is inseparable with the total exertion of my breathing.. the movement of the diaphragm, my eyes, the fan, the wind blowing...

...

Senses are naturally heightened and everything takes on a depth and freshness like you never experienced before. Colors literally feels deeper and more vibrant, sounds and scents are felt with stark vividness, an energetic pulsation of sensation flows throughout the body, and you can't help but be in a state of wonderment at the aliveness of the

universe. That's just the radiance aspect. There is also a complete absence of self/Self and only the forms and textures and fabric of the moment are the radiance, nothing else behind or besides as if experiencing things through a separative veil, that hallucinatory separative veil and background self/Self preventing a complete gaplessness and directness and immediacy of the experience of actual that is conventionally called "people, things and events" is realised to be completely delusory and extinguished. Without that hallucinatory veil, the other person you meet, the sun in the distance is seen and experienced to be no more distant than your heartbeat. For no longer do you see yourself as the seer of scenery, in seeing there is just radiant colors, in sensing just sensations without a sensor. This absence of distance and separation is called "actual intimacy" by Richard but a better term would be gaplessness as there is simply no one to "be intimate with" another, there is only another - the actuality of "people, things and events".

The sense of a self that feels like its existence needs to be protected or feels threatened and fearful or distressed and any other manners of emotional affliction is also seen to be a complete phantasm, a delusional construct without the slightest existence in actuality and thus extinguished, leaving the perfection and purity of the actual and the trees and nature appears as a paradisiacal wonderland full of neverending gladness and delight. You smile more. There is a complete absence of grim and glum in the "actual", only bright, joyful radiance and peace.

The radiance that is the very forms is always already so but the separative veil and identity prevents the full blossoming of the radiance and infinitude of the universe. This delusional veil of identity dulls out perception of life. It literally dulls our experience in the opposite way that psychedelics heightens it or tunes it up (albeit only temporarily - but once identity is completely relinquished this non-separative heightened perception of life becomes permanent).

This separative veil and identity must be completely seen through as a delusion and completely extinguished without a trace for the permanent actualization of the gapless and direct radiance of the actual and the infinitude of total exertion. In the infinitude of the universe, everything you see and experience is centerless and boundless, even the words on the screen is the exertion of the ten directions and three times (limitless space and limitless time), and yet the universe is at a standstill, a complete stillness or lack of continuity of something or 'myself' over time.

This separative veil and identity is precisely what must be "cleansed" from the "doors of perception" that prevents us from the direct living of the magical wonderland of the actual, such as William Blake have said,

“If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.”

...

"I’m now at the park.. the infinitude, aliveness, perfection of everything is strong.. but no tenseness. There is the experience that this body and every body and everything is the expression of the infinitude of the universe.. like I am the same stuff as everything, but I do not have the slightest sense of being a universal consciousness [there is no trace of metaphysicality or subjectivity here]. Neither do I reify some solid physical universe existing out there.. it’s just that the experience is like that

There is much joy and wonder.. my eyes are open wide.

The experience is like richard says, I am the infinite universe experiencing itself as this sensate and reflective body mind

Actually to say the experience is like this is wrong.. as if it implies subjectivity.. to say it is a physical universe out there is wrong.. to say it is universal consciousness is wrong.. yet it is experienced as cosmic exertion

Everything is seamlessly connected.. and interpenetrating. And the seamless infinitude of the universe does not take away the awareness of specific causalities, like I clearly know when an ant is biting my legs, that the pain is linked to the ant biting.

There is no effort at all in this state.. no concentration at all.. in fact concentration will probably spoil the natural boundless perfection

I think I do feel light as feather and immense as universe..."

...

"Sorry I didn’t look into your previous mail, lots of things have been happening to my life lately and something happened to my practice lately that resembles some of the things on the AF site. There is/was the intense actualization of the previous realization (I've had this realization of anatta for 8+ years with varying degrees or intensity in experience since then) of the radiance that is none other than the textures and details of infinite world (which makes the world a paradisiacal wonderland of incredible aliveness and in that sense resembles a constant trip on a psychedelic drug like LSD despite being completely sober, the colors literally look brighter and deeper, the scents and sounds and tactile sensations all becomes intensified and experienced differently - it felt like my brain, body and state of consciousness underwent a form of mutation and transformation) and there is/was an ongoing surge of super-active energy-sensation

running through the body (which has by now mellowed a little but not completely gone and I feel this is what makes me more awake and energized in the day), and the state of consciousness was/is so incredibly intense and blissful.

However, at one point an energy imbalance developed (and I think it was partly due to my wrong way of practicing, my overfocusing on the details of the world in PCE created a rather tense energy), a stuck energy in the head and third eye chakra that caused headaches, affected my state of consciousness and thought process (I can hardly focus on work during that time, I was just lucky I didn't have a very busy schedule at work back then), made me barely able to work and function and sleepless (at the peak of the imbalance at least for one day I could not sleep at all - my body laid on the bed while the mind was awake) and then on the last day I actually spent half an hour in the office toilet to calm my energies with the nausea which was hard to bear and on that day I entered a half-awake trance like state and had flashes of figures (like two brief one-second flashes of hallucination - one of a witch-looking woman wearing black and one of an alien-looking man with big eyes) and on a separate occasion (not tied to or caused by the hallucination - the brief flashes of images caused no fear in me) a brief one second flash of bodily sensations that seemed like fear caused by (or rather, is none other than a brief outburst of) the agitation of stuck energy but without any mental story or emotional content. I intuitively stood up and walked around, as soon as I stood up it subsided. But nonetheless it did cast doubt on my having overcome fear, but a further insight some days later seemed to do further damage to the sense of self involved in fear. Also, during that day I entered the world of sound where music took on a new depth while relaxing with music, but I quickly snapped out of it as I knew any focusing on sound will agitate my energies further. After these unpleasant experiences I thought to myself that I needed my family members to drive me home from work that day as I did not think it will be safe for me to operate a vehicle with my condition then. Fortunately by 5pm+ the tense energy in my head and chest suddenly lifted and my mind went back to normal. It has been solved since then (it's been about 2~3 weeks already), no more headaches, stuck and tense energy, trouble falling asleep, brain fog, etc. I was very wary of consuming caffeine (I avoided all coffee, tea, and chocolates) then as even a cup of tea was able to trigger another episode of a shift of consciousness and energy that sort of resembles the over-excited energy even about 1~2 weeks ago, but by now I am able to enjoy a cup of coffee without too much issues.

I was reminded of Richard's 2 years period of mental agony and 'brain excitation' and U.G. Krishnamurti's 'calamity' that he said was a mental torture which lasted 3 years. Fortunately that only lasted like a week or so and I am so glad to have solved that rather quickly (instead of years) with the advise of Thusness who seems to have gone through all these, he basically taught me to relax, completely stop any thinking or contemplating (including but not limited to any issues pertaining to self/no-

self/actual/radiance/universe/etc) as it has been my experience too that any thinking simply agitates my energies further at that point, stop focusing in a contrived manner, stop focusing on radiance and simply concentrate on somatic practice and rooting to the earth, bringing the energy into the abdomen and ground. That helped. (For a somewhat related energy practice, see https://buddhismnow.com/2015/09/12/zen-sickness-by-zen-master-hakuin/) John Tan had also informed me that the energy imbalance could have been far worse had I not nipped it in the bud.

Now all the good things remain without the energy imbalance stuff, like the full glory of PCE and the infinitude of the universe (without any need for focusing or effort - the centerless, boundlessness and infinitude of the universe is simply spontaneously present and living this 'flesh and blood body') where the field of consciousness is very naturally, unconstricted by the sense of a center, the vast infinite expanse (centerless, boundless) of the universe without the slightest trace of self/Self in which this body and everybody and everything is the expression of/with, a total exertion with the whole universe, including lessened sleep (right after I overcome the energy imbalance: 4-5 hours, now [2 to 3 weeks later] 5-6 hours, but in the past I can sleep anywhere from 7 to 10 hours plus naps in the afternoon if I'm free) but have no trouble falling asleep at all, and I feel much more energised with that lessened amount of sleep than when I was waking up with the help of alarm clocks with 7 hours of sleep everyday back then. John Tan (Thusness) himself sleeps only 4 to 5 hours everyday and has told me 10+ years ago that at some point my sleep will lessen and I will undergo a bodily transformation and become beaming with clarity and energy (the details of what he described was identical to what I have underwent recently), and recently he said he has been expecting that I would experience what I've been experiencing recently but I was behind his expected schedule by 2 years. I see the lessened need for sleep as a positive development for me, as that means I have more time to spend on other things.

This intense apperception has been ongoing in an unbroken way for a month or more, though there has been a gradual building up for months until a triggering event about a month back when I was contemplating on a PCE that made it go off the roof. The constant mode of heightened apperception seems to lessen or blocks out my ability to visualise and imagine. When closing eyes the state of consciousness is still apperception where only the vivid actuality of blackness is present along with whatever visual (non-imagined) colors imprinted due to lighting. Daydreaming seems gone or almost (if I relax I can still get a few wandering thoughts but that’s it, I cannot really enter into a state of daydreaming) whereas I used to enjoy daydreaming especially when younger, yet I do not think I have 'no imagination capacity' (I can still get a faint semblance of an image I used to be able to conjure up with considerably more effort, it doesn’t come as naturally or easily as before).

Dreams seems to have changed or is changing, I think I am dreaming less, with perhaps less visual content than before (I do not recall much visual contents, however I can't be sure if they completely lack that aspect). The last vivid dream with full on imagery was 1+ months back - I dreamt I was in a lift and that lift failed, I went into a free-fall from the 10th floor to the 1st and I thought I was going to die but I experienced 0 fear, anxiety, tenseness, emotions at all. Emotions now seem to have reduced a lot or changed and it is tempting at times to think "this is it, I'm free from affective emotions" but I still hesitate to make claims about being free from affective emotions as I think I will need more time to observe the changes - IMO the only way to get a good gauge of any changes is through time-testing in challenging conditions and utter sincerity (many have dropped claims later on, I would rather not make a claim to have them dropped later, making some claims to finality is not necessary to me). I am not too concerned whether I am there or I am not there, what matters more is the ongoing moment-to-moment actualization of freedom and peace, and if anything that hinders freedom arises, then they too can be investigated and dissolved or released with practice. And despite whatever breakthroughs we have in practice, life goes on - there are still so many things to be learnt and experienced in life, our new insights and state of consciousness continues to be integrated in various ways, and so on. It's not some be-all-end-all event in life that marks the end of any further developments down the road. If anything, perhaps it marks a new beginning in life, where life starts to be lived in an ever-fresh and pristine manner.

But the best thing in terms of affect so far is that the constant apperception is such a joyful, clean, pristine state of appreciating the boundless and radiant world that there isn't room for unpleasant emotions like sadness, boredom, depression, etc. There is certainly no more "Monday blues" or any kind of "blues" at all. It make sense now in my experience when Richard says his days are one perfect day after another. Even lying on bed, looking at the ceiling, the sound of the humming and background noises is joyful. Any added entertainment on top of that perfection is just another addition on top of perfection."

...

This state of apperception is effortlessly and naturally present from the very moment I wake up to the moment I sleep, for example when I wake up sometimes a sound is heard and I do not even know where I am (the body is lying on the bed but the mind hasn't cognized that on the very first moment of waking up) in contrast to the bird chirping or the fan humming as there is simply no 'I' to be located anywhere, there is only everything everywhere... it is almost as if I am at the sound of the bird chirping except there is no 'I' to 'be at' or 'be one with' the sound, there is only sound. The reflection of the orange rising sun over the window in the next building shines as vivid

radiance with flawless perfection... the radiant energies courses through the body, energising and vitalising my day. All these informs me that it's going to be yet another perfect day in paradise even before I open my eyes. When driving, when walking, overlooking the long stretch of road over the horizon, there is no center, no reference-point, no center-of-reference, and no circumference... the whole universe is walking, is the walking, is the driving, where the movement of legs is not done or perceived by an 'I' (there is no doer, thinker, feeler, watcher, cognizer, being/Being whatsoever, only action) and this body is walking inseparably from the entire universe, it is not the case that there is a body here and a separate universe out there in which the body moves through.

.....

Update: Certain descriptions of PCE and Actualism are now a very, very close description to what I am experiencing intensely on a constant and unbroken basis for the past 1+ month. However, as the Actualists experience an inherently existing, solid and physical universe, it is not completely identical to what I experience, although on the aspect of anatta and total exertion there are similarities. However as Vineeto [an *actually free* individual] informed me, 'it is my direct experience that trees and rivers and buildings … and birds and clouds and the entire physical universe are solid, physical and inherently existing.'

For me the world like a car, a car cannot be found to exist as any particular parts (windscreen/engine/doors/etc designated in isolation or separated from each other cannot be asserted as a car on their own), functions (such as driving), and conditions involved in the driving, nor does a car exist in and of itself something apart from those parts, functions and conditions, but depend on these parts and functions and conditions there is the valid convention 'car', that 'car' is merely imputed in dependence. Therefore the 'car' does not 'inherently exist in and of itself' as a soul-like essence to be found as a 'thing' somewhere, but is imputed in dependence, yet I am not asserting non-existence. Likewise to anything else in the universe. What is experienced in PCE (or what appears to me similar to PCE) to me does not inherently exist with a soul-like substance to be found anywhere, yet is vividly clear, alive, and not in any way subjective (I do not subsume them into a universal subjectivity or consciousness).

I do not experience an inherently existing physical universe, nor do I experience an inherently existing awareness/Self/Brahman. I experience a fourth alternative (to the normal, spiritual/metaphysical, physical). My direct experience is without a who, where, or when, and yet there is not just blankness or nothing. I think spontaneous presencing is a good term. That spontaneous and seamless presencing is not generated by a

self/Self and yet is not 'inherently there in and of itself', rather it is spontaneously presencing via total exertion (conventionally expressed as dependent origination or conditionality), empty and luminous. It is not some self-existing metaphysical presence, Absolute or Being, nor is spontaneous presencing a formless entity - whatever arises is spontaneous presencing, always seen, heard, tasted and experienced. What that is not seen, not heard and not experienced, is merely our conceptual idea of what "Presence" is. Neither is spontaneous presencing an inherently existing universe, nor is spontaneous presence manifesting causelessly/randomly/by chance, rather that spontaneous presencing is none other than the Maha (great/boundless) total exertion of the seamless conditions of the three times and ten directions, however it is not a linear causality where cause and effect are strictly separate with an actor (cause) and acted-upon (effect). As Dogen said, "Cause is not before and effect is not after." and John Tan wrote in 2013, "Do you feel being caused or effected? It is just a single flow. Now when we see one, the 10000 things arise". You can say what I experience (there is no 'I') is a spontaneous presencing that is none other than a seamlessly interdependent, radiant and empty universe.

