

Day Seven Notes for Reflection

Kamma and Cessation

Kamma and Fruition of Kamma

In plain terms, Kamma is an action via thought, speech, or physical deed. Kamma arises based out of Intentions. One chooses based on an Intention, which is conditioned by Formations. Formations arise from Contact. These Formations condition a particular Consciousness to arise, which will take root in Mentality Materiality. Intention in Mentality carries that Consciousness forward through the experience of the Six Sense Base. Moreover, that Intention, conditioned by Formations will then condition a choice that leans more towards one way than the other when one is faced with a choice due to conditioning of the Formations. This is the so-called cycle of Kamma.

One produces an action based out of choice rooted in Craving, Conceit, and Ignorance or rooted in Effective Vision. Those choices then will either bring Suffering through the flow of Dependent Origination or the effect of whatever Fruition of Kamma arises in Feeling is taken to be impermanent, impersonal and unsatisfactory at the level of Perception guided by Attention rooted in the Three Symptoms of Reality, and no new Suffering for a new Perception or sense of self arises in that moment. In essence, while action is Kamma, one's conditioning as effects from those choices is the Fruition of Kamma.

As choices change, so too do the Formations. Every choice made in every given present moment will either strengthen the Projections' fetters within the Formations or will unravel them and bit by bit wear them down. If one continues to take every Contact, Feeling and Perception to be self or pertaining to a self, to be permanent and takes delight or averts from it with the perspective of it affecting a sense of self, then one continues to dig deeper the Formations that will continue to condition the choices one makes through the process of Dependent Origination. At some point, however, one understands through practicing the Eightfold Path that one can decide to not take anything at all personal. It may seem difficult at first but as one's practice both in daily living and in meditation deepens, using the 6R process, one's choices change and as one's choices change, one reconditions the Formations.

Old Kamma and New Kamma

In every given present moment, there is the delineation between Old Kamma and New Kamma. That delineation point is the process of Contact. In every microsecond, there is a different set of Formations that arise based on the choices one makes in a given present moment. These Formations then activate to produce a Consciousness

that is driven forward by an Intention that conditions one's next set of choices. The more one chooses one side than the other, the further certain Formations become more active and stronger. Moreover, everything that led to the moment in which a choice is provided is Old Kamma.

What one does with that choice is New Kamma. In other words, Old Kamma is the Fruition of Kamma produced through a previous set of choices and New Kamma is the current choices one makes that will then come to Fruition in a new set of Old Kamma, i.e. a new set of Formations, Consciousness, Mentality Materiality, and Six Sense Bases, although the changes in these will be minute or noticeable based on the strength of one's choice. For example, if one acts (New Kamma) in a way that causes damage to one of the senses or the body, the next set of Old Kamma will be the damaged sense receptor or a scar on the body. More subtly, if one continues to strain their eyes on a computer with bad posture (New Kamma), eventually one may have a bad back or one's vision may deteriorate – this is the Old Kamma.

Contact is the Key – Contact with the Unconditioned

The process of Contact is where choices are made – how one decides to act in mind, body and speech in relation to the process of Feeling and Perception will decide the next set of Old Kamma that one inherits, as it were.

The cycle is broken when one starts to understand intellectually Effective Vision and determines to practice the Eightfold Path until it comes to fruition in a post-Cessation event.

Even during a Post-Cessation event, the process of Contact and what happens thereafter is crucial. The links of Dependent Origination arise and there is Contact with the Nibbana Element as a result of having seen the links. This Contact is considered to be empty or void, signless, and undirected or desireless. In other words, it is empty or void because such a mind has understood that there is no controller in any process of aspect of Reality and all is impersonal and thus it is empty of self, it is signless because with every passing second, there are millions of Rebirths so there can be no permanent sign of Reality to hold on to, and it is undirected or desireless because one understands that since everything arises and passes away and nothing remains the same ever, there is then no point in expecting satisfaction in anything completely. These insights come about as a result of Infinite Consciousness, but their fruition of that experience comes through Nibbana, where there is the Unconditioned. After that experience with the Unconditioned, great relief arises at the level of Feeling.

The experience of seeing the links is itself Nibbana because there is no holding onto any of them – just pure seeing, completely Unconditioned.

