**Half-Day Study Session on the Anatta**

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**The Day’s Schedule:**

**10 a.m.:**

1. Pass out the study guide
2. Introductions (names, in the sitting circle)
3. Plan for the day

**10:10-11:15 a.m.:** using the study guide:

1. Read the sutta excerpts
2. Read the commentary
3. Define and describe

**11:25-11:35:** short bio break and 15-minute sitting

**11:35-12:15:**

1. Q&A and discussion
2. Meditation instructions (instructions from a sutta and Analayo)

**12:15-1:00 p.**m. Lunch and Analayo’s Meditation on the Five Aggregates

**1:00-2:00: Discussion, Q&A, Closing circle**

**About the Study Session Materials**

* Tthe *Mijjima Nikaya* (MN), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Bodhi and Bhikkhu Nanamoli’s translation
* *Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN),* *The Grouped Discourses of the Buddha*, translation is by Bhikkhu Bodhi
* *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization*, Analayo.
* *In the Buddha’s Words, An Anthology of the Buddha’s Teachings,* Bhikkhu Bodhi
* *Early Buddhism: A New Approach,* Sue Hamilton
* *Mindfulness, Joseph Goldstein*
* The Three Cardinal Discourses by Nanamoli Thera
* https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nanamoli/wheel017.html#s2
* From the InsightMeditationCenter.org, an article by Gil Fronsdal adapted from one of his dharma talks.

# Why Study the Teachings on Not-Self?

The importance of the Buddha’s teaching on “Not-Self” is reinforced by mention in innumerable suttas throughout the *Tipi Pitaka* – the “document baskets” that contain the thousands of suttas that form early Buddhist canon. The Buddha’s first sermon on Not-Self was the second sermon he delivered after his enlightenment. During enlightenment, the Buddha came to understand the three characteristics of existence:

* Impermanence (change of all kinds)
* Suffering (in Pali, *dukkha*); sometimes translated as unsatisfactoriness, affliction, stress; particularly the mental and emotional suffering or stress by caused clinging and craving (i.e., Noble Truths 1 and 2); and
* *Anatta* (the Pali word for Not-Self, Non-Self, or No Self, depending on the translator); the Buddha advises us throughout his teachings to detach from and become disenchanted by notions of identity – from the “I, Me and Mine” mindset that fosters clinging. He taught that our own observations can show us that there is not an “essential,” static self or ***self-view*** within ourselves to cling to that stays the same from birth to death. There is not a self or component of self that we are fully in charge of.

These core characteristics correspond with the first three discourses of the Buddha after his enlightenment. The first three teachings the Buddha gave are together referred to as “The Cardinal Discourses.” The first was on Suffering – the Four Noble Truths – the second on *Anatta*, Not-Self, and the third was The Fire Sermon on the three fires that cause suffering (greed, hatred, delusion). The teaching on impermanence runs like a thread throughout his teachings – the cause of suffering is clinging, meaning we cling to things we like after they have passed away, which causes more suffering (causes craving) and crave things we don’t have.

# Sutta Excerpts on Anatta

1. This the second sermon the Buddha gave. It is called *Anatta-Lakkhana-sutta* (*The Not-self Characteristic* sutta), can be found in the basket called the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (SN), *The Grouped Discourses of the Buddha* as SN: 22.59. This translation is by Bhikku Bodhi.

“Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus of the group of five thus:

“Bhikkhus!”

“Venerable sir!” those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikkhus, form is nonself. For if, bhikkhus, form were self, this form would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to have it [said] of form: ‘Let my form be thus; let my form not be thus.’ But because form is nonself, form leads to affliction, and it is not possible to have it [said] of form: ‘Let my form be thus; let my form not be thus.’

“Feeling is nonself…. … Perception is nonself…. Volitional formations are nonself…. Consciousness is nonself. For if, bhikkhus, consciousness were self, this consciousness would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to have it said of consciousness: ‘Let my consciousness be thus; let my consciousness not be thus.’ But because consciousness is nonself, consciousness leads to affliction, and it is not possible to have it [said] of consciousness: ‘Let my consciousness be thus; let my consciousness not be thus.’

