
KNOWING

K N O W I N G

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KNOWING

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'Nothing is worth clinging to'

Preface

This booklet sets out to explain what the awakened one talked about. It starts by showing things we can all know for ourselves and build on that accordingly. Topics like *anattā*, *kamma*, *nāmarūpa*, *paṭiccasamuppāda*, *saṅkhārā*, etc. are addressed in plain English.

Since this work builds up, try to understand a chapter before faring to the next; they are purposely fairly short. Short but condensed, so they do require quite a bit of thinking and pondering. Rereading from the start is to be expected; it might take a while to get through.

Some parts of chapters 5 and chapter 6 go a bit deeper but this depth is not required for chapter 7.

Perhaps with this little nudge one could take a bit more out of the texts.

Minowani,
February 23, 2026

Contents

1 Introduction	1
1.1 Knowing and Believing	2
2 Basics	3
2.1 The Art Gallery	4
2.2 Cheese	5
2.3 The Football Player	6
2.4 The Donkey and the Carrot	7
2.5 The Barn	8
3 Implications	9
3.1 A Colour Picker Tool	10
3.2 Life and Death	11
3.3 Around	13
3.4 The Football Field	15
3.5 Mortgage	17
3.6 Fed Up	19
4 The Teaching	21
4.1 Breaking Through	22
4.2 The Texts	24
5 Arising, Ceasing	25
5.1 Dependent-Co-Arising	26
5.2 The Hexad Base	29
5.3 Name-and-Form	31
5.4 Cognition	33
5.5 Inclinations	37
5.6 Not Knowing	40
6 Particulars	42
6.1 Time	43
6.2 Me	45
7 Realization	46
7.1 Tranquillity and Insight	47
7.2 Concentration	48
7.3 Radiance	50
7.4 Knowing	55

1 Introduction

We know we are born, ageing, and will die someday. But what is the point of all this? Is there even something more to it? No matter what religion, even non-religion, has some kind of belief build in but how can we come to know for ourselves what it is all about?

1.1 Knowing and Believing

When we believe something it means we have no real evidence, no real certainty, to accept something as true; it can be based on trust, confidence, opinions, etc. To know is to understand based on facts, truths, from which we too can deduct, draw conclusions, etc. yet what we know and what we think to know are two different things. What we think to know is really just a belief, a difference which can be hard to see. This doesn't mean what we think to know can't be right, it is just what sprouts from belief stays a belief and therefore lacks the basis to be true throughout.

Suppose your tooth hurts, this is then directly noticeable. If someone were to tell you it is not your tooth which is hurting but your foot, you might not value this input so highly. But when your dentist informs you of a sinus infection you might accept this. Then after treatment you understand what you thought you knew was just a belief. Though the precise location might have been somewhat assumed, what you didn't assume was pain, acknowledged by your dentist who did find a cause. Nonetheless, you don't need anyone to tell you whether you did or didn't feel pain, at that moment there was no doubt about it, it was actual, true. The less assuming in our experience, e.g. 'pain' vs 'I have pain because of a hole in my tooth', the closer we are to knowing. What we know replaces our belief. Believing can't take the place of knowing, such a change can not go against our own experience, but it can replace other believes.

And why does this matter? Well, our ideas about life and death justify the way we live our lives. But what we know about death is what it means to *us* when it happens to *others*, and thus when we think to know what death is we entertain a certain belief. And acting out on belief is not necessarily the best way to guide our lives. Since we can act only now more beneficial would be to act in such a way we don't regret it later. Therefore, instead of leaning on what we already believe first, we could try to see if we can lean on things we know for ourselves.

So, what can or do we know?

2 Basics

When we comprehend the basics that what is generally called advanced might become more natural, more clear. Without comprehension we get entangled up very fast and things might then unnecessary seem advanced. Therefore let's start with some basics which we then can use as common ground to build on.

2.1 The Art Gallery

Suppose we are in an art gallery looking at a spotless white wall. When we are asked what we see we might say 'a spotless white wall'. Now if an attendant removes a white panel, which turned out to be placed in front of that wall, we understand we did not just see a white wall but a white panel as well. And we may understand there could be even more of those panels. When the panel is put back but with some smudges, we would see the white wall and the not-so-spotless part.

If we give this some thought we understand that in order to see things there must be a difference. Or better said, we only see difference. And for a difference we must have something and something-else, something and not that-something. Thus to see white we must also have not *that* white.

If everything was white we would not be able to see white. It would not be possible to name it simply because we would not have any experience of it. This same principle goes for the other senses as well. If there was no difference we would not register. For us to notice something there has to be a difference.

2.2 Cheese

Suppose I grab a block of cheese, point to one side and claim that to be the back, if I would then ask where the front is would you be able to point that out?

I cut a slice off the front, put it on a plate, and again point at the back. Where would you say the front was? At the slice on the plate or at the opposite side of where I am pointing at? And if I now would point to that side and claim it to be the new back, would you then not point at its opposite side as the new front?

What was previously determined as the back has now become the front and vice versa. Here we see the front depends on (where) the back (is) and the back depends on the front. When there is a back there is a front as well. And no matter how much we cut away, there will always be a front as long as there is a back. The only way to get rid of the front is to have no back either. They come and go together. This is also something we can see for ourselves. Here too no belief comes into play.

2.3 The Football Player

We are always doing something. Reading, thinking, talking, breathing, and so on. Can you think of any action which bears no result whatsoever? We act because of an expected result; it is already with that intention. When we do things we usually get better at doing them, we get more experienced. If we read we will improve. If we study we will improve.

A result might not be immediately noticeable since it does not need to follow an action right away. For instance, when we train we might hit a point where progress seems to stall. It might even seem as if it gets worse and worse from there. But later, perhaps after a break, we might discover things are suddenly going smooth again. As if we are now able to push through a certain barrier, we see our efforts finally paying off.

If someone, with a talent for it, wants to play football but all they do is play tennis, will they then become the football player they could have been? See, no need for believing here either. This too is something we can see for ourselves.

2.4 The Donkey and the Carrot

Something else we know is we want things. Let's look into this a bit.

If we want to be a football player it might be a good idea for us to practise football instead of tennis. Still, not everyone can become a football player. And by just wanting it, even with practise, we can't always fulfil this goal. Perhaps there is a lack of talent, sickness, old-age, or we just got no time available, etc. If our goal is totally out of our reach we might not be at ease. But why is it we want to be a football player or a tennis player or anything at all for that matter?

The short answer seems to be because we want to be happy, and presumably on our own terms. Getting what we want seems to have a promise in it. A promise of fulfilment, contentment, happiness. So we want something and, if we are not totally out of our mind, something which seems at least somewhat attainable. And then we act on it accordingly. Also, we don't just want one thing, we want many things. Being healthy, beautiful, loved, to have a nice breakfast; anything. But can you remember something you strove for and got? What happened? Did you get the gladness, ease, fulfilment, and was the wanting gone? And if you did get that sense of accomplishment, fulfilment, do you still have it? Or has it made room for something else?

This is always the case. We always want something we don't have. And there are so many things we want — eat, drink, succeed, excitement, not to be bored, rested, relaxed, money, more money — hence we are always doing something to fulfil this promise. And it is not that it is without rewards either right? If we want some tasty food we 'know' a pleasant taste is waiting for us. There is a lot of enjoyment in these things. But by getting what we want we still don't get this lasting quenching result. It is an empty promise really. Basically this mechanism keeps us going on and on. It is like the carrot dangling in front of a donkey to keep it on the move.

2.5 The Barn

On a new piece of land a farmer builds a barn. One day, upon arrival, the farmer notices the walls are covered with graffiti. This happened on two earlier occasions and this time the farmer decides to file a police report. At a later time someone passes by, admires the view, and asks the farmer if they would be willing to sell the place. The farmer accepts and they agree upon the farmer finishing the construction work, albeit with some adjustments so that the barn would turn into a lovely home instead.

A few months later again the walls got cluttered, and again the incident is reported. Only this time it is not for the barn but for a house right? But other then perhaps for some relatively minor changes the walls themselves have not really changed that much. Though first barn-walls they are now house-walls, yet the bricks are still the same bricks. And they kept their properties as well. It is not like you could not cut the barn-wall with a pair of scissors, but now that it is a house-wall you can.

A wall inherits the properties of its building-blocks. This is also something we know for ourselves. These building-blocks are barn-building-blocks if we intend to build a barn, but house-building-blocks if we intend to build a house. And they are building-blocks because we build with them.

3 Implications

We talked about basics, about principles we already know. We see these things every day. It is nothing new per se but perhaps put a little in a different perspective. 'The Art Gallery' and 'Cheese' show us a bit that the things we experience are not independent. 'The Football Player' let us realize what we do lead to results. 'The Donkey and the Carrot' shows us a bit of why we do the things we do. And 'The Barn' says something of how things become things by doing and by inheritance.