Also, here are some quotations where I find some similarities between Zen Master Dogen and AF Richard's message (both talk and emphasize about total exertion/the infinitude of the universe being apperceptively aware as a flesh and blood body in their own ways) although I am not suggesting that their expressions are completely similar -

*From **Bendowa**, by Zen Master Dogen*

*Question Ten:*

*Some have said: Do not concern yourself about birth-and-death. There is a way to promptly rid yourself of birth-and-death. It is by grasping the reason for the eternal immutability of the 'mind-nature.' The gist of it is this: although once the body is born it proceeds inevitably to death, the mind-nature never perishes. Once you can realize that the mind-nature, which does not transmigrate in birth-and-death, exists in your own body, you make it your fundamental nature. Hence the body, being only a temporary form, dies here and is reborn there without end, yet the mind is immutable, unchanging throughout past, present, and future. To know this is to be free from birth-and-death. By realizing this truth, you put a final end to the transmigratory cycle in which you have been turning. When your body dies, you enter the ocean of the original nature. When you return to your origin in this ocean, you become endowed with the wondrous virtue of the Buddha-patriarchs. But even if you are able to grasp this in your present life, because your present physical existence embodies erroneous karma from prior lives, you are not the same as the sages.*

*"Those who fail to grasp this truth are destined to turn forever in the cycle of birth-and-death. What is necessary, then, is simply to know without delay the meaning of the mind-nature's immutability. What can you expect to gain from idling your entire life away in purposeless sitting?"*

*What do you think of this statement? Is it essentially in accord with the Way of the Buddhas and patriarchs?*

*Answer 10:*

*You have just expounded the view of the Senika heresy. It is certainly not the Buddha Dharma.*

*According to this heresy, there is in the body a spiritual intelligence. As occasions arise this intelligence readily discriminates likes and dislikes and pros and cons, feels pain and irritation, and experiences suffering and pleasure - it is all owing to this spiritual intelligence. But when the body perishes, this spiritual intelligence separates from the body and is reborn in another place. While it seems to perish here, it has life elsewhere, and thus is immutable and imperishable. Such is the standpoint of the Senika heresy.*

*But to learn this view and try to pass it off as the Buddha Dharma is more foolish than clutching a piece of broken roof tile supposing it to be a golden jewel. Nothing could compare with such a foolish, lamentable delusion. Hui-chung of the T'ang dynasty warned strongly against it. Is it not senseless to take this false view - that the mind abides and the form perishes - and equate it to the wondrous Dharma of the Buddhas; to think, while thus creating the fundamental cause of birth-and-death, that you are freed from birth-and-death? How deplorable! Just know it for a false, non-Buddhist view, and do not lend a ear to it.*

*I am compelled by the nature of the matter, and more by a sense of compassion, to try to deliver you from this false view. You must know that the Buddha Dharma preaches as a matter of course that body and mind are one and the same, that the essence and the form are not two. This is understood both in India and in China, so there can be no doubt about it. Need I add that the Buddhist doctrine of immutability teaches that all things are immutable, without any differentiation between body and mind. The Buddhist teaching of mutability states that all things are mutable, without any differentiation between essence and form. In view of this, how can anyone state that the body perishes and the mind abides? It would be contrary to the true Dharma.*

*Beyond this, you must also come to fully realize that birth-and-death is in and of itself nirvana. Buddhism never speaks of nirvana apart from birth-and-death. Indeed, when someone thinks that the mind, apart from the body, is immutable, not only does he mistake it for Buddha-wisdom, which is free from birth-and-death, but the very mind that makes such a discrimination is not immutable, is in fact even then turning in birth-and-death. A hopeless situation, is it not?*

*You should ponder this deeply: since the Buddha Dharma has always maintained the oneness of body and mind, why, if the body is born and perishes, would the mind alone, separated from the body, not be born and die as well? If at one time body and mind were one, and at another time not one, the preaching of the Buddha would be empty and untrue. Moreover, in thinking that birth-and-death is something we should turn from, you make the mistake of rejecting the Buddha Dharma itself. You must guard against such thinking.*

*Understand that what Buddhists call the Buddhist doctrine of the mind-nature, the great and universal aspect encompassing all phenomena, embraces the entire universe, without differentiating between essence and form, or concerning itself with birth or death. There is nothing - enlightenment and nirvana included - that is not the mind-nature. All dharmas, the "myriad forms dense and close" of the universe - are alike in being this one Mind. All are included without exception. All those dharmas, which serves as "gates" or entrances to the Way, are the same as one Mind. For a Buddhist to preach that there is no disparity between these dharma-gates indicates that he understands the mind-nature.*

*In this one Dharma [one Mind], how could there be any differentiate between body and mind, any separation of birth-and-death and nirvana? We are all originally children of the Buddha, we should not listen to madmen who spout non-Buddhist views.*

*….*
*Mind is skin, flesh, bones and marrow. Mind is taking up a flower and smiling. There is having mind and having no mind... Blue, yellow, red, and white are mind. Long, short, square, and round are mind. The coming and going of birth and death are mind. Year, month, day, and hour are mind. The coming and going of birth and death are mind. Water, foam, splash, and flame are mind. Spring flowers and autumn moon are mind. All things that arise and fall away are mind.*

*….*

*'Mind as mountains, rivers, and the earth is nothing other than mountains, rivers, and the earth. There are no additional waves or surf, no wind or smoke. Mind as the sun, the*

*moon, and the stars is nothing other than the sun, the moon, and the stars.'*

*…*

...According to Dogen, this "oceanic-body" does not contain the myriad forms, nor is it made up of myriad forms – it is the myriad forms themselves. The same instruction is provided at the beginning of Shobogenzo, Gabyo (pictured rice-cakes) where, he asserts that, "as all Buddhas are enlightenment" (sho, or honsho), so too, "all dharmas are enlightenment" which he says does not mean they are simply "one" nature or mind.

~ Ted Biringer

**All Buddhas and all things cannot be reduced to a static entity or principle symbolized as one mind, one nature, or the like. This guards against views that devaluate the unique, irreplaceable individuality of a single dharma.**
**Hee-Jin Kim, Flowers of Emptiness, p.257**

- *http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2011/03/is-is.html*

Zen teacher David Loy:

Dogen "misinterprets" some of the most famous Zen stories to give them a radically different meaning-often one diametrically opposed to the traditional understanding. In the Katto fascicle, for example, Dogen challenges the traditional view of Bodhidharma's dharma transmission to his four disciples Tao-fu, Tsung-chih, Tao-yu, and Hui-k'o. According to their different responses to his challenge, Bodhidharma says that they have attained his skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, respectively-the last because Hui-k'o demonstrates the highest attainment by saying nothing at all. So it is, at least according to the usual view that sees these four attainments as metaphors for progressively deeper stages of understanding, indicating a hierarchy of rank among the disciples. Dogen, however, repudiates this common view by adopting the absolute point of view:

*We should know that the patriarch's saying "skin, flesh, bones, and marrow" has no bearing on shallowness or deepness.... The patriarch's body-mind is such that the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow are all equally the patriarch himself: the marrow is not the deepest, the skin is not shallowest.17*

…

A Soto Zen (Dogen's lineage) teacher Shinshu Roberts says:

"**Immediate Present, Ultimate Dharma**

Since our activity is not a progression from delusion to enlightenment made solely by the independent self, Dogen defines the first thought of practice as 'immediate present ultimate Dharma' or genjokoan: the presence and perfection of all dharmas as they are in the here-and-now.' Hee-Jin Kim further explains the meaning of genjokoan:

'It does not suggest an evolutionary ascent from hidden-ness to manifestation, or from imperfection to perfection, or conversely, an emanational descent from one to many, or from reality to appearance. Rather, things, events, beings are already unmistakably what they truly are; what is more, they are vibrant, transparent, and bright in their as-they-are-ness.'

…

…This would not be how Dogen would approach the practice of deep investigation or exhaustive penetration. He might be describe the activity of washing dishes as washing washes washing, thereby removing the subject-object relationship. Mindfulness may be a dharma gate to intimacy, but it is not the Zen practice of exhaustively penetrating the totality of one's experience. In the true intimacy of complete engagement there is no labeling of self or other that comes from paying attention to something outside the self….

…

Included in this intimate total immersion in the being-time of a particular moment is the simultaneous arising of all being-time. This nondualism is not separate from the relative or everyday. Washing dishes is not special. By entering the world of washing dishes, we enter the whole world, which is our world, by jumping in with wholehearted effort.

…

Do not aspire to great realization. Great realization is everyday tea and meals.

—Dogen Zenji, Shobogenzo Gyoji

…

Ted Biringer says:

While it may be contrary to the suggestions of many that claim to represent Zen or Dogen, true nature, according to the classic Zen records (including Shobogenzo) is ever and always immediately present, particular, and precise. Notions or assertions suggesting that Zen is somehow mysterious, ineffable, or inexpressible are simply off the mark. The only place such terms can be accurately applied in Zen is to definite mysteries, particular unknowns, and specific inexpressible experiences. Indeed, in Zen, the terms

definite, particular, and specific accurately characterize all dharmas. Dogen's refrain, 'Nothing in the whole universe is concealed' means exactly what it says; no reality is the least bit obscure or vague. To emphasize this truth, the assertion that 'real form is all dharmas' runs like a mantra throughout Shobogenzo, for example:

"The realization of the Buddhist patriarchs is perfectly realized real form. Real form is all dharmas. All dharmas are forms as they are, natures as they are, body as it is, the mind as it is, the world as it is, clouds and rain as they are, walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, as they are; sorrow and joy, movement and stillness, as they are; a staff and a whisk, as they are; a twirling flower and a smiling face, as they are; succession of the Dharma and affirmation, as they are; learning in practice and pursuing the truth, as they are; the constancy of pines and the integrity of bamboos, as they are. Shobogenzo, Shoho-Jisso[199]"

In light of Shobogenzo's (hence Zen's) vision of existence-time (uji), existence (ontology; being) and time are not-two (nondual); dharmas are not simply existents in time, they are existents of time, and (all) time is in and of existents (i.e. dharmas). In short, dharmas do not exist independent of time, and time does not exist independent of dharmas. On a corollary note, since (all) existence demonstrates the quality of 'impermanence,' time too is impermanent. In Zen the nonduality of impermanence and time is treated in terms of 'ceaseless advance' or 'ever passing' – 'ceaseless' and 'ever' connoting 'permanence' or 'eternity,'

'advance' and 'passing' indicating 'impermanence' or 'temporal' (temporary). Accordingly, 'impermanence' is 'permanent' and 'change' is 'changeless' – existence-time ever-always (eternally) advances (changes).[92] Dogen's vision of reality exploits the significance of this to the utmost, unfolding its most profound implications with his notion of 'the self-obstruction of a single dharma' or 'the total exertion of a single dharma' (ippo gujin). This notion reveals a number of important implications concerning the nature of existence-time; two of which are: Each and all dharmas reveal, disclose, or present the whole universe (the totality of existence-time). Each and all dharmas are inherently infinite and eternal.

Biringer, Ted. Zen Cosmology: Dogen's Contribution to the Search for a New Worldview (p. 34). ZazensatioN. Kindle Edition.

…

The point to get is that, in Zen, it is not dharmas in general but particular dharmas that are recognized as the fundamental elements, or better

Biringer, Ted. Zen Cosmology: Dogen's Contribution to the Search for a New Worldview (p. 95). ZazensatioN. Kindle Edition.

"To carry yourself forward

and experience myriad things is delusion.

That myriad things come forth

and experience themselves is awakening."

- Dogen (Genjokoan)

"In mustering the whole body and mind and seeing forms,

in mustering the whole body and mind

and hearing sounds,

they are intimately perceived;

but it is not like the reflection in a mirror,

nor like the moon in the water.

When one side is realized the other side is dark."

Dogen (Genjokoan, commentary in Flowers Fall)

…

From a Zen teacher of Soto zen (Dogen's lineage)

http://www.glasgowzen.com/gzg/kusen-a-notes-from-john/kusen/201-149

Master Dogen describes Zazen as dropping off body and mind. That is, dropping off this sense of a me and things that belong to me. It is his way of describing anatta.

He doesn't say that dropping off body and mind is a preliminary to the real activity of Zazen, but that Zazen is the continuous dropping off of body and mind. The activity of Zazen is this continuous activity of dropping off. It is an activity, not a state. It is an orientation, not an attribute.

He also says, although he attributes this to his teacher, Nyojo, that when body and mind are dropped off, we are free of the five desires and the five hindrances. The five desires correspond to the desires of the sense organs. The five hindrances are desire, ill-will, laziness, restlessness and doubt. If we think that practice is the vehicle for our own

aggrandisement, we are full of these hindrances. But if there is no me and nothing belonging to me then where can these hindrances attach? Hence, Zazen is the dharma gate of ease and joy.

...

From the same site:

Master Dogen described our practice of shikantaza as dropping off body and mind.

The Japanese which is rendered as 'dropping off' has two aspects. One is intentional, as we might drop off an article of clothing. The other is natural, like leaves falling in Autumn.

Dropping off mind, means dropping off that dualism between mind and world, and which is often prominent, although unacknowledged, in meditation.

So we don't think, "I must make my mind clear, my thoughts are an encumbrance to that". But rather, thoughts are just one more thing going on within unbroken experience, where there is not inner and outer, me and not-me.

And likewise dropping off body, we don't think "My body is experiencing these sensations and emotions", but rather, there is just this experiencing, which includes everything.

We can drop off Mind, in the sense that we can relocate the mind within the body, but we need to drop off both, otherwise the dualism remains.

So dropping off body and mind is, as it were, sitting within the body of the world. It is not to do with individual gain, or individual effort, and so it is the gateway to peace and joy.

…

From another Soto Zen master, John Daido Loori,

“What happens when the self is forgotten? What remains? The whole phenomenal universe remains. The whole Dharmadhatu remains. That’s what it means, “To forget the self is to be enlightened by the ten thousand things.”

John Daido Loori, “The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza”:

“To be verified by all things is to let the body and mind of self, and body and mind of others, drop off.” Dropping off body and mind is a trnaslation of shinjin datsuraku. This is one of the key words in Dogen Zenji’s teachings. Originally the expression used by Dogen’s teacher [Tendo] Nyojo (Tiantong Rujing). In the Hokyoki, Dogen Zenji recorded his conversations with Ju-ching while he was practicing at the T’ien-t’ung (Tiantong) Monastery. This expression, shinjin datsuraku, was one of the topics Dogen Zenji discussed with his teacher repeatedly.

Nyojo said, “Sanzen is dropping off body and mind. We don’t use incense burning, prostration, nembutsu, practice of repentance, reading sutras. We only just sit (shikantaza).”

Dogen asked, “What is dropping off mind and body?” Nyojo said, “Dropping off body and mind is zazen. When we practice zazen, we part from the five desires and five coverings.” Dogen asked, if we part from the five desires and get rid of the five coverings, that is the same as the teaching taught in the teaching schools. Thus we are the same as the practitioners of Mahayana and Hinayana.”

Nyojo said, “The descendants of the Ancestor (Bodhidharma) should not dislike the teachings taught by Mahayana and Hinayana. If a practitioner is against the sacred teachings of the Tathagata, how can such a person be the descendant of the buddhas and ancestors?” Dogen asked, “In recent times, some skeptical people say that the three poisonous minds are themselves Buddha Dharma and the five desires are themselves the way of the ancestors. If we get rid of them, it is nothing other than like and dislike. Such a practice is the same as the Hinayana.”

Nyojo said, “If we don’t get rid of the three poisonous minds and the five desires, we are the same as the non-Buddhists in the country of the King Bimbisara and his son Ajatasattu (at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha). For the descendants of buddhas and ancestors, if we get rid of even one covering or one desire, that is the great benefit. That is the time we meet the buddhas and ancestors.”

Nyojo Zenji said that sanzen is dropping off body and mind and dropping off body and mind is zazen. He also said that dropping off body and mind is being free from the five desires and getting rid of the five coverings. The five desires are caused in our mind by contacting the objects of the five sense organs. When we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch some pleasurable objects, we enjoy them, we attach ourselves to them, and we want them more and more. Or if the objects are not pleasurable, we dislike them and try to keep away from them. But they often come toward us, so we hate them and become angry. Greed and anger are caused by the five desires.

The five coverings refer to hindrances that cover our mind and prevent it from functioning in a healthy way. Those are coverings of greed, anger or hatred, sleepiness or dullness, distraction, and doubt about the principle of causes and conditions. These five desires and five coverings are discussed originally in the Daichidoron (a commentary on Prajnaparamita Sutra by Nagarjuna) as obstacles in meditation practice. And Tendai Chigi, the great philosopher of the Chinese Tiantai (Tendai) School, mentioned them in the manual of meditation practice, the Mahashikan (Larger Book of Shamatha and Vipashyana). Chigi said that a practitioner should part from the five desires and get rid of the five coverings in the meditation practice called shikan (shamatha and vipashyana). Dogen Zenji was originally ordained as a Tendai monk in Japan and was familiar with the teachings and meditation practice in the Tendai tradition. Dogen was not satisfied by Tendai practice and began to practice Zen. That was why Dogen asked Nyojo if he should part from the five desires and the five coverings. Until then, Dogen Zenji was looking for something that is different from the teachings he learned in the teaching school. But Nyojo said that our practice of zazen should not be different from the Buddha's teachings recorded in the sutras and systematized in philosophical teaching schools. The next conversation on the same topic between Dogen and Nyojo was as follows.

Nyojo said, "The descendants of the buddhas and ancestors should first get rid of the five coverings and then the six coverings. Adding the covering of ignorance to the five coverings make six coverings. Even if a practitioner only gets rid of the covering of ignorance, that makes the practitioner free from the five coverings. Even if a practitioner gets rid of the five coverings, if ignorance is not gotten rid of, the practitioner has not yet reached the practice of the buddhas and ancestors."

Dogen immediately made a prostration and expressed gratitude for the teaching. He put his hands in shashu position and said, "Until today, I have not heard of such an instruction as that which you have given me now, teacher. Elders, experienced teachers, monks and Dharma brothers here do not know at all. They have never spoken like this. Today, fortunately, specially I have received your great compassion and have heard what I have not heard before. This is fortunate for me, because of the Dharma connection from the previous lives. And yet, is there any secret method to get rid of the five or six coverings?"

