

REC003

Today's talk will be entitled

Mind Body Paradox

Anagarika Tevijjo

And we shall be proceeding
from the topic of nourishment,
to the topic of mind and body.

Concerning Mind and Body*

According to the Lord Buddha,
man's 'being-in-the-world'
may be analyzed in terms
of **two coexistent parts**,

which are dependent upon one another,
in what we may call a '*psychophysical*' sense.

**The mind/ could not exist/ without the body/,
and the body/ could not exist/ without the mind**
—(which/, it may be no surprise)—
is an area/ still being studied/ by
psychology and psychotherapy, [even today].

Indeed, many of the things,
which the Buddha said,
later became topics for modern science,

- especially the study/ of the movement/
of mental-energy/ particles/ and waves/
and vibrations/ (*in what we call physics*),

which, (for the moment, we must set aside)

in order to remain focussed upon
our main topic of

‘The Body and the Mind.’

As this series/ of lectures/ is respectfully/
dedicated/ to Luang Por Viriyang,
let’s start off/ with something/ he says
in the opening paragraph of his
Meditation Instructor Course. (Part One):

[He says:]

“The body and the mind
are intimately connected/
throughout the life span.

A person cannot live his life
solely/ with either/ existence,

[So]

During a meditation session,
**the mind and the body
must be co-functional.**

*

To study meditation,
**the meditator
must begin/ with studying
the correlation/ of this/ mind body co-function.”**

**In other words asking,
“How does one work/ in relationship/ to the other?”**

Once we know/, that meditation practice,
depends on observing/ the balance
of correlating factors/ of the mind and body,
then,

—the initial insight we must have—

**the first thing/ we must realize is—
that balanced meditation practice/
goes totally and directly against**

what we may call
**the common, conventional
pulling-current/ of worldly-desire within—**

**the current/ of mind-body/ nourishment
seeking the needs/ of the mind's/ cravings, wants.**

*

Balanced meditation practice means,

gradually, calming
and taming the craving mind
which
is always energetically — and hotly grasping—

after all the things/ **it thinks/ it wants/ and needs**/,
but does not/ essentially/ or necessarily/ require.

Fortunately,

**There are some in this world/ who realize
that the way of mindfulness
goes against
this mundane craving way of common,
conventional worldly-thinking and acting.**

*

And
while many of us/, **indeed**/, have the
insight that the way of mindfulness

goes against/ the worldly way/ of greed/ for
satisfaction/ of man's selfish/ desires and needs

STILL, in order to

reap the benefit of this insight,

We, (those of us who understand)
must be prepared/ to make a complete,
one-hundred-and-eighty-degree
'about-face'—[a total about-turn]—

(and make/ what in science is called)

a '**Paradigm-Shift**'

and adopt/ the directly opposite view
to the that/ of **those people/-in-the-world**

—who are/ concentrating/ their energies
upon the selfish/ gratification of
their own/ momentary/ cravings,

—who are consequently seeing things
as just-being there-in-the-world
to-be-used—as objects of the senses—

solely for the satisfaction and nourishment,
of their **own** worldly pleasure and happiness,

—often, with what we (in English),
traditionally, call
“**an eat drink and be merry attitude!**”

*

To repeat the point,
for the sake of emphasis,
we must be prepared
to make a '**paradigm-shift**' and

[turn/ in the exact opposite direction/ to the pull of/

the sensual/ gravitation/ of the worldly-compass,]

[in other words]

in order/

to be able/ to see things/ in the/ directly opposite way

to which people/ usually/ see themselves/ and the world:

[in other words]

in order/

to be able/ to see/

in the/ directly opposite way/ to

which people/ only see the world/

as a source/ of self-nourishment,

A world

- offering the opportunity/ of self-satisfaction/ for its own sake,”
without any regard/ or care/ at all/ for the benefit of Others.

[who, more often than not,
only care about themselves/
and who would also think/

that anyone who thinks/
differently from them/
must be crazy anyway.]

**In contrast/ to those/ who are held/ in the/
gravitational pull/ of self-gratification,**

we must come to realize
that **the needs of the
mind and the body**

and

**(i) the resultant, arising,
of uncontrolled processes**

and

**(ii) increasing desires
for an imbalance of**

**mental-sensual
over-nourishment
are, indeed, actually/
the worst enemies/ of man's happiness/,
because/ they lead him/ down an inevitable road
to frustration/, dissatisfaction/ and disappointment/ -**

which is a road/ which invariably leads/
to certain suffering in the long term.

