

# Further Meditations on Suffering

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## Contemplating the Three Types of Suffering

All of the suffering of cyclic existence can be included within three types:

1. suffering of change
2. suffering of suffering
3. suffering of conditionality

### 1. Suffering of Change

The suffering of change is exemplified by the following example.

When you have a painful open wound on your skin, the pain can be temporarily relieved by applying cool water.

**That relief of pain is experienced as a pleasant feeling.**

It is not really pleasure; it is just that the discomfort has lightened up a bit. And that relief, that feeling of pleasure, will not last long; Soon again it will turn into the suffering of pain.

In the same way, the experiences we ordinarily think of as pleasurable -- such as eating, drinking, touching, or lying down -- are not inherently, by their very nature, pleasant. There is no real, abiding, reliable pleasure there. What you experience as pleasure is really just the temporary relief of discomfort or pain, such as hunger or thirst.

**This temporary relief is what we experience as, and label as, pleasure.**

As soon as that relief stops, the underlying suffering emerges back.

**This is the meaning of the suffering of change: all feelings of pleasure eventually change into suffering again.**

The suffering of change doesn't include just the feeling, but also includes other mental processes such as the main mind and the associated mental factors. Also includes those contaminated objects that when experienced produce those feelings.

So like when you are hungry and eat food to soothe that discomfort. There arises as a result the mere feeling that you are experiencing pleasure. Concomitant with that sensory feeling of pleasure are various minds and mental factors. The entire body-mind complex that you experience as pleasure, as well as the food that generates the feeling of pleasure, is the suffering of change. It is nature of this entire conditioned web of cause and effect that will eventually change into more suffering. That is the suffering of change. In fact, there is no real pleasure there; it is only the degree of suffering that has changed.

### 2. Suffering of Suffering

Now imagine what would happen if you put something painful on that cut, like saltwater. The pain would flair up, becoming sharp and intense. That feeling is what we identify as suffering. Whenever something like this happens, the body or mind experiences an increased level of pain and anguish. This is what constitutes the suffering of suffering.

Like before, it also includes the main mind and the mental factors that arise together with the feeling of suffering, as well as the contaminated objects that produce such a painful feeling.

Abhidharma speaks of 5 types of feelings that can be experienced:

## 2 bodily feelings which are based on the sense faculties:

1. **unpleasant feelings** - a disagreeable bodily experience of pain
2. **pleasant feelings** - an agreeable bodily experience

## 2 mental feelings:

1. **mental happiness** - an agreeable mental experience
2. **mental unhappiness** - a disagreeable experience

and:

1. **Neutral feeling** - an experience in between agreeable and disagreeable, which can be either physical or mental

what we have seen is that:

1. **pleasant feelings**, along with its concomitant **mental happiness**, are the **suffering of change**, because by their nature they change into suffering
2. **unpleasant feelings**, along with its concomitant **mental unhappiness**, are the **suffering of suffering** - this is the pain we usually speak of when we speak of suffering

Now we turn to the **suffering of conditionality**, and as we shall see, this form of pervasive suffering also includes **(5) neutral feelings**.

## 2. Suffering of Conditionality / Pervasive Suffering

So you have a wound, and if you put cold water on it that is pleasure and if you rub salt in it there is more pain. But you have a wound either without these 2 actions. The very nature of that wound.. its condition, is suffering. This is the suffering of conditionality, and it pervades all experiences in cyclic existence, even neutral feelings. It is also called **pervasive suffering**, because all of cyclic existence is pervaded by this type of suffering.

It includes even negative tendencies, because even they are inseparably connected to the so called "negative tendencies"... negative tendencies refer to the potential you carry with you in the form of karma and afflictions to experience undesirable circumstances. **Even neutral feelings were produced by karma, which itself was instigated by obscuring afflictions.**

**Every feeling, and the web of experience in which it is embedded, is the product of karma and afflictions.** Not only that, this moment of experience carries with it the potential, in the form of afflictions, for future suffering. In this way, **all experiences**, including neutral feelings, are inseparable from the negative tendencies, the afflictions that will produce future suffering.

**This is why the suffering of conditionality is pervasive: there is simply no experience within cyclic existence, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral which is not rooted in, and carrying the future potential for suffering.**

From the highest to the lowest realm, wherever sentient beings are born under the power of karma and the afflictions, this is the pervasive condition.

Until you completely get rid of obscuring afflictions from the root, this will remain your condition.

**Because you are entangled with these negative tendencies, when a pleasant feeling arises attachment increases; when a suffering feeling arises hostility increases; and when a neutral feeling arises, ignorance increases.**

Attachment causes rebirth in future lives among the 6 realms of sentient beings. **Desire and attachment are the the precipitating cause of all rebirth within cyclic existence.** Hatred and anger give rise to many forms of misery, beginning with sorry and grief in this life and rebirth in the terrible lower realms in future lives. Ignorance is the basis of attachment, the other 2 root afflictions; it supports them and acts as their basis. **It is due to ignorance that the other afflictions thrive, and ignorance makes it extremely difficult to escape their influence.**

**Therefore, when a pleasant feeling arises, do not become attached to that pleasure, but see it in its true nature; as suffering. This is the way to eliminate attachment.**

When an unpleasant suffering feeling arises, instead of reacting with hatred and anger toward some external source, consider how this body itself is like a wound. Whose very nature it is to be a source of pain. When you touch fire and it hurts your skin, it would be stupid to get angry at the fire since its nature is to burn. Likewise, instead of surrendering to anger, understand that this is the nature of the body; realize that once you take a body like this, pain will naturally arise. **This is the way to eliminate hostility.**

**When neutral feelings arise, realize their nature is impermanent and perishable. This is the way to overcome ignorance.**

**Ordinarily, you allow pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feelings to become causes of the three poisons: attachment, hostility, and ignorance. This is the powerful engine that drives you through endless cyclic existence.**

\*\*\*\*\* read this \*\*\*\*\* **By applying these instructions, you transform the way you view these three types of feelings so that, instead of giving rise to the three poisons, they lead to disenchantment with samsara, patience, and wisdom that realizes the true nature of things. This is the way to gain liberation from cyclic existence.**

As long as you carry this burden of the five appropriating aggregates - this combination of body and mind - You will experience suffering and you will not find enduring happiness. It is the nature of the appropriating aggregates that they have within them the potential to manifest pain and suffering.