The teachers smiled and said, "Where have you been putting your whole energy? That is practicing nothing other than the Dharma to part from the six coverings. The buddhas and ancestors have not set up any classification in practice. They directly point out and singularly transmit the way of departing from the five desires and six coverings and getting free from the five desires. Making effort in just sitting and dropping off body and mind is the method to depart from the five coverings and the five desires. Besides this, there is nothing at all. Absolutely, there is nothing else. How can it fall into two or three?"

This is Tendo Nyojo Zenji's explanation of dropping off body and mind. Since Nyojo was the original person who used this expression we should understand it based on Nyojo's teaching. To drop off body and mind is to be free from the six coverings, the three poisonous minds that are the causes of samsara. In just sitting zazen, we let go of the three poisonous minds. That is why Dogen Zenji said zazen is not a practice of human beings but the practice of buddhas."

(Note: three poisonous minds: passion/greed, aggression/hatred, delusion

Five desires: the desire for food, the desire for sex, the desire for sleep, the desire for comfort and the desire for reputation)

....

"Our present-day seven feet of skull and bones is precisely the form and image of the whole universe in all ten directions. Indeed, the whole universe in all ten directions which trains and enlightens us in the Buddha's Way is our skull and bones, our physical body with its skin, flesh, bones, and marrow." - Dogen

....

"Thus, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind that fully manifest before us here and now are what an arhat is." - Dogen

....

Four years later, when Dogen returned to Japan, he said, "I have come back empty-handed. I have realized only that the eyes are horizontal and the nose is vertical."

....

"For Dogen this "dropping off body and mind" is the true nature both of just sitting and of complete enlightenment, and is the ultimate letting go of self, directly meeting the cold, clear wind and moon. After turning within while just sitting, it is carried on in all activity and throughout ongoing engagement with the world. Although just sitting now has been maintained for 750 years since Dogen, the teachings of Hongzhi and Dogen remain as primary guideposts to its practice." - Taigen Dan Leighton

....

"In Dogen's view, the only reality is reality that is actually experienced as particular things at specific times. There is no "tile nature" apart from actual "tile forms," there is no "essential Baso" apart from actual instances of "Baso experience." When Baso sits in

zazen, “zazen” becomes zazen, and “Baso” becomes Baso. Real instances of Baso sitting in zazen is real instances of Baso and real instances of zazen – when Baso eats rice, Baso is really Baso and eating rice is really eating rice.” - Ted Biringer, https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2017/11/zazen-polishing-tile-to-make-mirror.html

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20/05/2019

"It is good you are seeing the fabrications working together to shape a dualistic experience. That is seeing the afflictive dependent origination, seeing that selfing-activity, duality, grasping as the very activity that dependently originates. Therefore there is no self/Self/agent, but there is the afflictive sense of self, grasping and reification in action. There is no actor but there is action, be it afflictive or non-afflictive.. it is not an agent giving rise to afflictive activities but afflictive activities giving rise to selfing through dependent arising.

As for total exertion and maha, that is more on the non-afflictive side of dependent origination, the general principle of dependent origination. You will see that the +A expressions are all over in Dogen's writings, whereas the Mahamudra/Tibetan tends to emphasize more on -A.

I started having mini glimpses of total exertionas early as 2011 but only had very clear experiences of it beginning in 2013 where I wrote about dharma body - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2013/09/dharma-body_7.html -- where even the walking activity is as immense and boundless as the whole universe, a seamless activity of mind-body-universe.

John Tan used the word Maha and Total Exertion to describe this, it is about totality. Maha means great, but it is not big vs small, but great without boundaries. Immense as the universe. As he often said, be light as feather but immense as the universe.

Nowadays the infinitude of maha total exertion has become a natural, effortless state as an ongoing experience. When you are doubtless and stabilized anatta, you must mature your insight and experience in this direction.

That Maha total exertion must become a natural state, as written in https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html -

"A week ago, the clear experience of Maha dawned and became quite effortless and at the same time there is a direct realization that it is also a natural state. In Sunyata, Maha is natural and must be fully factored into the path of experiencing whatever arises. Nevertheless Maha as a ground state requires the maturing of non-dual experience; we cannot feel entirely as the interconnectedness of everything coming spontaneously into being as this moment of vivid manifestation with a divided mind.

The universe is this arising thought.
The universe is this arising sound.
Just this magnificent arising!
Is Tao.
Homage to all arising."

Even if you see the Actual Freedom teachings, there are two stages of actual freedom.

1) The basic, newly-free actual freedom is characterized by the lack of separative identity, feeling-being, magical and wonderful luminosity as actual time and form,

"On the woven table mat my attention was drawn to a dark blue plastic cigarette lighter, an empty glass, a tobacco pouch and other sundry items. All of a sudden, Richard's phrase "the actual world of people, things and events" came to mind and I found myself acknowledging that the things on the table existed in actuality, i.e. did in fact actually exist, and this being the case, here I was waving my hand in front of "people", in this case Richard, saying that I experienced him as if behind a veil, i.e. not actually existing. It took only a few more seconds of switching my attention from the things on the table and my waving hand for the whole illusion of a separating veil to collapse – along with my illusory self-centred identity as I was gradually becoming aware of.

The whole experience was like a seamless transition between two worlds – from being a feeling being trapped within an illusionary all-encompassing self-created and sustained bubble to being here in the actual world. There was no dramatic end for 'me', no death-like traumatic experience, no prior psychic events or escapades, no "wall of fear", no "abyss" – rather there was a profound experience of sweetness, a ready acknowledgement of my destiny and a final understanding that the feeling of separateness was nothing other than an illusion of 'my' own making." – Peter

"There was no fear, no experience of death, no physical phenomena or changes, just the realization that I have always been here in this eternal moment in time, in this luminous magical world, more naked than I was born and utterly safe... ...The next morning was the real test – I half-expected that I had reverted back to normal but the world was just as brilliant, beneficial and wunderbar as I had experienced it the night before. I am still surprised how easy it all turned out to be in the end." – Vineeto

This is why I asked how thorough are you experiencing the 2nd stanza.. as well as the intensity of luminosity as vivid form, this is important as well in addition for the aspect of no agent. But from what you messaged me it you are already experiencing that aspect well at the moment.

2) The Fully Free actual freedom characterized by permanent experience of infinitude [not just glimpses] that comes soon after the loss of social identity (from what I understand from that website, that includes views, impinging on what actions to take and interpretations of one's pure experience including of that infinitude, sometimes subtly interpreting it wrongly or in terms of metaphysical essence based on the convo of Vineeto with a newly-free person) - to me what I see as more crucial is that the view

aspect must be clear. This is also related to the example of the video by Leo on Actualized.org describes the Maha Total Exertion glimpses in 5-Meo-DMT trip, but he is still having view of inherent existence, and misinterpreting that infinitude in terms of metaphysicality in the same way that Vineeto discussed with another guy. With that social identity or 'shadow being' in place, it prevents the permanent experience of infinitude.

But that is how AF expresses or interpretes. For you, you just need to be clear on anatta and D.O., that will lead to effortless Maha/total exertion. There must not be desync of view and experience, otherwise it will be a hindrance.

But the progression is quite similar -- means anatta in two stanza stabilized, then glimpses of maha total exertion, then a shift into permanent total exertion. But AF lacks emptiness.

As John Tan wrote previously, “Richard's experience is not different from total exertion. However his actual view will be restricting him imo.”

.....

As Vineeto (who has become almost like a successor or Richard at the moment, being the first fully free person besides Richard himself, and I think is currently living with Richard) wrote:

VINEETO: Yes, the definite moment of becoming fully free happened on October 12, 2010.

And yes, "the experiences and investigation around those interactions constituted the bulk of the ‘many more things’."

To refresh my memory I checked what I wrote to Tarin in November 2010 about this period after the abdication of the guardian –

[Vineeto]: Frequent interactions with Richard quite often resulted in glimpses of a greater depth to an actual freedom and at the time I called them windows into purity. Both Richard and I had noticed that when I described how I experienced myself, words such as the ‘immaculate purity’ and ‘pristine limpidness’ where not part of my vocabulary and, except for a few occasional glimpses, neither did I mention in my description experiencing the infinitude of this spatially infinite, temporally eternal and perpetually forming and changing universe, whereas Richard has described his experience of an actual freedom in such glowing terms like in one of my favourite excerpts from his journal –

[Richard]: "There is something precious in living itself. Something beyond compare. Something more valuable than any "King’s ransom". It is not rare gemstones; it is not singular works of art; it is not the much-prized bags of money; it is not the treasured loving relationships; it is not the highly esteemed Blissful States Of ‘Being’ ... ... it is not

any of these things usually considered precious. There is something ultimately precious. It is the essential character of the infinitude of the universe … which is the life-giving foundation of all that is apparent. That something precious is me as-I-am ... me as I actually am as distinct from 'me' as 'I' really am. I am the universe's experience of itself. The limpid and lucid perfection and purity of being here now, as-I-am, is akin to the crystalline perfection and purity seen in a dew-drop hanging from the tip of a leaf in the early-morning sunshine; the sunrise strikes the transparent dew-drop with its warming rays, highlighting the flawless correctness of the tear-drop shape with its bellied form. One is left almost breathless with wonder at the immaculate simplicity so exemplified ... and everyone I have spoken with has experienced this impeccable purity and perfection in some way or another at varying stages in their life. Is it not impossible to conceive – and just too difficult to imagine – that this is one's essential character? One has to be daring enough to live it ... for it is both one's audacious birth-right and adventurous destiny.

When one lives the magical perfection of this purity twenty-four-hours-a-day; when one has ceased being 'I' and is being genuine, one can see clearly that there is no separation between me and that something which is precious. The purity of life emerges from the perfection that wells up constantly due to an immense stillness which is utterly immense in its scope and magnitude. This stillness of infinitude is that something which is precious. It is the life-giving foundation of all that is apparent. This stillness happens as me. This stillness is my essential disposition, for it is the principle character, the intrinsic basis of everything. It is this universe at its genesis. It is not, as it might commonly be supposed, at the centre of everything ... there is no centre here. This stillness, which is everywhere all at once, is the be all and end all of life itself. I am the universe experiencing itself as a sensate, reflective human being." Richard's Journal, 1997, Article Twenty-five

In the early months of this year [2010] I had plenty of opportunity to read Richard's words describing the outstanding quality of an actual freedom while I was updating the website, replacing all footnotes with the new format of tool-tips and I became starkly aware of the vast gap of experiencing between his descriptions and my own experience of myself and the world around me."

After the abdication of the guardian I was one day ready to allow myself to fully (and permanently) experience the spatial infinitude of the universe. Here is the description of what happened –

[Vineeto]: "The next significant event happened a week after my completion [the abdication of the guardian]. It began with an eerie sensation in the head as if my brain was being operated on whilst being fully conscious. After about 15 minutes or so there was a sensation as if my brain was being scattered throughout the universe. When I recovered from the experience itself enough to find out what actually happened, I noticed that I had lost my centre of reference (a discovery that left me quite disconcerted for about 2 weeks). Richard reported that in the days before he was able to existentially sense me as being close, very close, right in front of his eyes, so to speak, but that after this event he has been no longer able to sense me existentially. The direct

result of losing the boundaries of my localized reference during this 'brain-scattering' event is that I am permanently apperceptively aware of the infinitude of the universe as infinite space, eternal time and perpetual matter." Private letter to Tarin, November 29, 2010

I remember a similar profound disorientation (for a short period of time) after allowing to fully understand and experience the temporal infinitude of the universe.

So, lots of adventures and discoveries are still to come after becoming newly free." - Soh, 2019

"Now it's very clear that the whole universe is the total exertion of all conditions in spatial and temporal infinitude.. each activity is the exertion of all the conditions in ten directions and three times." - Soh, 2019

"There are few conditions to experience maha as a ground [state] *(Soh: means effortlessly experienced in all situations as always already so)*

1. Mature in non-dual experience
2. DO (dependent origination)
3. Experience and understand that 'interconnectedness' is the universe itself

Then 'self' and even non dual becomes quite irrelevant. In fact now presence is not understand as non-dual to me, but as dependent origination, where non-dual is already included" - John Tan, 2009

If Maha Total Exertion (+A) has become a ground state, effortlessly so and clear, you have to ask yourself is the taste of -A present? Or as John Tan asked, "Do you know what does landing without dust mean? 落地无尘，踏雪无痕 (falling to the floor without dust [accumulating], stepping on snow without leaving trails)"

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28/05/2019

Light as a feather, immense as the universe

Just now I went for yoga and meditation session. Then after that I went out for a walk. (I really enjoy walks nowadays, very meditative) Then I feel very very peaceful.. the luminosity of anatta and total exertion is clear as usual (has become a completely effortless natural state) but not heavy.. instead there is a sensation of lightness like floating. Everything is appearing but not truly there, there is no grasping, like falling snow that melts even before landing.

Anyway I was reminded of a verse by the arahant Khitaka in the Theragatha:

“How light my body!
Touched by abundant
rapture & bliss,
—like a cotton tuft
borne on the breeze—
it seems to be floating
—my body!”

Post anatta (or even before actually), this advice by John Tan (Thusness) is important - “be light as a feather, immense as the universe”

Angelo wrote: "Beautiful. Also by JT: “You have to fully and completely replace the mind that wants to understand with the mind that wants to live!”

Thanks for post 🙏 "

(Join the Awakening to Reality Facebook Discussion Group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/)

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# Recommended Reading

**Online Articles**

1) Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html
2) On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html
3) Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/09/realization-and-experience-and-non-dual.html
4) Book Recommendations 2019 and Practice Advices: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2017/12/book-recommendations-2017.html

# Book Recommendations and Practice Advices

**Update: a guidebook is now available as an aid to realize and actualize the insights presented on this journal. See https://app.box.com/s/157eqgiosuw6xqvs00ibdkmc0r3mu8jg**

Lately I have successfully guided a few people. As of now, more than 30 people have realised anatta through encountering this blog, myself or Thusness, a feat rarely achieved by dharma teachers. (Buddha had thousands of enlightened students but that's another story) This is only possible due to the use of modern technologies that allows easy access worldwide and the unique clarity of Thusness's writings (I'm sure Thusness will be quite displeased with me for stating my opinion openly, haha).

However in the future I do not foresee that I will have time to do personal coaching. It is also not fruitful to neglect one's practice, as a deva addresses the following verse to Ven. Ānanda as Ven. Ānanda had been spending too much time teaching Dhamma to laypeople, *"Coming to the bower at the root of a tree, placing unbinding in your heart, do jhāna, Gotama, don't be heedless. What use is this chitter-chatter to you?"*. This is why recently I have compiled a list of articles so that the essentials are covered and sufficient for one's personal contemplation, and do not require any personal coaching. Personal pointing can be of benefit (like what Liberation Unleashed is doing), but that will take time, effort and responsibilities.

**You are welcome to join our Facebook group Awakening to Reality to discuss anything related to this blog, or request for guidance from others who are ahead of you on the path**. For other general discussion of Buddhadharma (teachings of Buddha/Buddhism), you can also join the Dharma Connection facebook group. I have also updated Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment with further clarifications towards the end of the article as I found that many people who read that article continue to misunderstand those stages.

Plenty of words and discussions are pointless, sometimes (in fact, often times) just one stanza is enough to trigger one's awakening if taken seriously in one's practice. Bahiya attained liberation upon hearing a single verse of Dhamma from the Buddha. As Buddha said in the Dhammapada, *A man is not versed in Dhamma because he speaks much. He who, after hearing a little Dhamma, realizes its truth directly and is not heedless of it, is truly versed in the Dhamma.* However, as Thusness pointed out before, unless one has directly realized the truth of anatta, and one's view and practice is completely refined, pointers from good teacher(s) and/or clear dharma books are still necessary. Only after direct realization of anatta (Thusness Stage 5) does it become "safe" to explore on one's own, "because after anatta, one is able to see what is meant by direct, gapless and pure, and he is on his own to mature this experience, until the next phase comes" (See: The Path of Anatta by Thusness), and "all practitioners must experience for themselves and not read". (One can still read, but it takes secondary role in one's practice) On another occasion, Thusness said, "Only after seeing the 6 phases of insights, you can then be said to be safe to explore on your own. The actual experience cannot be communicated." And as Thusness commented about Simpo (Sim Pern Chong) after he had certain breakthrough realizations, back in 2007, "given enough time, whatever he said will be like Buddha. But he need not read what that is taught by Buddha. However by reading it, it may help him and speed up his progress.", "...longchen (Sim Pern Chong) has realised the importance of transients and the five aggregates as Buddha nature, time for unborn nature. You see, it takes one to go through such phases, from "I AM" to Non-dual to isness then to the very very basic of what Buddha taught... can you see that? The more one experience, the more truth one sees in what Buddha taught in the most basic teaching. Whatever longchen experience is not because he read what Buddha taught, but because he really experience it."