After one lets go, Nibbana is experienced. After one has let go of all Formations, Nibbana occurs after Cessation, not only after Cessation of Perception, Feeling and Consciousness but also after the Cessation of a link from and prior to Craving. It does not occur through the process of Formations or through the arising of the links. Rather, unraveling of the links has led to Nibbana. Nibbana is not just the Unconditioned, it is the *Un-Conditioning* of the links. It is seeing through each link as it arises with wisdom – and the mind naturally gravitates towards the ceasing of the links, not the arising, when it touches Nibbana.

It is the Unformed and the Un-forming (or Deconstructing) – without Formations and the letting go of Formations. It is the Cessation of Being because until the point of Contact, no links have arisen to create a Being through Craving. Since at this point the links are pure, there is no conditioning arising – only the seeing with wisdom. This seeing with wisdom without identifying, without Craving is Nibbana. It is the process of Contact that is empty or void, signless, and desireless. It has touched Nibbana. Each link up to Contact has been Unconditioned. What occurs next will determine the Attainment of a Path and its Fruition.

Post-Cessation Attainment

Through Effective Collectedness one reaches a point where one comes face to face, as it were, with Formations and as one 6Rs them one is starting to root out the fetters in those Formations on a deeper level. As one continues the practice, deepening it to the point of Cessation of Perception, Feeling and Consciousness, one then brings all Formations to rest and weakens the fetters and then reduces the infection of the Projections through those fetters.

Upon emerging from Cessation, one experiences Nibbana. Here, all is pure, unaffected and there is the seeing of the links of Dependent Origination arise – mind has turned into itself and sees the links from a retrospective lens, only microseconds after they have arisen. This is how one becomes aware of Formations in almost real-time post-Cessation because mind has become so pristinely sharp that it can attend to them without interference or resistance from other active aspects of itself.

When Contact arises at this point, it is Contact with the Nibbana Element. It is here that the breaking of the fetters occurs, although they do not always break at once but sometimes in batches based on the response one has at the point of Feeling that arises after Contact with the Nibbana Element.

Sotapanna

In the entrance of the Path of a Sotapanna, when Contact with the Nibbana Element occurs, the Feeling that arises is immense relief, caused by the shattering of the fetters of belief in a permanent soul, doubt in the practice, and attachment to rituals and techniques with the belief they will lead one to Nibbana. This Feeling however is

so peaceful and serene that such great joy arises and one identifies with it, thus there is still Craving in that form, along with Conceit due to the identification with it and Ignorance by not fully understanding the Four Noble Truths as one has just begun to lay down the foundations for the Four Noble Truths to be established into the mind.

If one does not experience the Fruition of Sotapanna before the dissolution of the body, one will experience it at that point. Now because the first three fetters have been broken, there is no more identifying with any practices outside of the Eightfold Path. In other words, one's mind has practiced and is beginning to become more and more rooted in Effective Vision. While this Effective Vision is still unrealized, it is nonetheless present in the form of understanding the importance of maintaining one's precepts, as well as seeing the process of Rebirth firsthand in Infinite Consciousness and having an experience of the Third Noble Truth of Cessation. As a Sotapanna one is less inclined to break the precepts or to cause intentional harm and immoral acts. If one does commit them or break a precept, one immediately takes them again and the mind is easily purified. Due to the inaction and more importantly inattention to choices rooted in ineffective vision, the Formations tied to such choices weaken and do not experience further fruition.

Therefore, if one has not experienced the Fruition before death in that life, the Formations that arise are from those that are rooted in the unrealized Effective Vision, which means that one's inclinations or one's Intentions will be conditioned by such Formations, which then will activate a Consciousness that leads it to spontaneously link with a Mentality Materiality best suited for those Formations to continue to activate, which could be in the human realm in better circumstances or a higher realm. Since the Formations rooted in ineffective vision that cause choices that are unwholesome are no longer active, the possibility of Rebirth in a lower realm has been cut off.

Sakadagami

If after that point, whether in the same life or in another life, one has another in-depth look at the links of Dependent Origination that arise and the Formations that are fettered with Craving will have weakened even further. At the point of Contact with the Nibbana Element, the relief that one experiences is lessened to a much larger degree and one still identifies with the relief. One has entered the Path of a Sakadagami. Here, the Craving rooted in the Formations has reduced to such a degree that in daily living, any delight or aversion from a Feeling will be greatly diminished and easily 6R'd.

