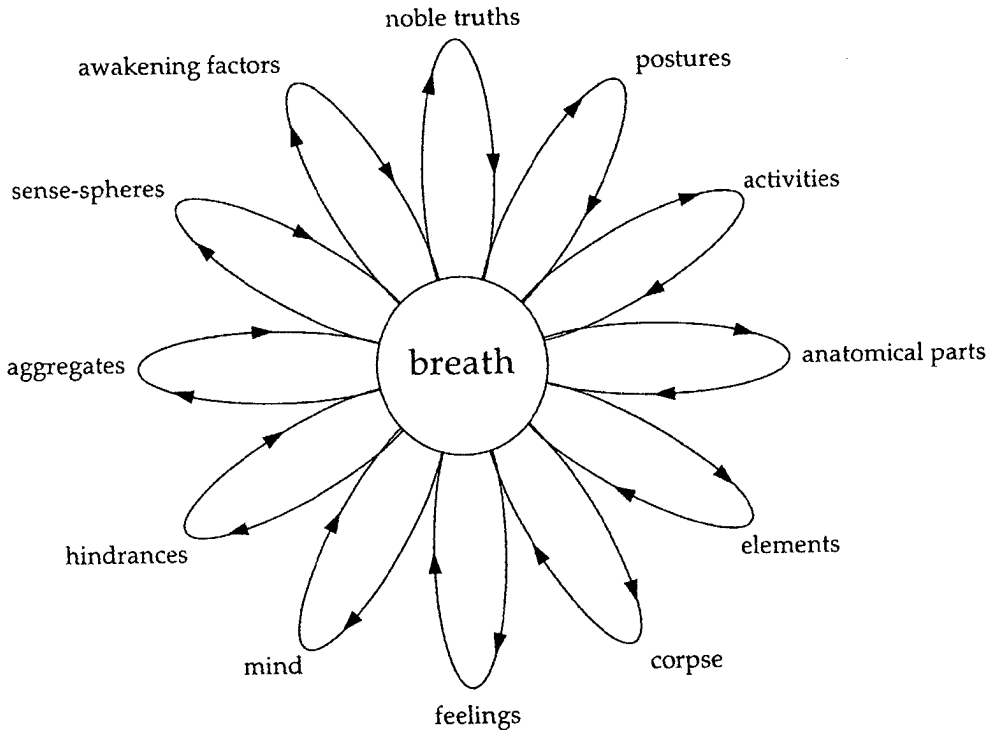
THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

A PRACTICAL EXPLORATION OF THE TRADITIONAL THERAVADIN AND MAHAYANA VERSIONS OF THIS CORE PRACTICE AND HOW IT COMPARES TO THE PRESENTATION BY THE VIDYADHARA, CHOGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE



The Rime Shedra/Core Texts Advanced Buddhist Studies Program

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THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

A practical exploration of the traditional Theravadin and Mahayana versions of this core practice and how it compares to the presentation by the Vidyadhara, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

Ten Tuesdays starting 1/17/12, skipping 2/21 and 3/6, ending 4/3/12

Course Syllabus

In this course, we will examine three traditions of this key practice: the early or "Theravadin" tradition primarily as presented by Mahasi Sayadaw in his *Practical Vipassana Exercises*; the Indian and Tibetan Mahayana traditions primarily as presented by Shantideva in his *The Way of the Bodhisattva* and by HH The Dalai Lama and the Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche in commentaries on that; and the tradition of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche primarily as presented in his 1974 Seminar, *Training the Mind* (unpublished transcript), and in *The Heart of the Buddha*. Ideally participants will put each version into practice to really experience them. all readings will be provided in *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness Sourcebook.*

I) Overview: SB Pages -15
   A) *The Foundations of Mindfulness, Satipatthana-Sutta*. Translated by Nyanasatta Thera. Pages 11-27. (In class reading.)

II) The Theravadin Vipassana Tradition of Mahasi Sayadaw: SB Pages 16-32
   A) *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness*. U Silananda.
      1) Meditation Instruction. Pages 213-221
   B) *Practical Vipassana Exercises*. Mahasi Sayadaw.
      1) Appendix. Pages 57-60
      2) Basic Practice. Pages 2-19

III) The Theravadin Vipassana Tradition of Mahasi Sayadaw: SB Pages 33-45
   A) *Practical Vipassana Exercises*. Mahasi Sayadaw.
      1) Progressive Practice. Pages 20-29
      2) Practical Vipassana Exercises. Pages 30-44

IV) Understanding the Satipatthana Sutta: SB Pages 46-60
   A) *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness*. U Silananda.
      1) Introduction. Pages 3-16
      2) Contemplation of the Body in the Body. Pages 17-30

V) Major Elements in the Practice of the The Foundations of Mindfulness: SB Pages 61-76
   A) *Minding Closely*. B. Allan Wallace.
      1) Mindfulness. Pages 55-58
      2) Introspection. Pages 58-60
   B) *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization*. By Analayo.
      1) The Definition Part of the Satipatthana Sutta. Excerpt on pages 32-43

2) The Body. Excerpt on pages 141-145
3) Conclusion. Excerpt on pages 266-271

VI) Classic Portrayals of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness: SB Pages 77-92
A) *Abhidharmakoshabhashyam of Vasubandhu, Volume III*. Translated into French by Louis de la Vallee Poussin; English Version by Leo M. Pruden
1) The Path and the Saints. Pages 921-930
B) *The Precious Treasury of Philosophical Systems*. By Longchen Rabjam. Translated by Richard Barron.
1) The Path of Accumulation in the Shravaka Approach - Initial Phase: The Four Applications of Mindfulness. Pages 129-130
2) The Path of Accumulation in the Bodhisattva Approach. Pages 191-192
C) *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech: A Detailed Commenatry on Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattava*. By Kunzang Peldan.
1) Outline of the Ninth Chapter on Wisdom
2) Meditation on the Absence of Self in Phenomena. Pages 357-367

VII) The Mahayana Analytical Vipashyana Tradition of Shantideva: SB Pages 93-102
A) *Practicing Wisdom: The Perfection of Shantideva's Bodhisattva Way*. HH the Dalai Lama.
1) The Nature of Phenomena. Pages 109-126

VIII) The Mahayana Analytical Vipashyana as Presented by Ponlop Rinpoche: SB Pages 103-123
A) The Four Foundations of Mindfulness. The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche. *Bodhi Magazine*, Issue Three. 21 Pages

IX) The Tradition as Presented by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche: SB Pages 124-137
A) *The Heart of the Buddha*. Chogyam Trungpa.
1) The Four Foundations of Mindfulness. Pages 21-47

X) The Tradition as Presented by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche: SB Pages 138-161
A) *Three Approaches to the Four Foundations: An Investigation of Vipassanā Meditation, Analytical Meditation and Śamatha/Vipaśyanā Meditation on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness*. Naropa University Master's Thesis. Thomas A.C. Weiser. May 2011
1) Training the Mind Seminar, RMDC, August 1974. Transcribed by Tom Weiser.
(a) Talk One. Pages 78-82
(b) Talk Two. Pages 90-93
(c) Talk Three. Pages 99-101
(d) Talk Four. Pages 107-109
(e) Talk Five. Pages 118-120
(f) Talk Six. Pages 129-131
2) Techniques of Mindfulness Seminar, Tail of the Tiger, August 1974. Transcribed by Tom Weiser.
(a) Talk Four. Mindfulness of Effort. Pages 139-141

FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

CHANTS

ASPIRATION

In order that all sentient beings may attain Buddhahood,
From my heart I take refuge in the three jewels.