We are blind at the start, pointers from good teachers and books bring us to the right track, and once we're in the right track, we will have to boldly walk forward ourselves. Unfortunately very clear teachers and clear books are hard to come by, so I try to provide a list of good resource that can be of help. I seldom read dharma books nowadays, though I have read plenty years ago. Even back in my army days (compulsory national service, about 8-9 years ago) I read thousands of pages of Buddhist scriptures, thousands of pages of dharma books, thousands of pages of non-Buddhist texts. It has been of help along my journey. But nowadays, I am more interested in actualizing my insights in living experience.

Many have awakened to anatta through reading this blog and contemplating accordingly, without personal coaching. And what I can advise is already documented in

my blog articles, Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book, and I think I have covered all the essentials quite thoroughly. If you have realized anatta through this blog, do write to me, I might even post your story up. Always good to hear an inspiring story.

After reading those articles and Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book, if you still have doubts that need to be clarified, you're welcomed to contact me. However if you have not read through those articles and/or Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book, please do so first, as otherwise I will simply be directing you to the existing articles that addresses your questions. Perhaps try doing a search on this blog to find your answer.

Someone asked me for book recommendations. What books you should read depends on where you're at, what practices you're doing, what realization you're aiming for.

If people ask me for advice on where to start, I usually recommend self-inquiry with the aim of attaining Self-Realization (the doubtless realization of I AMness). If you're still trying to attain I AM realization, focus on the books listed under the Self Inquiry sections. If you feel like you're having glimpses and experiences of the I AMness/Witness, do note that there are differing degrees and having glimpses and experiences are not the same as having the direct realization and complete certainty of I AM/Self. See I AM Experience/Glimpse/Recognition vs I AM Realization (Certainty of Being) and the first point in Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives by Thusness - anything short of the unshakeable and doubtless certainty of Being is not the I AM realization but more like a glimpse or experience. Self-inquiry will lead to the realization. I had glimpses of I AM experience for 3 years prior to the doubtless and unshakeable Self-Realization in February 2010 after less than 2 years of self-enquiry, which I detailed in my e-book, after which the Self/Presence/Awareness was no longer 'maintenance state' or passing glimpses for me and the certainty of what I am was never lost, I no longer felt the 'lose it/gain it' syndrome.

If you have realized I AM, focus on the four aspects of I AMness and other advices in Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book and the two types of nondual contemplation.

If you're already past I AM and/or nondual but aiming for anatta realization, just focus on Bahiya Sutta contemplation and its related articles, read The Sun My Heart by Thich Nhat Hanh especially the chapter on 'There is Knowing in the Wind' and 'Each Action is its Own Subject', The Breakthrough by Ajahn Amaro (mentions Bahiya Sutta in it) as well as MCTB 2nd Edition by Daniel Ingram, focusing more on post 3rd Path practice with the aim to attain MCTB 4th Path (meaning don't do noting, as noting is more suitable for lower stages in MCTB, you need a more direct apprehension mode of contemplation, like the way Daniel M. Ingram describes Vipassana here or how practice and contemplation is described in Gesture of Awareness).

If you think you already realized anatta, more often than not, you haven't. Most people who say they realized anatta are only having a more minor realization of non-doership or having experience of no mind, or are unable to distinguish between Thusness Stage 4 and 5. It is also common to fall into the disease of non-conceptuality, mistaking that as the source of liberation and thus clinging to or seeking a state of non-conceptuality as the main object of practice, whereas liberation comes only through the dissolving of ignorance and views (of inherent existence) that cause reification, by insight and realization. See: The Disease of Non-Conceptuality

Hence, do go through all the links in the comments section of Thusness Seven Stages of Awakening and read the article carefully before making a diagnosis on where you are as it is very common to think that one is there when one is not.

If you truly realized anatta and are wondering how to progress, read Advice for Taiyaki and +A and -A Emptiness (On the two experiential insights involved in Thusness Stage 6)

Also, it is very important to understand that having a conceptual understanding of no-self, dependent origination and emptiness is very different from direct realization. As I told Mason Spransy in The Importance of Luminosity, it is very possible to have the conceptual understanding of Thusness Stage 6 but lacking in direct realization. Days after that conversation he had certain breakthrough (see: Suchness / Mason Spransy). As Thusness pointed out in Purpose of Madhyamaka, if after all the analysis and contemplations of Madhyamaka (Buddhist emptiness teachings taught by Nagarjuna) one is unable to realize that the mundane is precisely where one's natural radiance is fully expressed, a separate pointing is necessary.

If you have attained all Thusness 7 Stages, do note that it is not a finality but the beginning of endless actualization. Have you perfected all elements of the Noble Eightfold Path? If your insight is clear, how about samadhi ("right concentration")? Furthermore, wisdom is just one aspect of practice. Another equally important aspect of practice is compassion or metta, which you can read more on your own from other sites, beginning with Metta Sutta. This blog hasn't dealt as much in topics like samadhi and metta/karuna, compared to topics on insight and wisdom. This is not because meditation, samadhi and metta/karuna are less important subjects, but there are resources out there that deals with these subjects quite thoroughly. Having a daily and disciplined meditation practice is important (refer to books under Mindfulness Practice/Meditation below). On the other hand, the insights and wisdom presented here by Thusness are very rare, and the clarity on the distinction of View, Realization and Experience can hardly be found elsewhere, therefore I have placed more effort to present these insights/wisdom aspect of the practice. As Thusness pointed out to me, there has to be a balance between insight, samadhi and compassion, in the sense that all these aspects are important in one's practice. Thusness is also deep into Yoga and energy practices and sees that as important for further progression in one's practice after insights, however it is beyond the scope of this blog at the moment, as I myself am not at the level of expertise like Thusness. It is important to have an "integral" approach to practice rather than skewing towards insight.

Regardless of where you're at, I still recommend reading the 'General Buddhadharma' books to get a rough understanding of Buddhadharma, even if one hasn't realized it yet.

Lastly, if you can find a spiritual community and living teacher, it can be of immense benefit for you. Thusness adviced before to "find a good teacher that has gone through the various phases of insights, at least until phase 5 of insight. However [in phase 5] one might still miss certain point [disregarding Dependent Origination]". Realistically speaking, it is quite hard to find someone who has at least realized Thusness Stage 5. That realization is very rare. For example, I searched around in my country and did not find any, though I can find lineage teachers at the I AM and Non Dual phases of insight (Stage 1 to 4). However, it should be known that whether the teacher has the exact same understanding of dharma, or whether he/she is coming from a very deep level of realization, there are always things that can be learnt, and a community of practitioners can be of a great help and encouragement to one's practice. Therefore I hope you will not have too much of an expectation for a dharma/meditation teacher, such as an expectation for a teacher to be fully realized. If there is someone who can help you grow spirituality, then seek their guidance. But you yourself must have clear understanding of dharma, have right views, and not be misguided. So read through this blog and the book recommendations. Group practice of sitting meditation can often be beneficial, it is something you have to experience for yourself. Refer to the book ***Meditation Now or Never by Steve Hagen*** for advice on how to find a good and qualified meditation teacher and practical advices on meditation. You need to overcome the common issues of 1) motivation, 2) monkey mind, 3) drowsiness. Mindful awareness is key, it solves dullness or drowsiness. Tranquility and release is key, it solves monkey mind. Consistency and discipline is key, getting habituated to a consistent practice solves the issue of motivation, especially when one tastes the higher state of bliss and clarity from meditation. I currently practice Anapanasati (Mindfulness of Breathing) and Satipatthana (Four Foundations of Mindfulness) while actualizing my insights like how Suzuki Roshi describes. This actualization is not confined to sitting but continues in everyday life (also see: What is Total Exertion?). See also: How silent meditation helped me with nondual inquiry

Happy New Year and may you attain Nirvana and realize all appearances are fundamentally in Nirvanic quiescence - the unity of two truths.

Not in any particular order -

**General Buddhadharma**

Buddhism Is Not What You Think by Steve Hagen (see some excerpts in https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/04/buddhism-is-not-what-you-think.html)

Buddhism Plain and Simple by Steve Hagen

What the Buddha Taught by Walpola Rahula

**Mindfulness Practice/Meditation**

Why do I need meditation training?

Meditation Now or Never by Steve Hagen

The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh

Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life by Thich Nhat Hanh

The Sun My Heart: Reflections on Mindfulness, Concentration, and Insight by Thich Nhat Hanh

Quietening the Inner Chatter

**On Theravada/Vipassana**

Gesture of Awareness: A Radical Approach to Time, Space, and Movement by Charles Genoud (excerpts can be found here)

Mastering the Core Teachings of Buddha 2nd Edition by Daniel M. Ingram, available in hardcopy for purchase, or online for free: https://www.mctb.org/

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, translated by Bikkhu Nanamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi

"Udana" and the "Itivuttaka": Two Classics from the Pali Canon by John Ireland -- Bahiya Sutta is in this

The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations Paperback – by Gil Fronsdal

Measureless Mind by Geoff - https://www.scribd.com/document/274168728/Measureless-Mind

The Breakthrough by Ajahn Amaro

In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon (The Teachings of the Buddha) by Bhikkhu Bodhi

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya (The Teachings of the Buddha) by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Early Buddhism's Model of Awakening

**On Zen**

Flowers Fall by Hakuun Yasutani

The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing by Ted Biringer

Zen Cosmology by Ted Biringer

Living By Vow by Shohaku Okumura

The Mountains and Rivers Sutra by Shohaku Okumura

Infinite Circle: Teachings in Zen by Bernie Glassman

Hakuin on Kensho: The Four Ways of Knowing, Edited with Commentary by Albert Low

Eihei Dogen: Mystical Realist by Hee-Jin Kim

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind by Shunryu Suzuki

Hearing with the Eye: Photographs from Point Lobos by John Daido Loori
**Yasutani-roshi's Introductory Lectures on Zen Training -**
https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/yasutani.html

Eight Gates of Zen by John Daido Loori

The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza by John Daido Loori

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind by Suzuki Roshi

Man on Cloud Mountain | Shodo Harada Roshi in America

**On Mahamudra**

Poems of Mahamudra in the blog Luminous Emptiness and its comments

Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal (some excerpts in http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2008/11/few-excerpts-from-clarifying-natural.html)

Essentials of Mahamudra by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche

The Royal Seal of Mahamudra by Khamtrul Rinpoche III (some excerpts in http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2015/12/self-liberation-by-khamtrul-rinpoche-iii.html)

Mahamudra: The Moonlight -- Quintessence of Mind and Meditation by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal (note: a new translation can be found called Moonbeams of Mahamudra and it also includes another text by the ninth karmapa, check it out here)

Garland of Mahamudra Practices by Khenchen Konchog Gyaltshen

An Ocean of the Ultimate Meaning: Teachings on Mahamudra by Khenchen Thrangu

The Gelug/Kagyu Tradition of Mahamudra by Dalai Lama (Author), Alexander Berzin (Author)

Lamp of Mahamudra by Tsele Natsok Rangdrol

**On Dzogchen**

Way of Bodhi by Yogi Prabodha Jnana and Yogini Abhaya Devi

Dzogchen vs Advaita, Conventional and Ultimate Truth by Kyle Dixon (also see linked articles inside)

Self-Liberation through Seeing with Naked Awareness by Padmasambhava

Buddhahood in This Life by Malcolm Smith

(also check out the interview at http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2017/11/podcast-with-malcolm-smith-on-dzogchen.html)

The Self-Arisen Vidya Tantra (vol 1) and The Self-Liberated Vidya Tantra (vol 2): A Translation of the Rigpa Rang Shar (vol 1) and A Translation of ... (vol 2) (The Seventeen Dzogchen Tantras)

by Malcolm Smith

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/08/the-self-arisen-vidya-tantra-vol-1-and.html

Books by Tsoknyi Rinpoche

A Garland of Views: A Guide to View, Meditation, and Result in the Nine Vehicles with a commentary by Jamgon Mipham (Padmasambhava's Classic Text)

**On Madhyamika**

How to See Yourself As You Really Are by Dalai Lama (Greg Goode has some good chapter summaries for this book in https://greg-goode.com/article/dalai-lama-summaries/)

Greg Goode on Advaita/Madhyamika

The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way by Nagarjuna/Jay Garfield

Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with Commentary by Ju Mipham

Ocean of Reasoning: A Great Commentary on Nāgārjuna's Mulamadhyamakakārikā by Tsong khapa, Translated by Geshe Ngawang Samten and Jay L. Garfield

In Praise of Dependent Origination by Tsongkhapa

Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way by Jeffrey Hopkins

A Sun That Never Sets

**On Tibetan Buddhism**

Jamgon Mipham by Douglas Duckworth

The Dharma's Gatekeepers: Sakya Pandita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet by Jonathan C. Gold

Mipham's Dialectics and the Debates on Emptiness: To Be, Not to Be or Neither

A Garland of Views: A Guide to View, Meditation, and Result in the Nine Vehicles - Padmasambhava's classic text with a commentary by Jamgon Mipham

**On Chittamatra/Yogacara**

Distinguishing Phenomena from Their Intrinsic Nature with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham (The Dharmachakra Translation Committee)

**Mahayana Sutras (Scriptures)**

**The Heart Sutra** (The most famous Mahayana sutra today. Short and brings out the essence of emptiness succinctly.)

The Diamond Sutra by Red Pine (This one triggered the awakening of 6th Ch'an Patriarch Hui-Neng)

The Lankavatara Sutra by Red Pine (This one was brought to China by 1st Ch'an Patriarch Bodhidharma, Thusness likes it very much)

The Samdhinirmochana Sutra by John Powers (Another sutra Thusness recommended 10+ years ago)

All the Sutras and Tantras as translated by 84000

Lopon Malcolm: "The most highly revered Sūtra in India was the Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 lines."

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines

Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra

Non-Arising of Phenomena is the Most Vital and Definitive TeachingThe Mahayana Model of Awakening

**Others**

A New Buddhist Path by David Loy

The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation Through Hearing In The Bardo by Chogyam Trungpa (Author), Francesca Fremantle (Author) (comments by Soh: I posted some excerpts of this book in my article Fearless Samadhi)

Nonduality by David Loy

A Brief History of Everything by Ken Wilber (comments by Soh: I like what Ken Wilber writes, but I also find that the critique on Ken's metaphysical beliefs very valid as well - http://www.integralworld.net/visser99.html and furthermore, Ken Wilber

mischaracterized the teachings of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, an issue I pointed out in A Common Wrong Explanation of Hinayana vs Mahayana)

This Is It: and Other Essays on Zen and Spiritual Experience by Alan Watts

The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are by Alan Watts

The Wisdom of Insecurity by Alan Watts

A Process Model by Eugene T. Gendlin

Ecodharma: Buddhist Teachings for the Ecological Crisis by David Loy

**Books for People Seeking Self-Realization (Realization of I AMness) and/or are Practicing Self-Inquiry**

Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind

My e-book has a chapter on Self-Inquiry:
http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/12/my-e-booke-journal.html

**The Direct Path to Your Real Self**

**Who am I? by Ramana Maharshi**

**Some Writings on Self-Enquiry and Non-duality by Ken Wilber**

**Essentials Of Chan Practice (Hua Tou/Self Enquiry) by Ch'an Master Hsu Yun**

**All books by Eckhart Tolle (perhaps start with The Power of Now – this is always the first book that I pass to friends and relatives if they show an interest in spirituality, as it is easy to read, inspiring and practical – it is a #1 New York Times bestseller that sold millions of copies)**

**The Untethered Soul by Michael A. Singer (if you like Eckhart Tolle's books, read this one too. It is another #1 New York Times Bestseller in a similar vein and also sold over a million copies. This book also teaches about Self-Enquiry ala Ramana Maharshi)**

True Meditation by Adyashanti

All books by Ramana Maharshi

**Sri Ramana Maharshi - JNANI 2018**

**Sailor Bob with John Wheeler, Feb 2012**

**The best non duality teachers: Meeting with John Wheeler Part 1**

The Way of Liberation by Adyashanti (free PDF here)

All writings/books by Ch'an Master Hsu Yun

All books by John Wheeler (See writing: Awakening to the Natural State: Guest Teaching by John Wheeler. Also: A sample of John Wheeler's book 'You Were Never Born')

The Simple Feeling of Being by Ken Wilber

Ken Wilber - I Am Big Mind

Descartes: Reviving the West's Greatest Modern Vedantist

Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark: The Korean Buddhist Master Chinul's Excerpts on Zen Practice

What Am I? A Study in Non-Volitional Living by Galen Sharp

**Advaita Vedanta**

Standing as Awareness: The Direct Path by Greg Goode

The Direct Path: A User Guide by Greg Goode

After Awareness: The End of the Path by Greg Goode

Anything by Ramana Maharshi, Rupert Spira, Ramesh Balsekar and Nisargadatta Maharaj

**Neo-Advaita**

Anything by Tony Parsons

Perfect Brilliant Stillness by David Carse

Anything by Jeff Foster

Comments: Neo-Advaita is good at pointing out nondual ala Thusness Stage 4 and in Tony Parsons' case more like Stage 5 especially recently, but I do not agree with their 'nothing to do' philosophy and neglecting conditionality/karmic propensities.

