



***Freedom through Seeing the Selfless  
Nature of Experience***

***PLEASE TAKE THIS TIME RIGHT NOW TO COME INTO A  
MINDFUL PRESENCE WHILE WE WAIT FOR THE OTHERS  
TO JOIN US***

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# **THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF AWARENESS**

**A DOORWAY INTO NOT-SELF**

# REVIEW

- The Process of Disidentification
- Importance of a Self
- Nagarjuna & Emptiness
- Views – Letting Go of our Identification with certain views.

What is the fundamental nature of awareness?

The “story” of

*Viññanam anidassanam*

Translated as:

- Consciousness without feature
  - Consciousness without surface
  - Unestablished Consciousness
- 
- Different than the Consciousness in the last of the five Khandhas.



*poo roo* (พู้รู) – Thai for 'the one who knows.' or “being the knowing (Ajahn Sumedho).

- Ajahn Chah utilized this teaching “*This is the true Buddha, the one who knows (poo roo).*” He received it from his teacher Ajahn Mun.
- It is the faculty of being aware. It is used for a range of qualities of being aware from mindfulness to a kind of awareness that is different from the ordinary consciousness that comes and goes with sense experience.

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- “As I see it, the mind is like a single point, the center of the universe, and mental states are like visitors who come to stay at this point for short or long periods of time. Get to know these visitors well. Become familiar with the vivid pictures they paint, the alluring stories they tell, to entice you to follow them. But do not give up your seat-it is the only chair around....continue to occupy it unceasingly, greeting each guest as it comes, firmly establishing yourself in awareness, transforming your mind into the one who knows (*poo roo*), the one who is awake...then your mind will at last be at peace.” *Still Forest Pool – Ajahn Chah*



Ajahn Maha Bua



Ajahn Mun



Ajahn Chah



Ajahn Sumedho



Ajahn Amaro



What are the qualities of Viññanam anidassanam  
or “poo roo” (in an ultimate sense)?

From an experiential perspective not philosophical

- Aware
- Not a thing – No location Unfindable
- Immediate
- Not touched by dissatisfaction



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# AWARE

- Difference between simply hearing and knowing hearing is happening.
- Direct – Not lost in comparisons and bifurcations in experience.
- Non-Dual

"Your question should not be phrased in this way: Where do these four great elements — the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property — cease without remainder? Instead, it should be phrased like this:

Where do water, earth, fire, & wind have no footing? Where are long & short, coarse & fine, fair & foul, name & form brought to an end?

"And the answer to that is:

**Consciousness without feature**[*Viññanam anidassanam*], without end, luminous all around: Here water, earth, fire, & wind have no footing. Here long & short, coarse & fine, fair & foul, name & form, are all brought to an end. With the cessation of [the activity of] consciousness each is here brought to an end."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Kevatta the householder delighted in the Blessed One's words. (*DN11 Trans. Thanissaro*)

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## NO FOOTING

- “Perhaps the best way of paraphrasing [this] is to say that when the dualistic, discriminative process is checked then the ‘thing-ness,’ the solid externality of the world and the ‘me-ness’ of the mind are seen as essentially insubstantial. There is no footing for the apparent independent existence of mental or material objects or an independent subject.” (*The Island* Passano&Amaro)
- Nagarjuna
- To put it simply – the Interdependent nature of the world.

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- A mind not entangled in these kinds of distinctions.
- Name & Form – Neuman translates as subject & Object –
  - Experiences of when the distinction between observer and observed disintegrates.
- Brought to an end – Nirodha – usually translated as extinction or cessation.
  - “It is translated in two ways in the Visuddhimagga. One way traces the etymology to ‘ni’ (without) + ‘rodha’ (prison, confine, obstacle, wall, impediment), thus rendering the meaning as ‘without impediment,’ ‘free of confinement.’ This is explained as ‘free of impediments, that is, the confinement of samsara.’”  
(*Dependent Origination* Ven. P.A. Payutto)



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Right Now, Where is Awareness?

## *Not Making Consciousness into a Thing or a “Me”*

Just as all phenomena are rooted in desire, consciousness localizes itself through passion. Passion is what creates the "there" on which consciousness can land or get established, whether the "there" is a form, feeling, perception, thought-construct, or a type of consciousness itself. Once consciousness gets established on any of these aggregates, it becomes attached and then proliferates, feeding on everything around it and creating all sorts of havoc. Wherever there's attachment, that's where you get defined as a being. You create an identity there, and in so doing you're limited there. Even if the "there" is an infinite sense of awareness grounding, surrounding, or permeating everything else, it's still limited, for "grounding" and so forth are aspects of place. Wherever there's place, no matter how subtle, passion lies latent, looking for more food to feed on. This is why the consciousness of nirvana is said to be "without surface" (*anidassanam*), for it doesn't land. Because the consciousness-aggregate covers only consciousness that is near or far, past, present, or future — i.e., in connection with space and time — consciousness without surface is not included in the aggregates. It's not eternal because eternity is a function of time.