This was composed by Mipham. Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee

MANJUSHRI SUPPLICATION

Whatever the virtues of the many fields of knowledge
All are steps on the path of omniscience.
May these arise in the clear mirror of intellect.
O Manjushri, please accomplish this.

This was specially composed by Mangala (Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche). Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee

DEDICATION OF MERIT

By this merit may all obtain omniscience,
May it defeat the enemy, wrong-doing.
From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness and death,
From the ocean of samsara, may I free all beings.

By the confidence of the golden sun of the great east,
May the lotus garden of the Rigden's wisdom bloom,
May the dark ignorance of beings be dispelled.
May all beings enjoy profound, brilliant glory.

A Table of the Wings to Awakening

I. The Seven Sets

The Four Frames of Reference (satipaṭṭhāna)

1. Remaining focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

2. Remaining focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

3. Remaining focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

4. Remaining focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

The Four Right Exertions (sammappadhāna)

1. Generating desire, endeavoring, arousing persistence, upholding & exerting one's intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen.

2. Generating desire, endeavoring, arousing persistence, upholding & exerting one's intent for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen.

3. Generating desire, endeavoring, arousing persistence, upholding & exerting one's intent for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen.

4. Generating desire, endeavoring, arousing persistence, upholding & exerting one's intent for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen.

The Four Bases of Power (iddhipāda)

1. Developing the base of power endowed with concentration founded on desire & the fabrications of exertion.

2. Developing the base of power endowed with concentration founded on persistence & the fabrications of exertion.

3. Developing the base of power endowed with concentration founded on intent & the fabrications of exertion.

4. Developing the base of power endowed with concentration founded on discrimination & the fabrications of exertion.

The Five Faculties (indriya)

1. The faculty of conviction *(saddhindriya)*.
2. The faculty of persistence *(viriyindriya)*.
3. The faculty of mindfulness *(satindriya)*.
4. The faculty of concentration *(samādhindriya)*.
5. The faculty of discernment *(paññindriya)*.

The Five Strengths (bala)

1. The strength of conviction *(saddhā-bala)*.
2. The strength of persistence *(viriya-bala)*.
3. The strength of mindfulness *(sati-bala)*.
4. The strength of concentration *(samādhi-bala)*.
5. The strength of discernment *(paññā-bala)*.

The Seven Factors of Awakening (bojjhaṅga)

1. Mindfulness as a factor of awakening *(sati-sambojjhaṅga)*.
2. Analysis of qualities as a factor of awakening *(dhamma-vicaya-sambojjhaṅga)*.
3. Persistence as a factor of awakening *(viriya-sambojjhaṅga)*.
4. Rapture as a factor of awakening *(piti-sambojjhaṅga)*.
5. Serenity as a factor of awakening *(passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga)*.
6. Concentration as a factor of awakening *(samādhi-sambojjhaṅga)*.
7. Equanimity as a factor of awakening *(upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga)*.

The Noble Eightfold Path (ariya-magga)

1. Right view *(sammā-diṭṭhi)*.
2. Right resolve *(sammā-saṅkappa)*.
3. Right speech *(sammā-vācā)*.
4. Right action *(sammā-kammanta)*.
5. Right livelihood *(sammā-ājīva)*.
6. Right effort *(sammā-vāyāma)*.
7. Right mindfulness *(sammā-sati)*.
8. Right concentration *(sammā-samādhi)*.

The Foundations of Mindfulness

Satipaṭṭhāna Suttā

Translated from the Pali

with

Introduction and Notes

by

NYANASATTA THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
KANDY 1968 CEYLON

THE FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

Satipaṭṭhāna-Sutta

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was living among the Kurus, at Kammāsadamma, a market town of the Kuru people. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: 'Monks', and they replied to him, 'Venerable Sir'. The Blessed One spoke as follows:—

This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbāna, namely the four Foundations of Mindfulness. What are the four?

Herein (in this teaching) a monk lives contemplating the body in the body,[1] ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating feeling in feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness,[2] ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects,[2] ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief.

1. THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY

1. *Mindfulness of Breathing*

And how does a monk live contemplating the body in the body?

Herein, monks, a monk having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree or to an empty place, sits down, with his legs crossed, keeps his body erect and his mindfulness alert.[3]

Ever mindful he breathes in, and mindful he breathes out. Breathing in a long breath, he knows 'I am breathing in a long breath'; breathing out a long breath, he knows 'I am breathing out a long breath'; breathing in a short breath, he knows. 'I am breathing in a short breath'; breathing out a short breath, he knows 'I am breathing out a short breath'.

'Experiencing the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe in', thus he trains himself. 'Experiencing the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe out', thus he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath-) body, I shall breathe in', thus he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath-) body, I shall breathe out', thus he trains himself.

Just as a skilful turner or turner's apprentice, making a long turn, knows 'I am making a long turn', or making a short turn, knows, 'I am making a short turn', just so the monk, breathing in a long breath, knows 'I am breathing in a long breath'; breathing out a long breath, knows 'I am breathing out a long breath'; breathing in a short breath, knows 'I am breathing in a short breath'; breathing out a short breath, knows 'I am breathing out a short breath'; 'Experiencing the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe in', thus he trains himself'. 'Experiencing the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe out', thus he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath-) body, I shall breathe in', thus he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath-) body, I shall breathe out', thus the trains himseif.

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body, internally and

externally.[4] He lives contemplating origination-factors[5] in the body, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors[6] in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution factors[7] in the body. Or his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'The body exists',[8] to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, [9] and clings to naught in the world. Thus also, monks, a monk lives contemplating the body in the body.