And as Thusness wrote before, "People that have gone into the nihilistic understanding of 'non-doing' ended up in a mess. You see those having right understanding of 'non-doing' are free, yet you see discipline, focus and peace in them.

Like just sitting and walking... ...in whatever they endeavor. Fully anatta."

**Christian Mysticism**

Resurrecting Jesus: Embodying the Spirit of a Revolutionary Mystic by Adyashanti

Days of Awe and Wonder: How to Be a Christian in the 21st Century by Marcus J. Borg

**Dream Yoga and Practices**

Dream Yoga: Illuminating Your Life Through Lucid Dreaming and the Tibetan Yogas of Sleep by Andrew Holecek and Stephen LaBerge

The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Mark Dahlby

Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu and Michael Katz

**Yoga and Energy Practices**

Yoga in the Kashmir Tradition: The Art of Listening

Yoga Unveiled by Godfrey Devereux (http://www.satcit.com/ebooks for PDF or http://www.satcit.com/books for paperback)

Light on Yoga by B. K. S. Iyengar

Open Heart, Open Mind: Awakening the Power of Essence Love by Tsoknyi Rinpoche

**Non-Traditional**

The Wonder of Presence and The Silent Question by Toni Packer

Anything by Joan Tollifson

Books by Judith Blackstone

Actual Freedom: Richard's Journal by Richard Maynard ( http://actualfreedom.com.au/sundry/orderformpaypal.htm )

Comments:

Toni Packer is an ex-Zen successor-in-line of Zen Master Philip Kapleau, Toni was later influenced by anti-authoritarian/iconoclastic spiritual teacher J Krishnamurti and left her tradition. She founded the Springwater Center. Toni Packer was able to express the non-dual insight of anatta well along with mind-body drop. Like J. Krishnamurti, she placed emphasis on 'choiceless awareness'.

Joan Tollifson was a student of Toni, as well as a follower of other neo-Advaita teachings/teachers.

However, besides the great insights expressed in Toni and Joan's books, my main criticism of their approach is similar to what Thusness wrote before,

"After this insight, one must also be clear of the way of anatta and the path of practice. Many wrongly conclude that because there is no-self, there is nothing to do and nothing to practice. This is precisely using "self view" to understand "anatta" despite having the insight.

It does not mean because there is no-self, there is nothing to practice; rather it is because there is no self, there is only ignorance and the chain of afflicted activities. Practice therefore is about overcoming ignorance and these chain of afflictive activities. There is no agent but there is attention. Therefore practice is about wisdom, vipassana, mindfulness and concentration. If there is no mastery over these practices, there is no liberation. So one should not bullshit and psycho ourselves into the wrong path of no-practice and waste the invaluable insight of anatta. That said, there is the passive mode of practice of choiceless awareness, but one should not misunderstand it as the "default way" and such practice can hardly be considered "mastery" of anything, much less liberation."

In 2013, Thusness said, "Anapanasati is good. After your insight [into anatta], master a form of technique that can bring you to that the state of anatta without going through a thought process." and on choiceless awareness Thusness further commented, "Nothing wrong with choice. Only problem is choice + awareness. It is that subtle thought, the thought that misapprehend (Soh: falsely imputes/fabricates) the additional "agent"."

“A state of freedom is always a natural state, that is a state of mind free from self/Self. You should familiarize yourself with the taste first. Like doing breathing meditation until there is no-self and left with the inhaling and exhaling... then understand what is meant by releasing.”

For those who have not yet gone into one mind, Judith Blackstone has some good techniques for accessing non-dual awareness and transparency, although more from the perspective of one mind.

Related: Bahiya Sutta, Dispassion and Spontaneous Perfection

Practice Before AND After Anatta

Non-Doing and Actualization

Non-Action

Non-Meditation and Daily Activities

**Update: a guidebook is now available as an aid to realize and actualize the insights presented on this journal. See https://app.box.com/s/157eqgiosuw6xqvs00ibdkmc0r3mu8jg**

## How to Realize Anatta / Contemplative Practices After I AM

Focus on practicing and contemplating the four aspects of I AM and two nondual inquiries.

**~ Four Aspects of I AM**

Many people get stuck in the initial I AM realization without much progress for decades. Fortunately Soh was able to progress relatively quickly (8 months from I AM realization to non-dual and anatta) compared to John Tan and many others that Soh know, who got stuck for decades due to a lack of good pointers and directions for progress from experienced teachers.

For progress after I AM realization, John Tan taught me about the deepening of the "I AM" in 4 aspects: 1) the aspect of impersonality, 2) the aspect of the degree of luminosity, 3) the aspect of dissolving the need to re-confirm and abide in I AMness and understanding why such a need is irrelevant, 4) the aspect of experiencing effortlessness (John Tan: any form of clinging, be it Self/self or Presence, will prevent a practitioner from correctly experiencing 'effortlessness')

By focusing on these four aspects of I AM, then later going deeper into the two types of nondual contemplations, Soh was able to make swift progress into non-dual and anatta realization.

- **01 The Aspect of Impersonality;**

This is the case when practitioners experience that everything is an expression of a universal cosmic intelligence. There is therefore no sense of a personal doer... rather, it feels like I and everything is being lived by a higher power, being expressed by a higher cosmic intelligence. But this is still dualistic – there is still this sense of separation between a 'cosmic intelligence' and the 'world of experience', so it is still dualistic.

Soh experienced impersonality after the I AM realization, however some people experience it before I AM realization. Some of the Theistic Christians may not have I AM realization (it depends - although many Christian mystics including Jesus Christ (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/jesus-christ-cosmic-consciousness-alan.html) himself have pointed out the I AM realization), however through their surrendering to Christ, they can drop their sense of personal doership and experience the sense of 'being lived by Christ', as in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.". This is an experience of impersonality that may or may not come with the realization of I AM. And as Sailor Bob Adamson said, "That separate entity, the belief in that entity or person, has never done a damn thing! It never can and never will. You must realize that you have been lived. That body-mind that you call 'you' is being lived, and it is being lived quite effortlessly. As Christ said, 'Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?' That separate entity can't do a bloody thing."

It should be noted that impersonality is not just an experience of non-doership. It is the dissolving of the construct of 'personal self' that led to a purging of ego effect to a state of clean, pure, not-mine sort of "perception shift", accompanied with a sense that everything and everyone is being expressions of the same aliveness/intelligence/consciousness. This can then be easily extrapolated into a sense of a 'universal source' (but this is merely an extrapolation and at a later phase is deconstructed) and one will also experience 'being lived' by this greater Life and Intelligence.

Impersonality will help dissolve the sense of self but it has the danger of making one attached to a metaphysical essence or to personify, reify and extrapolate a universal consciousness. It makes a practitioner feel "God". At this phase it is good to focus on this impersonal and universal aspect of consciousness, but beware of the tendency to extrapolate.

"...Next — and remarkably there is a next — we become aware of the other side of I Am, of the source from which it arises, within a stillness of surpassing quality. We see our I as a knot that blocks off the depths, a knot that makes itself the source of our will, intentions, choices, and decisions, including the intention to meditate in this moment. Gradually we loosen the knot until it gives way, until I let go entirely of being myself, of being my own source.

Until this point, our ascent has been into the depths within us. But always we have remained at the core of the experience, with the experience outside of us, of our core. Now we must empty that very core and open to what is deeper than our innermost center. We ourselves become the outside to the Sacred Will of the World, Who is our Source, and let that Will come through us, as us.

We inwardly prostrate ourselves, begging for reconnection, begging to become a part of that Greatness. Silently and wholeheartedly calling out to the Ultimate, completely and utterly opening the very kernel of who we are, we reach beyond the world of sacred light, into the unbounded emptiness, which is also an overflowing fullness, an intimacy with all, with the All.

- *This is the Sacred Will of the World,*
- *Of Whom I am now a particle,*
- *Who lends me the will to be myself,*
- *Who lends me my I,*
- *Who is my very Self,*
- *Whom I hope to become able to serve by emptying myself unconditionally,*
- *In Whom we are all united,*
- *And Who continuously creates and sustains this universe in love.*

This ultimate stage of the meditation comes only as an act of grace from Above. It lies well beyond our ability to make happen, although our emptiness, our surrender, and our love are necessary. Attempting to enter here, prayer may help. If you are so inclined, silently repeat one of God's names, one close to your heart, one that both expresses your yearning and brings you peace.

In closing the meditation, we climb back down Jacob's Ladder to return to our daily life, though somewhat changed inwardly. We come, in turn, back to the sacred light, back to the cognizant stillness of consciousness and the presence of I Am, back to sensation and relaxation, and thus back to the base of the ladder. We rest in awareness as the meditation settles in us." - Joseph Naft, A Meditation: Climbing Jacob's Ladder

"There is a vast impersonal natural intelligence which is living you, or rather, it IS this life, this breathing, this walking, this drinking... this life of the universe, of the earth spinning, .... all an interconnected play of Dharma, of total life, intelligence, and awareness. The only blockage is simply this sense of an 'I', someone who controls will and dictates actions in life.

If you think that I am sounding like an advocate of 'God', I have to reiterate that this so called 'God' or intelligent Mind is empty of its own existence apart from Dharma, is not something changeless and independent, and is not some sort of source acting behind the scenes or pulling the strings. Because this vast impersonal intelligence is so magnificent, powerful and impersonal, it can give the impression that we are all just the dream or expression of a Universal Mind of God, and if we follow this 'personification' and 'reification' we may start to think whether we are living in a matrix, a dream of Shiva for no other reason than his own enjoyment. But we are not the play or lila of a Brahman,

there is no need to personify or reify this at all. This intelligence IS the miracle of manifestation. The divine has no face of its own, and yet every face is the face of divinity. There is no I, no perceiver, or a controller of this spontaneous intelligent happening. Living this is living in complete ecstasy and joy born of this total intelligence, life and clarity." - Soh, 2015, Vast Impersonal Intelligence (Note that I wrote this post-anatta insight, therefore there is no more reification of this impersonal intelligence into universal consciousness)

- **02 The Intensity of Luminosity**

The degree of luminosity refers to feeling with entire being, feel wholly and directly without thoughts. Feeling 'realness' of whatever one encounters, the tree bark, the sand, etc. As with Impersonality, one may experience this even before the I AM realization. I (Soh) did. However one should practice to experience this aspect further after the I AM realization. This will also serve as one of the conditions for further non-dual insight. (You will also need to engage in nondual contemplation - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/two-types-of-nondual-contemplation.html - see below)

This aspect will come by practicing Vipassana, see John's Vipassana - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/thusnesss-vipassana.html and Vipassana - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/09/vipassana.html

"It will be advisable to take a step back to re-visit and re-experience each of the 6 sense doors. To cultivate a little on the aspect of being 'bare' for all the senses. Experience as much vividness as possible and have clarity on the luminous aspect of awareness first. Touch, taste, smell and sound… are all equally vivid as compared to seeing. Experience the texture and fabric of awareness. The rest of the conditions that give rise to no-self will come later. :) There is no 'willful' entrance into non-duality, create enough conditions, that's all. :)" - John Tan, 2007

"When we experience Awareness directly without using our thoughts, everything is experienced as having a magical, alive, shimmery, fresh, amazing and blissful quality to it. Life is not the 'boring and ordinary' as the mind interprets it, even the most ordinary things (such as eating, walking, etc) just feels awesome. You will be naturally attracted, pulled towards the pristine awareness than to stressful thoughts. The ego will melt in the wonder and majesty of awareness." - Soh, 2009

"I was awakened by the chirping of a bird outside the window. I had never heard such a sound before. My eyes were still closed, and I saw the image of a precious diamond. Yes, if a diamond could make a sound, this is what it would be like. I opened my eyes. The first light of dawn was filtering through the curtains. Without any thought, I felt, I knew, that there is infinitely more to light than we realize. That soft luminosity filtering through the curtains was love itself. Tears came into my eyes. I got up and walked around the room. I recognized the room, and yet I knew that I had never truly seen it before. Everything was

fresh and pristine, as if it had just come into existence. I picked up things, a pencil, an empty bottle, marveling at the beauty and aliveness of it all.

That day I walked around the city in utter amazement at the miracle of life on earth, as if I had just been born into this world.

For the next five months, I lived in a state of uninterrupted deep peace and bliss. After that, it diminished somewhat in intensity, or perhaps it just seemed to because it became my natural state. I could still function in the world, although I realized that nothing I ever did could possibly add anything to what I already had.

…

In your everyday life, you can practice this by taking any routine activity that normally is only a means to an end and giving it your fullest attention, so that it becomes an end in itself. For example, every time you walk up and down the stairs in your house or place of work, pay close attention to every step, every movement, even your breathing. Be totally present. Or when you wash your hands, pay attention to all the sense perceptions associated with the activity: the sound and feel of the water, the movement of your hands, the scent of the soap, and so on. Or when you get into your car, after you close the door, pause for a few seconds and observe the flow of your breath. Become aware of a silent but powerful sense of presence. There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice: the degree of peace that you fell within." - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

"I was walking through the park on my way home when something happened. Something holy arose from within and took over. I was standing there looking out at the trees and the grass like it was the first time I was seeing them. I was looking at my hands and feeling my body as it moved and I was marvelling at being alive and being in this body. I was acutely aware of being in the world, that I was a separate being in the world. I was enjoying all this as a child would enjoy a new and novel experience. I went over to a tree and grabbed a branch, I touched it softly and then grabbed it firmly, I really wanted to feel the tree, I really wanted to be there with it, to be present, to feel and see and take it all in. I bent down and touched the trunk near the roots, it was very real, very solid to my touch, it felt very alive. I noticed some bare earth around the tree trunk and picked up a chunk and broke it in my hand and watched and felt it crumble and stream through my fingers as it fell down to the earth. I was feeling so primal, so alive, I went around to the other side of the tree where the branches were a little higher off the ground and squatted under the branches near the tree trunk and put my hand on the trunk and left it there. I was feeling the roots and feeling extremely rooted myself in being. I stayed there for a few minutes, the feelings arising were so intense and overwhelming that tears were streaming down my face. Finally I left the tree and moved closer to the bench and sat and watched the crescent moon in the clear blue sky, there was a very bright star right beside it, so bright that I thought it might be the headlight of a plane heading towards me. I sat there and watched this scene and marvelled at life and being alive.

I finally got up and was going to go inside but I had to walk by the sandbox and I was immediately attracted to the sand. I bent down and started letting the sand run through my fingers, feeling the texture of the grains on the skin of my hand. I dug deeply into the sand and noticed that the sand was very damp when you dug down 3 or 4 inches. And then I found a flat stone. I don't know why this was so fascinating but I was like a little child, I would pick up the stone with a handful of sand and squeeze the sand so it would run through my fingers and then I would feel the hard stone pressing against the flesh of my palm and fingers. It was like finding a treasure, I did this over and over again.
I left the sandbox and moved over to a very large pine tree and grabbed on the branches really hard. I gave a really good pull on it and ripped that piece of branch clean off and allowed the needles to run through my fingers as they fell through the ground. I grabbed two branches, and held on really tight like I was holding hands with the pine tree, I looked up at it and was just present with it for a little while. But things were beginning to feel really intense inside of me so I went inside.

I went in the bedroom to change and got undressed, but when I was completely undressed I was drawn down to my knees and I bent very low with my forehead against the carpet. The energy was flowing like crazy inside, it felt like it was all emanating from the gut area. My head was on the carpet and my gut was much higher since I was still on my knees, this felt right as it had so many times before. Energy was flowing from my gut down through my head and out. But the energy also radiated outwards in all directions at the same time, like a sacred sun was shining in my gut. It was extremely intense and overwhelming and continued for at least 15 minutes.

I have no idea what is going on and I don't care. It feels very right and it makes everything sacred, my own body, and everything else in the world. It's almost a mystical experience at times to be alive.

I'm completely filled by this experience, it's overflowing.

I love you.” - Din Robinson

- **03 Dissolving the Need to Return or Abide in I AM**

There are two tendencies after I AM realization which are pitfalls that prevent effortless and total Presence, although the second is more helpful than the first:

a. Attempting to re-confirm the ever-presence of Awareness through reasoning
b. Attempting to abide in Presence

Dissolving the need to re-confirm is important as whatever is done is an attempt to distance itself from itself, if there is no way one can distant from the "I AM", furthermore the attempt to abide in it is itself an illusion.

