

STAGE ONE

Progressive Stages of
Meditation on Emptiness

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Chapter One

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THE SRAVAKA MEDITATION ON NOT-SELF

Although this is called the Sravaka stage because it represents the heart of the Sravaka vehicle, one should not assume that it is unimportant in the other vehicles of Buddhism. Milarepa, the great Vajrayana master, taught his disciple, the shepherd boy, the Sravaka meditation on not-self after the boy had shown signs of having great natural meditation ability. It is said that on being told to meditate on a small image of the Buddha he went straight into meditative absorption (samadhi) for a week without noticing the time. When he came out of samadhi it seemed to him he had only been meditating a few seconds.

At this stage one does not consider the emptiness of all phenomena but only the emptiness or lack of self in the person. The importance of this is that it is the clinging to the idea that one has a single, permanent, independent, truly existing self that is the root cause of all one's suffering. One does not need to have an explicit or clearly formulated idea of self in order to act as if one had one. 'Self' here means the implied self which might also be regarded as

implied in the behaviour of animals. Animals, just like us, identify themselves with their bodies and minds and are constantly seeking physical and mental comfort as they try to avoid discomfort and assuage pain. Both animals and humans act as if they have a self to protect and preserve and one regards this behaviour as automatic and instinctive as well as normal. When pain or discomfort arise the automatic response is to try to remove it. It is extraneous to the self and the implication is that the self would naturally be happy if all pain and suffering were removed.

Strangely, however, when we try to analyse our behaviour in relation to this self, we realize that we are very unclear as to what this self really is. Non-Buddhist thinkers have defined the self variously as resting in the brain, blood or heart and having such qualities as true or transcendental existence in or outside of the mind or body. To have any meaning such a self has to be lasting, for if it perished every moment one would not be so concerned about what was going to happen to it the next moment; it would not be one's 'self' anymore. Again it has to be single. If one had no separate identity why should one worry about what happened to one's 'self' any more than one worried about anyone else's. It has to be independent or there would be no sense in saying 'I did this' or 'I have that'. If one had no independent existence there would be no-one to claim the actions and experiences as its own.

We all act as if we had lasting, separate, independent selves that it is our constant pre-occupation to protect and foster. It is an unthinking habit that most of us would normally be most unlikely to question or explain. However, all our suffering is associated with this pre-occupation. All loss and gain, pleasure and pain arise because we identify so closely with this vague feeling of selfness that we have. We are so emotionally involved with and attached to this 'self' that we take it for granted.

The meditator does not speculate about this 'self'. He does not have theories about whether it does or does not exist. Instead he just trains himself to watch dispassionately how his mind clings to the idea of self and 'mine' and how all his sufferings arise from this attachment. At the same time he looks carefully for that self. He tries to isolate it from all his other experiences. Since it is the culprit

as far as all his suffering is concerned, he wants to find it and identify it. The irony is that however much he tries, he does not find anything that corresponds to the self.

Westerners often confuse self in this context with person, ego or personality. They argue that they do not think of the person, ego or personality as a lasting, single, independent entity. This is to miss the point. The person, personality or ego as such are not a problem. One can analyse them quite rationally into their constituent parts. The Western tradition has all sorts of ways of doing this. The Buddhist way is to talk of the five skandhas, the eighteen dhatus or the twelve gates of consciousness. The question is not whether or not the person, personality or ego is a changing, composite train of events conditioned by many complex factors. Any rational analysis shows us that this is the case. The question is why then do we behave emotionally as if it were lasting, single and independent. Thus, when looking for the self it is very important to remember it is an emotional response that one is examining. When one responds to events as if one had a self, for example when one feels very hurt or offended, one should ask oneself who or what exactly is feeling hurt or offended.

If you are not convinced that you behave emotionally as if you had a lasting, single and independent self, then it is important to address yourself to this issue before moving on to consider the doctrine of not-self. Think carefully about pain and suffering and ask yourself who or what it is that is suffering. Who is afraid of what will happen; who feels bad about what has happened; why does death seem such a threat when the present disappears every moment, scarcely having had a chance to arise? You will find that your thinking is full of contradictions, inconsistencies and irresolvable paradoxes. This is normal. Everyone (except, perhaps, the insane) have a common sense notion of what or who they are which works (more or less) and enables them to function as normal human beings.