2. *The Postures of the Body*

And further, monks, a monk knows when he is going 'I am going'; he knows when he is standing 'I am standing'; he knows when he is sitting 'I am sitting'; he knows when he is lying down 'I am lying down'; or just as his body is disposed so he knows it.

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in the body, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution factors in the body.[10] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'The body exists', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus also, monks, a monk lives contemplating the body in the body.

3. *Mindfulness with Clear Comprehension*

And further, monks, a monk, in going forward and back, applies clear comprehension; in looking straight on and looking away, he applies clear comprehension; in bending and in stretching, he applies clear comprehension; in wearing robes and carrying the bowl, he applies clear comprehension; in

eating, drinking, chewing and savouring, he applies clear comprehension; in attending to the calls of nature, he applies clear comprehension; in walking, in standing, in sitting, in falling asleep, in waking, in speaking and in keeping silence, he applies clear comprehension.

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body....

4. The Reflection on the Repulsiveness of the Body

And further, monks, a monk reflects on this very body enveloped by the skin and full of manifold impurity, from the sole up, and from the top of the head-hair down, thinking thus: 'There are in this body hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, gorge, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid, urine'.

Just as if there were a doubled-mouthed provision bag full of various kinds of grain such as hill paddy, paddy, green gram, cow-peas, sesamum, and husked rice, and a man with sound eyes, having opened that bag, were to take stock of the contents thus:—This is hill paddy, this is paddy, this is green gram, this is cow-pea, this is sesamum, this is husked rice. Just so, monks, a monk reflects on this very body enveloped by the skin and full of manifold impurity, from the soles up, and from the top of the head-hair down, thinking thus: There are in this body hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, gorge, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid, urine.

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body...

5. The Reflection on the Material Elements

And further, monks, a monk reflects on this very body, however it be placed or disposed, by way of the material elements: 'There are in this body the element of earth, the element of water, the element of fire, the element of wind.[11]

Just as if, monks, a clever cow-butcher or his apprentice, having slaughtered a cow and divided it into portions, should be sitting at the junction of four high roads, in the same way, a monk reflects on this very body, as it is placed or disposed, by way of the material elements: 'There are in this body the elements of earth, water, fire and wind'.

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body....

6. The Nine Cemetery Contemplations

(1) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body dead one, two, or three days; swollen, blue and festering, thrown in the charnel ground, he then applies this perception to his own body thus: 'Verily, also my own body is of the same nature; such it will become and will not escape it'.

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in the body, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-factors in the body. Or his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'The body exists', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives independent, and clings to naught in the world. Thus also, monks, a monk lives contemplating the body in the body.

(2) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnel ground, being eaten by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals or by different kinds of worms, he then applies this perception to his own body thus: 'Verily, also my own body is of the same nature; such it will become and will not escape it.'

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body...

(3) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to a skeleton with some flesh and blood attached to it, held together by the tendons...

(4) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to a skeleton, blood-besmeared and without flesh, held together by the tendons...

(5) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnal ground and reduced to a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together by the tendons...

(6) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnal ground and reduced to disconnected bones, scattered in all directions—here a bone of the hand, there a bone of the foot, a shin bone, a thigh bone, the pelvis, spine and skull...

(7) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnel ground, reduced to bleached bones of conch-like colour...

(8) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnel ground, reduced to bones, more than a year-old, lying in a heap...

(9) And further, monks, as if a monk sees a body thrown in the charnel ground, reduced to bones gone rotten and become dust,

he then applies this perception to his own body thus: 'Verily, also my own body is of the same nature; such it will become and will not escape it'.

Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body internally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body externally, or he lives contemplating the body in the body internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in the body, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-factors in the body. Or his mindfulness is established with the thought: 'The body exists', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus also, monks, a monk lives contemplating the body in the body.

II. THE CONTEMPLATION OF FEELING

And how, monks, does a monk live contemplating feelings in feelings ?

Herein, monks, a monk when experiencing a pleasant feeling knows, 'I experience a pleasant feeling'; when experiencing a painful feeling, he knows, 'I experience a painful feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling', he knows, 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling'. When experiencing a pleasant worldly feeling, he knows, 'I experience a pleasant worldly feeling'; when experiencing a pleasant spiritual feeling, he knows, 'I experience a pleasant spiritual feeling'; when experiencing a painful worldly feeling, he knows, 'I experience a painful worldly feeling'; when experiencing a painful spiritual feeling, he knows, 'I experience a painful spiritual feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful worldly feeling, he knows, 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful

worldly feeling'; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful spiritual feeling, he knows, 'I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful spiritual feeling'.

Thus he lives contemplating feelings in feelings internally, or he lives contemplating feelings in feelings externally, or he lives contemplating feelings in feelings internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in feelings, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in feelings, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution factors in feelings.[12] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'Feeling exists', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus, monks, a monk lives contemplating feelings in feelings.

III. THE CONTEMPLATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

And how, monks, does a monk live contemplating consciousness in consciousness?

Herein, monks, a monk knows the consiousness with lust, as with lust; the consciousness without lust, as without lust; the consciousness with hate, as with hate; the conscious; ness without hate, as without hate; the consciousness with ignorance, as with ignorance; the consciousness without ignorance, as without ignorance; the shrunken state of consciousness as the shrunken state;[13] the distracted state of consciousness as the distracted state;[14] the developed state of consciousness as the developed state;[15] the undeveloped state of consciousness as the undeveloped state;[16] the state of consciousness with some other mental state superior to it, as the state with something mentally higher;[17] the state of consciousness with no other mental state superior to it, as the

state with nothing mentally higher;[18] the concentrated state of consciousness as the concentrated state; the unconcentrated state of consciousness as the unconcentrated state; the freed state of consciousness as the freed state;[19] and the unfreed state of conscious as the unfreed.

Thus he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness internally, or he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness externally, or he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in consciousness, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in consciousness, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-factors in consciousness.[20] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'Consciousness exist', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus, monks, a monk lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness.

IV. THE CONTEMPLATION OF MENTAL OBJECTS

1. *The Five Hindrances*

And how, monks, does a monk live contemplating mental objects in mental objects?

Herein, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances.

How, monks, does a monk live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances?

Herein, monks, when *sense-desire* is present, a monk knows, 'There is sense-desire in me', or when sense-desire is not present, he knows, 'There is no sense-desire in me'. He knows how the arising of the non-arisen sense-desire comes to

be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen sense-desire comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sense-desire comes to be.

When *anger* is present, he knows, 'There is anger in me', or when anger is not present, he knows, 'There is no anger in me'. He knows how the arising of the non-arisen anger comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen anger comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned anger comes be.