Since we know these basics for ourselves we don't need anyone to tell us this is right, wrong, or otherwise. So, let's take this a step further and look at their implications.

3.1 A Colour Picker Tool

Earlier we talked about that what we can experience is a difference. And for this we need a thing and not that-thing e.g. white and black, warm and cold, life and death.

Red is not white, birth is also not white. Birth and white are two different things. But to say birth is not white is a bit weird isn't it? It doesn't seem to apply. This is because we can't see a necessary relation between white and birth. While white, red and black are related, they belong to the same (colour) dimension or spectrum. To illustrate this we could think of a colour picker tool: a slider on a colour spectrum which moves from one side to another, and by doing so gradually changes the selected colour from white to black.

— For a difference the two things must be somewhat related; they must be in the same spectrum. And as such it is possible to shift from one into the other. From white to black, from warm to cold, from life to death. When something changes it changes into something else for a 100%, but within the same spectrum. When my arm changes it could f.i. be my skin or a muscle that changes, but it would be a weird thing if my arm would change into a palm tree right? So this change is in some aspect total but from another point of view there is no change.

The part where there is no change, at least not at the same time, we could call context or background. And this is not apart from what we already know (see 'The Art Gallery'). We need a context or background to appropriate a thing. Or, if you like, a thing and its background create a difference. The spotless white wall could form a background for our panel because they both have a colour property (colour dimension). The taste 'sweet' can't form a background to the panel, but sugar — which also has a colour-dimension — can. And those colours depend on the fact there is such a thing as colour in the first place. When there is colour, which we can discriminate, there must be no(t)-colour as well. Still the same basic principle, but applied to a more general level.

— Because a thing is dependent (a difference needs a dyad) it changes when the things it depends on change. And it will change since it is dependent. Only a "thing" which is not dependent would not be subjected to change, but this is a bit problematic since 'to experience' already implies difference, which implies dependence and thus change.

3.2 Life and Death

We know we are born, ageing and will die someday. Some think it all ends with death, others think life goes on in some form or another. But normally these are both believes; we don't know whether it is one or the other. Since we prefer knowing above believing, let's see if we can work with what we got so far already.

We know we live; we discern life. Then in order to do so — since we can only experience differences ('The Art Gallery') — there must also be not life (death) on the other end of that same spectrum ('A Colour Picker Tool'). And to have death there must then also be life (birth); they are dependent.

There are different ways to consider dependence. Take our cheese for example, we can't say first we have a front and then the back. A front without its back can't be. But take for instance 'walking'. First we put one leg in front of the other, we shift our body and then we put the other leg in front of the first. This too is a dependent relation, but more in the order of 'if this (comes first) then that (follows)' instead of 'with this, this'. Do you see the difference? With the cheese-point-of-view (CPOV) there is no time involved, when you have a front you got the back as well. With the walking-point-of-view (WPOV) there is time, first you move one leg and then the other. You don't need to move them both the same way at the same time, we wouldn't even call that walking.

Normally we would apply a WPOV — first we are born, then we will die — but this is a bit muddled since we are not really looking at life and death there but at *me* — another context or background (which we will address later). Let's go back to walking for a moment. We move one leg and then the other. So, for the concept of walking two legs are needed, they are related. Suppose you would have only one leg, and not an artificial second one whatsoever, then you wouldn't be able to walk. But the one leg in itself is perfectly fine without the other. It is still the same one leg. But a front wouldn't be the same without its back. It is not like one is perfectly okay without the other. They are dependent in a necessarily way. One (end) can't exists without the other (end).

And so, do we know of any life without death? We know of people with one leg or none so we see that the relation between legs is not a necessarily one in order to live. But we do consider death as a part of living.

We know we will die. We may not like it, we might try to find ways to escape it, but at the same time we do understand death is part of life. We don't know of any concrete life where death does not seem to be waiting. We can't see that the relation is not necessary. In fact, if death came for a person we see they are not living any more; its relation is a necessary one. Thus then we should apply our CPOV instead of the WPOV. When we do we see that when there is birth, there is death and when there is death, there is birth. By applying the basics to life and death we then seem to get some kind of ongoing becoming; they both are necessary for each-other to exist. And although this ongoing becoming might perhaps seem strange, it is in line with what we know to be true for ourselves so far already. It starts to cut out believing, which did lead to views going against what we know.

3.3 Around

In 'The Football Player' we talked about actions and their results. We usually understand this partially. We understand to some extent doing good can lead to good results, 'what goes around comes around', but we don't necessarily understand how this must always be the case. Same with good which can't come from bad. We sometimes do think good can come from bad and vice versa.

If we go back to our basics, we know from doing things over and over we improve. For example, if you like to play football you improve. But suppose you don't like football but you are forced to play it more, then this does not necessarily mean you will come to like it, or become better at it, at football. It could very well be the case your dislike improves, your disengagement grows; it is the blooming what is the result.

So what do you think, if we do something which is let's say based on anger, we act and speak with anger and we cultivate this, will we then become better or worse at it? If we feed our anger will we then improve this or lessen it? So if we want to be a professional in being angry, it will be a good thing for us to feed anger and act upon it. But we should not make the mistake thinking happiness is to be found in there. Happiness can only come from siding with the good, happiness is a result from being good, which is also something we must train to be well at — if we do pursue such a thing of course.

Suppose someone successfully robs a bank and lives in wealth. We can understand the fear of getting caught could come from this action and we might think the living in wealth comes from this too. However if we understand that good comes from doing good, we can reason that the fact this person succeeded and live in wealth might be because of the results from previous actions did bloom. The results which got invested in earlier f.i. the ability to succeed, to be fortunate, by means of studying, preparing, practising, etc. might be spend on something like this.

An action can bloom but we don't always see this result (from that particular action) nor do we know if and when this will happen. With this birth-and-death thing going on it would therefore not be illogical to assume that such a result could occur in a next life. We don't know, but it does not go against what we know either. Take our football player

again. If we train playing football we become better at it, we might like it more and then train more. Can you imagine by doing this over and over again (life after life) we could at some point become a natural talent? But suppose we lack the discipline, now doing this and then that, perhaps this talent then, because it is not cultivated, isn't there.

If we let this all sink in we'll understand a responsibility: We are responsible for our actions, and sooner or later we may inherit the results which may not need to be restricted to just this life. So how about in order to not get the results we don't want, we start managing our actions properly?

3.4 The Football Field

We talked about good and bad actions and their results. But what is good, and what is bad? How do you know which is what?

Well, look at it this way. What is a bad result? When it is unwanted, unwelcome, right? Since bad actions lead to bad results a bad action is something which leads to unwanted, unwelcome, results. We already know we don't always see the results of our actions nor do we know when they bloom, so it is not always that clear. But let's go back to our football player for a moment.

On the football field we find two goals, each on the opposite side. When our player is about to score they aim at their opponents goal and not at the one belonging to their own team. Whether they actually score or not depends on several things, but at least they aim at the right side for them to score. And this is what we can try here too. We might not know if an action is good or bad but does it side with welcome or unwelcome results?

An unwelcome result is for example pain. Siding with pain leads to pain and vice versa. It could be physical pain or mental pain. Suppose we would be verbally backstabbing someone, even if we didn't know whether this would be a good action or a bad one, or to which exact result it could lead, we do know it sides with pain, either for us or for the other. But since it sides with pain, it increases, nurtures, pain; it doesn't lessen it. And since it is our action the result, the blooming with pain, is ours too.

Many actions we seem to do so fast, almost instantly. We trained such behaviour quite well; we got a real talent for it. If we don't like the results we might start to look more carefully at the things we do and why we do them. If they side with what is for us the right side, the wholesome side, we should keep doing them but if they side with for us the wrong side, the unwholesome side, we should just get rid of them, destroy them, not feed and dwell in them. This way we will become more and more skilful. It is wise to do those things which lead to the result we want.

Used to the things we do, some actions feel unnatural. For instance if someone is angry at us, our trained reaction might be to retaliate in some way, we might even start a fight. But since hurting sides with

things we don't want for ourselves nor for the people we care about, it would be wise not to go there. And don't worry, even though it could take a while, things siding with the wholesome will become natural, habitual, too.

What we train we will become better at, we will come to know better and it will feel less and less alienated. But be aware, it is not like we should be a smiling pounce bag for bullies! Or let people rob, abuse, walk over us, or anything like that. That is like enabling them to do so which doesn't side with the wholesome either right?

3.5 Mortgage

Suppose you have a mortgage loan from a bank with which you bought your house. If you stop paying off the bank can, whether you like it or not, sell your house. So from one point of view it is your house but from another point of view it isn't. Basically this 'my, mine', is about the amount of control we have. And with that some responsibility. If you don't have any control is it really right to call something yours?