However, when the meditator addresses himself to what or who this self is, he cannot find it. Then gradually, very gradually, it dawns on him that the reason he cannot find it is that it is not there and never was. There is tremendous emotional resistance to this

realization so it takes a long time to break through, but when it does there is an immediate release of tension and suffering. The cause of it has gone. The cause of it was a mental attachment to something that was not there.

Sometimes the resistance to the realization takes the form of irritation. One is used to being able to explain things to oneself rationally. Experience of the 'self' is so direct and in a sense so obvious, there seems to be no reason to include it in one's rational explanation of things. On the other hand, when one does try to explain it to oneself, the whole thing is so irritatingly subjective it seems one could never reach any satisfactory conclusion. Instead of letting the mind rest in the actual experience of that paradox, one gets frustrated and irritated at not being able to form a water-tight explanation of what the 'self' is. It is important to notice that and be aware of it. If one tries to just push that irritation out of one's mind, one will never have a deep realization of not-self.

Clinging to the idea of self is like clinging to the idea that a piece of rope in the dark is a snake. When the light is turned on and one sees that there is no snake there, one's fear and suffering that arose from clinging to it as real dissolve. The snake never existed in the first place, so it was simply one's clinging to that idea that caused the suffering and nothing else. The wisdom that realizes not-self is like the light that revealed the rope was not a snake.

Clearly, in order to end one's own suffering, there is nothing more important than to realize that when one acts as if the body and mind constituted a lasting, separate, independent self, one unthinkingly attributes to them qualities which they simply do not have. Nothing in the whole stream of mental and physical phenomena that constitute one's experience of body and mind has the quality of separate, independent, lasting existence. It is all change and impermanence, moment by moment and so none of it can be 'self' and it is one's persistent effort to treat it as if it were, that makes it a constant stream of suffering (duhkha).

Realizing not-self is the first step to realizing the empty nature of all phenomena. That is why the first teachings of the Buddha concern the Three Marks of Existence i.e. suffering, impermanence, and not-self.

THE DREAM EXAMPLE

The Buddha often used the example of a dream to illustrate his teachings on emptiness and this example can be applied with increasing subtlety at each stage of the meditation progression on Emptiness. It is a good example for showing how the two truths, relative and absolute, work together. In a dream there is a sense of being a person with a body and mind living in a world of things to which one feels attracted or averse depending on how they appear. As long as one does not realize it is just a dream, one takes all these things as real and one feels happy or sad on account of them.

For example, one may dream of being eaten by a tiger or being burnt in a fire. In the absolute truth no-one is being eaten or burnt, but still in terms of the dream one might really suffer as if one had been. The suffering arises simply by virtue of the fact that one identifies oneself with the person in the dream. As soon as one becomes aware that it is only a dream, even if the dream does not stop, one is nonetheless free to think, 'It does not matter; it is only a dream. It is not really happening to me.' The person that was suffering in the dream only arose as a temporary manifestation dependent on the condition of one's not being aware that it was only a dream. It had no separate, independent, lasting 'self' of its own.

Understanding this intellectually is not enough to free oneself from the strongly ingrained habit of clinging to one's mind and body as a separate, independent, lasting self. One has to examine the stream of one's mental and physical experience again and again, reflecting on what one does or does not find until one reaches total conviction and certainty. Having become convinced of what is the case, one then has to meditate, resting the mind in this new-found knowledge until the veils caused by one's habitual patterns of thought have finally dissolved. At this point direct, unmistakable realization of not-self arises and it is this genuine experience that actually liberates one from suffering.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Instinctively we identify ourselves with our bodies and minds. We have a very strong emotional attachment to them even though our whole idea of self and mine is very vague and confused. For example, when we are sick we sometimes say, 'I am sick', and yet in the very next breath we may say, '...because I have a headache'. What do we mean? Do we mean the I is one thing and the head another? Or do we mean that the head is the I? One should begin one's investigation with these very common sense notions of 'I' and 'I, the doer' or 'I, the experiencer'.

