

# Going Deeper Meditation Morning: Dukkha

## TURNING TOWARDS

Where there is Dukkha, our practice is to turn towards, fully allow, and fully accept its presence.

Dukkha is supported by resistance and aversion. If we try to push it out of awareness, the effort involved will dominate our practice: "what's kept out controls" - like trying to keep an inflatable ball hidden under water.

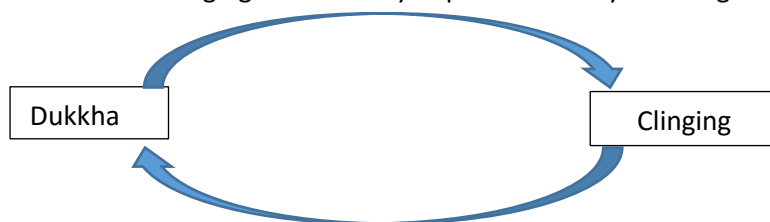
The resistance/aversion is the reactive mind: the same mind that craves more of a desired experience. Craving and aversion are two sides of the same coin: wanting a different experience, not wanting the one we've got.

Sometimes we characterise this reactive mind by "Clinging" or "Grasping" but in relation to Dukkha, it will be the resistance/aversion side of the coin that's uppermost.

We'll use the term "clinging" though, as it draws out the way in which we're holding - not able or willing to let go in to the experience.

## DEPENDENT ARISING

Dukkha and Clinging are mutually dependent: they arise together



Consequently we can attenuate Dukkha by releasing the clinging that supports it:

Fully accepting and allowing Dukkha: experiencing Dukkha as Dukkha, it no longer constitutes an imperative to remove it or a value judgement as 'bad'. So in a way it becomes neutral: just an experience, unaccompanied by any imperative to react or to respond in any particular way. This is the wishless samadhi: like a sphere on a smooth plane. There are no ruts of habit patterns.

## LETTING GO

The clinging is a holding to a defence against Dukkha. Letting go of this defence will relax the clinging that supports it. There are various ways of doing this:

1. Forming and holding the intention to let go: this can in itself be enough, so it is good to give just this some time, to see what effect it has.
2. Looking for any holding of tension in the body, and relaxing this
3. Bringing a fine moment-to-moment awareness to the experience of Dukkha. Seeing each moment as distinct, and each distinct moment as falling away before the next arises. Seeing experience as ceasing in each moment, we find nothing to hold on to

## COMPASSION

Being able to be with Dukkha without reacting is the basis of compassion:

“In a funny way, love and compassion might not feel like anything at all. We may find ourselves wondering if we even know what they are... From our own side we may just notice feeling more able to be with our own pain and the pain of others without reacting or spinning off into thinking. We might just feel more open and more deeply touched by things. We might not particularly associate that with having more love and compassion, but over time we can learn to trust it”

Shanpen Hookham: Dharma Life 2004: Awareness

## KINDNESS

Knowing sorrow as the deepest thing enables us to know kindness as equally deep seated:

“Before you know what kindness really is  
you must lose things,  
feel the future dissolve in a moment  
like salt in a weakened broth.  
What you held in your hand,  
what you counted and carefully saved,  
all this must go so you know  
how desolate the landscape can be  
between the regions of kindness.  
How you ride and ride  
thinking the bus will never stop,  
the passengers eating maize and chicken  
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,  
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho  
lies dead by the side of the road.  
You must see how this could be you,  
how he too was someone  
who journeyed through the night with plans  
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,  
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.  
You must wake up with sorrow.  
You must speak to it till your voice  
catches the thread of all sorrows  
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,  
only kindness that ties your shoes  
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and  
purchase bread,  
only kindness that raises its head  
from the crowd of the world to say  
it is I you have been looking for,  
and then goes with you every where  
like a shadow or a friend.”

--Naomi Shihab Nye, from The Words Under the Words