However, abiding in presence is a form of meditative practice, like chanting, and leads to absorption. It can result in the oceanic experience. So although it is a pitfall that prevents effortless and non-dual experience of Presence (this requires deeper insights) and is a form of efforting, abiding in Presence through samadhi is a form of development after I AM realization. But once one focuses on the 4 aspects discussed here, one will have that experience of oceanic Presence too.

On the other hand, attempting to re-confirm the ever-presence of Awareness through reasoning (reasoning to oneself that Presence-Awareness is always here regardless of what experiences arise) is a retrogression from the I AM realization (which is direct certainty without inference), instead of any kind of development. The following conversation explains why.

Conversation with John Tan while Soh was in his I AM phase:

"John Tan: what is the difference before and after the realization of "I AM"?
Soh: a non conceptual certainty that does not come from inference, words, concepts
*certainty of being
John Tan: This certainty is unshakeable at that moment of realization.
Complete, Done, Still, Perfect, Pure, non-dual , Non-conceptual, primordial
(7:58 PM) AEN: yea
John Tans: Yet it doesn't seem 'there' anymore. Though intuitively it can't be lost, but this clarity despite the realization does not stay.
Soh: yeah..
John Tan: why so?
Soh: Because of conceptual thoughts... the I AM experience is a non conceptual direct authentication, just abiding as that
John Tan: why does conceptual thought arise?
Soh: By habit mostly
John Tan: now... have you seen through the illusion and power of 'thoughts'?
Soh: I can see that thoughts are illusory... yet when I get lost in thoughts it still seems real and powerful. That's why suffering still arise
John Tan: I remember reading something you said you read somewhere.. that the only problem is 'thought'. Because it becomes a 'reality' to the mind. Suggestion is very real to the mind to consciousness, so how does problem arise? This is important… if you can't understand this, it is difficult for you to progress and understand deeper. You cannot have 'problems' if you do not react to the content of 'thoughts'...
Soh: yeah.. we invest meaning and invest identity to our thoughts. I wrote about 'What's wrong with right now unless you think about it?'. It's when we label and give meaning to things that there are problems, otherwise there are just wordless vibrations, even thoughts are wordless
John Tan: yes, and problems includes confusions. Now in the direct mode, is there confusion?
Soh: no

John Tan: Is any explanation needed?
Soh: no
John Tan: Is any re-confirmation needed?
Soh: no
John Tan: Now if I were to ask you about source, is there any differentiation in that mode? You do not differentiate between source or you. There is no such differentiation… but when you are out of that mode, you seek explanation. You attempt to re-confirm, and your way is by explaining to yourself. This very act itself already distant itself from the direct and immediate mode. Get it? You made the mistake after the realization of "I AM". So does Mr. T. There is no why, no because,...no matter how logical it sounds, how much sense it makes, it is irrelevant, and from that [Soh: i.e. when comparing the logical reasoning process to direct realization] quality of experience in your realization, it is completely off the mark…
...actually ramana maharshi only tell you to abide in the Self. There is no explanation, just the abiding. However, that is not the way though it is better than explanation… hahaha.
Is surrendering a form of 'explanation'?
Soh: no
John Tan: It is just a quality of non-dual experience... a direct, immediate, non-dual, pure and non-conceptual experience that is still, complete and entire. Nothing matters in that mode. It is not about reading or no reading. If I don't explain to you, how are you to know? It is about getting into that mode and not falling into the trap. If you want to re-live the experience, you cannot approach that way. Read my article on anatta ( http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html ), I have already said it must be a more direct mode. In hearing, just sound, this is an experiential fact. You may describe the experience, you do not ask why in hearing, just sound. Or in hearing there is just sound because..... this and that… get it?"

As John Tan also wrote in 2009, "...Awakening to the 'Watcher' will at the same time 'open' the 'eye of immediacy'; that is, it is the capacity to immediately penetrate discursive thoughts and sense, feel, perceive without intermediary the perceived. It is a kind of direct knowing. You must be deeply aware of this "direct without intermediary" sort of perception -- too direct to have subject-object gap, too short to have time, too simple to have thoughts. It is the 'eye' that can see the whole of 'sound' by being 'sound'. It is the same 'eye' that is required when doing vipassana, that is, being 'bare'. Be it non-dual or vipassana, both require the opening of this 'eye of immediacy'".

- **04 Effortlessness.**

Any effort to sustain a state of Presence is contrary to the self-shining and spontaneous nature of Presence. But this aspect will require further insights (into non-dual, anatta and empty nature - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html) to unfold and mature much further.

Third and fourth point is especially clear after realization of anatta (No-Self, as elucidated in the latter part of this document):

“There is no one who has ever known the essence of awareness. There is no one has ever rested in the presence of awareness. Such is only concept and concept can not cross the threshold of wisdom.

Expanse and eveness are their ownmost and admit no one, no realizer, no Buddha, no being ..... no one can enter therein and yet not only is no one excluded but no thing no time no presence has ever strayed or wavered from ……..

Identity does not rest within but resolves….. and the absence of all conceptuality 'about' is known as absence of identity of beings of Buddhas. Devoid of reification, within this eveness, all appearances, all bodies, all thought abides non-other than ownmostness’ uncompounded and uncontrived essence.

What is talked about when we speak of the essence of awareness is not mere intellectualization, abstract philosophizing but is directly realized in the unutterableness of contemplative practice's deep and concept free eveness.

One does not come to abide in this realization. The fact that there is no such one at all is realized long before the eveness of essence is known. One does not come to abide in this state but instead realizes that in fact no-thing has ever strayed from it.

When this is realized then body and mind are informed by, and animate the truth of ……” - Traktung Rinpoche (from *recent talks on ineffability*)

“Hi AEN,

I do not usually reply people about spiritual stuff but I sense the confusion in Mikael's mail to you.

It is advisable to correctly point out to him that there is no short cut to direct path.

In the most direct path, Awareness is already and always at rest. In the most direct path, whatever manifests is Awareness; there is no "in Awareness" and there is no such thing as going deeper in Awareness or resting in Awareness. Anything "going deeper" or "resting" is nothing direct. Nothing more than the illusionary appearances of 'hierarchy' caused by the inherent and dualistic tendency of understanding things.

It is more 'gradual' than 'direct'. Therefore have the right view first before we talk too much about the direct path so that we do not fall into such views. Next clearly understand the cause that blinds us then have direct authentication of our pristine nature so that we will not be misled.

By the way, non-discrimination does not deny us from clear discernment. An enlightenment person is not one that cannot differentiate 'left' from 'right'. :)" - John Tan, 2009

"The 4 aspects are simply guiding and allowing the mind to get prepared for anatta. Look into the four aspects *(Soh: and compare it to Anatta)* and you will understand." - John Tan, 2019

**~ Two Types of Nondual Inquiry which leads to the collapse of perceiver/perceived duality**

Two Types of Nondual Contemplation after I AM

Today sent this to another person, this one is at Thusness Stage 4 and asking me for guidance. His guide from LU (Liberation Unleashed) led him from I AM/Eternal Witness to Thusness Stage 4 through the first contemplation on challenging the sense of a border/division between awareness and manifestation.

Telling him to focus on the second contemplation to realize 5 (anatta).

As I wrote before a month ago:

There are two lines of inquiries that helped my progress after I AM/Witness realization.

1) contemplating 'where does awareness end and manifestation begin' or 'is there a border/dividing line between awareness and manifestation' until Witness/phenomena collapses into a borderless one mind, one field of awareness where mind and manifestation can no longer be distinguished. This is *NOT* anatta. At this phase, the One Mind is still seen to be truly (inherently) existing, changeless

(Thusness Stage 4)

2) contemplating Bahiya Sutta -- in seeing only the seen, on hearing only the heard, (no seer or hearer besides) and same for all other senses. Until it is suddenly realized that the whole structure of Seer-Seeing-Seen doesn't apply and there is no seeing besides colors -- no seer, no hearing besides sound -- no hearer, no awareness besides manifestation. This is not just realising the lack of borders or duality but realizing the Absence of an inherently existing Self/Agent/Awareness behind manifestation. This is the realization of anatta.

(Thusness Stage 5)

Do these contemplations simultaneously while practicing Thusness's Vipassana

As Thusness wrote before, a good approach should provide an *"effective way to allow practitioners to have adequate experience of the vividness, realness and presence of Awareness and the full experience of these qualities in the transience. Without which it will not be easy to realize that "the arising and passing sensations are the very awareness itself." A balance is therefore needed, otherwise practitioners may experience equanimity but skew towards dispassion and lack realization."*

Read through these following articles as they will help your contemplation on Anatta:

(Perhaps start by reading the links marked in bold)

****Important: Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment**
****Important: On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection**
****Important: The Wind is Blowing, Blowing is the Wind**
****Important: The Buddha on Non-Duality (read the article by Ajahn Amaro followed by the comments by PasserBy [Thusness] in the Comments section)**
****Important: Nothing other than the sun, the moon, and the stars**
****Important: How is Anatta and Emptiness not Nihilism? / Suchness / Weather Analogy**
****Important: Fully Experience All-Is-Mind by Realizing No-Mind, Conditionality, Unreality and Non-Arising**
****Important: Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives**
****Important: Vipassana**
****Important: Emptiness as Viewless View and Embracing the Transience**
****Important: Advice from Kyle Dixon**
****Important: A Sun That Never Sets (Written by Kyle Dixon)**
****Important: Fearing No-Self**
****Important: Actual Freedom and the Immediate Radiance in the Transience**
****Important: Airplane and Flying**
****Important: Quotes by Dogen**
****Important: Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma on the Inseparability of Awareness and Conditions**
****Important: Actualization in Mundane Life and Encounters**
Difference Between Thusness Stage 4 and 5 (Substantial Non-duality vs Anatta)

Rigpa and Aggregates
My commentary on Bahiya Sutta
Sun of Awareness and River of Perceptions
What Is The "Me"?
The Breakthrough
Joel Agee: Appearances are Self-Illuminating
Zen Priest Alex Weith's report on his realization of Anatta
Nothing to Abide In, Anatta as Dispersing into Multiplicity + Spontaneous, Disjoint and Unsupported
Alan Watts: Agent and Action
Nouns and Verbs
The Trouble With Agency
Dan Berkow's Writings
Beyond Awareness
There's No Such Thing As Awareness / Redditors Who Realized Anatta
No Awareness Does Not Mean Non-Existence of Awareness
Non-duality of Essence and Form
James M. Corrigan's Writings
Greg Goode on Advaita/Madhyamika
Excerpts from the Jewel Mirror Samadhi
Realization, Experience and Right View and my comments on "A" is "not-A", "not A" is "A"
Man on Cloud Mountain
Putting aside Presence, Penetrate Deeply into Two Fold Emptiness
Leaving traces or Attainment?
A casual comment about Dependent Origination
Reply to Yacine
The Key Towards Pure Knowingness
Flowers Fall: A Commentary on Zen Master Dogen's Genjokoan (Soto Zen/Dogen)
Just Manifestation or Just Mind
No Self, No Doer, Conditionality
Possessed by Conceit
Some Remarks on Conceptualization and Transcendent Experience
Phagguna Sutta: To Phagguna
The Different Degrees of Non-Duality (Post anatta insight progression)
Self-Liberation by Khamtrul Rinpoche III (Mahamudra)
Resolving That Thoughts and Perceptions are Buddha-Mind (Mahamudra)
Nobody is running this show (luminousemptiness blog)
Where did by breath go? (luminousemptiness blog; read article + comments by PasserBy/Thusness)
All Experience is Mind (luminousemptiness blog; read article + comments by

PasserBy/Thusness)
Self-Liberation through Seeing with Naked Awareness by Padmasambhava (Dzogchen)
True Mind and Unconditioned Dharma
The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space, water
Early Forum Posts by Thusness
Part 2 of Early Forum Posts by Thusness
Part 3 of Early Forum Posts by Thusness
Early Conversations Part 4
Early Conversations Part 5
Early Conversations Part 6
+A and -A Emptiness

.....

Along with the two types of nondual contemplation, also practice to experience the intensity of luminosity and bring it to the foreground.

I wrote in 2011:

Good insight. Stability of experience has a predictable relationship with the unfolding and deepening of insights. For example how seamless and effortless can non-dual experience be, if in the back of one's mind, subtle views of duality and inherency and tendencies continue to surface and affect our moment to moment experience - for example conjuring an unchanging source or mind that results in a perpetual tendency to sink back and referencing experience back to a source.

For example even after it is seen that everything is a manifestation of awareness or mind, there might still be subtle tendencies to reference back to a source, awareness or mind and therefore the transience is not appreciated in full. Nondual is experienced but one sinks back into substantial nonduality - there is always a referencing back to a base, an "awareness" that is nevertheless inseperable from all phenomena.

If one arises the insight that our ideas of an unchanging source, awareness or mind is just another thought - that there is simply thought after thought, sight after sight, sound after sound, and there isn't an inherent or unchanging "awareness", "mind", "source". Non-dual becomes implicit and effortless when there is the realisation that what awareness, seeing, hearing really is, is just the seen... The heard... The transience... The transience itself rolls and knows, no knower or other "awareness" can be found. Like there is no river apart from flowing, no wind apart from blowing, each noun implies its verb... Similarly awareness is simply the process of knowing not separated from the known. Scenery sees, music hears. Because there is nothing unchanging, independent,

ultimate apart from the transience, there is no more sinking back to a source and instead there is full comfort resting as the transience itself.

Lastly do continue practicing the intensity of luminosity... When looking at tennis ball just sense the tennis ball fully.... Without thinking of a source, background, observer, self. Just the tennis ball as a luminous light. When breathing... Just the breathe... When seeing scenery, just sights, shapes and colours - intensely luminous and vivid without an agent or observer. When hearing music... Sound of bird chirping, the crickets... Just that - chirp chirp. A zen master noted upon his awakening... When I am hearing the bell ringing, there is no I and no bell... Just the ringing. The direct experiencing of no-mind and intensity of luminosity.. This is the purpose of the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness that is taught by the Buddha.

.....

Thusness just wrote today, “In anatta, self is negated and D.O (dependent origination) is realized. In emptiness the idea of "negation" is further refined to allow the mind to see how conventions are mistaken to be "real" and "true". Understanding how conventions and reifications *(mistaken to be "real" and "true")* can be intellectual but seeing through requires direct experiential insight and anatta is the actual taste of that in relation to the convention "self/Self". Once this is understood "emptiness" is realized to be the natural progression of anatta. The direct taste is beyond description, often expressed as +A and -A.”

Related: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2014/07/a-and-emptiness_1.html

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**Some Q&A regarding anatta realization -**

Another person asked, *"I am very interested to hear about how "your life" has changed due to these realizations?"*

I replied, "Life is now experienced in the most vivid, clear, free, alive and spontaneous way without gaps or division. The luminous taste of existence like 'I AM' is now experienced in everything, colors, sounds, etc. This is blissful. The release of all self/Self is liberating.

For the most part, life goes on. As the Zen saying goes, before enlightenment, chop

wood carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood carry water. But now without duality/self/Self/contraction/identification, and so one is free to face each situation with increased clarity, acceptance, intimacy with life, and transcendence. When I talk to others I do not feel myself as someone talking with someone else, there's just the whole activity talking and exerting, I am not I and other is not other, all dissolve into an interplay. One becomes fearless, non-attached and yet fully engaged in all experience and activities.

In terms of how emotional life has changed, pretty similar to how Kyle Dixon described after his anatta realization,

"...The anatta definitely severed many emotional afflictions, for the most part I don't have negative emotions anymore. And either the anatta or the strict shamatha training has resulted in stable shamatha where thoughts have little effect and are diminished by the force of clarity. I'm also able to control them, stopping them for any amount of desired time etc. but I understand that isn't what is important. Can I fully open to whatever arises I would say yes. I understand that every instance of experience is fully appearing to itself as the radiance of clarity, yet timelessly disjointed and unsubstantiated.."

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# How to Realize Emptiness:

+A and -A Emptiness

**Note: Click here to see more related articles.**

“In anatta, self is negated and D.O (dependent origination) is realized. In emptiness the idea of "negation" is further refined to allow the mind to see how conventions are mistaken to be "real" and "true". Understanding how conventions and reifications *(mistaken to be "real" and "true")* can be intellectual but seeing through requires direct experiential insight and anatta is the actual taste of that in relation to the convention "self/Self". Once this is understood "emptiness" is realized to be the natural progression of anatta. The direct taste is beyond description, often expressed as +A and -A.”