“What do you think, bhikkhus, is form permanent or impermanent?”—“Impermanent, venerable sir.”—“Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?”—“Suffering, venerable sir.”—“Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’?”—“No, venerable sir.”

“Is feeling permanent or impermanent?… Is perception permanent or impermanent?… Are volitional formations permanent or impermanent?… Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?”—“Impermanent, venerable sir.”—“Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?”— “Suffering, venerable sir.”—“Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’?”—“No, venerable sir.”

“Therefore, bhikkhus, any kind of form whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all form should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

“Any kind of feeling whatsoever … Any kind of perception whatsoever … Any kind of volitional formations whatsoever … Any kind of consciousness whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all consciousness should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

“Seeing thus, bhikkhus, the instructed noble disciple experiences revulsion [or: disenchantment] towards form, revulsion towards feeling, revulsion towards perception, revulsion towards volitional formations, revulsion towards consciousness. Experiencing revulsion, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion his mind is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It’s liberated.’ He understands: ‘Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Elated, those bhikkhus delighted in the Blessed One’s statement. And while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of the bhikkhus of the group of five were liberated from the taints by nonclinging.”

1. From MN 44, the ***Culavedalla Sutta, The Shorter Series of Questions and Answers***

Scene: Householder Visakha has a Q&A with *Bukhuni* Dhammadina on the nature of “Identity”:

1. “Lady…What is called identity by the Blessed One?”

“Friend Visakha, the five aggregates affected by clinging are called identity by the Blessed One; that is, the material form aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling aggregate affected by clinging, the perception aggregate affected by clinging, the mental formations aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging.”

7. “Lady, how does identity view come to be?”

“Here, friend Visakha, an untaught person regards …material form as self, or self as possessed of material form…..feeling as self, or self as possessed of feeling…. He regards perceptions as self or as self possessed of perceptions…. mental formations as self, or self as possessed of mental formations…. consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness….”

8. “Lady, how does identity view not come to be?”

“Here, friend Visakha, a well-taught noble disciple, who has regard for the noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma….does not regard feeling as self or self as of possessed of feeling…. He does not regard perceptions as self or self as possessed of perception….He does not regard material form as self or self as possessed of material form….he does not regard mental formations as self…..does not regard consciousness as self….”

C. From SN 22:82, ***A Full Moon Night***, Bhikku Bodhi, ***also MN 109, 15-19. Anthology, 339-340.***

“Venerable Sir, how does identity view come to be?”

“Here, monk, the uninstructed worldling, who is not a seer of the noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma…regards form as self, or self as possessing form, or form as in self or self as in form. He regards feeling as self, or as self as possessing feeling, or….perceptions as self…volitional formations as self, consciousness as self… That is how identity view comes to be.

“But venerable sir, how does identity not come to be?

“Here, monk, the instructed noble disciple, who is a seer of the noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their dhamma…does not regard form as self, or self as possessing form, or form as in self or self as in form…He does not regard feeling as self….This is how identity view does not come to be.”

1. **The Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra**

Note by the unnamed translator: Perfection of Wisdom is a translation of Prajnaparamita. The full title of this sutra is *The Heart of Prajnaparamita Sutra*. <https://webspace.ship.edu/>

“Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, meditating deeply on Perfection of Wisdom, saw clearly that the five aspects of human existence are empty\*, and so released himself from suffering. Answering the monk Sariputra, he said this:

Body is nothing more than emptiness,

emptiness is nothing more than body.

The body is exactly empty,

and emptiness is exactly body.

The other four aspects of human existence --

feeling, thought, will, and consciousness --

are likewise nothing more than emptiness,

and emptiness nothing more than they.

All things are empty:

Nothing is born, nothing dies,

nothing is pure, nothing is stained,

nothing increases and nothing decreases.

So, in emptiness, there is no body,

no feeling, no thought,

no will, no consciousness.

There are no eyes, no ears,

no nose, no tongue,

no body, no mind.