*

In other words,
we must come/ to a clear understanding/
that a selfish attitude of

“I want what I want/, right now! /
And I'm not going to be satisfied
until I get it!” /
is not the Right View.

And it is certainly not the way to happiness,

Because/ such a view/ is based upon a/
**Wrong Understanding/ of 'happiness/,
—falsely seeing/ happiness/ as being the
'nourishment/ of self-centred/, ego-centric needs.'**

*

The common worldly view is Wrong View.

And why is this so?

To explain/ we must/,

(for the purposes of observation
and mental analysis at least),

separate a human being,
and this means you/, (and me)/
into its **TWO** component parts/ and examine,

“What is the body?” and “What is the mind?”

Let’s take, “*What is the body?*” first:
Once we have understood
that everything depends/ on
feeding and nourishment,
then/, we must/
closely examine/ the nature of the body/
to see it/,
not for what/ we might/
want or wish/ it to be,
but — for what it actually is

—within this mundane/ worldly world—

—the way the body really is—

which the Buddha describes
in a well-known, detailed, discourse as follows:

The Buddha says:

“In this body, there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine and so on.” (MN.119)

Now, is this you?

Do you see your ‘self’ this way?

Do you see your self—
in the way a medical surgeon/,
who has been equally-
well-trained/ in the Dhamma -

would see the body/
as just the way it physically is?

Do you see the body
the way the Buddha
sees the body?

If not, how then?

In the same dialogue,
the Buddha uses an analogy
to compare the body to a
“fathom-length-long sack,”

the kind of sack which
normally contains grain,
- open at two ends - as it were,
But/ instead of containing grain,
it is stuffed-full of/ an agglomeration/
of the above-mentioned body parts.

*

Now,
we should consider
how **we** would feel,
if our **own** ‘body sack’
were being shaken,

so that we might see
each one/ of our own/ body parts,
as it was/ slowly slipping/ and sliding/
and slithering-out/, and falling,

(as if in slow-motion)

and

we could observe our own
individual body organs,
as they were slowly
running-down
and piling-up
into a heap, upon the ground,

so we would have ample time
(with concentrated awareness)
to examine and contemplate each one
of these body parts, individually,
accumulating there in the pile—

—contemplating each one of these body parts
as actually being/ only one/
of the many/ component organs/ and parts/
which make up/ the mundane/ physical body.

How would we feel then?

Would we be/ enamoured/ with the physical body
if we examined it in this way

—as just a composite of components
—being aware of its nature/ as a mere
compound of connected, individual body parts?

*

One who meditates on the body
—contemplates himself/ as just such a body
—as just made up/ of such individual parts.

And that's a good starting-point
for meditation on the body:

Contemplation of the body is
(for most meditators)
the best starting-point
for beginning-to-see-the-body

as it really is/, and not/ as one might
wish/ or imagine it to be/—especially
as an/ independently-imagined/ entity

—as though/ you/, yourself/,
were somehow/
intellectually/ or mentally separated/
from this/,
unpleasant/, physical/, (bad smelling) / ‘bag-of-bones’ itself.

Moreover/, no matter/ how well/ the body parts/
may usually function together/, to sustain life/,
and even to provide/ momentary pleasures,
they are still/ just/ body-parts/ that have,
— through a gradual process/ of evolution/,
come together/ to continue/ to sustain life.

*

The Buddha, **using a simile, again,**
for comparison’s sake—
goes on to add/ that it is as if:

“A skilled butcher or his apprentice,
having killed a cow,
would sit at a cross-road
cutting it up into pieces,”...

And

Thus/ the monk or meditator
learns to contemplate the body
as though it were/ just made-up of/
aggregates of component parts.

Elsewhere/, the Buddha says/ that even a **king’s chariot**
is not a unity but just made-up of its individual parts.

[Or to use a more modern analogy/
to cite Bhante Gunaratana/
a Venerable Monk, born in Sri Lanka
but who lives in America)

Bhante G. has said
that even a brand-new **Chrysler car**,
right-off the factory/ assembly line,
is, similarly, only/
a compilation/ of its individual parts.]

*

And the Buddha **also** reminds us
in the above-mentioned Cow Sutta
that this body is composed,
not merely of component parts,

but that the parts are made up of
combinations of the four elements:
of “**matter, liquid, heat and gas**”
—and this being so—we should know:

**that this sack-full-of-elements,
in accordance with bio-chemical laws,
contains an ever-changing process**

—of the four essential elements—

a process of the arising and ceasing of
solidity/, liquidity/, burning-energy/ and gaseous-aridity/,
which has/ no fixed or permanent reality.

