

## Module 17, Looking at Self and Selflessness, Class 11: wrap-up

We began this module in order to explore what we are talking about when we discuss self, selflessness, ego and egolessness.

As practitioners, will be revisiting this material for the rest of our lives; deepening our intellectual understanding but also our intrinsic understanding, deeper than the language we use to describe it.

This class is an opportunity for all of us to review it a bit, to explore whatever might have come up during the classes.

We covered a remarkable amount of material.

### > What is the SELF?

Permanent - Impermanent

Solid (Singular-"Lumping") - Composite, open / fluid / dynamic

Separate / Independent - interconnected, unable to be centralized or pinned down

### > Methods for Investigation into Self / Selflessness:

Contemplation, Analytical Meditation Techniques (Tyler Dewar)

Clinging to ideas of our identity

- Meditations on our body: like vs dislike parts...are they "You"

-Criticism or blame vs praise

-Rejecting, resisting vs hanging out with discomfort rather than reacting

-Are we ever just one thing? What changes...is there anything that does not change?

> **Subtle impermanence:** example:candle flame, seeing that our habitual patterns of thought interfere with our ability to see things as they are.

We are constantly constructing and reconstructing our "Imputed" self.

### >5 Skandhas:

**1.Form:** Momentary events that we experience as physical:

physical elements, 5 sense organs, corresponding sense objects

**2. Feeling:** Primitive sensations of positivity or negativity

**3. Perception:** labelling rudimentary perceptions through our senses and thoughts

**4. Karmic Formations (samskara):** conglomeration of all the habitual concepts, labels judgements, conclusions that have resulted from the previous skandhas

**5. Consciousness:** PRIMITIVE "circumscribed, self-referential field [of ME] surrounded by an electric fence" governed by a sense of self-protection and territoriality.

Seduces what we like, rejects (pushes away) what threatens us, ignores-or doesn't even see- that which can neither help nor harm our edifice of ME

**8 Consciousnesses:** Included in 5th Skandha:

**5 sense consciousnesses:** eye consciousness, ear, nose tongue, body. Concept -free, only registers sense experience

**6th Consciousness:** consciousness recognizes registers minds perception of mental objects. CONCEPT FREE, registers minds direct experience of object

**7th Consciousness: Creator of Duality:** separates experience into I, ME MINE. Imposes constructed SELF onto every experience.

**8th Consciousness: The ALAYA:** "storehouse consciousness" NOT A "THING"

All experiences leave impression minute-by-minute, lifetime-to-lifetime: resolved through natural occurrence of one's suffering or through spiritual practice. This is KARMA. Subtle level of consciousness. All MOMENTARY. Subtle.

"One moment of consciousness, with the alaya as its most subtle level, carrying our particular karma, dies"

### >The 12 Nidanas:

Links (chains) of the interdependent origination of suffering and confusion.

1. Ignorance
2. Formation
3. Consciousness

4. Name and Form
5. 6 sense fields
6. Contact
7. Feeling
8. Craving
9. Grasping
10. Becoming
11. Birth
12. Old age and death

Repeat ; /

Hinayanists cut linkage between old age and death, Bodhisattvas reverse the chain “draining the reservoir of ignorance”

### >The 12 Nidanas go to a Bar!!

—handout

### >the 51 Mental Factors:

how we can actually work with what comes up in our lives. See Class Notes for complete list.

### >The 6 Realms:

**Hell:** anger, aggression, hatred. Claustrophobia “hallucinations of Hell”  
Exhaustion of struggle leads to a relaxation of effort to free oneself, sees possibility of a more spacious way. Leads to:

**Hungry Ghost:** experience of hunger for relief, wants more. Holds on to everything. Needs more pleasure, nothing is enough. miserliness, constant dissatisfaction, poverty, possessiveness, insatiable hunger. Eventually resigns himself to habitual way of relating to his situation. Limits his world. Evolves into:

**Animal:** stupidity, ignorance, lack of awareness, wearing blinders, pushing ahead without seeing-or considering- the consequences for others. Humorless. Eventually becomes more discriminating, evolved into:

**Human:** desire, passion, intellect Begging bowl could indicate poverty, or possibility of richness. Can pick and choose, explore, compare. Grasping hope and fear. Aware of illness, old age, death, and the reality of pain. Also reality that pleasure and pain are inseparable. Looks for way out.

**Jealous Gods** (Asuras): envy, jealousy. Looks for a way to pin down and secure happiness, ward off any threats. Need for constant entertainment, confirmation, so always an underlying sense of anxiety and insecurity.

**Gods:** pride, bliss. Achievement is sort of hypnotic, blocks out anything that would be irritating or undesirable. Going beyond any need to manifesting the world. Maintain a sense of solid self continuously. Empire of Ego. But still subtle

sense of I and other. Becomes dissatisfied again, back to Jealous Gods, Human, etc.

Real? Psychological states of awareness?

Our experience is always cycling through various aspects of these states.