## CAN YOU SEE YOUR EYES?

The very organ with which we see is doing the seeing, yet we go out searching: “Has anyone seen my eyes? I can’t see my eyes anywhere. They must be around here somewhere but I can’t find them.”

We can’t see our eyes, but we can see. This means that awareness cannot be an object. But there can be awareness. Ajahn Chah and other forest masters would use the expression “being the knowing.” It is like being rigpa. In that state, there is the mind knowing its own nature, Dharma knowing its own nature. That’s all. As soon as we try to make an object of that, then a dualistic structure has been created, a subject here looking at an object there. There is resolution only when we let go of that duality and relinquish that “looking for.” Then the heart just abides in the knowing. But the habit is to think, “I’m not looking hard enough. I haven’t found them yet. My eyes must be here somewhere. After all, I can see. I need to try harder to find them.” (*Small Boat, Great Mountain Amaro*)



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# IMMEDIATE

- This awareness is immediate and ubiquitous.
- In Zen it is likened to a lichi fruit that is peeled and ready to eat and placed in your mouth. You don't need to go looking for it. (Mumonkan Case 23)
- “Ajahn Chah expressed the futility and absurdity of this tendency by giving the example of riding a horse and looking for it at the same time. We are riding along, asking, “Has anyone seen my horse? Anyone see my horse?” Everyone looks at us like we are crazy. So we ride over to the next village and ask the same thing: “Anyone seen my horse?”” (*Small Boat, Great Mountain Amaro*)

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“But what he had got from Ajahn Mun—in the three short days he spent with him—was the clear sense that there is the knowing mind, the *poo roo*, the one who knows, and then there are the objects of knowing. These are like a mirror and the images that are reflected in it. *The mirror is utterly unembellished and uncorrupted by either the beauty or the ugliness of the objects appearing in it. The mirror doesn't even get bored.* Even when there is nothing reflected in it, it is utterly equanimous, serene. This was a key insight for Ajahn Chah, and it became a major for his practice and teaching from that time onward.” *(Small Boat, Great Mountain. Ajahn Amaro).*



## SOME WAYS TO EXPLORE

- Shifting to Awareness itself
  - The Guided Meditation I sent you
  - Jack Engler
  - Ken Wilber video
  - Where is Awareness – A kind of ease or opening might arise...
  - Inclining the mind to the knowing aspect of experience
    - Hearing – “hearing is known”
    - Seeing – “seeing is known”
  - Walking Meditation –
- The World is mind-created-

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One approach is to *shift the locus of subjectivity from representations of self to awareness itself*: to *who* it is that is thinking this, feeling this, experiencing this, having this sensation, behaving in this way.

To catch a “glimpse” of this in everyday experience: suppose I introspect for a moment and ask, What am I aware of (actually, what am I aware of being aware of)? Probably a thought or a feeling. Let’s say it’s the thought, “I’m writing this paragraph.” There’s an implicit metaphysics in this way of representing things: it posits a self, an “I,” that exists apart from the flow of experience—who is thinking—“me”—and a more or less “objective” world out there—a word processor, an editor, a contract, a publication date—to which this “I,” this self, must respond.

Suppose now I redirect attention away from the object of my awareness to the subject: *who* is it that is thinking? If I say, “I am,” who is this “I”? When I turn around to find this “I,” I can’t find it. It’s nowhere to be found. Because of my deeply held sense of myself as a personal center of subjectivity, this is a little unnerving. If I pursue the inquiry in earnest, it rapidly becomes very unnerving! Why is this sense of “I” that I normally take for granted so elusive?



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# KEN WILBER

Not this...Neti, Neti

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## **Walking Meditation**

The body and mind are moving – Awareness may not have a flavor of moving but is simply aware of moving.



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# The World is Mind Created

“To see that the world is within our minds is one way of working with these principles. The whole universe is embraced when we realize that it’s happening within our minds. And in that moment when we recognize that it all happens *here*, it ceases. Its thingness ceases. Its otherness ceases. Its substantiality ceases.” (*Small Boat, Great Mountain* Amaro)







