

Notes from discussions with Ajahn Sujin Boriharnwanaket in Sri Lanka 1977

by Sarah Procter Abbott

- Life exists in one short moment - this very moment only.
- We cannot change any moment,
- All the Teachings are in a moment, so it has to be the understanding of this moment now.
- If there is right understanding, one can live alone, now, right at this moment, at this moment of seeing or thinking.
- We are alone with the citta which thinks at this moment.
- One doesn't live with "Elizabeth", because it's only a moment of thinking,
- At the moment of hearing, we are alone with the sound as the object of hearing at that moment. Then it's completely gone, like a momentary death.
- One lives in the world of ignorance; clinging to the next moment and forgetting about the falling away of the previous moment.
- It's impossible to know the seeing that's gone but it's possible to know the seeing at this moment.
- The concept of seeing is not the same as the seeing which just sees visible object.
- Thinking does not see. If we close our eyes, there's thinking but not seeing of the visible object as usual.
- If we close our eyes and there's no thinking about anyone in the world, is there anyone in the world?
- Only one reality can be experienced at a time.
- The Buddha's Teachings concern realities which can be proven any time with right understanding.
- If there's awareness and understanding now, there's no thought of doing anything special.
- At this moment of seeing, if there's no understanding, don't think one can become a sotāpanna.
- One has to study and consider carefully, otherwise one can misunderstand the Teachings.
- Seeing cannot be the same as visible object because it's only an element of experiencing.
- One can see how much one clings to hearing and sound and all the other phenomena when they appear one at a time.
- The world as we know it can be understood as just an idea which is thought about.
- Most of the time we don't even know that we don't understand. When there is no understanding, we are enslaved by our own defilements.
- What is real can be known.
- To know the truth is to not feel unhappy.
- There are so many characteristics to be known, to be directly experienced.
- Hardness is common to all, it's a reality which cannot experience anything.
- Paññā is so keen and sharp when it develops,. It can know the precise characteristic of a reality.
- Paññā must see things as they are, otherwise it cannot be paññā.
- Don't underestimate paññā!

- All types of bhāvanā require right understanding, but of different levels.
- Only the sotāpanna has eradicated wrong practice.
- The paññā which sees it's wrong will turn away from the wrong practice.
- The intention to watch is wrong practice.
- Right understanding must be developed by studying the Teachings carefully, otherwise it'll be wrong practice.
- When there is wrong practice there is wrong understanding.
- One has lived many lives with avijjā, is it not time to develop vijjā?
- There is no idea of a self in the paññā which experiences a reality.
- One has to understand the purpose of bhāvanā.
- It's the right understanding which sees the difference between kusala and akusala dhamma.
- The Buddha's Teaching is so wide.
- Without right understanding one must be subjected to attachment or aversion from moment to moment.
- The condition for complication is ignorance.
- There can be understanding of what is appearing now through any of the six doorways.
- Don't try to select!
- There must be the idea of Self if there is not the precise understanding of the difference between seeing and visible object.
- The moment of kusala at whatever level is conditioned, so it's a matter of understanding rather than of trying to control.
- Develop more understanding of the uncontrollable realities, the saṅkhāra dhammas.
- When there is still the idea of control, there is still the idea of self lurking there.
- How do we know what is right understanding if there is no discussion?
- To concentrate without right understanding is not the goal.
- There are different levels of sati according to different levels of understanding.
- Who knows there is attachment already following this moment of seeing?
- Direct experience can eradicate doubt.
- Right understanding is also conditioned, it can arise.
- Right effort must have right understanding as it's condition.
- If there's still the idea of Self, it cannot be considered as right effort of the eightfold path.
- The more one understands the characteristics that appear, the more one understands the virtues of the Buddha.
- Right sīla of the eightfold path has to arise with right awareness and right understanding of no Self.
- If there were no seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or thinking there would be no conditions for attachment or aversion. So there has to be right understanding of all realities through six doorways.
- What has just arisen and fallen away can be the object of right understanding, different from thinking about the object much later.