When such delight or aversion is diminished, the link of Craving loses momentum and the rest of the links likewise have less of an effect on Formations fettered by Craving. Since there is such little delight or aversion, or taking personal any Feeling that arises, the choice to 6R and let the delight go becomes stronger. In this way, Craving does not arise. As Craving does not arise, one's mind further roots itself into

Effective Vision. Having done this, the Formations fettered by Craving are now unstable, ready to break. Another in-depth look at Dependent Origination will cause one to establish this mind further into the Fruition of a Sakadagami. If this does not arise in one's lifetime, the Fruition will occur at the dissolution of the body, at which point, most Craving has been let go of and any Formations that arise are nearly pure with hints of Craving, and there still remain the fetters of Ignorance and Conceit. With them, the establishment of the Four Noble Truths has not yet been concretized and one still identifies with the Consciousness that activates with the nearly pure Formations. That Consciousness will then link with a Mentality Materiality that has Formations that are now mostly hindered by Ignorance and barely fettered by feeble Craving.

Anagami

Whether in the next life or in the same, one continues the practice of the Eightfold Path even further. This time, there is very little relief in the Feeling that arises from Contact with the Nibbana Element. One has seen the links of Dependent Origination once again in a much clearer manner to the retrospective mind. While the relief is there, one does not take delight in it, seeing through with wisdom and does not identify with it. However, there is still identification with the process. There is still the notion of "I am" in the links and in the Five Aggregates. At this point, there is only Conceit and Ignorance present and one has utterly destroyed Craving, having attained the Path of the Anagami.

Here, the link of Craving is completely destroyed, but there is Clinging to the Five Aggregates and there is still an incomplete understanding of the Four Noble Truths. One understands Suffering and the cause of it and if one develops the mind, one can experience Cessation of Perception and Feeling, as it were, if one intended, but there is Clinging to the Eightfold Path. The Anagami Clings to the Dhamma, the Raft and is just not yet willing to step off the Raft to get to the Other Shore of Full Liberation. The Anagami identifies with the process. Despite this, the Anagami has destroyed the fetters of Craving and Ill Will forever, as well as eradicated the Projection of Craving. Now, those Formations fettered by this Projection are destroyed. However, with the Formations that take the process personally through Conceit and the Projections of Being and Ignorance activate the Consciousness that causes one to consider the Five Aggregates intrinsically as a self. The fetters of Conceit and Ignorance is so deeply ingrained into the Formations for so many lifetimes that effort is required to truly unravel them and break them apart.

If one then experiences the Fruition attainment whether in the same life or when the body breaks apart and one has not gone any further, the Formations that are present are still fettered by Conceit and Ignorance, which will activate a Consciousness carried forward by an Intention hindered by Ignorance into a Mentality Materiality that spontaneously takes rebirth in the Pure Abodes. Because the fetter of Craving (that is sensuous Craving) has been destroyed, and does not exist in such a mind, the Formations one identifies with do not lead them to a realm

of sensuous experiences. Therefore, an Anagami will never return to Earth nor to any of the realms bound by sensuous experiences. However, from the Pure Abodes, work is further to be done in order to de-identify with all the higher fetters, which include the Craving for Existence, the Craving for Non-Existence, Restlessness, Conceit and Ignorance.

Caveat – Your Experience is Your Best Guide

While an attempt has been made to clarify the various attainments, do not consider the process to be set in stone in one way or another. There are notable instances in the Suttas of individuals attaining Arahantship just upon listening to the Dhamma – in such experiences as well, the being's mind looked deeply into the process of Dependent Origination and by not holding onto anything, experienced Arahantship. The most important thing to understand and see is where you are in this process – no one is going to tell you or confirm it. You must confirm it for yourself using the wisdom of the Suttas. But remember, even in the Suttas, the demarcation of Path and Fruition and the Attainments is not always so clear-cut, especially in the case of a Sakadagami, and that usually in the case of confirming one's level of awakening such a task is left to a Buddha. Since such a being is not present, we must be our own true reflections of where we are on the journey. For example, if one has the idea that one has become a Sakadagami, the truth of the matter of Craving and Aversion significantly having been reduced can only be truly judged by oneself. In all cases, see for yourself in the days, weeks, even months after a deep experience whether the fetters are broken, and which fetters still remain. This will help you know what work is yet left to be done. No matter what anyone tells you, your own experience and your own understanding are your best guide.