One could think for example of having one's limbs and organs removed or transplanted. If one were given another man's heart would it really affect the 'I'? We naturally think that 'I' (the experiencer or doer) has now received a new heart. One does not think that one is grafting a new heart into the 'I' as such. How far can one go with this process? With limbs and organs it seems quite clear that the 'I' is a separate entity, but what about the brain? Suppose one had another man's brain implanted into one's skull. Would that affect the 'I'? One might find oneself wondering whether 'I' (the experiencer or doer) could actually use another man's brain and yet still be the same person. One might wonder if one might find some actions governed by the 'I' one has now and some actions governed by the 'I' of the person from whom the brain was taken. Of course one cannot know what the result of such a transplant would be, were it ever possible to perform it, but instinctively one feels it is important to know whether the 'I' would be affected or not.

Although this seems so important, we are still very unclear about what this 'I' might be. We may wonder if it is, perhaps, just a small vital part of the brain. However, when one thinks about it, one is not emotionally attached to a minute mechanism in one's grey matter. If that were all one's emotional attachment were about, it would be easy enough to remove and all the suffering with it. Life would not need to have any meaning, nor human life any particular value. There would be no need to go on struggling in a life full of suffering and frustration. However, such a view strikes us as totally nihilistic and demeaning. The 'I' feels it is more important than that.

The 'I' that we are emotionally attached to seems to step back and look on life, evaluating experience and wishing to avoid suffering. We do not experience it or treat it the way we would a physical object like a brain. We know from general knowledge gleaned from other people that the brain is in the skull. It can be physically located, touched and measured. It has some relationship with the mind because, when our mental state changes, a change can often be detected in the brain. However, whatever scientists may find out about the brain, they will only be able to tell us the relationship between mind and brain in more detail. They can look and probe and measure to find facts about what the brain is doing, but how will they know what the mind is experiencing as they do it? They may, for example, be able to say there is a lot of activity in such and such region of the brain when a person thinks of red. But how do they know the person is really experiencing red? The person himself knows for sure the nature of his experience. He may call it red. He may not. He may not call it anything. He will never know if anyone else ever experiences anything in the way that he does, even if everyone agrees to call the experience they have by the same name. Who can know how anything is experienced other than the experiencer? A scientist can say the brain is acting as if it were experiencing red because the brain is doing what it always does when people are experiencing red. Who will know if they are right in any particular case or not? Only the experiencer can know for sure. The scientist relies on well-informed guess-work. Certain theories are taken to be true because they seem to explain events very well.

The main thrust of Buddhism, however, is not about theories at all. It is about experience. In particular it is concerned with the experience of suffering. What Buddhism has discovered is that the experience of suffering is always associated with strong emotional attachment to a vague sense of 'self'. So Buddhism turns its attention onto that strong emotional response associated with that sense of 'self' and asks about how that 'self' is actually experienced. Where is the 'I' experienced?

One might answer that one experiences it in the brain. However, one does not need to know anything about the brain in order to suffer. Even a dog or a child suffers. They do not have theories about the 'self', but their behaviour suggests that they have

a sense of self. If they did not, why would a child or a dog existing in one instant of time concern itself about a dog or a child that was going to exist in the next moment? Surely it is because unconsciously he is thinking that the dog or the child of the next moment is still 'him' in some sense and is distinct from anyone else. When he sees a threat to his life or comfort he recoils from it. Unconsciously he is thinking that 'he' could escape this threat and continue his existence somewhere more pleasant; this shows he has a sense of having an independent existence.

One could argue that in lower forms of living organisms recoiling from unpleasant stimuli is simply a mechanical response, like trees waving in the wind. Maybe that is true for primitive forms of life, but this does not have any bearing on the problem of suffering at all. If we were merely complex mechanical devices one could argue that objectively suffering did not matter. This would be an extremely impoverished attitude to life and not a very convincing one.

One may feel that what one really means when one says that suffering is experienced in the brain is that it is experienced in the mind. Since one automatically assumes (in modern western society) that the mind is in the brain, and since one's notion of mind is so vague anyway, there does not seem to be much difference between talking about the mind and talking about the brain. However, they cannot be synonymous, even if ultimately they are discovered to be of the same stuff, or nature.

One cannot avoid the question of what we mean by mind. We are extremely vague and imprecise in our everyday, common-sense way of talking about it. Sometimes it seems we identify ourselves with our mind, as for example when we say we are happy or sad. Although we mean the mind is happy or sad, we do not really make a distinction between our 'self' and our mind. Nevertheless, we also find ourselves saying things like, 'I could not control my mind'. Incidentally, we also say, 'I could not control myself', as if one had two selves. This seems to be the same lack of clarity that enables us sometimes to talk as if the self were the mind and sometimes as if the self owned the mind.