There is no seeing, no hearing,

no smelling, no tasting,

no touching, no imagining.

There is nothing seen, nor heard,

nor smelled, nor tasted,

nor touched, nor imagined.

There is no ignorance,

and no end to ignorance.

There is no old age and death,

and no end to old age and death.

There is no suffering, no cause of suffering,

no end to suffering, no path to follow.

There is no attainment of wisdom,

and no wisdom to attain.

The Bodhisattvas rely on the Perfection of Wisdom,

and so with no delusions,

they feel no fear,

and have Nirvana here and now.

All the Buddhas,

past, present, and future,

rely on the Perfection of Wisdom,

and live in full enlightenment.

The Perfection of Wisdom is the greatest mantra.

It is the clearest mantra,

the highest mantra,

the mantra that removes all suffering.

This is truth that cannot be doubted.

Say it so:

Gaté,

gaté,

paragaté,

parasamgaté.

Bodhi!

Svaha!

Which means...

Gone,

gone,

gone over,

gone fully over.

Awakened!

So be it!”

### On Emptiness

\* “Emptiness is the usual translation for the Buddhist term *Sunyata* (or *Shunyata* in Sanskrit). It refers to the fact that no thing -- including human existence -- has ultimate substantiality, which in turn means that no thing is permanent and no thing is totally independent of everything else. In other words, everything in this world is interconnected and in constant flux. A deep appreciation of this idea of emptiness thus saves us from the suffering caused by our egos, our attachments, and our resistance to change and loss.”

# The Five Aggregates Instead of a Self

The study of and practice with the Five Aggregates (in the teachings sometimes referred to as “the five aggregates of clinging”) provide a conceptual framework that helps us understand what to look at and what to look for in order to liberate us from suffering and the cycle of samsara.

## What is an Aggregate?

In Pali, the word for “aggregate” is *khandha*. In Sanskrit, it is “*Skandha*”. *Khandha* is most often translated as “aggregate” but also sometimes as “heap” or “bundle.”

Here are a couple of definitions of “Aggregate” as a noun (which is how the Buddha used it):

**From Merriam Webster online**: “A mass or body of units or parts somewhat loosely associated with one another. Example: Froth is an aggregate of tiny bubbles.”

**From the OED, online**: “A whole formed by combining several separate elements. Example: The council was an aggregate of three regional assemblies.”

An example from Goldstein, pp. 181: “a ‘storm’ is an aggregate of wind, rain, lightening, thunder, etc.; separately, they are not a storm; together, they are.”

So in short, an “aggregate” is a group of parts that work together in some way.

## The Simile of the Chariot

**The Simile of the Chariot**

The simile of the Chariot is one the clearest teachings on the *khandhas* and what they represent. The simile of the Chariot or “cart” was first presented in the *Samyutta Nikaya* (SN) as a very short dialogue between a Buddhist nun named Vijara and Mara the tempter; it was later retold in a Mahayana sutta revised and added to the cannon somewhat later, entitled *The Milindapanha*, which is a dialogue between an Enlightened Buddhist monk named Nagasena and the Indo-Greek King Menander I (*“Milinda”* in Pali), who was thought to have ruled from about 160 to 130 BCE. Following is a summary of part of the dialogue:

*“One of the King's first questions is on the nature of the self and personal identity. Nagasena greeted the King by acknowledging that Nagasena was his name, but that ‘Nagasena’ was only a designation; no permanent individual ‘Nagasena’ could be found.*

*This amused the King. Who is it that wears robes and takes food? he asked. If there is no Nagasena, who earns merit or demerit? Who causes karma? If what you say is true, a man could kill you and there would be no murder….*

*Nagasena asked the King how he had come to his hermitage, on foot or by horseback? I came in a chariot, the King said.*

*But what is a chariot? Nagasena asked. Is it the wheels, or the axles, or the reigns, or the frame, or the seat, or the draught pole? Is it a combination of those elements? Or is it found outside those elements?*

*The King answered no to each question. Then there is no chariot! Nagasena said.*