When something is mine I should be able to do what I want with it. This (my) body is mine not yours. I can put a tattoo on it, have it pierced, etc. Sometimes my or mine is used in another sense, like 'my country'. But here we don't mean to say the country is mine, that I own it.

We can control our body, but only to some extent. We can't prevent it from getting sick or older. It is the same with the mind, we can't just prevent it from some excitement, for example. Thus, being out of our full control, is it then really proper to call it mine? Is it right to consider it me? Yet we do feel this is me, mine. But what is this *me* then? Well we can't describe it really. We use words like me, self, myself, but we can't define or locate this properly. Why? Is it out of reach? Well then it isn't mine for sure. If it was so clear we wouldn't have so much trouble describing it. Perhaps then we might be looking at it from a wrong point of view? From a wrong notion, from... a belief? Maybe we just think we know?

We do know that something which would be really myself would be fully under one's self-control. But would a self need (to) control? If so it would be dependent and not in-dependent. And if it depends on something else it falls away if this dependence isn't there. So a self can't depend on not self, it should not be dependent at all. We already know what we experience is a difference, a duality. This is always dependent and therefore not self. If we can't experience it how can we say it exist or not exists? What can we say about it? If it is something we can't experience, is it even right to call it 'something' or 'not something'?

So this is a strange matter. We could rethink this through and ask how we came up with a self in the first place. If I ask 'does a *goeloo* exist?' you would ask me what it is. With a self we immediately assume we have one or not — both ways at least assume we know what it is. But it seems to go against what we know. Should we then take a self up on believe?

Well the problem here is we are still assuming and still muddled, since it can't go against what we know and we already established we can't experience it.

Basically we can't discern 'self'. We think we somewhat do but it is a flaw in our assuming. Normally we use the WPOV. We think things are things-in-themselves, not dependent; 'self'. Like white exists on its own. Or black. We don't see these exist only in dependence. They are two sides of a spectrum. A self implies no dependence. It doesn't mean there is no you or me etc. with dependence. Of course you are you and me is me. And I call this myself, or self, which is in the same manner as I call this my country; it is handy for communication. However we often switch these contexts without noticing. When we talk of this self even with dependence, which strictly speaking makes no sense, we automatically assume an independent self, a soul or something going on, which keeps itself in essence, after we die or till we die. So we get drawn to duality — there is a self and there is not a self, all exists and nothing exists — drawn to this WPOV, drawn into the game of extremes.

3.6 Fed Up

At this point we are not much further than 'what goes around comes around' or 'you reap what you sow'. Life may go around and around and we get to experience nice and not so nice things. But now what? Well nothing really, unless we get fed up with all this, especially with the painful, grievous side of it.

If we get tired of these unwelcome experiences, or if we see the pointlessness in experiencing, we might want to do something about it. When we understand the duality (see 'The Art Gallery') it might perhaps become even more easy to see the repetitious nature of things. When we are new in this world it is a big place with lots of things to discover. Later on we might get a natural eye for (some) repetition. We wake up, prepare, eat, go to work, get home, eat, cool down, sleep. Or whatever repetition we call ours. With this duality we might get a little bit disenchanted already: 'Okay, this is nice but it is just another colour', 'Okay, this tastes nice, but is just another taste'. But how tasty it might get, it does not leave the taste spectrum; it is more of the same really. And it stays this way. It doesn't break out these dimensions; it doesn't go further than our sense experiences. Life after life possibly, on and on.

The clearer the mind the easier it will be to see the more generic levels. If we are aware we are seeing colours, and thus that colours depend on no colours, which is basically just a dimension in which a colour could be possible, then we might not have the need to experience every colour out there. We might somewhat get fed up with colours, they are just colours, and then these colours lose their enchanted powers. When they do, they don't form the parts of the 'The Donkey and the Carrot' any more. So we don't go out in the world trying to experience all different colours in the hope they will enrich us. No, we will understand this is a vicious circle and we won't go after them.

Always wanting and we always want (have thirst for, long) something we don't have; it is a perfect fuel for this perpetuum mobile. If we see this there is also the chance we get fed up. Perhaps not fully yet, but we will understand to some extent wanting things is a bit pointless too. It never gets fulfilled. There are often many things one can want and no situation is perfect — which can give an excuse on why a want is not fulfilled. — We might think 'if only I was rich' or 'if only I was healthy,

younger, older, more loved, less loved, attractive, less attractive'. So we keep busy longing, wishing, but intrinsic it is just the same really.

When we get fed up with all this we might want to stop and be done with it. Understanding this does not mean we can't appreciate nice things, we just don't need to make all kinds of assumptions while getting tricked by them. Then gradually we will be siding more and more to things we know, things which we experience right now, instead of creating a duality between what is here and what isn't (yet, any more). We become more and more occupied with the actual.

So this stopping then, is it something which can be done and if so how? If here is what we know for ourselves might end, then it is time to take some things up on trust. Only temporarily though, only till we can work here with what we know for ourselves too.

4 The Teaching

By following our basics we came perhaps to a different view on life and death. And we might understand some of our own responsibility since what we do leads to manageable results. We may not know if breaking through this life-and-death cycle is something which is even possible, but we do know we don't want to suffer. And this is what life entails for us; there is this sickness, separation from those we care about, ageing and dying and so on, waiting. So at least we could try to look into the possibility whether or not suffering could be ended. What we did previously on our own, to decrease or end suffering, might not have given us a lasting result, so let's see what someone who claimed to have broken through such a cycle had to say about this.

— We know we can only do and experience things just right now. And we are always doing something; we either increase or decrease suffering. Breaking through is something which doesn't side with the increase of suffering right? So, the way to increase happiness and breaking through must then be one and the same. This way we understand we are able to guard and verify what we are doing with what we already know. We don't welcome blind belief.

4.1 Breaking Through

According to buddhism it is possible to break through and this breaking through, this ending of this cycle of life-and-death, is what buddhism is about. Those who broke through on their own are referred to as awakened (*buddha*), which is said to be very rare to accomplish. To fully understand is to have it realized, till then it means some things will have to be taken up on trust. Which does not have to be a problem though. If you understand what we said earlier you got enough knowledge to keep things in check. For example the doubting or worrying 'is this the right way or not?' what do you think, does it side with knowing or with not knowing? With not knowing right? With knowing there is no doubt. So, if we dwell in it, if we feed this thought, will this doubt then increase or decrease? It is just a basic, if we dwell in it we will just be getting more. So, don't get preoccupied, obsessed, with it. Don't dwell in there. What to do? Well we can cultivate something which sides with knowing. Also, when we are in a lot of doubt we can get stressed right? Which doesn't side with calm at all. So we can do something which calms us. Or, when stressed we are also not having joy, so we can do something which sides with joy. And more and more we might come to understand there is only one direction out. It is either the game of extremes or not. We either play the game or we don't. In the beginning this might all be easier said than done but don't panic, just apply the basics. And this way it can only lead to more knowledge, more calm, more joy and, according to the awakened one, this is all you need to do.

You might perhaps think: 'Hmm, this can't be all there is to it'. Well actually it is but there is indeed a problem. Perhaps you might not get the calm and happiness when you want and you don't know which results ripens when. You might not know when you'll get sick or die which might all be obstacles. What if you die, get born and perhaps just as in this life you forget about previous things learned? It is very easy to act with greed or anger. We often feel justified to do so, it seems even socially the norm. So it can get worse and worse very fast.

But we are in luck. Some awakened ones were able to explain what they did; they became teachers. And it is a lot easier to follow a teachers' guidance than to discover things on our own. Compared to that this is a shortcut. In our era we did have an awakened one too and lucky for us

a teaching one. For a long time his teachings were handed over orally and are now somewhat available to us in modern languages.

About that siding with the good, we did mention above, here is what the awakened one said about it:

'What, almsmen, action is done without greed, is without greed-borne, is situated without greed, the rise is without greed, that action is wholesome, that action is unblameable, that action has a happy ripening. That action does lead to the cessation of action, that action does not lead to the rise of action.' (AN3.112)

— Idem with hate and delusion.

4.2 The Texts

The latest awakened one taught many and is referred to as the greatest teacher. We don't have the awakened one to teach us in person, but we do still have access to his teachings. And not just to a few texts, we got thousands! So we can think, ponder, study them from different angles.

In the texts we read about people listening to one talk and then put it into practise. Some heard more than one and we even got so many more, probably more than people have heard in the awakened one's time. And we got those from his disciples too, even those from after the awakened one had given his last one. So if some heard one, others two, three, ten, and so on, how many would be enough for us? hundreds? thousands? If it is never enough we have to ask ourselves if we are really studying or just collecting. We like to collect things and we can make up good excuses for it. So we do have to be careful.