When *sloth and torpor* are present, he knows, 'There are sloth and torpor in me', or when sloth and torpor are not present, he knows, 'There are no sloth and torpor in me'. He knows how the arising of the non-arisen sloth and torpor comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen sloth and torpor comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned sloth and torpor comes to be.

When *agitation and scruples* are present, he knows, 'There are agitation and scruples in me' or when agitation and scruples are not present, he knows, 'There are no agitation and scruples in me'. He knows how the arising of the non-arisen agitation and scruples comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen agitation and scruples comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned agitation and scruples comes to be.

When *doubt* is present, he knows, 'There is doubt in me', or when doubt is not present, he knows, 'There is no doubt in me'. He knows how the arising of the non-arisen doubt comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen doubt comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned doubt comes to be.

Thus he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects externally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating origination - and - dissolution - factors in mental objeets,[21] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'Mental objects exist', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world, Thus also, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances.

2. *The Five Aggregates of Clinging*

And further, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging.[22]

How, monks, does a monk live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging?

Herein, monks, a monk thinks, 'Thus is *material form;* thus is the arising of material form; and thus is the disappearance of material form. Thus is *feeling;* thus is the arising of feeling; and thus is the disappearance of feeling. Thus is *perception;* thus is the arising of perception; and thus is the disappearance of perception. Thus are *formations;* thus is the arising of formations; and thus is the disappearance of formations. Thus is *consciousness;* thus is the arising of consciousness; and thus is the disappearance of consciousness'.

Thus he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects externally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally and externally. He lives

contemplating origination-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-factors in mental objects.[23] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'mental objects exist', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus also, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five aggregates of clinging.

3. The Six Internal and the Six External Sense-Bases

And further, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the six internal and the six external sense-bases.

How, monks, does a monk live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the six internal and the six external sense-bases?

Herein, monks, a monk knows, *the eye and visual forms*, and the fetter that arises dependent on both (the eye and forms);[24] he knows how the arising of the non-arisen fetter comes to be, he knows how the abandoning of the arisen fetter comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned fetter comes to be.

He knows the *ear* and *sounds*...the *nose* and *smells*...the *tongue* and *flavours*...the *bady* and *tactual objects*.. the *mind* and *mental objects*, and the fetter that arises dependent on both; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen fetter comes to be; he knows how the abandoning of the arisen fetter comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned fetter comes to be.

Thus, monk, the monks lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally, or he lives contemplating

mental objects in mental objects externally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-factors in mental objects.[25] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'Mental objects exist', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the six internal and the six external sense-bases.

4. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

And further, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the seven factors of enlightenment.

How, monks, does a monk live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the seven factors of enlightenment.

Herein. monks, when the enlightenment-factor of *mindfulness* is present, the monk knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of mindfulness is in me', or when the enlightenment-factor of mindfulness is absent, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of mindfulness is not in me'; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of mindfulness comes to be; and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of mindfulness comes to be.

When the enlightenment-factor of *the investigation of mental objects* is present, the monk knows 'The enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects is in me'; when the enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects

is absent, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects is not in me'; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects comes to be, and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of the investigation of mental objects comes to be.

When the enlightenment-factor of *energy* is present, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of energy is in me'; when the enlightenment-factor of energy is absent, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of energy is not in me'; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of energy comes to be, and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of energy comes to be.

When the enlightenment-factor of *joy* is present, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of joy is in me'; when the enlightenment-factor of joy is absent he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of joy is not in me'; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of joy comes to be, and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of joy comes to be.

When the enlightenment-factor of *tranquillity* is present, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of tranquillity is in me'; when the enlightenment-factor of tranquillity is absent, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of tranquillity is not in me'; and he knows the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of tranquillity comes to be, and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of tranquillity comes to be.

When the enlightenment-factor of *concentration* is present, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of concentration is in me'; when the enlightenment-factor of concentration is

absent, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of concentration is not in me'; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of concentration comes to be, and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of concentration comes to be.

When the enlightenment-factor of *equanimity* is present, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of equanimity is in me'; when the enlightenment-factor of equanimity is absent, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of equanimity is not in me'; and he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of equanimity comes to be, and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of equanimity comes to be.

Thus he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects externally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-factors in mental objects.[26] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'Mental objects exist', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the seven factors of enlightenment.

5. *The Four Noble Truths*

And further, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the four noble truths.

How, monks, does a monk live contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the four noble truths?

Herein, monks, a monk knows, *'This is suffering'*, according to reality; he knows, *'This is the origin of suffering'*, according to reality; he knows, *'This is the cessation of suffering'*, according to reality; he knows, *'This is the road leading to the cessation of suffering'*, according to reality.

Thus he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects externally, or he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in mental objects, or he lives contemplating origination - and - dissolution - factors in mental objects.[27] Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, 'Mental objects exist', to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world. Thus, monks, a monk lives contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the four noble truths.

Verily, monks, whosoever practises these four Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner for seven years, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest Knowledge (Arahantship), here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-returning.[28]

O monks, let alone seven years. Should any person practise these four Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner for six years...for five years...four years...three years...two years...one year, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest Knowledge, here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-returning.

O monks, let alone a year. Should any person practise these four Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner for seven months...for six months...five months...four months... three months...two months...a month...half a month, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest Knowledge, here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-returning.

O monks, let alone half a month. Should any person practise these four Foundations of Mindfulness in this manner, for a week, then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: Highest knowledge, here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of Non-returning.

Because of this was it said: 'This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbāna, namely the four Foundations of Mindfulness'.

Thus spoke the Blessed One. Satisfied, the monks approved of his words.

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta No. 10

NOTES

1. The repetition of the phrases 'contemplating the body in the body', 'feelings in feelings', etc. is meant to impress upon the meditator the importance of remaining aware whether, in the sustained attention directed upon a single chosen object, one is still keeping to it, and has not strayed into the field of another Contemplation. For instance, when contemplating any bodily process, a meditator may unwittingly be side-tracked into a consideration of his *feelings* connected with that bodily process. He should then be clearly aware that he has left his original subject, and is engaged in the Contemplation of Feeling.

2. Mind, Pāli *citta*, also consciousness or viññāṇa, in this connection are the states of mind or units in the stream of mind of momentary duration. Mental objects, *dhammā*, are the mental contents or factors of consciousness making up the single states of mind.

3. Literally, 'setting up mindfulness in front'.

4. 'Internally': contemplating his own breathing; 'externally', contemplating another's breathing; 'internally and externally'; contemplating one's own and another's breathing, alternately, with uninterrupted attention. In the beginning one pays attention to one's own breathing only, and it is only in advanced stages that for the sake of practising insight, one by inference pays at times attention also to another person's process of breathing.

