

Seeing whole, becoming whole (1 of 2)

Source: *SD 60.1f Handbook of Meditation in Society 6: A psychopathology of Mindfulness*
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5.4.10.1 This typology of 6 kinds of “beings” represents our existential struggles. We can become any of these 6 states at any time by identifying with the things that define that struggle, for example, the gods (pleasure), asuras (power), humans (learning), animals (ignorance), pretas (greed) and hell-beings (violence). The beings in each of these states comprise these respective qualities. We *become* such a being by identifying with the qualities of that state: this is our “self.”

Even then, it is only part of our self, or rather a manifestation of our “self,” that part of us we *struggle* with. In our daily life, we tend to see only a part of ourselves—we are not a *fully wholesome person*—a part defined by greed, hatred, delusion or fear: we are a partial person. Occasionally, we think we enjoy something, but this is just like a flash in a pan; perhaps, drops of water on a red-hot metal pan. This is the suffering of change (*vipariṇāma, -dukkha*).

We then reify what we see in ourselves—whether a fault or a virtue—*that’s what I am!* These are self-created projections, self-views that are our suffering states (*saṅkhārā, dukkha*). Since we are like that, we feel that others are like that, too. So we reify others in the same way with perceived faults and virtues and are trailed and haunted by such phantoms.

The Buddha reminds us to cultivate **moral conduct**—wholesome actions and speech—guided by the precepts; this is the apophatic (not-doing) aspect of our wholesome conduct. Then there is the kataphatic, that is, affirming the values behind each precept—valuing *life, charity, freedom, truth and wisdom* in others. We are reminded to see all of everyone not merely as *partial persons* of greed, hatred, delusion or fear—but as whole persons capable of *charity, love, wisdom and courage*. Our task is to inspire them in these wholesome states; in that way, we affirm ourselves, too.

An important aspect of **nonself** (*anattā*), then, is when we realize that this “struggle” that we are caught in is our own *being* of identifying with things that we are not. Hence, we cry out: “This is not me! I’m beside myself!” We then see this and accept this truth, and so realize: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.” We are closer to the reality of nonself.

5.4.10.2 The suttas record a number of cases who are able to free themselves from the samsaric stranglehold of these 6 existential states or self-struggles, to become **whole beings**. On various occasions, we see the Buddha instructing his listener on how to reach wholeness, that is, see themselves as they truly are and so awaken.

The Vinaya records the inspiring story of the youth **Yasa** experiencing an epiphany similar to that of Siddhattha’s vision of dancing girls [4.5.2.2]. In both cases, this vision is actually a powerful trigger that compels them to flee from the comfort of their palatial home. Yasa laments, “Oh, what trouble indeed! Oh, what affliction indeed!”

In the dark of night, he goes into the park where the Buddha is sitting under a tree in meditation. Hearing him, the Buddha makes a succinct inspired utterance (*udāna*):

“This, Yasa, is *no* trouble, indeed; this is *no* affliction!”

Come, Yasa, sit down: I will show you the Dharma.”

The Buddha first teaches Yasa some basic Dharma to calm, brighten and focus Yasa’s mind, freeing his heart from heavy darkness he has just fled from. When Yasa’s mind is “malleable, pliable, free from hindrances, uplifted, clear,” the Buddha teaches him the 4 noble truths in all their aspects.

Just as a clean cloth free of any black spot easily takes a dye,

even so, just as he sat right there, the stainless, spotless **Dharma-eye** arose in him, thus:

“Whatever is of the nature to arise, all that is of the nature to end.”

Yasa gains the path as a streamwinner.¹

5.4.10.3 Bāhiya (“the one from Bāhiya town”) is shipwrecked off a town located on the coast outside modern Mumbai. Having lost his clothes in the sea, he dresses himself in bark. He comes to be known as Dāru,cīriya, “the bark-dressed,” and is thought to be a holy man. Hearing about the Buddha—and being a sensible person who knows his human limits—he decides to meet the Buddha, who is at Sāvattthī, quite some distance away.

Upon arriving in Sāvattthī, he meets the Buddha on his morning almsround and asks the Buddha for teachings. The Buddha excuses himself saying that it is not the right time. Thrice Bāhiya insists that the Buddha teaches him: “Bhante, it is hard to know the dangers to the Blessed One’s life or to my life!” Noticing that he is calm and ready, the Buddha teaches him the essence of the Dharma, thus:

“In the seen (<i>diṭṭhe</i>),	there will only be the seen;
in the heard (<i>sute</i>),	there will only be the heard;
in the sensed (<i>mute</i>),	there will only be the sensed; ² [5.3.6.3]
in the known (<i>viññāte</i>)	there will only be the known.” [6.1.3.3]

then you, Bāhiya, are not by that.³

When you, Bāhiya, are ‘not by that,’

then, you, Bāhiya, are not therein.⁴

When you, Bāhiya, are ‘not therein,’

then you, Bāhiya, are neither here nor beyond

nor in between the two.⁵

tato tvaṃ bāhiya na tena

yato tvaṃ bāhiya na tena

tato tvaṃ bāhiya na tattha

yato tvaṃ bāhiya na tattha,

tato tvaṃ bāhiya n’ev’idha na huram

na ubhayam antarena

¹ **Yasa Pabbajjā** (Mv 1.7.1-14 (SD 11.2(7))).

² *Muta*, ie, what is tasted, smelt and touched.

³ *Na tena*, ie, one would not be aroused “by that” lust, etc.

⁴ *Na tattha*, ie, one would not be “therein”, ie, in the seen, etc.

⁵ “Be neither here ... nor in between the two,” *n’ev’idha na huram na ubhayam antarena*, meaning that one would not be reborn anywhere. Comy rejects “in between the two” (*ubhayam antarena*) as implying an intermediate state (*antarā,bhāva*). However, a number of canonical texts apparently support this notion (see, eg, **Kutuhala,sāla S** (the Debating Hall Discourse), where the Buddha declares: “When, Vaccha, a being has laid

—This is itself the ending of suffering.”⁶

Bāhiya becomes an arhat.⁷

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down this body but has not yet been reborn in another body, I declare that it is fuelled by craving.” (S 4:400; cf M 1:266, 2:157).

⁶ On this koan-like teaching, see **The taming of the bull**, SD 8.2 (10).

⁷ **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10), SD 33.7, which is itself based on the 4 satipatthanas: **(Satipaṭṭhāna) Bāhiya S** (S 47.15), SD 47.10. The same awakening teaching is given to Māluṅkya,putta, based on the 6 sense-faculties): **(Arahatta) Māluṅkya,putta S** (S 35.95,12 f/4:73), SD 5.9.