*Now the King acknowledged the designation "chariot" depended on these constituent parts, [and] that "chariot" itself is a concept, or a mere name.*

*Just so, Nagasena said, ‘Nagasena’ is a designation for something conceptual. It is a mere name. When the Five Skandhas are present, we call it a ‘being.’”*

## Definitions of the Five Aggregates

A working definition of each aggregate, along with some commentary:

* **Material Form (*rupa*):** This aggregate describes our bodies as home to the six sense bases (sense bases=sense doors): eyes, ears, nose, touch, tongue, and mind; sight, sound, smell, feel, taste, object of mind. In the context of the five aggregates, a living body is required (because the six senses can’t be accessed through a dead one).
* **Consciousness (*vinnana*):** Paired with material form, consciousness arises as awareness of a particular sense-contact. Ergo: eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, touch consciousness, taste consciousness, thought consciousness. Though it is always listed last in the list of aggregates, it comes second in the mental-physical cycle of awareness/response-reaction – it has to because we cannot respond or react to something we aren’t aware of. Consciousness as an aggregate refers exclusively to “awareness” in this usage of the term.

From Sue Hamilton, pp 74-75: “Consciousness, then, is the awareness that accompanies the operation of the *khandhas* as a whole. At its most basic, one does not see, hear, and so on, if one is not aware of it: what one actually sees when one looks at a scene… are only those aspects of it that become, whether immediately or with some effort of attention, part of one’s awareness; anything else is *not seen*. By definition, then, seeing is only seeing if one is knows one is seeing.”

Further, “…what is meant by consciousness in early Buddhism is the *activity* of being conscious and not some kind of entity that one carries around … as a sort of mind-stuff.” Which is how it is often regarded in Western philosophy.

Analayo, pp. 205: “Although at times, the discourses use ‘consciousness’ to represent mind in general, in the context of the aggregate classification it refers to being conscious of something.”

Goldstein, *Mindfulness*, pp 188: “In the teachings on the aggregates, the Buddha gives special emphasis to understanding the impermanent, conditioned nature of consciousness. For example, a moment of seeing consciousness arises from the conjunction of four causes: the working organ of the eye, a visible form, light, and attention. If any of these conditions are absent, then seeing consciousness cannot arise.”

* **Feelings (*vedana*):** Typically understood as “feeling tone” in the commentary rather than “feeling” to distinguish it from our emotions. “Feeling tone”refers to the immediate, basic sensation that arises from initial contact via one of the six sense doors to our consciousness of an object: pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

Joseph Goldstein, *Mindfulness*, pp. 174: “The feeling tone is so important because it is the conditioning factor of our reactions. When we experience something as pleasant, we like it, and we want to hold on to it and have it continue. So we can see how pleasant feelings condition desire, craving and grasping. When we experience something as unpleasant, we don’t like it and we try to push it away and have it end. These unpleasant feelings thus condition aversion, anger, irritation, and fear.”

* **Perceptions (*sanna*):** The process of recognizing, naming, delineating what one has made sense contact with. Memory plays an important role in perception because that is what allows us to remember or infer what an object is or might be or might be like.

Analayo, pp. 204: “To speak of a ‘cognition’ [i.e. the aggregate of “perception”) of an object refers to the act of identifying raw sensory data with the help of concepts or labels, such as when one sees a colored object and ‘re-cognizes’ it as yellow, red, or blue, etc. Cognition to some extent involves the faculty of memory, which furnishes the conceptual labels used for recognition.”

Goldstein, pp. 175: “The particular perceptions we have, the concepts we use to describe things, often condition the way we feel about different experiences. Unfortunately, in many situations our perceptions are inaccurate.”