Nowadays there are many buddhist books and many different schools of buddhism. Since they are all claiming to be buddhist, what do all these teachings, schools, have (roughly) in common? It should be what the awakened one taught right? It seems they could roughly agree on some collections, which in Pāli are called the Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN, shorter enumerated texts), Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN, shorter texts grouped by topic), Majjhima Nikāya (MN, middle length texts) and Dīgha Nikāya (DN, lengthy texts), from which we then can all study to build a good foundation. With a foundation we got something to stand on. This does not mean they don't go deep though, they go just as deep as you can get; they have the ability to grow with you. These four collections are really really enough. Study them honestly, for understanding, and you gradually develop right view.

When you study the texts you don't rob or kill someone; in that moment you are doing things siding with the good, things siding with the end of suffering.

5 Arising, Ceasing

After covering what we can know for ourselves and the implications, we talked about the Teaching. Now let's see what the Teaching is about.

To look only just now for what the awakened one and his followers have said, does not mean what we covered could be reached without what they said. Without practise, without their guidance we would simply be overcome with doubts and kept switching between sides. We would not be able to deduct the basics or keep going through their implications. But because they are factual they don't need the 'because the awakened one said so' argument. Which does, of course, not mean every one will agree or prefer this approach in the first place. This work is about knowing, our approach is not directed by faith or trust. Not that we do mistrust, but we want to know why and how, preferably before doing. And how do we know we are not led astray? Because a supposed awakened one said so? Or his followers? Or even if we do have that trust, how do we know we have not misunderstood what they said? Or if translations were properly done or understood?

So, now that we have got our basics and implications in place to keep things in check, let's look at the implication of those implications; the arising and ceasing of suffering.

5.1 Dependent-Co-Arising

The problem is suffering. We suffer. There is sickness, ageing, death, abuse, torture, separation from the ones we care about, etc. Were there no suffering we wouldn't suffer. And we don't seem to be able to stop suffering by just not wanting or ignoring it. So, if it can be stopped, how to end it?

Suppose we would remove the supporting bars of our barn-house, it will then collapse right? Perhaps not right away. Perhaps it still stands on its own, without its support, for a while. But it is not any more suitable for living; it is bound to collapse.

Before broken through the awakened one thought about what the support (*paccayā*) of suffering could be. Cut away its support and it can't keep going right? And what is the support for suffering, for ageing-and-death? Birth. If there was no birth would there be ageing-and-death? Of course not. Birth is just birth and ageing-and-death is just that. No mystics here. To say birth (being born, life) is the support for ageing-and-death doesn't seem to require too much insight right? We all know beings are born and will die someday. First we are born, then we will die. No big deal here. So, are we now so much smarter, educated, then? Well, normally we look at it with the WPOV but try to look at it from the CPOV which is about: not self ('Mortgage'), change ('A Colour Picker Tool') and suffering ('Fed Up'), now that would be a whole different story.

— While the CPOV might be convenient to use, we should not forget our basics. After all, we can't see both the cheese its back and front. Whatever is discerned it is against its context or background (see 'The Art Gallery'). Thinking of the back of the cheese is just reasoning. We can turn the cheese to look at its back, so we know it is there, but then right there this would be the new foreground. Structurally a background comes first and with it, its foreground.

And what is the support for birth? In 'Life and Death' we turned back, from death to life and vice versa, which wouldn't be too helpful to really understand since this is reached by just reasoning (we can't experience life after death, it would just be life). Instead the one clung-to-enlightenment (that is before enlightenment, not having realised awakening yet) went deeper. If what wasn't here, there wouldn't be any

birth? Becoming. If there was no becoming would there then be birth (ageing, death)? Of course not, no speculation needed.

— When action has its results ripening, it is old action intent to be felt. As it ripens it thus becomes. With the ripening of a lustful result, lustful becoming. If there was no lustful becoming, lustful ripening would not have been possible. Likewise for formful and formless becoming.

And what is the support for becoming? As fire becomes where it takes up fuel, as such it is the becoming which depends on the taking up. And taking up has longing as its support. Thus with longing, taking up; with taking up, becoming; with becoming, birth; with birth, ageing-and-death; suffering. And what is the support for longing? Feeling. This is easy enough to understand right? If we long for something tasty, nice, beautiful, it is because of this niceness, a nice feeling. Well..., we have to be careful because even with the WPOV we would say we understand, but we are not talking about the WPOV here still the CPOV applies. It could be the CPOV is easy enough seen in the case of the front and back of our cheese, but we are so used to feeling and longing from a WPOV we automatically switch back; don't use the WPOV here. And by what is feeling supported? By touch. If there was no touch there would not be a difference, no experience, no feeling. For touch there must be a difference; it must be able to be touched, to be able to see for seeing — which is just seeing — to be able to hear for hearing etc. So, there are the six's bases for the support for the six's touch. Thus for touch (the general) it is the hexad-base. — Since the following items take up a bit more space they will be explained later. — And what is the support for this the hexad-base? Name-and-Form. And for name-and-form? Cognition. And for cognition? Inclinations. And for inclinations? Not Knowing.

Seeing how suffering arises we then understand how to end this: we need to remove the supporting bars so this whole building falls down. So that with the ending of not knowing, inclinations ends; with inclinations ending, cognition ends; with cognition ending, name-and-form ends; with name-and-form ending, the hexad-base ends; with the hexad-base ending, touch ends; with touch ending, feeling ends; with feeling ending, longing ends; with longing ending, taking up ends; with taking up ending, becoming ends; with becoming ending, birth ends; with birth ending, ageing-and-death ends and with the ending of ageing-and-death this entire mass of Suffering

ends.

When we are talking about the stopping of birth, feeling, etc. and it sounds a bit gloomy, it shows us how easily we forget our basics and implications. Didn't we talk about how bad can't come from good, that good comes from siding with the good? And gloomy, does it side with wholesome (happiness) or with the unwholesome (unhappiness)? So although we might think we follow this logically we then, when gloomy, misunderstand.

In the texts we can find other occurrences too. The principle stays the same of course, applying the CPOV instead of the WPOV:

*Thus when this exist, this is;
with the arising of this, this arises.
When this not exist, this is not;
with the cessation of this, this ceases.*

(SN12.37)

5.2 The Hexad Base

Imagine a swimming pool with its base made of heavy concrete plates. The water is perfectly still. Then suddenly from the middle to the end all the plates drop down one feet. What happens to the water? It now flows right? We got ourselves a tiny waterfall.

First when there was no difference in the base the water was still. There was no higher or lower part to discern. And like the water moved, so do we. As with 'The Donkey and the Carrot' we are moved by our thirst. And just like the water, we got then a difference in base too. We thirst for things we don't have; differences in sights, sounds, and so on. So there got to be differences in eye-base, ear-base, etc. too.

— We call it eye because of its function, not for being the organ; Warmth and pressure with the ear-organ would thus be with the body as base, not the ear. A base is a base for touch.

A difference in eye-base is the thirst for visuals between have and not have. So we would, just like our pool, have a higher and a lower base. But which part is here the higher and which would the be lower? That depends. Since there is no height it depends on where we point at. Just like our cheese its back and front. From the viewpoint of the eye, or sight, we could speak of closer and further, or here and not here, there.

The thirst for visuals, between have and not have, is a difference (experience, see 'The Art Gallery'). Feeling arises with these six's base for touch. A difference in the sight spectrum, we could call seeing. A difference in the sound spectrum, hearing and so on. If we would not ever have been able to experience sight would there be any longing for it? Would we long for something we never experienced nor imagined its becoming? Of course not, we don't long for what we don't miss. So, if there was no experience would there then be a difference? Also not, right? Can we see something without experiences? Also not. Thus, the relationship between sight-experience and the eye-base is a necessary one; it is the CPOV.

— Note that now and then I switch contexts a little to get my point across. Dependent-co-arising is not about us longing, feeling, etc., which comes with the WPOV, it is about cessation of longing, etc. itself.

Explained this way you might perhaps see why this base stops when not knowing stops, why it stops with the stopping of greed; it is because then a difference (depending on thirst) isn't there.

5.3 Name-and-Form

Suppose you walk with your arm straight ahead and your eyes closed. And you bump into a panel in front of you. Your arm might bent a bit because of the pressure, resistance, and you understood you hit something on your way. Perhaps because of the sound and feel you get the impression you hit a glass panel and roughly you might have gotten an impression about its size or thickness too. This information you got out of your earlier experiences with glass. You know what glass is like. Your whole life you've been with glass. And it doesn't matter if the glass is coloured or not but if you are able to look at it you might know this too. If it turns out the panel was made out of wood you would be rather surprised right? The information you got from your older experiences and the information retrieved while bumping against the panel didn't match. Yet it did stop you all the same.

