

THE FIVE HINDRANCES: THE WATER ANALOGY

Imagine a bowl of water mixed with red, yellow, indigo, or orange colouring, such that a person with good eyesight would not be able to see his or her face reflected accurately in the water. In the same way, when one's awareness is possessed by sensual desire, overcome with sensual passion, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from sensual passion once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one's own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both...

Now imagine a bowl of water heated on a fire, boiling and bubbling over, such that a person with good eyesight would not be able to see his or her face reflected accurately in the water. In the same way, when one's awareness is possessed by ill will, overcome with ill will, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from ill will, once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one's own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both...

Now imagine a bowl of water covered with algae and slime, such that a person with good eyesight would not be able to see his or her face reflected accurately in the water. In the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by sloth and drowsiness, overcome with sloth and drowsiness, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from sloth and drowsiness once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one's own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both...

Now imagine a bowl of water ruffled by the wind, disturbed and covered with waves, such that a person with good eyesight would not be able to see his or her face reflected accurately in the water, in the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by restlessness and anxiety, overcome with restlessness and anxiety, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from restlessness and anxiety once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one's own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both,...

Now imagine a bowl of water stirred up, turbid, muddied, and left in the dark, such that a man with good eyesight would not be able to see his or her face reflected accurately in the water. In the same way, when one remains with awareness possessed by uncertainty, overcome with uncertainty, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from uncertainty once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one's own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both...