One might be tempted at this point to start speculating about the nature of the mind and the self. One might even wax philosophical about it, reflecting on such statements as, 'I think, therefore I am'. However, since 'I am' is merely a thought, the only thing we are really sure of is the experience of thought. So the only sure means of finding out what that experience is, is to experience it as precisely and as dispassionately as is possible. So the Sravaka approach is to investigate experience by simply being as aware as possible every moment.

In order to carry out this investigation as systematically as possible Buddhist teachers have organized experience into a number of comprehensive sets of categories. One of these sets of categories is called the five skandhas, which literally means the five heaps. They are called heaps because, looked at dispassionately, all our experience arises moment by moment as isolated, impersonal events. After they have arisen, so soon after that it seems simultaneous, we become emotionally involved and create a whole scenario of 'self' versus 'world' or 'other'.

The five skandhas are;

1. form,
2. feeling,
3. perception,
4. mental constructions,
5. consciousnesses.

Form

Form refers to the body and the environment. We take for granted that there is a world 'out there' beyond our senses and that our body partakes of that world. When we sit down to meditate it is the body and its environment that first catch our attention. So we can start our investigation there. I am sitting here because my body is sitting here. Is that 'I' therefore the body?

One can examine the body systematically taking it limb by limb, organ by organ. Is my hand me? Am I still me without my hand? What is a hand anyway? Is it still a hand without fingers? Without

skin? Without bone? Without flesh? When it is broken down in his way one finds that 'hand' is merely a convenient concept. There is no such thing as a 'hand' as such. It is the same for every part of the body. It is the same right down to the tiniest cell, and the tiniest atom and the tiniest part of an atom as scientists know only too well. However far one investigates one will always find more parts and as each part is given a name, each part will be found to break up into something other than itself. The process is endless.

Examining the body in this way one may come to the conclusion that 'I' and 'body' are merely convenient concepts for dealing with the world and experience. They have a certain relative reality, but they are not absolutes. In the relative truth they are streams of events that one identifies and labels as 'I' or 'body'. But that 'I' or 'body' cannot be said to have lasting, separate, independent existence. If the body had such existence it might have been called the self, but it does not have, and however much one were to investigate it, it never would have. It is not self and self is not the body. The same applies for the brain of course.

Feeling

Feeling here refers specifically to those of pleasure, displeasure and indifference. For example, as one sits in meditation, one may like it and want to stay, or one may not and want to leave. The only other alternative is that one may not care one way or the other. Wherever we are and whatever we are doing, we are always experiencing one or other of these three feelings. They are not self, however, because none of them is lasting; they take turns in arising; now there is happiness, now sadness and so on. Self could not be the feelings because they are always changing.

Perception

Perception here refers to the first moment of recognition of input through the senses. When one experiences a colour such as blue one recognizes it as blue, when one feels an itch one recognizes the feeling, or when one hears a car starting up one recognizes the

sound, and the same applies to smells etc.. We experience a continual stream of perceptions through our senses all the time we are awake. We are either listening to something, looking at something, feeling something with our sense of touch, tasting or smelling something or even receiving the image of something arising in the mind. We have six senses including the mind. As one sits in meditation one might be perceiving the breath moving in and out, images floating into the mind, or noises going on in the street outside and so on. Although one thinks it is one's 'self' that is perceiving these things one does not think these perceptions are the self. None of them has the characteristics of self since none of them is lasting.

Mental Constructions

Mental constructions include all the mental activity of thinking, patterns of thought, negative emotions such as desire, pride, and jealousy, and healthy emotions such as love, devotion and patience. In fact feeling and perceptions are mental constructions too, but for the sake of this categorization they are here listed separately. The term in Sanskrit for this heap (skandha) is samskara ('dus byed in Tibetan). Samskara also has the meaning of predisposition in the sense of tracks left by former deeds that condition one's present thinking and behaviour. The Tibetan term 'dus byed is a general term meaning mental constructions of any kind. Although we should understand that everything that arises in the mind is conditioned by what has gone before, in general we can just take this skandha to mean all mental events not included in the other three mental skandhas.