Although there are times when the overt feeling of pain or discomfort doesn't manifest.. the potential for it to rise is always there with the right causes.

For the devas the overt forms of pain are not manifest, but the potential is still there.

The pervasive conditions of suffering are with every being until the causes of suffering are removed from the root.

**The suffering of conditionality pervades all forms of suffering. It is the root of the suffering of change and suffering of suffering. It is the fundamental condition enabling the temporary relief of pain(which we call pleasant), or the intensification of pain(which we call unpleasant) to arise. The fundamental**

**condition for all of these experiences is your birth into the aggregates, which are inextricably intertwined with karma and afflictions.**

Therefore you need to meditate on this fundamental samsaric condition with a lot of effort because it is very subtle and hard to see. Beings like us who are enmeshed in cyclic existence cannot see it because it is too close to us, because we are right in the middle of it.

**The effect of fully realizing the suffering of conditionality is that you understand the first noble truth: the truth of suffering. You must gain a deep insight into the pervasive nature of suffering, the way it encompasses the whole situation of samsara.**

There is no such thing as a pleasant feeling which is, in its own nature, true pleasure. **Pleasure does not exist independent of the occasional relief of suffering.** Pleasant feeling is actually just a comparison with the previous unpleasant yearning or discomfort, and we label that comparative feeling, 'pleasure'.

For ex. if sitting were intrinsically pleasurable, then as long as you sat you would be in pleasure.. but the suffering of change kicks in and you start to feel uncomfortable. **So, the pleasure does not reside in the actual activity, but in the relief from the suffering that the activity offers. And that relief is invariably short-lived.**

Eating is not intrinsically pleasurable and cannot provide lasting happiness. In fact, the only kind of pleasure it can offer is to end the misery of being hungry.

**The nature of samsaric pleasure, is that it will eventually turn into suffering.**

Nanda, when the feeling of pleasure arises, it is only suffering arising. When it stops, it is only this suffering nature that stops. Also, when it arises, it arises in the nature of a produced phenomena. When it stops, it stops in the nature of a produced phenomena.

Buddha

In order to bring an end to the discomfort of the activity you are involved in, you try to do something else. You decrease one type of suffering only by increasing another. This is the nature of cyclic existence. While one type of suffering is ceasing, the the cause of another, new type of suffering is starting. **In this sense, the ceasing of suffering itself, when it is produced by contaminated or samsaric activities is itself the nature of suffering.**

The buddha is also saying that the pleasure is produced, which means that it is impermanent.

For pleasure, when it increases,  
Is seen to change into its opposite.  
When pain increases,  
It does not similarly change into its opposite.

Aryadeva 400 Stanzas

**When you view all of cyclic existence with this perspective, the feeling of disenchantment toward samsaric pleasure begins to develop, and this is the beginning of the thought of renunciation. That is the correct way to view your circumstances, and it will lead you along the pure, right path.**

We need to distinguish this correct form of renunciation vs. the incorrect one that is an aversion to some short term pain. This is not a reliable or stable form of renunciation, because it is not rooted in an encompassing vision of the entire nature of cyclic existence. You are not really renouncing all of cyclic existence, but merely some particular unhappiness that you do not want to experience.

**To develop the true thought of renunciation, you need the proper foundation of understanding the whole samsaric situation in its true nature. That pure thought is what transforms your practice into the true path leading to emancipation, and any virtuous actions you perform with that view as the motivation become the actual path of emancipation.**

It is not easy to develop this form of renunciation. Some people take high tantric initiations, do profound mahayana practices, etc. but haven't developed this renunciation. This kind of practice is really just another form of attachment, and is turning the path of liberation into something else.

When you understand your situation in its totality by means of these trainings, it's easy to apply that understanding to the circumstances of others. It becomes easy to see how others are in the same exact straits as you are in, and when you see that deeply, it becomes easy to produce great compassion. Seeing this can produce almost depthless compassion.

**Without this broader vision, you will only produce some kind of superficial, self serving compassion.**

You can do this type of meditation any time, all the time. When you are eating, walking, laying down, etc. What you see, what you experience every day, all contributes to the development of this understanding. This is the way to put it all together. This is the way to make your unpleasant thoughts very productive. You can think about how the whole samsaric situation is miserable, full of sorrow, and disappointment. When you think about this using the proper methods and reasons, although it is not pleasant, it will bring good results.

## Contemplating Specific Sufferings

### a. The Suffering of Human Beings

all of the sufferings of the 8 types of suffering apply to human life

as well as more here..

### b. The Suffering of the Demi Gods

These demigods are mentally tormented by their unbearable jealousy toward the wealth, power, and luxury of the superior desire realm devas. So the constantly attack them are try to steal their wealth and goddesses.

#### 1. The Suffering of the Devas

#### 2. The Suffering of falling to a lower state

Those beings of the form and formless realms  
Are beyond suffering of suffering and suffering of change.

They naturally reside fo eons, undistracted,  
In the bliss of meditative equipose.

Vasubandu