

# Going Deeper Meditation Morning: Direct Experience in Insight Practice

## Introduction

For the first part of the year we will explore the three 'Lakshanas', (aka the three 'marks' or 'characteristics'). These are:

1. **Anicca** impermanence or transience
2. **Anatta** non-self, insubstantiality, emptiness or ungraspability
3. **Dukkha** suffering or unsatisfactoriness

The aim in investigating the lakshanas is to access ways of perceiving the world that lessen suffering, allowing letting go, peace, and compassion.

## Direct Experience

An important foundation for insight practice of this kind is the distinction between

1. Ideas, concepts, mental activity – including thought which is word-based and thought that is image based; and
2. Direct experience; experience through the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and body – the latter including all the different kinds of sensations such as muscle tension, heat, cold, pain etc

At the centre of the Wheel of Life lie Greed, Hatred, and delusion, the roots of our suffering. Delusion (aka Ignorance, ignoring) involves our distorted views and ideas about how things are; our denial or 'ignoring' of our direct experience in favour of our preconceive ideas, supported by our culture.

So looking at direct experience, distinguishing what is actually going on from our ideas about it is a way to combat delusion.

One way to clarify the distinction between direct experience and mental arisings is to go through the senses and imagine an experience, and then experience the real thing; eg imagine a sound and then listen to it.

## Insight and Samadhi

To investigate our experience in this way it is usually helpful to settle and calm the mind to at least some degree. The classic model is that 'Samadhi' (absorption in meditation) leads to Insight. But it can be a two-way process, as Insight also leads to Samadhi. When we see past our painful preconceptions, that insight brings a letting go – which calms the mind – and this can then allow more insight, or allow the insight to sink in. Investigating our experience as we will be doing can also be very engaging, and the engaged interest itself can lead to absorption.