~ Thusness (John Tan), 2018

John Tan Hi David, thanks for sharing.

First there is the direct apprehension of Clarity/Awareness.

Next is recognizing the apparent separation of clarity and appearance caused by a seeming perceptual knot.

Then there is resolving of this separation and what's left is appearances / phenomena / cognized, seen, heard, tasted, smelled and sensed

It is interesting that the resolving of the separation for your case is not by way of subsuming into an all-encompassing non-dual awareness/space; however the overcoming of the center/agent can arise (from my experience) by:

1. By a prolong training in a state of no-mind.

2. Seeing through the center that the center has always been assumed, it is extra. In reality it does not exist.

3. Seeing through that the fundamental nature of the perceptual knot itself

4. A combination of above

Do you overcome the center by any of the above or by a different approach?

June 25 at 12:45pm · Edited · Unlike · 4

David Vardy Nice to meet you John. Looking back ( I was a slow learner. This is over a thirty year period). The first insight was associated with Taoist Yoga/Meditation performing the small microcosmic orbit. I had developed a lot of Chi over the years and when that orbit opened there was a hyper aware state, one of complete calmness and clarity. A feeling where everything just dropped. It wasn't until another decade or so when I was standing in line at an ice cream stand and a little girl turned around and looked up at me. In that moment she seemed as if she didn't see me, was looking straight through me. It was huge to say the least, brought me literally to my knees. The event left me feeling as if I had a hole in my forehead for about 2 months, experiencing headlessness all along. Deconstructed were the opposites, particularly inside and outside. You could say that from that day with that girl automatic continuous deconstruction was going on henceforth. There was no getting around it, even when exhausted. It's difficult retracking in such a short space here, but subsequently there was the experience of Anatta. This was incredible in light of the fact it hadn't been spelled out to me and having left the Chan tradition well before advancing in it I was kind of at a loss, not experientially, there was no doubt there, but how to talk about it. I had pretty much been seeing from the I AM position prior to this. Prior to Anatta it was as if my backside was an infinite expansive potential, the front being purely phenomenal. This

destroyed the backside. What had been imagined to be non-dual was seen not to have been the case at all. The notion of absence being on the backside was now gone. The idea of no-self prior to Anatta was really just self as Absence, but still holding onto a conceptual absence you could say. There was still a center. Experiencing Anatta in my case, coincided with seeing DO. Prior to Anatta, phenomena seemed to be hyper real, substantiated as you say? In the moment of Anatta, the packed nature of phenomena as a unitary seeing having no inherent qualities was clear. Emptiness of both sides was clear in the same moment, and fortunately continued as a heightened Samadi like experience for months after the initial introduction.
June 25 at 1:28pm · Unlike · 3

David Vardy There is a physical component to this. Here, the experience occurring with the insight coinciding with seeing the packed nature of sensing is also a packed feeling in the brain. Every space is filled. I call it the 'stuffed animal' effect. The center is squeezed out by seeing itself. It's as if by virtue of occupied receptors, the play of opposites is cancelled out, not intellectually but physically. And that which is cancelled is who you've been featured imagining yourself to be. There has been no one there but the play of opposites in a hyperactive fashion. The essence of quietude is the absence of that play.
June 25 at 1:51pm · Like

John Tan Hi David,
Nice meeting you too and thanks for sharing your experiences…felt a little nostalgic after knowing your Taoist background.
Your description of the little girl's stare is beautiful. The stare cuts through not only one's discursive thoughts but also pierces through the living Presence (the first level of koan of one's original face) and right into the fundamental essence of anatta. Even from your mere description, there is still the wordless transmission of headlessness that penetrates deep into one's bone marrow and boils the blood. The stare preserves the lineage that is beyond words. Thank You.
For me, the initial insight of anatta was mainly what I have stated in scenario 2 -- seeing through the center that the center has always been assumed, it is extra. In reality it does not exist.
Up until this point of anatta, I was very much a non-conceptual advocator, less words more experience. I have heard of the word "Kong 空"(Emptinesss) numerous times but never exactly know what it truly meant. The idea of Emptiness struck me probably "2 years later when I came across the chariot analogy of the Buddhist sage Nāgasena. There was an instant recognition that the analogy is precisely the insight of anatta and anatta is the real-time experiential taste of the "Emptiness" in relation to self/Self except that it is now replaced with "chariot" in the example.
The insight was huge and I began to re-examine all my experiences from the perspective of "Emptiness". This includes mind-body dropped, the impression of hereness and

nowness, internal and externality, space and time...etc. Essentially a journey of deconstruction, that is, extending the same insight of anatta from the perspective of emptiness to all phenomena, aggregates, mental constructs and even to non-conceptual sensory experiences. This led to the taste of instant liberation at spot of not only the background (self) but also the cognized, seen, heard, tasted, smelled and sensed without the need to subsume either subject into object or object into subject but liberates whatever arises at spot.
The deconstruction process reveals not only the taste of freedom from freeing the energy that is sustaining the constructs (in fact tremendous energy is needed to maintain the mental constructs) but also a continuous formation of a perceptual knot that blinds us in a very subtle way and that relates to scenario 3 -- Seeing through the fundamental nature of the perceptual knot itself. Seeing the nature of perceptual knot involves in seeing clearly certain very persistent and habitual patterns that continues to shape our mode of knowing, analysis and experience like a magical spell. The perceptual knot is the habitual tendency to reify and Emptiness is the antidote for this reifying tendency.
The journey of emptying also convinces me the importance of having the right view of Emptiness even though it is only an intellectual grasped initially. Non-conceptuality has its associated diseases…lol…therefore I always advocate not falling to conceptuality and yet not ignoring conceptuality. That is, strict non-conceptuality is not necessary, only that habitual pattern of reification needs be severed. Perhaps this relates to the zen wild fox koan of not falling into cause and effect and not ignoring cause and effect. A koan that Hakuin remarked as "difficult to pass through".
Not falling, not ignoring.
A word different, a world of difference.
And the difference causes a wild fox for five hundred lifetimes!
A long post and time to return to silence.
Nice chat and happy journey David!
June 26 at 1:33am · Edited · Unlike · 9

David Vardy Thank you John. This is a real pleasure. It's like having a first flush cup of Tung Ting after a few years of drinking Lipton. This feels similar to when Soh happened to pop up in another forum that I was in. What he said then, and continues to say, is perennially refreshing.
"This led to the taste of instant liberation at spot of not only the background (self) but the cognized, seen, heard, tasted, smelled and sensed without the need to subsume either subject into object or object into subject but liberates whatever arises at spot." Functioning, in the absence of clinging as it were, seems to be self-consuming much like a fire burning, the fuel being what appears to be arising. Whatever arises is consumed by the very nature of the activity itself. What we're featured doing it seems is making 'still lifes' (reification) out of the flames, assumed to be living as such, but only in memory.

When this functioning isn't appearing against a background, and there can only be a conceptual background, then what pops up only survives as long as it's noticed. If there was anyone to be continuously surprised by all this, slack jaw would probably be an ongoing problem.....lol
For many years, 23 to be exact, I worked in a small kitchen of my restaurant. We had two windows looking into the dining room including a distant view of the street in front of our restaurant. I remember to this day, the first impact of seeing people walking by in the street, disappearing stage left, disappearing stage right, appearing from stage left, appearing from stage right. What was a surprise back then, slowly became a virtual matter of fact. There just isn't a way to create a story of what's happening to those people, do they have lives, where do they go, what happens to them. etc. in the absence of a background. In many ways, this is just about seeing things as they arise in the absence of stories. What can't be described is the utter simplicity of it, and in one sense, it's the one thing that isn't required because, in fact, that's all that's happening.
This then translates to our daily 'lives'. When someone shows up who you haven't seen for sometime you ask out of genuine curiosity how they've been, what's been happening because they've simply been out of mind and out of sight, not asking out of mere habit. So long as there's reification, deconstruction is required. The nature of deconstruction can at first be tedious, but eventually it just becomes what has to happen. There's no getting around it. When it becomes as natural as a fire burning, then we can trust that what's happening is what's happening and their need not be concern for outcomes, a future, a past, whatever. It's not different from experiencing a wound heal. Patience I've discovered has been my best friend. Sometimes these things feel as if they can take an eternity....lol When it's understood that the undercurrent is far stronger than whatever is appearing at the surface, we give in to the current.
June 26 at 1:43am · Edited · Unlike · 3

John Tan Hi David, I see that you are expressing what I called the +A and –A of emptying.
(+A)
When you cook, there is no self that cooks, only the activity of cooking. The hands moves, the utensils act, the water boils, the potatoes peels …here there is no room for simplicity or complications, the "kitchen" went beyond it's own imputation and dissolved into the activity of cooking and the universe is fully engaged in this cooking.
(-A)
30 years of practice and 23 years of kitchen life is like a passing thought.
How heavy is this thought?
The whereabouts of this thought?
Taste the nature of this thought.
It never truly arises.
June 26 at 8:43am · Unlike · 8

David Vardy Hi John - Well said. The kitchen is full of metaphors, but once beyond metaphor and measure, there's nothing quite like it. I use to refer to it as being a 'corner of a wall-less room'.
June 26 at 11:25am · Like · 1

Soh:

**On "Right View? No View? Semblance":**

I wrote to Din Robinson:

Not commenting on Aham Monas as I am unfamiliar with his view. But commenting on your comment:

"Din Robinson yes, I'm asking if you believe your thoughts/views are an accurate reflection of reality"

Which implies that no thoughts and views are an accurate reflection of reality. I don't quite agree with that. That view of yours will lead to the disease of non-conceptuality: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../the-disease-of...

Before Anatta, non-conceptual direct realization of Presence-Awareness can be there, but reified and identified and clung to as some true Self or background behind all phenomena. This is a form of clinging, not liberation. Even though one may rest in a non-conceptual state of Presence, it is not the same as liberation.

Even if the Witness collapses into One Mind and one experiences non-dual luminosity, that luminosity can be reified again into something ultimate, changeless and independent.

As Thusness said in the past (and has been so in my experience), non-dual luminosity is blissful, but emptiness liberates (seeing the nature of Self/Phenomena as empty liberates).

It will be a mistake to think that I, Thusness, and the other members of this group, have not had direct realization of that Presence-Awareness. But we know that is not the key to liberation, merely resting in a state of non-conceptual awareness is not the key to liberation but serves as a basis to investigate the nature of Presence-Awareness further, so that not only is the luminous clarity experienced but its empty nature.

Even after anatta, all experience is self-luminous, lucid/vivid, direct and non-conceptual,

without seer-seeing-seen. Although the sense of being a background Witness or Agent is gone, foreground presencing/lucid/vivid phenomena can appear vivid and real, until analyzed by seeing the dependent origination, so that its non-arising is realized. This analysis of dependent origination and dependent designation is at first conceptual and inferential, but eventually a direct, non-conceptual realization of the emptiness and non-arising of foreground Presence can arise. But until direct realization arises, having a proper understanding of dependent origination, dependent designation and emptiness as a semblance (semblance as direct insight has not arisen) can be helpful to aid one's contemplation.

Hence the path of Buddhadharma is about giving rise to direct realization that ends reification, identification and clinging, of both Self and Phenomena as existing inherently, rather than merely resting in a state of Awareness or Clarity (as most teachers and teachings have taught). It is quite unique in this regard from the common non-dual discussion groups out there. The direct realizations are non-conceptual, but it is not induced by merely resting in a non-conceptual state of clarity/presence/awareness (which can happen even at the I AM phase) but by analyzing and contemplating the nature of Presence/Awareness/Experience. First penetrating into anatta (with the wind analogy and weather analogy and the two stanzas of anatta), then into twofold emptiness (the dependent origination and non-arising of all phenomena).

Even so, Pristine Awareness is never denied. As Thusness wrote in 2012, "I do not see practice apart from realizing the essence and nature of awareness. The only difference is seeing Awareness as an ultimate essence or realizing awareness as this seamless activity that fills the entire Universe. When we say there is no scent of a flower, the scent is the flower.... that is because the mind, body, universe are all together deconstructed into this single flow, this scent and only this... Nothing else. That is the Mind that is no mind. There is not an Ultimate Mind that transcends anything in the Buddhist enlightenment. The mind Is this very manifestation of total exertion... wholly thus. Therefore there is always no mind, always only this vibration of moving train, this cooling air of the air-con, this breath... The question is after the 7 phases of insights can this be realized and experienced and becomes the ongoing activity of practice in enlightenment and enlightenment in practice -- practice-enlightenment."

This reminds me of something Thusness wrote years ago which I agree:

John TanThursday, August 21, 2014 at 6:36am UTC+08
I am not into no view...but actualization of right view.

John TanThursday, August 21, 2014 at 7:03am UTC+08
We all know views are only provisional and are approximate of "reality" but some views

are better representations of "reality" than others. I am not into "no view", that will lead us into taking "non conceptuality" as the goal of practice. I have no issue adopting "right view", "non conceptuality of view" to me simply means not to let "view" remains intellect and conceptual but have experiential insight and actualized it in daily activities.

...

John TanTuesday, December 30, 2014 at 6:21pm UTC+08
No what I mean is a view and a structure like that of "mere designation" to have a semblance of direct experience of 2 fold and total exertion. Then in each of the phase, to trigger the direct insight, use koan or short stanza for contemplation.

John TanTuesday, December 30, 2014 at 6:22pm UTC+08
So a practitioner will not have a desync of view and experience, there will be a smooth process.

...

John TanMonday, January 5, 2015 at 2:26pm UTC+08
Seeing through first how reifications arise and the deconstruction of these reifications in direct experience (anatta and 2 folds) and then how to correctly apply conventionality as a semblance to "what is".

...

John TanTuesday, January 6, 2015 at 9:12am UTC+08
Semblance because insight has not arisen.

...

John TanTuesday, February 3, 2015 at 8:56am UTC+08
Lol...actually I have always like Jax's relentless zeal in pointing out the ultimate is direct, immediate and beyond arbitrary concepts. Primordial suchness is free from all elaborations, natural and stainless. Like eating an apple, the taste cannot be conveyed; all concepts of ultimate are at best a semblance, a concordant mental image but I believe no one is contesting that. It is the no practice and unskillful presentation of the ultimate, ignoring two truths and seeing everything as conceptual designation is a nightmare. Phenomena are only realized to be absence and empty when sought and analyzed via dependent arising, otherwise it is amazingly real and vivid. No matter how direct, non-dual and non-conceptual, no experience survives ultimate analysis, when analyze always non-arisen and empty. There is no subsuming of subject into object or

object into subject, no skewing to either poles; only always seeing the nature of whatever arises as empty and non-arisen when presented then phenomenon is free and liberating.

...

Look at what that appears quite substantial in experience, it is easier to contemplate like "the green color of my yoga matt" because the "green-ness" doesn't disappear...clearly it is "green" but is it? We keep contemplating and realized it isn't truly there at all. We must infer for non-conceptuality cannot bring us to that realization...there it is conceptual + non-conceptual to "awake" this insight of absence while in vivid presence. What most practitioner missed is they hold too tightly to non-conceptuality and therefore are denied of this realization. We then bring this taste to the entire scenery and ask where is in this scenery...it must be in a non-dual of just scenery to bring this actual taste upon one's own empty clarity...then the whole entire experience turns illusion-like. Then we bring this to the more insubstantial phenomena like sound, sensation, scent...just one's empty clarity ... Vividly there while absence...not being constantly dissolved.

It is a 2 mode (analysis via DO + non-dual no mind experience) of cognition into right contemplation as a practice...

Also, Thusness wrote in Jan 2015:

From "hereness"...everything is clearly here but there is no "here"....to scenery...where is this scenery ... Where is this clear "redness" of the flower...

Now I know how to express in prasangika terms - "A" being negated of the existence of "A"

From "hereness"...everything is clearly here but there is no "here"....to scenery...where is this scenery. If not how I dare to say the "key" is in translating the insight from inferring consciousness into a taste then dropped the habit to capture by inference after one is familiar with the illusion-like experience ... ... Where is this clear "redness" of the flower...

Look at what that appears quite substantial in experience, it is easier to contemplate like "the green color of my yoga matt" because the "green-ness" doesn't disappear...clearly it is "green" but is it? We keep contemplating and realized it isn't truly there at all. We must infer for non-conceptuality cannot bring us to that realization...there it is conceptual + non-conceptual to "awake" this insight of absence while in vivid presence.

What most practitioner missed is they hold too tightly to non-conceptuality and therefore are denied of this realization. We then bring this taste to the entire scenery and ask where is in this scenery...it must be in a non-dual of just scenery to bring this actual taste upon one's own empty clarity...then the whole entire experience turns illusion-like. Then we bring this to the more insubstantial phenomena like sound, sensation, scent...just one's empty clarity ... Vividly there while absence...not being constantly dissolved.