5. The origination-factors (*samudaya-dhammā*), that is, the conditions of the origination of the breath-body; these are: the body in its entirety, nasal aperture and mind.

6. The condition of the dissolution of the breath-body are: the destruction of the body and of the nasal aperture, and the ceasing of mental activity.

7. The contemplation of both, alternately.

8. That is, only impersonal bodily processes exist, without a self, soul, spirit or abiding essence or substance. The corresponding phrase in the following Contemplations should be understood accordingly.

9. Detached from craving and wrong view.

10. All Contemplations of the Body, excepting the preceding one, have as factors of origination: ignorance, craving, kamma, food, and the general characteristic of originating; the factors of dissolution are: disappearance of ignorance, craving, kamma, food, and the general characteristic of dissolving.

11. The so-called 'elements' are the primary qualities of matter, explained by Buddhist tradition as solidity (earth). adhesion (water), caloricity (fire) and motion (wind or air),

12. The factors of origination are here : ignorance, craving, kamma, and sense-impression, and the general characteristic of originating ; the factors of dissolution are : the disappearance of the four, and the general characteristic of dissolving.

13. This refers to a rigid and indolent state of mind.

14. This refers to a restless mind.

15. The consciousness of the meditative Absorptions of the fine-corporeal and uncorporeal sphere (*rūpa-ārūpa-jhāna*).

16. The ordinary consciousness of the sensuous state of existence (*kāmāvacara*).

17. The consciousness of the sensuous state of existence, having other mental states superior to it.

18. The consciousness of the fine-corporeal and the uncorporeal spheres, having no mundane mental state superior to it.

19. Temporarily freed from the defilements either through the methodical practice of Insight *(vipassanā)* freeing from single evil states by force of their opposites, or through the meditative Absorptions (*jhāna*).

20. The factors of origination consist here of ignorance, craving, kamma, body-and-mind (*nāma-rūpa*), and of the general characteristic of originating; the factors of dissolution are: the disappearance of ignorance, etc., and the general characteristic of dissolving.

21. The factors of origination are here the conditions which produce the Hindrances, as wrong reflection, etc.; the factors of dissolution are the conditions which remove the Hindrances, e.g. right reflection.

22. These five groups or aggregates constitute the so-called personality. By making them objects of clinging, existence, in form of repeated births and deaths, is perpetuated.

23. The origination-and-dissolution-factors of the five Aggregates: for Material Form, the same as for the Postures (Note 10); for Feeling, the same as for the Contemplation of Feeling (Note 12); for Perception and Formations, the same as for Feeling (Note 12); for Consciousness, the same as for the Contemplation of Consciousness(Note20).

24. The usual enumeration of the ten principal Fetters (*samyojanā*), as given in the Discourse Collection (Sutta Pitaka), is as follows : 1. self-illusion, 2. scepticism,

3. attachment to rules and rituals, 4. sensual lust, 5. ill-will, 6. craving for fine-corporeal existence, 7. craving for uncorporeal existence, 8. conceit, 9. restlessness, 10. ignorance.

25. Origination-factors of the ten physical sense-bases are ignorance, craving, kamma, food, and the general characteristic of originating; dissolution-factors : the general characteristic of dissolving and the disappearance of ignorance, etc. The origination-and-dissolution-factors of the mind-base are the same as those of feeling (Note 12).

26. Just the conditions conducive to the origination and dissolution of the Factors of Enlightenment comprise the origination-and-dissolution-factors here.

27. The origination-and-dissolution-factors of the Truths should be understood as the arising and passing of Suffering, Craving, and the Path ; the Truth of Cessation is not to be included in this contemplation since it has neither origination nor dissolution.

28. That is the non-returning to the world of sensuality. This is the last stage before the attainment of the final goal of Saintship, or Arahatship.

APPENDIX I – STRUCTURE OF THE SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA

1. Mindfulness of Body

1.1. Breathing
- 1.1.1. Length of Breath
- 1.1.2. Experiencing the whole body (of breath, or breath in whole body)
- 1.1.3. Tranquilizing bodily formations

1.2. Four Postures
- 1.2.1. Walking
- 1.2.2. Standing
- 1.2.3. Sitting
- 1.2.4. Lying Down

1.3. Full Awareness
- 1.3.1. Looking ahead and looking away
- 1.3.2. Flexing and extending limbs
- 1.3.3. Wearing robes, carrying robes and bowl
- 1.3.4. Eating and drinking
- 1.3.5. Defecating and urinating
- 1.3.6. Walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent

1.4. The Body Parts
- 1.4.1. Head-hairs
- 1.4.2. Body-hairs
- 1.4.3. Nails
- 1.4.4. Teeth
- 1.4.5. Skin
- 1.4.6. Flesh
- 1.4.7. Sinews
- 1.4.8. Bones
- 1.4.9. Bone-marrow
- 1.4.10. Kidneys
- 1.4.11. Heart
- 1.4.12. Liver
- 1.4.13. Diaphragm
- 1.4.14. Spleen
- 1.4.15. Lungs
- 1.4.16. Intestines
- 1.4.17. Mesentery
- 1.4.18. Contents of stomach
- 1.4.19. Feces
- 1.4.20. Bile
- 1.4.21. Phlegm
- 1.4.22. Pus
- 1.4.23. Blood
- 1.4.24. Sweat
- 1.4.25. Fat
- 1.4.26. Tears
- 1.4.27. Grease
- 1.4.28. Spittle
- 1.4.29. Snot
- 1.4.30. Oil of the joints
- 1.4.31. Urine

1.5. Four Elements
- 1.5.1. Fire
- 1.5.2. Earth
- 1.5.3. Air
- 1.5.4. Water

1.6. Charnel Ground contemplations
- 1.6.1. Bloated, livid, oozing corpse
- 1.6.2. Corpse being devoured by scavengers
- 1.6.3. Skelton with flesh and blood
- 1.6.4. Skeleton smeared with blood
- 1.6.5. Skeleton without flesh and blood
- 1.6.6. Disconnected skeleton
- 1.6.7. Bleached white skeleton
- 1.6.8. Bones heaped up
- 1.6.9. Rotted and crumbling bones

2. Mindfulness of Feelings

2.1. Pleasant feeling
- 2.1.1. Worldly pleasant feeling
- 2.1.2. Unworldly pleasant feeling

2.2. Painful feeling
- 2.2.1. Worldly painful feeling
- 2.2.2. Unworldly painful feeling

2.3. Neither-Painful-nor-Pleasant feeling
- 2.3.1. Worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling
- 2.3.2. Unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling

3. Mindfulness of Mind

3.1. Mind affected by lust
3.2. Mind unaffected by lust
3.3. Mind affected by hate
3.4. Mind unaffected by hate
3.5. Mind affected by delusion
3.6. Mind unaffected by delusion
3.7. Contracted mind
3.8. Distracted mind
3.9. Exalted mind
3.10. Unexalted mind
3.11. Surpassed mind
3.12. Unsurpassed mind
3.13. Concentrated mind
3.14. Unconcentrated mind
3.15. Liberated mind
3.16. Unliberated mind

4. Mindfulness of Mental Objects

4.1. Five Hindrances
- 4.1.1. Sensual Desire
- 4.1.2. Ill-will
- 4.1.3. Sloth and Torpor
- 4.1.4. Restlessness and Remorse
- 4.1.5. Doubt

4.2. Five Skandhas
- 4.2.1. Material form
- 4.2.2. Feeling
- 4.2.3. Perception
- 4.2.4. Formations
- 4.2.5. Consciousness

4.3. Six Bases
- 4.3.1. Eye and forms
- 4.3.2. Ear and sounds
- 4.3.3. Nose and odors
- 4.3.4. Tongue and flavors
- 4.3.5. Body and tangibles
- 4.3.6. Mind and mind-objects

4.4. Seven Factors of Enlightenment
- 4.4.1. Mindfulness
- 4.4.2. Investigation-of-states
- 4.4.3. Energy
- 4.4.4. Rapture
- 4.4.5. Tranquility
- 4.4.6. Concentration
- 4.4.7. Equanimity

4.5. Four Noble Truths
- 4.5.1. Suffering
- 4.5.2. Origin of suffering
- 4.5.3. Cessation of suffering
- 4.5.4. The way leading to cessation

THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

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MEDITATION INSTRUCTIONS

TO PRACTICE MEDITATION, you have to look first for a suitable place. A suitable place is a place that offers you the necessary seclusion for your meditation. You may find secluded places in nature; however, when you are meditating inside a house, you have to look for the place that is most suitable for meditation and you will then use this place for meditation each time. You may want to put up a statue or a picture of the Buddha, some flowers, a candle, or some incense to assist your meditation, but these items are not so important as the necessity for a secluded place where you will always practice your meditation in the future.

To begin your meditation, you sit down cross-legged, keeping the upper portion of your body erect. If the cross-legged position is too difficult for you, you may sit in the half-lotus position, putting one leg on top of the other, that is, not intertwining your legs. If this is still too difficult, you may sit in the "easy" or "Burmese" position, putting one leg in front of the other. Because some comfort is necessary to continue the practice of meditation, you may even sit on a cushion, a chair, or a bench. Though the cross-legged position is the ideal position for meditation, you have to decide for yourself in which position you can maintain your meditation best. Important in all positions is that you keep the upper portion of your body erect.

We will look at three kinds of meditation. The first is Forgiveness, the second Loving Kindness, and the last *vipassanā* meditation.

We practice forgiveness to remove any guilt feelings. Sometimes you did something wrong to somebody and then you have this feeling of guilt. Especially, when you are meditating, you want to keep your mind pure but these thoughts come to you again and again and

spoil your meditation. Like cleaning the slate, you first ask forgiveness from others. This is one aspect. The other aspect is to forgive others. There may be somebody who has done something wrong to you and you have some anger or grudge against that person. You have to get rid of this anger or grudge, too. In order to practice loving kindness, you must be able to forgive people. If you cannot forgive people, you cannot practice meditation. So, loving kindness and forgiveness go together. If you cannot forgive somebody, you cannot send loving kindness to that person. So you get rid of the ill feeling toward anybody who may have done something wrong to you. And thirdly, you forgive yourself. Sometimes, you find it more difficult to forgive yourself than to forgive others. If you cannot forgive yourself, the same feeling of anger and hatred about yourself will disturb your meditation. Therefore, before entering meditation, you have to practice forgiveness; after that you practice loving-kindness meditation.

Loving kindness is a kind of love, a genuine desire for the well-being of all beings. It is love, not connected with attachment, not connected with lust. It is pure love and pure desire for all beings, including ourselves. So when you practice loving kindness and wish for your own happiness, "May I be well, happy, and peaceful!" this should not be interpreted as selfishness because, in order to send out loving kindness to others, we have to generate these thoughts first in ourselves. Also, when you send thoughts to yourself, you can take yourself as an example. That means, when you say, "May I be well, happy, and peaceful," you think, "I want to be well. I want to be happy. I want to be peaceful. May the other person also be well, happy, and peaceful." To be able to practice loving kindness toward other beings, you first have to practice loving kindness toward yourself. Then you send your thoughts to other beings. You can send these thoughts in different ways. You can send thoughts to all beings by location. You send loving kindness to all beings in this house, all beings include all animals, insects, etc. Then you send loving kindness to all beings in this area, in this city, in this county, in this state, in this country, in this world, in this universe, and last, to all beings in general. When you say the sentences to yourself, please mean them and try to see and visualize the beings you mention as well, happy, and peaceful. Your thoughts of loving kindness will be going to them

and make them really well, happy, and peaceful. Do this for about fifteen minutes. When practicing forgiveness, please fold your hands.

If by deed, speech, or thought,
foolishly I have done wrong,
may all forgive me honored ones,
who are in wisdom and compassion strong.
I freely forgive anyone
who may have hurt or injured me.
I freely forgive myself.

Now you can practice loving-kindness meditation. When practicing loving-kindness meditation, please repeat each sentence silently to yourself, about ten times.

May I be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this house be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this area be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this city be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this county be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this state be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this country be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this world be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings in this universe be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful!

Loving kindness can also be practiced by way of persons:

May I be well, happy, and peaceful!
May my teachers be well, happy and peaceful!
May my parents be well, happy, and peaceful!
May my relatives be well, happy, and peaceful!
May my friends be well, happy, and peaceful!
May the indifferent persons be well, happy, and peaceful!
May the unfriendly persons be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all meditators be well, happy, and peaceful!
May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful!

May suffering ones be suffering free
and the fear-struck fearless be!
May the grieving shed all grief,
and all beings find relief!

After you have sent loving kindness to the whole world and all beings, you practice *vipassanā* meditation.