Goldstein highlights a few areas in which this can be particularly true:

* + Place and ownership: Such as national or state borders, “my” parking spot, “my” seat at the table or in the meditation room. And: I am a writer, I am a mother, I am a doctor, I am a programmer.
  + Time: we can conceive of and react to the past as real and fixed and anguish over it, and we can conceive of future events the same way: if I do this, x will happen, or as when we have a fantasy in the present about something that is clearly not real but that we wish to be, then we act as if it were.
* **Mental Formations (*samkharas*):** The reactions and stories we create in response to sense contact, i.e. *mental constructions.* Of the five aggregates, this is the one most frequently called out as “volitional” or “intentional.” This is because it is our mental formations which can generate the consequences – the karmic results – that produce suffering. What we refer to in contemporary culture as “reactivity” is the result of the mental formations we make in response to our impressions of something pleasant or unpleasant or that we like or don’t like or that we want or don’t want.

On the factor of volition, Goldstein, pp 186: “Intention [i.e. volition] itself is ethically neutral. It is the motivation associated with the intention behind the action that determines the particular karmic fruit of the action, whether pleasant or unpleasant. Although there can be many different motives underlying our actions, they can all be traced back to one of the three wholesome or three unwholesome roots: the wholesome ones are non-greed, non-hatred and nondelusion, and the unwholesome ones are greed, hatred and delusion.” However, “Although motivation determines the result, it is volitional nature of the act that provides the karmic energy.”

**Examples of Five Aggregates Working Together:**

From Analayo, pp. 206: “….during the present act of reading, for example, consciousness is aware of each word through the physical sense door of the eye. Cognition [i.e. perception] understands the meaning of each word, while feelings are responsible for the affective mood: whether one feels positive, negative, or neutral about this particular piece of information. Because of volition [i.e. mental formation] one either reads on, or stops to consider a passage in more depth, or even refers to a footnote.” Or, possibly, disagrees with the author and builds an argument against it or for a different view.

From Hamilton, paraphrasing; she develops a variation of this example over a few chapters: Suppose you wake in the night and want to get a glass of water, which is in a kitchen a few rooms away. As you walk to it in the dark, your foot encounters something. In miliseconds, you observe through touch that the object is wet, is warm, is a little rough. You might think yuck! dog/cat pee! And then you might begin a story about that – that darn dog/cat! You might wonder if s/he is ill, and you recognize that you have to clean it up, should you do it now or after you get your glass of water….or you notice that no, it’s not animal pee, it’s a warm, wet towel! You may like the feeling of warm/wetness on your foot or you may not. You may laugh that your husband/teenager forgot to pick up his towel or you may get irritated….

It’s important to understand the five aggregates as processes that work in tantum and that arise and passes away many, many times in the course of an hour and a day. Sometimes we cling to a mental formation – or keep developing it – over minutes or even days, long after the initial contact and consciousness rise and pass away. The initial coming together to form an experience though typically last perhaps a minute or two at most. In meditation, we want to slow the process down and parse out each part, the arising and passing away of each part.

From Analayo, *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization*, pp. 210-212: “Practically applied…contemplation of *anatta* [through study and awareness of the five aggregates] can expose the various types of self-image responsible for identifying with and clinging to one’s social position, professional occupation, or personal possessions.”

“….Once these patterns of identification are seen for what they really are, the natural result will be disenchantment and detachment in regards to these five aspects of subjective experience.”

“Moreover, [the study of] *anatta* can be employed to reveal erroneous superimpositions on experience, particularly the sense of an autonomous and independent subject reaching out to acquire or reject discrete substantial objects.”

What Analayo is talking about in that last remark is that study of the Five Aggregates reveals that the subject/object relationship is not so objective or separate after all.

# Short Meditation Period

Bio break, stretch, settle and stillness.

# Commentary on Identity Views

Commentary from Thanassaro Bhikkhu, from Accesstoinsight.org, “No Self or Not Self?”