It is a 2 mode (analysis via DO + non-dual no mind experience) of cognition into right contemplation as a practice...

Having vivid experience and we look into the dependent arising of this vivid presence of experience...where is "hereness", just a formation of sense impression...clearly everything is here but "where"....this has the same effect of throwing one into illusion-like spaciousness...not only does it point to dependent arising and empty nature and also points us right back into one's clarity.

They [Advaita] are simply looking at the deconstruction of subject/object duality and the clarity that comes from such a state. This experience is important to nyingma as well as other schools too but that is simply part of the it. More importantly is to understand the non-arisen nature of whatever dependently originates. Many pride non-conceptuality over conceptuality and that is the problem. They refuse to analyze properly because there is this wrong impression that they already have a vivid experience of non-conceptual non-dual clarity, why the need to step back... The "when analyze" is key in madhyamaka because insight of non-arisen via dependent arising will not dawn without analysis.

Imo it is crucial to look at "dependencies" and "absence" as two distinct separate insights and later unite them. If masters and teachers can device koans style to trigger the "aha" moment of these 2 insights in a direct way and later the skillful unity of them, it will be great.

In addition to debates, one must seriously contemplate and realize the limitations of even the direct non-dual and non-conceptual mode of perception. Over pricing it can be a disservice. Prajna wisdom (wisdom of emptiness) is a deep realization that arises from the maturing of non-dual perception + inferring consciousness. It needs both. Btw, open spaciousness is a presence, not an absence.

So "profound absence" is triggered by ultimate analysis and integrated in an experience of non-dual Presence as empty and non-arisen. Therefore illusion-like spaciousness comes from both. It is not easy to see this but go contemplate deeper. I am referring the

4th level of realizing the "absence", clearly appear but "not exactly there". So analysis via DO triggers the realization of the absence and the dependencies whereas direct non-dual perception is about Presence.

…

Someone wrote: “I think something that might be totally crazy here but, isn't viewing things as mere conditioned arisings subtly reifying things to be a thing which is conditioned?”

I replied:

Depends on how it’s understood. Understood in the following way, conditionality does not reify but serves as a semblance for total exertion and empty clarity, +a and -a emptiness.

…
I wrote to someone after his realization of anatta,

“I see, that means your insight into the two stanzas of anatta should be clear without going much into the aspect of view. For now you need to spend quality time everyday to actualize anatta in its pristine purity and luminosity in all sense fields (or better yet, all senses are a seamless exertion of one formation) until it stabilizes (or rather the traces of self/Self gets released through practice).

Having quality each time actualizing the equipoise of anatta everyday (means like just sitting, zazen, or just doing/acting/walking/etc, without relying on concepts and thoughts), just naked awareness empty of self/Self, fully open, centerless and boundless as vivid manifestation and total exertion.

However post-equipoise, you should contemplate and integrate the right view of emptiness. That requires thoughts initially.

That is to say, for further progression you will also need to understand and realize the view of emptiness, and reading these two articles by Kyle Dixon may help for a start as he was able to have certain realization into the view aspect along with his anatta insight from the beginning - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../a-sun-that... and http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../advise-from...

The second article mentions about the h2o analogy with a link to a ted talk.

These articles will help you and prevent the desync of view and experience that John Tan warned earlier.

As John Tan said about 2 months back, "For Kyle, due to his view in emptiness, the experiential insight of anatta not only pierce through the self/Self but also triggered the arising insight of emptiness. However this may not be true (imo) in most cases if one's view isn't firmly established. For me when I first encountered the chariot analogy, there is an immediate and intuitive recognition that it is referring to anatta but I am unable to grasp the essence of the phrase "emptiness and non-arisen" there and then.

In other words, in addition to self immolation, a specific insight must arise, it is the prajna that clearly sees through the referent is empty and non-arisen. So anatta I would say is about severing the self/Self whereas phase 6 is the blossoming of this specific insight. Extending this insight from self to phenomena, from conventions to magical appearances is then a natural progression."

....

5/21/2012 12:37 PM: John: Not exactly...that is experience...what is important is to realize what the YouTube about h2o then the willingness to drop the inherent view becomes natural. Coupled with the direct experience of anatta and luminosity, experience will turn illusionary naturally but in a different light.
5/21/2012 12:38 PM: John: How is contemplating on illusion like phenomena lead one to such realization and not substantial non dualism
5/21/2012 12:41 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic
5/21/2012 12:41 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Yes I think advaita also talk about illusory but returns to substantial
5/21/2012 12:44 PM: John: Over intellectualizing is no good without a good balance of direct experience. Right view then non conceptual direct experience of what the view is pointing. But get the view right.

...

6/1/2012 8:23 AM: John: Do stage 5 understands what that is being said in the YouTube of the water and h2o?
6/1/2012 8:24 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Hmm... Interesting, never pondered about it. I think the h2o is also about dependent origination
6/1/2012 8:27 AM: John: about the essence of emptiness and DO. Phase 5 do not have this insight. That is what you fail to clearly understand and tell me. Be clear and understand the difference before going further.
6/1/2012 8:28 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic..

6/1/2012 8:29 AM: John: When you were in ruthlesstruth, same problem arise.
6/1/2012 8:30 AM: John: Having the view of what is described in the YouTube of h2o is not just "there is thoughts, no thinker"
6/1/2012 8:31 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
6/1/2012 8:34 AM: Soh Wei Yu: So its more like seeing the aggregates as manifesting dependently?
6/1/2012 8:34 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Btw what do you think about the blog I sent u
6/1/2012 8:37 AM: John: The blog is good but have the same issue. Unless there is clarity of all these insights, there will be no break-through in terms of stability and effortlessness of experience.
6/1/2012 8:38 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. But he understands d.o. too?
6/1/2012 8:40 AM: John: It is like going through the insight of anatta, you understand why a practitioner struggles through getting himself non-dual and effortlessness in no-mind.
6/1/2012 8:43 AM: John: A non-dual substantialist will tell you how effortless non-dual is and how stable he is in that state but only a practitioner knows the limitation.

...

6/9/2012 9:30 PM: John: I have told you about the disease of
6/9/2012 9:30 PM: John: Non conceptuality, you need to seek a balance
6/9/2012 9:31 PM: John: Otherwise it will limit your progress into phase 6 and especially 7
6/9/2012 9:33 PM: John: View must be fully integrated into your practice for you to understand what the maha experience is
6/9/2012 9:33 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
6/9/2012 9:34 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Maha is like everything is seamlessly interconnected as this very arising right, its not like one thing interacting with other (which would have segmented experience subtly), but that everything is integrated in one interconnected suchness
6/9/2012 9:40 PM: John: Many do not understand the implication of right view yet
6/9/2012 9:41 PM: John: you do not go non conceptual and realize the maha experience of suchness
6/9/2012 9:43 PM: John: It is just like how dualistic and inherent view has integrated into our moment to moment of experience
6/9/2012 9:43 PM: John: And we feel and behave the world is really dual.
6/9/2012 9:44 PM: John: As if the world is really dual
6/9/2012 9:46 PM: John: If a practitioner is simply at "in hearing, only sound and no hearer", he can still get stuck at no self and simply be awed by the grandeur of the pce.
6/9/2012 9:49 PM: John: This is different from understanding the emptiness of self. Understanding "emptiness" requires you to understand the analogy given by the h2o

YouTube and more
6/9/2012 9:50 PM: John: It also requires to penetrate into DO by deeper investigation of the nature of experience”

**Does dependent arising require some “thing” to depend on?**

Greg Goode:

Steve, Madhyamika interprets the "thingness" gestalt as a type conception, a way of reacting or conceptualizing words or concepts or sensations, as if there were existence involved. Maybe some words seem to invite this kind of reifying conceptualization more than others - we usually feel that more physical-sounding, more concrete words entail a more independent kind of existence. But Madhyamika would refute this kind of existence across the board.

Does "dependent arising" require there is (A) something dependent that arises, and (B) something that A is dependent on? Even though Madhyamika itself refutes this?

Not according to Madhyamika itself. When A is said to be dependent, the meaning is that is is not INdependent. It is not self-sufficient, it has no essence or true nature.

What does "dependent" mean? Dependence is usually broken down into three types. Phenomenon A relies on pieces and parts, on conditions, and on conceptual designation.

But none of these things (pieces + parts, conditions, conceptual designation) is an inherent, self-standing thing. Each of these things itself dependent.

This kind of dependency is not linear, tracing back to an original first cause or universal stopping point. It's more like a web of dependencies. It's not arborial, it's rhizomatic.
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Years ago:

Greg Goode: Different types of dependency: several people have given examples, and here's another one.

A table..

1. A table depends on legs, a top, screws and braces (parts)
2. A table depends on being constructed, and trees, and sun and air, and builders (causes and conditions).

3. A table depends on being conceptualized and designated as a table.

This is the subtle one. Let's say you see a leg and a top. Do you see a backrest? No, so you won't call this a chair. The designation goes like this - you see some forms, and make them out as legs and a top. You give those forms the name, label, designation of "table."

This is subtle because the table is not exactly equal to the parts. The table cannot equal the parts, because then, if the parts change, the parts would be different, and so, following the equation, the table would have to change. Another reason the equality cannot hold is that there are many parts and only one table. The table cannot equal the *collection* of parts, because if the parts change, or if a leg gets broken off, or swapped out, then the collection changes. So the table would have to be a different table.

But we really don't want to say that the table would be different just because the parts are different. We want to somehow say that the table can remain relatively stable as the same table, even if the parts change, or get painted, etc.

And at the same time, we cannot find a truly existent, unchanging table behind or within the parts. If we did find such a truly existent table, then we wouldn't need to designate the parts as a table. But we do. It makes no sense that the table would really be a table if no one had ever in history designated anything as a table.

So we allow ourselves to end up saying, in a loose, conventional way, that the table depends on the parts, but is not the parts. It's a table in name only. this kind of naming is the designation-aspect of the dependency.

And this loose, conventional approach to tables and selves and life and all things is the experience of emptiness. It's a free, flexible, sweetly joyful, open-hearted way of life....

John Tan: And also functionality. A Chariot continues to function even with some of its parts missing. Dependencies based on parts, causes and conditions, relations, functions and imputations.

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Also see:

**[**Important: Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment]
**[**Important: On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection]
**[**Important: Advice for Taiyaki]

**Important: Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness
**Important: An Expansion on the Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness
**Important: Presence and the Nature of Presence
**Important: Insight of Emptiness
**Important: What is Total Exertion?
**Important: Drivin' Dogen
**Important: Syncing +A and -A, Unity of Two Truths
**Important: Does dependent arising require some “thing” to depend on?
**Important: All Things are Conceptual Designations
**Important: A Sun That Never Sets (Written by Kyle Dixon)
**Important: Putting aside Presence, Penetrate Deeply into Two Fold Emptiness
**Important: Nondual Emptiness Teachings
**Important: Fully Experience All-Is-Mind by Realizing No-Mind, Conditionality, Unreality and Non-Arising
**Important: Quotes by Dogen
**Important: Emancipation of Suchness
**Important: Buddha-Dharma: A Dream in a Dream
**Important: Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma on the Inseparability of Awareness and Conditions
**Important: Emptiness as Viewless View and Embracing the Transience
**Important: Actualization in Mundane Life and Encounters
Ultimate and Relative
Fully Experience All-Is-Mind by Realizing No-Mind and Conditionality
Daniel's Post on Anatta/Emptiness
Realization, Experience and Right View and my comments on "A" is "not-A", "not A" is "A"
Non-Arising Because of Dependent Origination
Being-Time by Shinshu Roberts (more on Total Exertion)
Dharma Body (more on Total Exertion)
How Experiential Realization Helps in Liberation
Emptiness as Unity
Two-Way Dependency/Dependent Designation
Another Kind of Self-Inquiry: Chandrakirti’s Sevenfold Reasoning on Selflessness
Dependent Arising and the Emptiness of Emptiness: Why did Nagarjuana start with causation?
Advice from Kyle Dixon
Dzogchen vs Advaita, Conventional and Ultimate Truth (Written by Kyle Dixon, with comments by Thusness)
Greg Goode on Advaita/Madhyamika
Purpose of Madhyamaka?
Leaving traces or Attainment?

A casual comment about Dependent Origination
Reply to Yacine
Phagguna Sutta: To Phagguna
Where did by breath go? (luminousemptiness blog; read article + comments by PasserBy/Thusness)
All Experience is Mind (luminousemptiness blog; read article + comments by PasserBy/Thusness)
True Mind and Unconditioned Dharma
The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space, water
Two Types of Nondual Contemplation after I AM

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# Glossary

**Anatta:** non self, empty of self
**Bahiya Sutta:** a famous discourse by Buddha on non-self that led Bahiya to liberation upon listening. See: The Buddha on Non-Duality

**D.O./Dependent Origination:** Every arising, every manifestation, every experience arose dependent on causes and conditions. This principle was originally discovered and taught by the Buddha:*"When there is this, that is. With the arising of this, that arises. When this is not, neither is that. With the cessation of this, that ceases."*

**Dharma:**in the context of teachings, like "Buddhadharma", it is the teachings of Buddha, or the teachings of truth. In the context of appearing phenomena, such as "all dharmas are impermanent", they refer to a unit of experience, activities, arising phenomena or manifestations.

**Dharma seal:** the nature of phenomena/experiential reality, always already so.
**Aggregates:**Buddha taught that there are five aggregates that makeup a conventionally labelled "human being", that is, form, feelings, perceptions, volition and consciousness.

One of the messages of this teachings is no-self and dependent origination. No "self" could be pinned down inside or apart from the aggregates in the same way that no "chariot-ness" can be pinned down inside or apart from the parts of it - the wheel, etc. It is simply aggregates being conventionally imputed as such. There is no abiding or intrinsic reality/existence. These aggregates co-dependently arise and are empty of any self, anything pertaining to an I, a me, or a mine.

**Emptiness:** the absence of a real existence of a self or an entity that can be pinned down or established

**Luminosity:**cognizance, clarity, presence, knowingness, aliveness, intelligence, consciousness, sense of existence, sense of reality

**NDNCDIMOP:** Non-dual, non-conceptual, direct and immediate mode of perception.

**PCE:** Pure consciousness experience (see NDNCDIMOP).This term's usage was popularized by the Actual Freedom foundation. Excerpt from their site: *"A pure*

*consciousness experience is a temporary, 'self'-less and sensuous experience of the perfection and purity of the actual universe. A PCE offers a glimpse or window out from the 'real' world everyone is born into (and therefore assumes to be all there is), and one suddenly finds oneself in the unimaginable, magical, fairytale-like actual world.*

*For a brief period, there is no 'self' as a mediator, interpreter, censor or spoiler. All is directly evidenced by the physical senses to be pure, perfect, delightful. One's intelligence is freed of any emotions and affective feelings – thinking becomes benign, clear and concise – free of malice and sorrow. The already-existing innate purity and perfection that becomes stunningly apparent in this 'self'-less state instantly renders redundant the need for any morals, ethics or any kind of 'self'-control. With awareness and intelligence operating totally freed from the Human Condition, 'I' can then be clearly seen for what 'I' am – a parasitical identity who is the source of 'my' own suffering and 'my' own malice."*

**Ten Fetters:**Fetter that binds the mind to the cycle of rebirth (vaṭṭa) — self-identification views (sakkāya-diṭṭhi), uncertainty (vicikiccha), grasping at precepts and practices (sīlabbata-parāmāsa); sensual passion (kāma-rāga), resistance (vyāpāda); passion for form (rūpa-rāga), passion for formless phenomena (arūpa-rāga), conceit (māna), restlessness (uddhacca), and unawareness (avijjā). These fetters are eliminated progressively in four stages of awakening from stream entry to arahantship, according to the Budddha's teachings.

**The Place Where There is No Heat or Cold:** ***A monk asked Tozan, "When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?"***
***Tozan said, "Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?"***
***The monk said, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?"***
***Tozan said, "When it's cold, the cold kills you; when it's hot, the heat kills you."***

*This is not advice to "accept" your situation, as some commentators have suggested, but a direct expression of authentic practice and enlightenment. Master Tozan is not saying, "When cold, shiver; when hot, sweat," nor is he saying, "When cold, put on a sweater; when hot, use a fan." In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe. The heat kills you, and there is only heat in the whole universe. The fragrance of incense kills you, and there is only the fragrance of incense in the whole universe. The sound of the bell kills you, and there is only "boooong" in the whole universe…*

*~ The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing, Ted Biringer*