In-breath and out-breath each last about four or five seconds. Be really mindful of the in-breath. You may feel a sensation of the air at the tip of your nose or in your nose. Be mindful of it. When you exhale, be really mindful of the out-breath for the whole duration of four or five seconds and concentrate on the nature of breath, the moving nature or the supporting nature of breath rather than the shape or form of the breath. Try to see the in-breath and out-breath as two separate things not just one and the same breath going in and coming out. Do not follow the breath into your body or outside the body. Your mind is like a gatekeeper standing at the gate, taking note of people going in and coming out. Do not force or strain yourself. Just calmly be mindful and watch the breath. You may make a mental note when you breathe in and when you breathe out, as "in" and "out," or "in, out." If you think you should recognize what is interfering with your concentration, you need not do that. Just be mindful of the breath. Your mindfulness is important and not the knowing of "what is going on." However, for some people, it is important to know what helps them to keep their mind on the object and what not. If it helps you, you may use labels or investigate "what is going on," but when it interferes with your concentration, you don't have to say "what is going on," just be mindful.

When your mind can be on the breath only, that is very good. However, the mind has the tendency to wander. If your mind wanders or goes out and you are aware of it, be mindful of the going out. Or you may say to yourself, "going out, going out, going out," two or three times and then go back to the breath. If you see something or someone in your thoughts, be mindful of seeing or say to yourself, "seeing, seeing, seeing," until that object disappears from your mind; then go back to the breath. If you hear somebody talking in your thoughts, be mindful of hearing or say to yourself, "hearing, hearing,

hearing," and then go back to the breath. If you talk to someone in your thoughts or if you talk to yourself, be mindful of talking or say to yourself, "talking, talking, talking," and then go back to the breath. If you speculate about something, if you analyze something, be mindful of analyzing. If you make judgments, be mindful of making judgments. If you remember something in the past, be mindful of the remembrance or say to yourself, "remembering, remembering, remembering" or "thinking, thinking, thinking," and then go back to the breath. If you think of the future and make plans, be mindful of it or say to yourself, "planning, planning, planning," and then go back to the breath. If you become lazy, be mindful of your laziness or say, "lazy, lazy, lazy." The laziness will go away after some moments; then go back to the breath. If you feel bored, be mindful of boredom or say to yourself, "bored, bored, bored," until boredom goes away; then go back to the breath. If you have resistance, be mindful of it or say to yourself, "resisting, resisting, resisting." When resistance disappears, go back to the breath. If you have thoughts of attachment or greed or lust, be mindful of these thoughts or say to yourself, "attachment, attachment, attachment," or "greed, greed, greed," or "lust, lust, lust," until they disappear, and then go back to the breath. If you are upset or angry for any reason, just be mindful of that anger; in other words, make that anger the object of meditation. Concentrate on your anger or you may say to yourself, "anger, anger, anger" or "angry, angry, angry" or "upset, upset, upset." After some moments, the anger will disappear and when it has disappeared, go back to the breath.

If you want to swallow your saliva, first be mindful of the intention or desire to swallow, saying to yourself, "intention, intention, intention," or "desire, desire, desire." And when you have gathered the saliva in your mouth, be mindful of gathering or say to yourself, "gathering, gathering, gathering." When you swallow, be mindful of swallowing or say to yourself, "swallowing, swallowing, swallowing"; then go back to the breath.

If you have an itching sensation, do not scratch it right away. Concentrate on the place of that itching and be mindful of it, saying to yourself, "itching, itching, itching." In most cases, the itch will go away after some time. When it goes away, return to the breath. Sometimes,

the itching will not go away. It may become more intense; then be with it, taking note of it, and be aware of it, as long as you can. If you think you cannot bear it any longer, you may scratch. But before scratching, be mindful of the intention or desire to scratch. When you move your hand to the place where you experience the itch, be mindful of moving. Move your hand slowly, following the movement with mindfulness. When your fingers touch the place, say "touching, touching, touching." When you scratch, say "scratching, scratching, scratching." When you take the hand back, say "taking, taking, taking" or "moving, moving, moving." When your hand touches your lap, the knee, or the other hand again, be mindful of touching or say to yourself, "touching, touching, touching." Then go back to the breath.

If you have painful feelings in the body, numbness, stiffness, heat, focus your mind on the place of these feelings and be mindful of them. If you have pain somewhere in the body, focus on the place of that pain, be mindful of that pain and say to yourself, "pain, pain, pain." You will have to be very patient with painful feelings. Pain will not easily go away. You have to be patient and be mindful of it. It may go away or it may become more acute. Stay with it as long as you can. Actually pain is a very good object for meditation. It is a strong object. Your mind is pulled toward the place where there is pain. So be mindful of it and try to see that it is first of all a sensation. Do not identify pain with yourself. Don't say either, "It is not *my* pain" or "*I* feel pain." There is just the pain, just the sensation. If the pain becomes so intense, you think you cannot bear it any longer, you may ignore pain altogether and go back to the breath. Or you may move and change posture to ease pain. But when you move or change posture, first note the intention to change, be mindful of the intention to change, and then make movements slowly, one at a time, following each movement with mindfulness. And when you have made changes, go back to the breath.

So the breath is the whole object of your meditation. Whenever there are no other objects to be mindful of, you just continue with being mindful of the breath. If there are more prominent objects, then you take note of them, become aware of them, mindful of them, and then go back to the breath. Do not use force, do not strain yourself, just calmly watch the objects, take note of them, be mindful of them. Do not try to push distractions or emotions or feelings in the body away, just watch them and let them go by themselves.

For some people, it is difficult to concentrate on the breath at the tip of the nose. Such people can keep their mind on the abdomen and be mindful of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. When you inhale, the abdomen extends or rises, and when you exhale, it contracts or falls. These movements of rising and falling can be the home object of meditation instead of the breath. Keep your mind on the abdomen and be really mindful of the rising from the beginning to the end, and also the falling movement from the beginning to the end. Your mind is like a jockey riding a horse; your mind and your breath are both moving. You may even put your hand on the abdomen to feel the rising and falling movements. After some time, you may be able to follow the rising and falling movements without your hand on the abdomen. If you are comfortable with just watching the breath, you need not go to the abdomen.

Do not have any expectations at this time of practice, do not expect to experience something strange or to see visions or whatever. Expectation is a mild form of greed or attachment that is a hindrance to concentration and has to be eliminated. If you have expectations, just be mindful of them or say to yourself, "expecting, expecting, expecting." Then go back to the breath or the movements of the abdomen.

Having meditated for ten or more minutes, you can practice walking meditation.

When you practice *vipassanā* meditation, it is important to keep mindfulness with you always. So, when you change from sitting to standing, keep mindfulness with you. Before standing up, therefore, be mindful of the intention to stand up or to get up. You may say to yourself "intention, intention, intention," or "desire, desire, desire." Then get up slowly, keeping your mind on your whole body, on the upward movements of your body, or saying to yourself, "getting up, getting up, getting up." And when you are standing, be mindful of the standing position or say to yourself, "standing, standing, standing."

When you walk, it is better to choose a walking path and stay on

it. Walk on it back and forth. When you walk, you walk slowly, keeping your mind on the foot or the movements of the foot, being aware of at least four stages of each step.