“To avoid the suffering implicit in questions of "self" and "other," [the Buddha] offered an alternative way of dividing up experience: the four Noble Truths of stress, its cause, its cessation, and the path to its cessation. Rather than viewing these truths as pertaining to self or other, he said, one should recognize them simply for what they are, in and of themselves, as they are directly experienced, and then perform the duty appropriate to each. Stress should be comprehended, its cause abandoned, its cessation realized, and the path to its cessation developed. These duties form the context in which **the anatta doctrine** is best understood. If you develop the path of virtue, concentration, and discernment to a state of calm well-being and use that calm state to look at experience in terms of the Noble Truths, the questions that occur to the mind are not "Is there a self? What is my self?" but rather "Am I suffering stress because I'm holding onto this particular phenomenon? Is it really me, myself, or mine? If it's stressful but not really me or mine, why hold on?" These last questions merit straightforward answers, as they then help you to comprehend stress and to chip away at the attachment and clinging — the residual sense of self-identification — that cause it, until ultimately all traces of self-identification are gone and all that's left is limitless freedom.”

So instead of “I am angry”: “there is anger here.” That makes it less personal, and less likely to be attached to.

From the InsightMeditationCenter.org, an article by Gil Fronsdal adapted from one of his dharma talks.

In the West, Fronsdal writes, notions of the Self tend to “derive from the strong human drive to identify with certain things as defining what this self is. We identify ourselves with our thoughts, feelings, consciousness, volition, personal characteristics, or with a sense of continuity. Held lightly and provisionally, such identifications may be useful. Held tightly, they are self-limiting. If we expend the energy to cling to anything as the definition of the self, we will sooner or later suffer. In order to find a deeply abiding peace, we need to learn to let go of any attachment to or habit of fixating on self-identity….

“If you were to go to Africa to photograph the wildlife, you could walk all over the plains looking for the different animals. Or you could sit by the watering hole, where all the animals eventually come. Likewise, practice becomes very simple if we pay attention, carefully and non-reactively, to our suffering, that is, the contractions, restrictions and stresses in our body, mind and heart. For the sake of liberation, what you do and don’t need to know will come to you if you simply watch your suffering and its cessation. You will see the grasping and you will see the possibility of genuine happiness that comes from releasing that grasping. May you know the peace of non-grasping to both self and no-self.”

# Q&A and Discussion on what we’ve covered so far

Questions? Comments? Observations?

# Lunch and Lunch Meditation Instructions

I chose our meditation period to coincide with lunch because the process of queuing for food, seeing and tasting the food and cleaning up will generate a lot of sense contact and corresponding engagement with our “cognitive apparatus.” This gives us ample opportunity to watch the arising and passing away of the aggregates, individually and together, in a simple and clear way.

Let’s start with a reading of the excerpt from MN 10 on ***The Foundations of Mindfulness, the Satipatthana sutta.***

1. From MN 10, the ***Satipatthana Sutta*, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness***:

[How to Meditate on] the Five Aggregates:

38. “…. And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the Five Aggregates affected by clinging? Here a Bhikkhu understands: ‘Such is *material form*, such its origins, such its disappearance; such is *feeling*, such its origins, such its disappearance; such is *perception*, such its origins, such its disappearance; such are *the formations,* such their origins, such their disappearance; such is *consciousness*, such its origins, such its disappearance.’

39. “In this way [the bhikkhu] abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, externally …And he abides independent, not-clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging.”

Analayo, pp. 213: “According to the *Satipatthana Sutta*, to contemplate the five aggregates requires a clear recognition of each, followed by directing awareness to their arising (*samudaya*) and passing away (*atthagama*). This second stage of practice reveals the impermanent nature of the five aggregates, and to some extent thereby also points to their conditioned nature.” Because the five aggregates come and go, we can see not only their impermanence but their non-self-ness, their non-fixedness and indeed, their universality.

So during the lunch and clean up meditation period, silently and gently observe with:

1. Clear recognition the nature of each aggregate (for example, the conditions under which it arises), and
2. the awareness of its arising and passing away, followed by the arising and passing away of the next one and the next one, etc.

As you practice, notice where you cling and constrict and where you don’t. Be gentle and let the experience flow as it will. Be compassionate and non-judgmental if irritation or any negative feeling arises.

Return from lunch, settle in silence for ten minutes before beginning the discussion.

# Final Q&A and Discussion

Tell us what you noticed during the lunchtime meditation period. And also, please bring forth any comments, observations, questions you have about anything we discussed today.