Although we do not think of mental constructions or mental events as being 'self', we do tend to identify our 'self' with what we conceive to be our personality. Emotionally, if some part of our personality is criticized, we feel we (our self) has been criticized. However, if one examines the make-up of one's personality very carefully and dispassionately one finds it even more intangible than the body. At least with the body one was sure what was included as part of it, even though none of it could be identified as the self. With one's personality, on the other hand, one just has a stream of ever-changing mental constructions and events. One tends to choose

certain, more or less constant features of this stream as characteristic of a particular personality, and when they are manifest one feels a person is being himself. If he starts to manifest (again in a more or less constant fashion) totally different characteristics, we talk about him having a change of personality. We talk of people not being in their right mind, of being temporarily deranged and so on. The implication is that there is a person or 'self' other than the present personality or mind state. It is this 'self' that we are investigating. It is clearly not the personality or any of the mental constructions or events that constitute it, since none of them exhibits a separate, independent, lasting element that one could call the 'self'.

Consciousnesses

A consciousness in Buddhism refers to a moment of awareness. As we think about the four skandhas that have already been listed we might feel that behind all of them there is a general sense of awareness or knowing. We might even call it the mind itself as opposed to the mental events that occur within it. We might feel that this is really what we mean by the 'I' or the 'self'. It seems to be an unchanging, separate, independent awareness that is just going on as the basis of all our experience and it is this awareness that is 'I, the doer'. Let's examine this idea carefully.

Generally speaking we think of our life and experience going along as a sort of stream in time and space. There is a sense of beginning and end and one event following on from another. Even though one does not think exactly in terms of a moment of experience having edges round it, nevertheless there is a sense of its ending somewhere, otherwise it would just merge into everything else. So our experience and our sense of self is definitely bounded by time and space. Therefore, it must be possible to divide it up into the smallest conceivable parts and the smallest conceivable moments of time. In the Sravaka approach one tries to be aware of the smallest conceivable moments of experience in order to be sure that one has missed nothing in one's search for a lasting, separate, permanent self.

What one finds is that every moment of experience has two aspects. If it did not have these two aspects it could hardly be counted as being a moment of experience at all. What are these two aspects? There has to be something to experience and something to experience it. In other words there is always something knowing something or being aware of something. If either of these elements were missing there would be no experience. These smallest conceivable moments of consciousness arising dependent on their corresponding momentary object of consciousness are what in Buddhism are known as consciousnesses. The term is *vijnana* (*rnam shes* in Tibetan). The 'vi' part of the word can mean partial or divided. Thus, a consciousness is a partial or divided knowing. This contrasts with *jnana* (*ye shes* in Tibetan) which means simply knowing or wisdom. The difference between *jnana* and *vijnana* becomes very important in the later stages of the progression of meditation on emptiness.

The upshot of this rather long discussion on what is meant by consciousness in Buddhism is that when, in the hopes of resolving one's difficulties, one suggests that the self is that continuing awareness that is behind all one's experience, one must in fact be referring to the stream of *vijnanas*. One may not have analysed it as deeply as that, but if one still accepts common-sense notions of time and space, then the nature of consciousness must be divisible in the way outlined above. Furthermore, since each moment of consciousness has a different object each moment of consciousness is separate and distinct. It might be a consciousness of form, sound, smell, taste, touch or mental image, but whichever it is, it is quite distinct from any other moment that has arisen before or is about to arise after it. The moment before has gone and the moment to come does not exist yet. So consciousness can only ever be momentary and such a momentary phenomenon would never qualify for the title of 'self'. Thus, the mind or awareness that seems to be behind all our experience cannot be the self either.

At the end of our analysis we arrive at the conclusion that the self is simply a vague and convenient concept that we project now here and now there onto a stream of experiences, and is nothing in or of itself. One may wish to maintain that the 'self' is the continuity of the stream of physical and mental events that constitute a person-

ality and that as such it does not have to have the characteristics of being lasting, single and independent. This is simply a redefinition of the term 'self', but it does not explain our emotional behaviour at all. Buddhism is not telling anyone that he should believe that he has a self or that he does not have a self. It is saying that when one looks at the way one suffers and the way one thinks and responds emotionally to life, it is as if one believed there were a self that was lasting, single and independent and yet on closer analysis no such self can be isolated or found. In other words the skandhas are empty of a self.

