



Letting go of grasping requires that we meditate to see the true nature of these five aggregates.

- Sayalay Susilā

There are two levels of purpose in undertaking the practice:

- An Immediate Purpose
- An Ultimate Purpose

The Immediate Purpose is to overcome our habitual reactions towards our own likes and dislikes. In our daily life, our six sense-bases are always open to the impingement of the six sense-objects: the eye to the impingement of form, the ear to sound, the nose to smell, the tongue to taste, the body to tangible objects, and the mind to various thoughts. The untrained mind grasps at agreeable or pleasant objects as “mine” with **craving**, and as “myself” with **identity view**. But if the object is disagreeable or unpleasant, the mind rejects it compulsively. When the object is neutral, we respond with dull indifference, delusively thinking that there is no feeling arising.

These habitual reactions give rise to three kammic potentials:

1. Current-Life-Effective Kamma

When one reacts with aversion, fire element in the body is excessive. This phenomenon causes one’s face to turn red and the body to become hot. When a person is constantly in a state of anger, his health is also affected. This “unhealthy” energy that is generated affects others as well as the environment.

2. Next-Life-Effective Kamma

Craving and aversion are considered unwholesome kamma that leaves behind kammic tendencies in one’s life continuum. When this kamma matures, one may be reborn in a woeful state accordingly.

3. Indefinitely-Effective Kamma

We are owners of our own kamma. As long as we are still cycling in the round of rebirths, this indefinitely-effective kamma has the potential to come to fruition when the conditions are ripe

Therefore, we meditate to stop our habitual reactions and undermine their kammic effects.

The Ultimate Purpose is to see the five aggregates as they really are in order to end suffering. Suffering comes from attachment to the five aggregates. We cling to the aggregates because we fail to see their danger or faults. We are blinded by the beauty and pleasure stimulated by the five aggregates. Our practice is to see the five aggregates as they really are as impermanent, suffering, and non-self repeatedly in order to arouse disenchantment. Being disenchanted, we become dispassionate, and the letting go of suffering becomes possible.

The five aggregates are bundles of form, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness. They work together to form the conventional truth of “I.” For example, when one looks (eye-**consciousness**) at one’s image in the mirror (**form**), one perceives one’s own beauty (**perception**). That perception causes a very pleasant **feeling** to arise, followed by delight (**mental formation**): “I am beautiful!” In reality, what actually exists is just the characteristic, function, and manifestation of the five aggregates. *The compactness of the continuity of consciousness creates the illusion of a permanent and substantial self-existence.* Consciousness arises in rapid succession, one after another, each performing its separate function. Unable to break down the compactness of this process, we mistakenly assume consciousness is a single, permanent state: I am seeing, I am hearing, etc. Thus, we grasp the consciousness aggregate as a permanent self.