

(d) Impermanent, Suffering, Nonself

"At Savatthi. Monks, form is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.' When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

"Feeling is impermanent....Perception is impermanent....Volitional formations are impermanent....Consciousness is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.' When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints* by nonclinging.

"If, monks, a monk's mind has become dispassionate toward the form element, it is liberated from the taints by non-clinging. If his mind has become dispassionate toward the feeling element...toward the perception element...toward the volitional formations element...toward the consciousness element, it is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

"By being liberated, it is steady; by being steady, it is content; by being content, he is not agitated. Being unagitated, he personally attains Nibbana. He understands: 'Destroyed is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.'"

(SN 22:45; III 44-45)

*Taints (Asavas) are the basic defilements or corruptions of the mind. The list consists of either three or four elements depending on the particular sutta of the historical Buddha being consulted. The list of four includes sense desire, the desire for eternal existence, wrong views and ignorance. The list of three does not contain wrong views.