What you know is there was friction, resistance, and with your interpretation this got combined into a story. You know you hit the panel with your arm and this is in the story too. Someone who has always been blind doesn't know what his or her arm looks like, in that story this particular information is omitted. Or when disgusted with glass the experience would be different too, even though the touch-resistance is somewhat similar. While this story-making (up) is very handy in daily life, if I say bananas you already know a lot about them, it is a lot about story-making and thus further away from knowing.

Suppose you would pick up a rock and find it heavy. And another rock, which you find lighter. Then you would have picked up a heavier rock and a lighter one. But they are heavier or lighter because of you... the rocks don't have any notion about their weight. This measuring is something you brought in. So it quickly becomes a story. It gets quickly tagged. Here we see this tagging doesn't necessarily mean big or old stories.

If you sit and relax you might notice you don't feel your hands or you might feel them differently. If you know what your hands normally look or feel like, chances are you interpreted, manipulate, 'correct', this current experience with your normal one. Though through practise you might become more and more aware of this, and see this story-making doesn't always have to be made more than it already is.

If we both sit in a room but I sit on a pushpin, this experience would be 'here' where I sit and not 'there' with you. Although the happening is in the same room so to speak, it isn't your experience. You can't register it, you don't have this difference, this tagging and the resistance, existing for you. While I do register this happening, which is my experience. So, an experience is this noticing, registering, knowing of a happening. It is how this happening presents itself (to me).

This tagged-resistance — a happening — is name-and-matter. Name is this tagging, labelling, naming; inclined by feeling, perception, intention, touch and attention. Matter is the resistance, oppression, friction; the earthy-, watery- fiery- and airy aspects, of the four great essences (earth, water, fire, air) and what of them is taken up as form (as this is me, this I am, this is myself). Name-and-Matter is what is cognized. When there is name-and-matter there is cognition and when there is cognition there is name-and-matter; they are each others' support (SN12.65).

Of course, talking about matter is a little abstract. In a way it is indirectly known matter is there, because what we experience of it is the experience. That which we call matter we discern as violation, infringement, breach, breaking, deformation, of boundaries. Just as we saw in our examples above. As it thus deforms, it is called Form. So, *and* the four great essences *and* what of them is taken up as form, is what is called form. Then together with Name we got Name-and-Form.

5.4 Cognition

Consciousness, subconsciousness and unconsciousness

Normally when we are conscious, it somewhat means we can register and respond to things. We are aware, not not aware. But we are not aware of everything around us with the same intensity. Perhaps we have an itch and we scratch without paying attention to it. It is not we didn't register the itch, else we wouldn't have responded to it, but there were for us more important things to pay attention to. Scratching is something we are used to do, it is not a new way of manoeuvring, it is easy, we can do this without much effort, it doesn't require a whole lot of attention. If something else needs a lot more attention we just scratch and, as it served its purpose, be done with it. We even might forget doing it, just as with many other things.

This is not only the case for simple tasks but for more complicated ones as well, even those just recently done. Confronted some indicate they acted without being conscious. Without being conscious? Unconscious? This would sound strange right? But then we get to use the term subconscious. I don't know whether it has always been the case, but people are not only saying they might have done something subconsciously, something can be done by their subconsciousness as well. And it is widely (wildly) accepted we do have a thing called subconsciousness. Yet forgetting, paying attention (focussing, giving priority) are very common aspects. We seem to accept more easily we may have forgotten something when it happened longer ago, but this mechanism is just the same. We don't really need a subconsciousness for this. Whether we know it or not, people shift, from being conscious to 'having a consciousness', from subconsciously to 'a subconsciousness', and now suddenly we got stuck with all these things. For some the subconsciousness is viewed as part of the consciousness for others not, but it seems to be taken as part of you, your self, what you are.

We might think when someone can't register and respond they are not conscious, unconscious. But how do we know this is so? When the tooth pain is gone are we then unconscious? Not so right? We are not conscious of the pain, which is gone, but we are conscious of other things. And unless awakened this entire mass of suffering is still in tact, even when dying; when the body is still warm there is still life (SN41.6). If we would come up with an idea like 'this person is neither dead nor

alive' even then there must be name-and-form, etc. How could we then maintain 'consciousness' not being there? When someone is unconscious we can only truly say there is no response perceived by *us*.

Thus subconsciousness and unconsciousness might perhaps be things we think we are familiar with, but there does not seem to be a need for them apart from communicating about the intensity, level, degree of awareness. We know what we experience is dependent, and thus taking conscious, unconscious or subconscious as a not dependent thing goes against what we know. Whatever you find is there for you, it is dependent. And when you find it, experience it or what ever, we say you are conscious of it.

Location

Generally speaking we have a body (*kāya*) and mind (*citta*). They are two different things; a mind is not physical and this body not mental. When we personify things we attribute human nature to not humans e.g. 'The Teaching says'. But in this materialistic oriented world we are so used to cope with materials we 'materialize' things, we give physical attributes to non-physicals. A physical attribute is for example colour. There are things with no-colour as well, so when we think of consciousness having no colour it may not sound to strange. But we have to be careful because no-colour depends on colour and vice versa, so we are talking about the colour-spectrum here, which applies only to matter. It isn't the case that consciousness has no colour, colour doesn't even apply. Perhaps we like to make things physical, tangible, because they then exist for us? And the more we get into that way of thinking, the more a consciousness feels like a thing and a subconsciousness too for that matter (pun intended). Physical objects we can (often) point at, they have a location. So perhaps we are trying to do this with non-physicals too?

Of course, when something is, it is here or there, so we can't say consciousness has no location. But it is just there where name-and-form is, it is dependent. It is in this way we can justly speak of a location. And like physicals, things can be not here or there. Perhaps we think this of consciousness too? Maybe this is, partly, why we need unconsciousness?

Cognition

What we understand as consciousness is something about being aware, awareness. And now that we can let that objectification go, we might see that the use of cognition (from *cognoscere* meaning in Latin 'to know') can fit better; it already feels more fleeing. It is easier to see that when there is cognizing there must be something to be cognized as well, while consciousness seems often to be misunderstood as being a thing somewhat present on its own.

Cognizing name-and-form

Suppose you are thinking of pickled cucumbers (pickles). Perhaps you can even see the colour, and almost smell and taste them. Perhaps, if you crave for them, water is already running in your mouth. You prepared to eat them already. But the sour you can only experience through the taste-base. You know sour, you can remember what it is like. If you are not eating pickles right now, is there then (pickle-)taste-cognition? Of course not. There is (pickle-)taste-cognition when we are actually tasting pickles.

If we fell back to the WPOV, we think because we have the taste-base and an external object, while being conscious, we experience taste and then feeling — or something along that way of thinking. But with the CPOV we understand things arise and cease together. Those things can be known, discerned, when there is taste, when there is feeling. In daily speech we use the WPOV, but to see what is really going on, to understand, we need the CPOV. If the pickle is on the other side of the room we can't taste it. Then there is no base for taste, no outer-taste-base nor an inner one (regarding the sour that is). For taste-cognition to exist we need a difference. The 'tongue' — or rather the inner taste base — and the outer name-and-form. So we know we taste when taste is cognized, thus 'with cognition'.

Foundation of cognizing

In 'Name-and-Form' we said: '*... quickly becomes a story. It gets quickly tagged*' and '*... this story-making doesn't always have to be made more than it already is*'.

Suppose someone stepped on your toes while carelessly passing by and you get angry. This happening (name-and-form) is what is cognized for which, as an example, the underlying 'I have pain in my toes caused by someone stepping on them while passing by carelessly' is present first.

For which '*I have pain in my toes caused by someone stepping on them while passing by*' is present first.

For which '*I have pain in my toes caused by someone stepping on them*' is present first.

For which '*I have pain in my toes caused by someone*' is present first.

For which '*I have pain in my toes*' is present first.

For which '*I have pain*' is present first.

For which '*I have*' is present first.

For which '*I*' is present first.

So we can perhaps see here how cognition can build up, grows. It grasps on cognition with name-and-form, which when fuelled forms this new thing to take up. In this way cognition takes up cognition, but it keeps being cognized of course; it still is just cognition which cognizes.

5.5 Inclinations

Inclination: tendency, leaning, desire, wish, impulse, bent; liking, preference, interest, taste; bending, slope, slant, rise, angle

'Matter', when cognized, is already directed or orchestrated; what is cognized is name-and-form. This directing starts on a very generic level of experience (see 'Knowing and Believing'). In a way the more particular levels are inheriting their properties from the more general ones, just as our wall inherited its characteristics from its building-blocks (see 'The Barn'). Like our building-blocks, which could be for the barn or house, there are different ones for experience too. Those, the inclinations for body, speech and mind, incline body, speech and mind.