Imagine solidity/ turning, through heat,
into liquidity/, and burning/ as energy,
and turning into invisible gaseous-aridity
within your own body.

Imagine your own body/ as continually

consuming and nourishing itself
by burning-up/ and (concurrently)
regenerating/
fresh fuel/ through the changing
process/ of the Four Essential Elements,
to continue on/, within/ the
natural process/ of body nourishment.

Can you imagine that?

If you cannot,
you cannot conceive
reality as it really is.

The body is just a sack (or sheath) full of elements,
which are ever-changing,
ever-being-burned-up,
internally,

(as in a furnace),

- as sources of self nourishment,
and ever-being re-nourished
by new elements -
dependently-regenerated
as new sources of energy.

*

Now, how about you?
Do you assume that you are
a 'fixed unity to be nourished'
called '**Self-to-be-Satisfied,**'

rather than as just a simple
aggregation of component parts,
made up of elements/, which, in turn/,

nourish the body-parts/ with energy/
merely/ to keep them/ functioning?

*

How do **you** see the human body?

How do you see your **own** body?

If you have never yet
thought this basic bodily
elemental process
through before, it is high time to start.

*

The body is certainly not/ what
the **marketing-media**/ want us to
imagine it to be/ when we see
it presented in advertisements/
as they are *flickering away* on TV.

I wonder what percentage/
of the population/ of today's generation/
has had the suspicion (or realization)
that there is/ definitely 'something-wrong/' with the way/
our modern world/ conceives of/ and presents the body?

Do you believe-in/ the way the marketing media/ show the body?

Concerning Conventional Worldly View of the Body

Luang Por Viriyang has said:

“The first media is the body.
It refers to our physical body
which is capable of obtaining/

all/ of the feelings/ and emotions/
and communicating/
through its five senses.

The body/ can co-function/ with the mind/
and it is also/ under its control.

“One usually thinks/ of the body/ as his whole self.

“Since the life span/ of our body/ is 50 to 100 years,
human beings/ usually compete/ with their life span/
and try their best/ to use their bodies/ to the fullest potential.”
(ibid. p.22)

In other words/, for good or for worse/,
in the conventional sense/,

we try to extract/ and get the most/
out of our lives/ and our bodies,

for as long as we can/, for as long as they last,
especially in terms/ of physical pleasure,
because, in our heads,
(and especially in present-day culture),

**we mistakenly consider the body
as being a source of
satisfying-sense-experience,**

as being beautiful/, as being
pleasurable/ and satisfying

—despite the obvious fact/ that
[as in my case—for example]
—we may, ourselves, know

we are growing older
and becoming weaker,
inherently-knowing

we are slowly dying.

The so-called beauty of the body/ or
—the idealized-body-beautiful—
is a deeply-embedded/ socio-cultural myth
which the mind/ just does not want/
to let go of and certainly/ will not/
give-up/ without a struggle -

[a mental struggle/ which will be/
a painful psychophysical process

even for one
who already
has the intention,
the skill and the will

and even the necessary energy
and courage to struggle to make

the Paradigm-Shift/ to try to see/
the world the way it really is.]

The body, we must accept,
(our own or another's),
is not a beautiful object
in the way/ which we might desire/ it to be
(or in the way/ we see it/ in the media/ and on TV).

The body/ is not here in the world/,
solely/
for the purpose/ of bringing-about
the ultimate-fulfilment of our dreams.

*

Yet, quite perversely
(in reverse of the truth,)
that the body is not, in reality,
what we might/ imagine it to be,
(within the distortions/ of our own mind's eye,)

**we habitually and foolishly
continue believing in the
stubborn reverse of the truth—**

ironically/, often/, ignoring/, even
our own bodily aches and pains
—as undeniable/, physical indications

of decay/, deterioration/ and dissolution/,
contrary/, even/ to the obvious/ visual and physical
discrepancies/ which anyone else/ may clearly see.

*

Despite/ whatever/ we might desire/ the body to be/
the body is only/ an impermanent/ and temporarily
arising, fleeting and ceasing phenomenon.

Paradoxically,

quite contrary to the obvious truth,
despite all evidence to the contrary,

in today's generation/in today's world,

we continue hanging onto wrong belief/ about
the pleasing and satisfying/ nature of the body,

with such a stubborn tenacity/, that it becomes
almost impossible for most men (and women)
to shake loose/ and see the actual corporeal/
truth of the body/—‘the way it really is’—

the body

**—as dissipating slowly/,
(continually in a state of decay/,
deterioration/ and dissolution/
—ultimately ceasing in death.**

[And ironically, again,]

we dislike imagining that
our precious bodies/
will eventually become/
nothing more than

wholly useless/,

deteriorating/, lifeless heaps/
of rapidly dissipating elements/
worthy only of being discarded/,
and
neatly and discreetly disposed of,

once you have used-up its resources
in the unending pursuit of pleasure.]