- There is no idea of a being when paññā experiences realities as they are.
- While there is only intellectual understanding there will be doubt.
- Attachment is attachment, it's not aversion. Both attachment and aversion are not Self.
- Is it not good to understand reality as it is? Or is it better to have ignorance on and on which is the cause of suffering?
- It's useless to think "I will give up attachment and aversion", because it's quite impossible. So we don't have to think of giving up anything at all.
- Attachment has conditions to arise for sure and aversion arises by conditions as well.
- Attachment must arise by conditions, so understand it as a conditioned reality.
- See the danger of attachment and how it's better to develop kusala in order to lessen it.
- When shall one begin to see things as they are?
- The right cause will bring the right result.
- The right understanding is the right cause.
- The Buddha said the most dangerous teaching is that which teaches no cause and result.
- Reading a single sutta with the understanding of anattā is better than reading the whole Tipiṭaka with the idea of Self.
- In other religions there is no teaching of realities which can be experienced as anattā.
- All kusala cittas are better than akusala cittas.
- At the moment of kusala there must be some degree of calmness.
- When people don't have any understanding and they try to meditate it's impossible to have calmness.
- When one concentrates, it's not samatha bhāvanā.
- Concentration arises with each citta.
- The object of samatha is different from the object of vipassanā.
- One shouldn't think of a need for samatha, because one cannot select what will arise.
- One cannot know whether it'll be the kusala of dāna, the kusala of samatha or the kusala of right understanding.
- We cannot tell by outer appearances if it's a kusala or an akusala citta.
- Taṇha is so crafty. It always moves one away from the present object.
- Saṅkhāra dhammas in the Suttanta are the same as saṅkhāra dhammas in the Abhidhamma.
- Whether we'd like to be reborn or not, the result is there by conditions.
- No conditioned reality can arise singly, alone.
- Even one's wholesome and unwholesome cittas are only conditioned realities.
- There must be right understanding of the object of samatha and how it is a condition for calmness, otherwise there is just attachment to concentration.
- Everything depends on there being breath at this moment.
- There is no detachment from the idea of self in samatha bhāvanā.
- When we try to concentrate, there is clinging to the calm that is not there yet and there is aversion when there is no calmness.

- The Buddha had fully accomplished samatha and vipassanā yet he didn't point out that one should start with ānāpānasati, but with whatever is appearing now.
- When there is desire for calmness, there is no studying of the characteristic which appears now.
- If one can see that there's calmness at moments of mettā, calmness can be developed with mettā as the object. First one has to see clearly the difference between attachment and mettā.
- There is the latent tendency of attachment even when there is a moment of kusala.
- Everyone likes moments of attachment.
- It's our own defilements or kilesa that harm us.
- We shouldn't think of "my aversion". Aversion is common to all.
- Akusala kamma is the intention of doing akusala deeds.
- There are conditions for attachment to arise more often than there are for any kusala to arise
- Bodily pain is only one moment, but mental pain magnifies it by seven times even in the sense door process.
- Pain without worry is more easily cured than pain with worry.
- When one goes to the Bodhi tree or the temple, what is important is the citta at that moment. One can pay respect to the Buddha and his virtues with right understanding.
- There is samsāra at this moment of seeing and at every moment of life, from doorway to doorway.
- There are countless rounds of samsāra in a day.
- We can learn to be easy to please and have more consideration for others in our daily lives.
- Less thoughts of "I" who is so important.
- It's the citta at this moment that is more important than any justification for doing or not doing something.
- If we have more moments of kusala, we help ourselves and others more.
- It's so hard to give with kusala cittas. What's the use of giving if it's to have pleasant feeling?
- One should give wisely. It's hardest of all to give away the idea of Self.
- When there's thinking of oneself, there's attachment.
- It's useless to depend on other people.
- Do we have patience when the object is pleasant?
- Have we listened enough?
- Develop patience with and without people.
- Patience to give instead of taking.
- I know some vegetarians who kill.
- What is the citta at the moment of refusing certain foods?
- All conditioned realities are dukkha because all conditioned realities arise and fall away - not just unpleasant feelings and pain.
- Unpleasant feeling is unpleasant feeling, it's not the understanding of dukkha.

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