But building-blocks themselves have properties too right? A building-block made out of wood has different ones than a building-block made out of stone, yet they have similar ones as well else they wouldn't both be building-blocks. Such a property could be size, colour, weight, the ability to stack, and so on. Likewise we got properties for the inclinations. And what do those inclinations then have in common? They arise, change — but stay the same from another point of view — and cease. Hence the things derived from them do have these same qualities too. All experiences come, stay-and-change and go right?

And we could try to find even a more generic level. What do these properties themselves have as properties? Well, arising itself arises, stays-and-changes and ceases, and so is it the case with the other properties. Thus, likewise for the properties of those properties, and for the properties of those properties ... they are recursive (AN3.47).

In 'The Football Player' we talked about what we do leads to results, an improvement, it increases, but we didn't say how. It is through this recursiveness. Each level or layer inherits from a more general one and so this builds up, stacks, adds up. The ability to build up, add up, is a basic too. Adding is just a basic operation and arithmetic has nothing to do with belief either. This building up is an increase but look at our barn-house-wall for example. If a wall got every stone stacked on top of each other, neatly aligned, it is rather weak. But a sturdy wall has its row-stones overlapping so every part is covered by the stones from another row. And like our wall, our suffering is sturdy too. In 'Fed Up' we

talked about a vicious circle, a self-regulating mechanism which reinforces itself through a feedback 'loop' (the output, after processing, is 'routed back' as input but to a more particular level) and in this case the in- and output are unwelcome, unwholesome, hence vicious. This reinforcing is something which works on each and every level. Even at a high level where intention seems more like a direction; an inclination. It is like stacking bricks so they overlap for which each next row's stones are just moved a bit to the left or right. Movement is of course not chaotic. How do things move? They follow their principles. Just as water flows from a higher to a lower point. We don't think water wants or chooses to go a certain way, even though we can use this in our speech, but this is what water does. It just goes to a certain direction, slanting, sloping, alternating between two points (ends of a spectrum); just like the slider of our colour picker tool. So this movement we are talking about actually is the change while standing. The ability to build-up is just another way of talking about change-while-standing which is a characteristic of Inclinations (AN3.47); it too is inclined.

Perhaps we understand better we used CPOV mostly to illustrate the necessity of a relation, the arising and ceasing. The relation itself, change-while-standing, is a feedback 'loop'. Phrases and implications from texts like 'cognition depends on cognition' or 'meditation cultivates meditation', and so on, might now make more sense. To include this feedback system in our way of thinking we could call this the CPOV+ (new content, new label).

This feedback system is very counter-intuitive and here too, just as with our CPOV, we might keep switching back to causality. Even when we 'think we understand' we might still cut things up into casual chains and sneakily find ourselves moving to causality again. Causality can put us on the wrong foot very fast. But not only in that way; we know when the front and back are gone our cheese is gone right? We think of us, when thus gone, as either existing or not existing. But what we are then in fact doing is applying the WPOV as background for our CPOV, implying with the ending of suffering there is suffering. While if the CPOV+ is applied thoroughly, we come to understand 'we then (neither) exist and/(n)or not exist' is muddled thinking. Normally we mistake opposite sides as ends, 'selves'. White vs black, life vs death, exists vs not exists. We don't see co-arisen and co-arising as ends (AN6.61). Of course there is no turning back from cessation; how could it be a spectrum's end? What we normally take as 'ceasing' (viz. not becom-

ing, death, an end) is just an alternation between life and its arising.

If we reread 'Dependent-Co-Arising' we can keep this CPOV+ in the back of our head. See how that chapter got even more depth? It would be an overkill to try to grasp this in the fullest range possible though, if such a thing would even be conceivable at all. It is said that the best way to tackle this problem, of reasoning about a feedback system, is to describe the principle and the system as a whole, which was exactly what the awakened one did.

With Inclinations as feedback 'loop', we see how it is-and-gets co-arisen. But what does this tell us? Have you ever seen how some people ride bikes and get into trouble when something in their back is calling for attention? They steer where they look at right? We steer and we go. Aim and move, aim and fire, think and act, think and become. So, look where you want to go, aim for your target (see 'The Football Field'). This way we get either a more stable vicious circle or we unwind this stableness with a virtuous one. Understanding this we now don't need to rely to manage our actions to end suffering with misunderstood, mismatched, results but we can manage our actions by direction — never mind a misinterpreted 'result'.

5.6 Not Knowing

When something is present it is here. And when it is absent it isn't. Suppose there is no anger now then you can say it is absent. But anger can pop up again, so was it really gone?

Now we can go a little overboard with this way of thinking, but luckily we find in the texts there is no need to do so: What is present is here; what is not, not. Which doesn't mean it is then uprooted (SN46.38). Thus when anger is not present it is absent, gone. Which doesn't mean its absence is nothing or that it should be understood as present anger, no, it is absent but present as absence, as possibility. Hence it is still possible to become angry.

When something is present it is not absent and when absent not present. Both are defined by what they are not. Presence is a matter of attendance. Something which is attended to becomes the foreground of our attention, it becomes 'seen'. And what it is not, the absence, becomes the background. Discernment is dependent on this difference between fore- and background (see 'The Art Gallery') so you can't really take a foreground out of its background so to speak; they depend on each other. A 'thing' is not its not dependent self.

If we apply this way of thinking to not knowing then, logically, not not knowing (thus knowing) should be at the back. But how could something be fed, supported, with knowing be not knowing? This would be a contradiction. So, when there is not knowing there can't be another more general background be discerned. Therefore not knowing is the ultimate background when it comes to the rise of suffering. And when knowing is settled at the back, then not knowing can't be any more. Not knowing can't grow out of knowing, which too would be a contradiction.

We suffer and to some extent we know this, even though we don't fully get why or how this is. Not knowing is then already in its right place, at the back. And there must be at least some degree of knowing present to be able to make this difference with not knowing. How else could not knowing (or something else for that matter) otherwise even be known?

— For 'to be present' there must be something to be present, which (as presence) is thus already inclined, supported, fed, by its background;

by not knowing. So not knowing comes first then (for the inclined presence of this inclined thing) inclinations. Thus we got, with not knowing inclinations and with inclinations the inclined presence (cognition) of this inclined thing: With not knowing Inclinations, with inclinations Cognition, with cognition Name-and-Form.

6 Particulars

We saw that the CPOV does not involve time, as is the case with Dependent-Co-Arising. 'But', one might ask when misunderstood, 'how should I see all this? How should I look at it with time? After all I know that I was born and will die someday. If these things are arising and ceasing together, are they then now present? Do they then mean something else than what is normally understood by them?'

6.1 Time

In 'Life and Death' was said: 'Normally we would apply a WPOV — first we are born, then we will die — but this is a bit muddled since we are not really looking at life and death there but at *me* — another context or background'.

Adding time to the principle ('first ... then ...') implies talking about a particular. In this case however it is the WPOV (causality) and it is the WPOV which is mistaken as principle. So if we need to talk about this as a particular we should do so without the WPOV. But first an illustration.

Suppose some years ago you tasted an apple and you tried to grow a tree out of its seeds. The work paid off and you are holding one of its fruits. This apple is not the same as the first, yet you might have hope for the apple to taste similar as its ancestor, after all there is a chance it inherited the same properties. At the time you didn't know if a tree would grow out of its seeds, whether this tree would carry fruits, but you did recognize its potential and you would have been rather surprised if the tree gave fruit to sour bananas. This would not have been possible; this potential was not there present to begin with.

Time we know as past, present and future. We can say our present ageing-and-death depends on an earlier, past, birth. Without this past birth *this* ageing-and-death wouldn't have been. And if this ageing-and-death wasn't, this past birth wasn't. Or, keeping the illustration with the apple in mind, this specific-past-birth-with-this-potential wasn't. Thus this present-ageing-and-death depends on this present-ageing-and-death-potential-of-this-past-birth. Which is how past is present (as past) — CPOV.

There being this potential is a commonly held view. After all we do find people saying one is (un)lucky to be born in such or so family, or caste, or it is understood as in inheritance and heredity, so this potential is somewhat seen, expected, as to be present. And it will fulfil its inclined possibilities of this ageing-and-death too. It is when fruit is not fertile, potentials and possibilities will have become ceased; this way death too is a possibility.

So, being (seeing as what is, the present) comes with inclined potentials (seeing as what was, the past), pregnant with inclined possibilities

(seeing as what will be, the future). Hence past and future are not determined as in determinism, but determined as in chosen or possible possibilities. Depending on the aim — on the cultivation of wisdom — some are more likely to be experienced than others. These potentials and possibilities we are here talking about *are* Inclinations, and chosen or possible says something about how inclined these Inclinations are as potential (past, what was), actual (present, what is) and possible (future, what will be). Past and future are thus experienced, seen, foreseen, acknowledged, in the present as potential and possibilities.