Quite paradoxically/, again/, as we have said -

**Human beings/ usually compete/ with their own life span/ to try
to extract/, as much/ out of their own physical bodies/ as they can**

— (like stealing from and harming themselves)—

**so they can enjoy the maximum physical pleasure which
can be possibly experienced within a man's short lifespan.**

Thus, quite naturalistically, and realistically seen—

**Mental craving may be likened/ to a rapacious
Vulture/ that takes no pity on the body/ which it
is devouring/ even though it may be nourishing-
itself/ on its own, physical, corporeal substance.**

And, what is more,

If we turn our attention away
from ancient archives and
textual evidence, and we

**turn the search-light of
the bright light of truth
upon the real world of today,**
(the everyday world in which we live)
[in the worldly-world the way it really is],

**Quite in contradiction to
the common-sense wisdom
of the Buddha's diet of balanced-nourishment**

the mind-watching-the-mind will find
abundant empirical evidence of the clear,
undeniable and terrible truth that

**the psychophysical organism, ironically,
actually, enjoys becoming-and-being an
economic, commercial, product-consumer
in the mundane, material, physical world.**

[Indeed]

It does not require/ penetrating concentration/
or deep insight/ for the mind to come to the
perplexing realization

that, **socio-economically**/, today/,
men and women/ are, now, being/
overtly and subliminally/ **trained-and-bred**/
through marketing and the mass media,
within
the popular structure of modern society,
(globally)
(especially through the media and TV),

**to become even-more-willing
and enthusiastic consumers,**

whom manufacturers
and entrepreneurs can
actually continue to
stimulate and cultivate,

to train and brainwash,

in order to continue feeding-off
ever-newly-arising generations,
- ever-flowing along/, in surging waves/,
of persistently-arising/ bodily needs,

- indefinitely and forever
(if it might be imagined
that the world would
ever last that long).

Everything is nourishment,
and in such a scenario,
quite ironically,

those who feed our needs
are also well-rewarded,

well-provided-for,
and well-nourished,
due to the evolution/ of manipulative,
marketing strategies/ and contrivances.

In plain words, such service-providers
live-off supplying/ our unexamined/
unheeded/, unskilful/, wants and needs/,
and there is hardly an ounce of morality in it.

—It's just plain consumer-greed/

taking advantage/
of people's inherent weaknesses/
wants and needs
for psychophysical-stimulation/ and nourishment -

in a way that is intended/
not so much/
in the way/
that it ought to be/
(for the intended-good of society),

as it is
—just to make money—
—just for money's sake—
wherever there is a market need.

*

Such greed, based upon
unnecessary need,
is morally reprehensible,

from both the consumer
and producer perspective,

AND

**there are very
few wholly-open
and candid-minded
people in today's world**

**who would be
willing to
openly admit
to modern man's
un-relinquish-ing
quenchless-thirst**

and worldly craving—

**an insatiable craving
for much more than is
basically required for
essential nourishment
in this world
the way it really is.**

The truth is that
people will feed
wherever there is need.

And thus, it seems,
that nourishing oneself/
off the needs of others

[sigh]

has become the
predominant way of life
within in today's generation
in the present-day world.

**But, fortunately:-
not everybody
in this world
is like that.**

**There are still a few
with little dust in their eyes**

**who live their lives
following**

the Buddha's diet of balanced-nourishment.

And what is encouraging is that

**Indeed, (as we may see) there
are even many/ of these good few/
gathered right here in this room**

**who, out of loving-kindness,
dedicatedly devote their lives to
disseminating (and marketing)**

**the ultimate truth of the
One and Only Good Dhamma,
not for personal profit - but**

**Out of deep love and compassion
for the benefit of all of humanity.**

[Thus ends this lecture.]

*The text of this talk was excerpted from *The Mind Watching the Mind* at www.noblepath.info and adapted for audio presentation.

** For extra textual background regarding the topic of the need for nourishment, see Venerable Nyanaponika Maha Thera's *The Four Nutriments of Life* (BPS Wheel Number 15).

*** Anagarika Tevijjo usually resides at Comsaed Dhamma Park and Retreat on the River Kwai, sixteen kilometers up-river from Kanchanaburi, in Thailand, and anyone who may benefit by spending a day meditating and walking by the side of the river is always welcome to visit.