In terms of relative reality, however, because one is so emotionally attached to one's concept of self, all one's mental patterning and habits of thought (samskaras) feed and strengthen the idea. Furthermore, the actions that one performs in the belief that it is the self acting serve to create the 'world' that one finds oneself in. In other words, although there is no self in absolute terms, in terms of the relative one still has to suffer the results of one's past good and bad actions.

To illustrate this point, take, for example, a candle flame. One can, in a general way, say something like, 'That flame has been burning all day.' However, in absolute terms, no flame has been burning all day. The flame was never the same flame from one moment to the next. There was no single, independent, lasting flame there at all. There is no such thing as a flame as such, nevertheless it is still meaningful to talk about flames.

When one meditates on the emptiness of the skandhas, one simply sees them as they are; there is nothing solid and real about them, they are not a lasting, independent, separate self and there is no such self in them. Just as in a dream, once one sees that the person in the dream is not really oneself, any suffering that one may have felt on account of being burnt or chased by a tiger, for example, simply fades away. In the same way, when one focuses one's attention inwardly on the absence of self in the skandhas, all the suffering caused by taking the skandhas to be the self fades away.

Then the mind can rest peacefully in empty space, with perfect confidence and assurance. Through meditation in this manner all

subtle doubts are worn away and the mind can rest naturally in emptiness.

THE FRUIT OF THE SRAVAKA PRACTICE

Our instinctive, emotional attachment or clinging to a vague notion of self is the source of all our suffering. From the idea of 'self' comes that of 'other'. It is from the interaction of 'self' and 'other' that desire, hatred and delusion arise. There are many kinds of desire including greed, envy and miserliness. Hatred can take the form of jealousy, anger and resentment. Delusion includes mental dullness, stupidity and confusion. From these unhealthy mental states arise actions motivated by them, and their results. The results take the form of all kinds of sufferings, which one cannot escape as long as one identifies with the 'self' who is suffering.

Thus the only way to remove one's suffering is to realize not-self. The wisdom mind that realizes not-self is like light removing darkness. Just as darkness cannot exist in the light, so suffering cannot exist in the light of the wisdom mind.

Where there is suffering, clinging to self must also be present. Where there is clinging to self, ignorance of not-self must be present. The only way to remove suffering is therefore to remove the ignorance that causes the clinging to self.

Thus the goal for the Sravaka is the removal of suffering. That goal is called nirvana. The Sravaka is not trying to remove the suffering of all beings, nor is he trying to attain Buddhahood. He does not have the vision, the understanding, nor the confidence necessary to do that. His aim is relatively modest. It is simply to remove the cause of his own suffering. Nonetheless, one cannot say that his realization of emptiness is not very profound. It is said that it corresponds to that of Bodhisattvas on the first to the sixth levels. It removes the veils of ignorance and confusion that make deeper and more subtle levels of emptiness so inaccessible. Therefore, by realizing the not-self emptiness of the skandhas one is preparing the way for the higher vehicles, whose goal is not just the removing of one's own suffering, but the suffering of all beings.

MEDITATION PROCEDURE

Although when the progressive stages of meditation on Emptiness are being taught one often has little time to meditate on one stage before one is introduced to the next, it is best to take each stage at a time and to practise it until some definite experience has arisen.

It is important to have a regular meditation schedule, beginning with periods of 15-30 minutes in the morning and evening. One can build up from there meditating for longer and longer periods. As with study and reflection a certain amount of perseverance and effort are needed at first, but one should never let one's mind get too tight. Remember the example of the musician tuning the strings of his instrument. The tension has to be just right, neither too tight nor too loose.

Choose a definite time in the morning and evening to sit in meditation. Sit in a good meditation posture and always begin by taking refuge and rousing Bodhicitta motivation.

When you first begin the practice, reflect for some time on the meaning of not-self, and investigate in the manner explained above. However, once you have developed some confidence and understanding, do not bother to keep investigating, just go straight into the emptiness meditation. To keep returning to the investigatory stage after confidence has arisen is like keeping switching a light on and off without any purpose. Once the light is on, leave it on. At the meditation stage of your practice there should be no more need for reflection. One should just rest in the meditation without any hesitation.

At the end of each session dedicate all the merit to the enlightenment of all beings. Between sessions reflect again and again on how there is no self in the skandhas and think of everything as being like a dream, a film or a magical illusion. There is the appearance of a self but there is no self there really. Thinking like this, how can unhealthy emotions such as greed, hate and delusion arise? If these do not arise, how can suffering arise.