The difference between past, present and future inclinations is thus a matter of presence. It depends on their way of being present (was, is, will). And being present, the matter of presence, is cognizing. Thus: With inclinations, Cognition.

6.2 Me

In 'Life and Death' was said: 'Normally we would apply a WPOV — first we are born, then we will die — but this is a bit muddled since we are not really looking at life and death there but at *me* — another context or background'.

'But', one might still wonder, 'apart from the time aspect, what about the *me* then?' Well, what about *you*? What do you consider to be you? Usually we see ourselves as this combination of body and mind which we are so used to, it automatically comes with the WPOV attached. We could make use of another classification based on what we take up as to be me, mine, myself which leads to the discovery of the masses of form, feeling, perception, cognition and inclinations. All form (coarse or fine, inner or outer, in the past, future and the present, inferior or superior, far or near) belongs to the mass-of-form. Form is form throughout, void of anything else. There are for example no feelings in form (feelings belong to the mass-of-feeling). Idem the other masses. Feel free to play with it, whatever you regard as you see if you can make it not fit into one of them. You'll notice you can't find anything you identify with, taken up, which doesn't fall within these five masses (*pañ-cakkhandhā*); there is no attachment found apart from them.

With this taking up of the masses as me, myself, for me, of me, there is this view of embodiment (*sakkāyaditthi*). The view that there is this you and because there is this you there are things for you, from you, that are you, etc. But these masses are unstable and it would be wise not to hold on to them to such an extent they cause you trouble. With this taking up comes this sense of self which is thus really about regarding things which are not self (*anattā*) as self (see 'Mortgage'). And making it about self while it is not about self is actually a form of esteem (*māna*), which in its most subtle form is the self-esteem 'I am' (*asmimāna*).

So basically we are taking things up as I, mine, belonging to me, self, while actually they don't belong to anyone at all. We seek dependence to things which are outside our full control (which is just a recipe for disaster really). Being pleased with the limited control, we do not see the huge interest which comes with it. We are in debt. And when it is time to pay, we suffer.

7 Realization

With the right view, understanding, we can summon this all up with one word: Suffering. It is suffering which arises and ceases. Since we experience suffering we now understand there must be a difference, dependence. And being dependent it is supported, set up, aimed, orchestrated, inclined, intended, willed in the CPOV+ way. To end it we need to remove its support, which also is dependent. When there is suffering there is not not suffering. Since both are dependent, aimed for, willed, but rule each other out, we either set the things up for the increase of the support of suffering or for the decrease of this support. We learned that wholesome actions lead to the ending of actions. So targeting, aiming, inclining to the right side leads to the end of inclinations; to the uninclined.

At this point we are still not much further as in 'Fed Up': 'What goes around comes around' or 'you reap what you sow'. Even though we might perhaps understand even better what to do and why. We saw this approach, of not playing the game of extremes, was understood by one clung-to-enlightenment. So, it is not about learning this, which is just part of the path, it is about actually realizing it, reaching the goal, the cessation of suffering.

7.1 Tranquillity and Insight

To break through we need to cultivate tranquillity and insight, both siding with knowing. Through tranquillity our longing fades and through insight our not knowing fades.

This longing is a build up of inclinations, supported by not knowing. From our CPOV+ we know we can't remove a back from its front, they come and go together. Here likewise we remove inclinations and not knowing together. Tranquillity diminishes inclinations and insight diminishes not knowing. And with the fading of not knowing inclinations fades and with the fading of inclinations not knowing fades.

'Samatho ca vipassanā ca ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave asaṅkhatagāmimaggo'

'And tranquillity and insight, this is called, almsmen, the way heading to the uninclined' (SN43.2).

So we can see why they side with wisdom. Both need to be cultivated and their development is gradual. Like 'inclination' builds up (a vicious circle) it builds down (a virtuous one). If we didn't get 'calm' we just would be running after our senses, trying to fill this empty promise ('The Donkey and the Carrot') and just be too busy with that. And without 'knowing' we don't even see we are doing this. We would not understand this empty promise and only create more desire and get more chained in.

But now we know what to do: things siding with the wholesome. And we need to be sharp, to see the things as (or for what) they are, else we might find ourselves having turned and build things up, ready to experience suffering again.

We already talked a lot about the knowing part so let's now talk a bit about concentration leading to the kind of calm which leads to the fading of greed.

7.2 Concentration

In 'Breaking Through' we talked about the problem of forgetting what we learned and practised. And things could turn from bad to worse because of it. But we also said we are in luck because we got the principle made available to us. This must then mean practising, understanding, following, this principle must contain some insurance so we won't turn from bad to worse right? And we all can understand if there is such a thing as awakening, enlightenment, relief, it entails not turning to the wrong side.

From the texts we can learn that the cultivation is gradual. There are three stages, before suffering ends, where we already have this insurance. The first stage is called *sotapatti*. When we know for ourselves we don't rely on others (see 'Knowing and Believing'). Then we can stand on our own; we become emancipated. Emancipation (*vimutti*) got this feature of being less-to-not dependent which is precisely where this insurance or security comes from. If falling back would be possible it would be dependent and thus not emancipated, not steadfast, not standing on its own. Though as long as suffering hasn't ended, it is not not dependent either. This security is reached by practising the noble eight-membered way. Walking on this path heading to the cessation of suffering will gradually turn our actions, aiming to the right side; it counters the vicious cycle (see 'Inclinations') with a virtuous one.

The eight members of this noble way are right view, right attitude, right speech, right doing, right way of life, right exertion, right meditation and right concentration. Right concentration is supported by all the other members (SN45.28). And SN22.88 seems to say that if this isn't reached this only matters to people who think concentration is super important (not having it, making a problem about it; thus put obstructions up) but what is important is developing understanding. Of course understanding needs concentration and vice versa. But it is not like there is no concentration at all in there. It is not that for one who understands 'calm' isn't reached or for one who is calm 'understanding' isn't reached. And there are differences, preferences, too. For some their calm is more (easily) developed, for others their understanding. But this does not matter. We work with what we got. Calm can be used as a base to develop understanding and understanding can be used as a base to develop calm.

So, when we study we think, ponder, examine, contemplate. Reading falls under listening, so we are listening and thinking; two ways of developing understanding (radiance being the third). Thus studying the texts involves all this too, they are good subjects themselves. And who knows, perhaps for the duration of a finger snap we get into that pleasure, that concentration, already and who is there to say it isn't enough to qualify as fulfilment of concentration? We might have this idea we need to sit long, as if it is utmost important and too difficult to do, but it just might be all these kinds of thought are putting a barrier up, they just obstruct. And you already know engaging in this leads to more of that engagement. Don't be too heavy on things, keep it light. Aim for the right direction.

So the subject (food, support) on which we concentrate can differ (right or wrong kind of concentration), the intensity can differ and whether we master it or not can differ (getting in and out that intensity when we want), but concentration is just concentration. It too is supported, dependent in a CPOV+ way. In our daily life we all have concentration and we all experience different strengths. To learn something new we might have to concentrate harder than when eating an apple for example. And it might be we experience some kind of absorption, flow, where things feel pleasant or brighter, etc., too. But no matter the experience, when not supported by the other members of the path we got for us the wrong kind of concentration; we then develop the wrong eight-membered way.

Now that we can understand a bit what we can do with concentration, what it is we use it for, let's talk a little more about developing it.

7.3 Radiance

In 'The Football Player' we talked about action (*kamma*) and its ripening (*vipāka*); good comes from doing good. And we saw doing good leads to the stopping of action (see 'Breaking Through') with which this suffering stops.

Before doing something we think about it. In MN19 we see the awakened one saying no harm would come from thinking good thoughts. This is in line with our basics right? But a problem is we can't sit still and just think good thoughts for a very long time. Our body will get tired and then our mind gets disturbed from which we get no concentration. Without concentration we can't keep focusing. The awakened one then switched to the radiances, a type of cultivation of concentration.

— Radiance? The Pāli word *jhāna* is often translated as meditation or absorption or not at all. Further it is supposed to be related to the burning of a flame. I say *sati* is meditation and it either involves absorption or, if absorption has for you this connotation of not being aware, it would not be proper to use it for either *sati* or *jhāna*. But leaving it untranslated does not make it more helpful. Radiance has this link with bright, light, and thus flame too. And in daily life we can see something resembling this feature, when someone is happy they can be seen as warmed up, glowing, shining, beaming, thus radiant. So this is something we know and can relate to. And here too we are radiating when happy, only this happiness which we will be generating does not involve the outside world.

So, if for some reason we can't radiate we don't have to worry; we can just think good thoughts. We can't keep this up for a very long time but chances are this is long enough for us, to practise, anyway. If we don't know this, we might have some idea of how things should be like and we try to live up to it. Which can be very unpleasant, painful even. Feeling frustrated about this, thinking sitting quietly gives rise to boredom, and so on, are just thoughts which imply the diminishing of suffering leads to more suffering, not less. And how can this be, right? Don't manage actions by mismatched results, manage by direction. So, as in accordance with our basics, better sit with nice thoughts than to sit in despair or with doubts.

If thinking nice thoughts was good but too heavy to keep up, we can imagine a lighter thing would be having no thoughts at all. And we can imagine to stop thoughts the development could be going from something like having normal thoughts, to pleasant thoughts, to cosy, to softer, lighter, till... no thoughts? We might not know if this is possible but we do understand when we worry we are experiencing heavy thoughts and when we are at ease our thoughts are already feeling lighter, we feel lighter. Since even pleasant thoughts are heavy, tiresome in the long run, lighter thoughts would then already be easier to keep up. Whether the stopping of thoughts is possible for us or not, it does not matter. The way to lighter and stopping is just the same. It is gradual.

We know when we are stressed or angry we feel it in our body. This means there is a connection. Perhaps it is then not so strange to think that getting lighter thoughts could be supported by relaxing our body. So if you sit, sit comfortable. When you sit to comfortable though, it is pleasant but only at the start. It is more comfortable to sit stable. We needed concentration for the development of calm, so while practising we keep try to calm down, relax, too. We calm our body and we calm our mind.

But what are nice or good thoughts? Suppose you wish all people being well and happy, this would be nice right? But if you are thinking about people chances are, when unskilled, sooner or later your thoughts go towards certain people. People who are dear to you for example. But some of them might be sick others may have died. Or your thoughts go to those who might have wronged you, upset you etc. This way your nice thoughts might get disturbed very fast. And being disturbed does not lead to calm right? So, instead of picking anything we like, or just sound good, we can pick a for us more beneficial subject, a subject by which we don't get moved so fast. From the previous chapters we know good thoughts are those not rooted in greed, anger or not knowing. And from the types of developments of concentration (AN4.41) we can understand helpful subjects can be about thoughts, feelings, contemplation on the five-masses-and-the-taking-up, and so on too. A lot more subjects can be found in the texts as well. But even with a subject our thoughts can go all over the place right? Well, don't worry, just try to have more good thoughts than bad ones.

So we pick a subject for example the breathe, which is a general subject

as it is suitable to all states of mind. We can fathom whether we breathe long or short, or train to f.i. experience our whole body thus while being aware of the inhales and exhales. We don't need to focus on any body-part specifically to know whether it is in or out. It is not different from being aware of our posture. We know whether we sit or stand right? Or if we bend our arm slightly or with a big angle, we don't need to focus on any part to know this either. We know this when we attend to it. It is just the same with the inhale and exhale. We might still forget we are practising, still drifting off but we'll be quicker notice it. And then, right there, we already stopped drifting and we can just continue. This 'tying' to the breathe is the factor of meditation. It weakens the attention our senses are trying to get. Because breathing is connected to the body this practise is known as meditation on the body (*kāyagatāsati*). Other subjects like the gross anatomy or the postures of your body belong to this same category as well. When looking into 'body', not as the body for appropriation of the world but what it entails, as it is, first there is no going after what is not here, thus not negative, and secondly it provides the relief of any negative not here (normally nice things come with greed attached). Thus by attending to the actual we get a double positive if you like. How is this as fast-track, for building a virtuous circle? As such, considerations like these are as lanes on a highway. There are three more of such lanes where, when looked into, concentration from meditation can be fulfilled: feelings, mind, and principles. Cultivating meditation in either of these leads to the fulfilment of the seven members of enlightenment viz. meditation as member of enlightenment, discernment of principles as member of enlightenment, vigour as member of enlightenment, pleasure as member of enlightenment, calmness as member of enlightenment, concentration as member of enlightenment, objectivity as member of enlightenment; which are so called because they progress to enlightenment (SN46.5).

For radiance to be deemed proper it involves the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th ones where gradually the inclinations for speech and body are dropped. To develop them we need to understand and get rid of the obstructions. With them gone their weight isn't felt any more. We then feel lighter, uplifted, with which comes pleasantness and with a pleasant mind the body becomes calm. We feel at ease, content and being content the mind becomes concentrated. Thus by meditating, by being secluded from the obstructions, we turn inwards. Immersed with pleasantness and happiness, by means of this stepping back (for each next mode the grosser experience is dropped) we dwell radiant.

It is important to understand the obstructions; there is joy in them too so we have to make sure we are not feeding them instead. Which is the case when the danger of their enjoyment is not seen for what it actually is; a bait. The results then still seem worth it. In a way you could say these obstructions are having us aimed towards the external, having to do with the outside world, as they keep us away from going inwards, going to this inner cosiness where it is nice to dwell in; just as it is, just on its own. A way to counter these obstructions is by practising meditation. If we practise, for example meditation directed at the body, we don't focus outwards (note it got this 'meditation cultivates meditation'). There are other ways to counter the obstructions too; it is not as if one antidote is always equally effective (AN7.61). To get to know more about the obstructions we can study the texts. We can then learn to recognize them so we know what to do. From SN46.38 we learn they can be removed through studying too, here is also shown how the mind is in such situation; it is with pleasantness, energetic, fully directed, active. Not bored, sluggish, darkish, sleepy, passive. Not passive at all.

The radiances are, of course, dependent too, they too are set up, aimed for and willed; they too are not self. So depending on how we feed them (CPOV+) there is a difference. For those who do not walk the noble eight-membered way the radiances don't lead to emancipation (AN4.123). This is for us not the proper radiance; it is wrong concentration. For a learner they do lead to knowing but they are different than for those who did break through who, with nothing more remaining to be done, dwell in this pleasantness; having achieved right concentration (SN54.13).

So, we see it is not about the radiances themselves. Since the awakened one abundantly taught about them (about their differences) this must then mean it must be beneficial for us to even learn about them. In what way could this be helpful? By describing the differences between the first, the second, and so on, we get to see there is a next thing to go to: it is a roadmap. A roadmap can be very handy in order to not to get lost and, in some way, we can see what comes ahead. To describe them only the differences are needed; it is as if someone asks 'which car is yours?' and you say 'the blue one over there'. It doesn't mean your car has no wheels, no engine, no steer. And if there are more blue ones you might say 'the blue one with the darker roof' or 'the first blue one' etc. Another benefit is to see this gradual-practise-of-stilling described as being pleasant, even when nothing remains to be done. If this was not

the case, if there was no joy or if this was even a painful road, practising would still be the preferable thing to do (SN56.35). So this makes it even more inviting; a roadmap for a pleasant travel to a pleasant stay. It is not needed to take a stand about whether the radiances are achieved or not; just make sure you feed your concentration properly (the eighth member is not right radiance, but right concentration).

We saw that thoughts and thinking are inclining speech. If lighter thoughts were already too heavy to keep up, a lighter thing is to have no thoughts, no inclination towards communication at all. We are so used of having to deal with the outside world, we are even communicating with ourselves. We can perhaps imagine when we would not have to communicate, not to justify or explain ourselves, a lot of what we do could be dropped right? If everything was just fine as it is, explaining, justifying, would just seem disturbing. We might not know if this is possible, after all it is not something we consider normal. And the texts do say exactly so; the four radiances are '*uttari manussadhamma*', beyond what is the principle of man. And what is the principle of man? It is the world of the five senses; the cultivation of sense-enjoyments. Taking a vacation from all this, from our thoughts, might sound refreshing; perhaps it sounds as a relief. However, when we don't know we use 'thoughts' to come up with this view, not 'no-thoughts'. So, it is then mere an opinion or belief. But for what would this direct experience, of stilling the inclinations, be needed? It is for full understanding; the abandonment of the yokes.

7.4 Knowing

We started with things we know for ourselves and continued to build on this. Though this way of thinking could perhaps be followed, we might still think 'well... I don't know about that' or 'I just don't buy it', etc. But why? It is because then what we think to know does not agree with our direct experience. And when it is not our experience, no matter how valid it might all sound, it still leaves room for doubt.

When we come to know, recognize, understand, our joy and desire for our straw man — whether it is lead by wisdom, trust or concentration — we learn to see for what it is and step by step, gradually, the chains which tighten us to suffering weaken, till they are cut. Then this duality does not apply any more. Thus *with the ending of not knowing, inclinations ends; with inclinations ending, cognition ends; with cognition ending, name-and-form ends; with name-and-form ending, the hexad-base ends; with the hexad-base ending, touch ends; with touch ending, feeling ends; with feeling ending, longing ends; with longing ending, taking up ends; with taking up ending, becoming ends; with becoming ending, birth ends; with birth ending, ageing-and-death ends and with the ending of ageing-and-death this entire mass of Suffering ends.*