In order to make a step, first you raise your foot. Keep your mind on the foot and be mindful of the raising or lifting, "lifting, lifting, lifting." Then you push your foot forward, you move your foot forward. Be mindful of that moving, saying to yourself, "moving, moving, moving." When you put your foot down on the floor, be mindful of the putting down or just say, "putting, putting, putting." Then you shift weight to make the other step. Keep your mind on the whole body and say, "shifting, shifting, shifting." Then make the next step, being mindful of lifting, pushing, putting down, and shifting, moving slowly. Keep your eyes open and look at the floor about four or five feet in front of you. Do not close your eyes. You may fall if you close your eyes. Keep them a little open and look at the floor, look down.

When you reach the end of the walking space, you stop and be mindful of stopping or say to yourself, "stopping, stopping, stopping." When you want to turn around, be mindful of the desire or intention to turn around or say to yourself, "intention, intention, intention," or "desire, desire, desire" then you turn slowly. Be mindful of the turning movement or say to yourself, "turning, turning, turning." Then walk again, taking note of the different stages in each step, lifting, pushing, putting down, shifting, and so on, until you reach the other end of the walking space. Stop there and be mindful of stopping. Wanting to turn around, be mindful of turning around and then walk again. Also, when you walk, you may keep your hands in front or in the back or on the sides. So, you walk back and forth until the end of the walking period.

Walking is designed to exercise the body. When you are practicing for half an hour or one hour, walking may not be necessary but when you are on a retreat and practice the whole day, you need to move your body. At the end of the walking period, the sitting period begins again. So you go back to the sitting place, walking slowly, noting, being aware of the different stages and steps. Before lowering yourself, be mindful of the desire to sit down. Then lower yourself slowly, keeping your mind on the whole body. When the body

touches the floor, say "touching, touching, touching." Arrange your legs and hands, say "arranging, arranging, arranging." And then, go back to the breath and be mindful of the in-breath and out-breath. This way, you alternate sitting and walking and maintain your mindfulness, trying not to lose it at any moment during the retreat. During retreats, eating is also done with meditation. Everything has to be done with mindfulness. Even the activities in the bathroom should not escape your mindfulness.

After meditation, we share merit. It is a good practice to share merit with all beings whenever we have done some meritorious deeds.

> May all beings share this merit
> which we have thus acquired
> for the acquisition of
> all kinds of happiness.
>
> May beings inhabiting space and earth,
> deities and others of mighty power,
> share this merit of ours!
> May they long protect the Teachings!

Practical Vipassana Exercises

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APPENDIX

Below is a concise excerpted translation from the Pāḷi of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta accompanied by a commentary from the author, Mahāsī Sayādaw. This is offered as an expanded aid in this meditation technique, a reference to the source from which all Satipaṭṭhāna meditation arose, the words of the Buddha.

Techniques of Meditation

The Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta states:

"And moreover, monks, a monk, when he is walking, is aware of it thus: 'I walk'; or when he is standing, or sitting, or lying down, he is aware thereof."

"And moreover, monks, a monk, when he departs, or returns, when he looks at or looks away from, when he bends or stretches (his limbs), when he puts on the lower robe, the upper robe, or takes the bowl, when he is eating, drinking, chewing, savouring, or when he is obeying the calls of nature - he is aware of what he is doing. In going, standing, sitting, sleeping, watching, talking, or keeping silence, he knows what he is doing."

"And moreover, monks, a monk reflects upon this very body, however it be placed or disposed, with respect to the four elements."

"Herein, monks, when affected by a feeling of pleasure, a monk is aware of it as 'I feel a pleasurable feeling'. Likewise, he is aware when affected by a painful feeling."

"Herein, monks, if a monk has a lustful thought, he is aware that it is so, or if the thought is free from lust, is

aware that it is so. Herein, monks, when a monk is aware of sensual desire he reflects 'I have sensual desire'."

In accordance with these teachings of the Buddha, it has been stated in colloquial language thus: "rising" while the abdomen is rising; "falling" while the abdomen is falling; "bending" while the limbs are bending; "stretching" while the limbs are stretching; "wandering" while the mind is wandering; "thinking", "reflecting", or "knowing" while one is so engaged; "feeling stiff, hot," or "in pain" while one feels so; "walking, standing, sitting," or "lying" while one is so doing. Here it should be noted that walking and so on are stated in common words instead of "being aware of the inner wind element manifesting itself in the movement of the limbs," as is stated in the Pāḷi texts.

Rising and Falling Movement of the Abdomen

It is quite in agreement with the Buddha's teachings to contemplate on the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. Such rising and falling is a physical process (rūpa) caused by the pressure of the wind element. The wind element is included in the material group of the five aggregates (khandhā); in the tactile object of the twelve sense bases (āyatana); in the body impression of the eighteen elements (dhātu); in the wind element of the four material elements (mahābhūta); in the truth of suffering of the four noble truths (sacca). The material aggregate, a tactile object, a body impression and the truth of suffering are certainly objects for insight contemplation. Surely they are not otherwise.

The rising and falling movement of the abdomen is therefore a proper object for contemplation, and while so contemplating, being aware that it is but a movement of the wind element, subject to the laws of impermanence, suffering and unsubstantiality, is quite in agreement with the Buddha's discourses on khandhas, āyatanas, dhātus and saccas. While the abdomen is rising and falling, the pressure and movement experienced thereby is a manifestation of the wind element which is tactile, and perceiving that rightly as such is quite in accordance with what the Buddha taught as briefly shown below.

"Apply your mind thoroughly, monks, to body and regard it in its true nature as impermanent."

"Monks, when a monk sees the body which is impermanent, as impermanent, this view of his is right view."

"Herein, monks, a monk reflects: 'Such is material form, such is its genesis, such its passing away'."

"Apply your minds thoroughly, monks, to the tactile objects and regard their true nature as impermanent."

"Monks, when a monk sees tactile objects which are impermanent, this view of his is right view. However, by fully knowing and comprehending, by detaching himself from and abandoning the tactile objects, one is capable of extinguishing ill."

"In him who knows and sees tactile objects as impermanent, ignorance vanishes and knowledge arises."

"Herein, monks, a monk is aware of the organ of touch and tangibles."

"Whatever is an internal element of motion, and whatever is an external element of motion, just these are the element of motion. By means of perfect intuitive wisdom it should be seen of this as it really is, thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self'.

Thus it will be seen that the contemplation of the rising and the falling movement of the abdomen is in accord with the above discourses and also with the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Dhātumanasikārapabba — section on attention to the elements), Again, the wind element that causes the movement and pressure of the abdomen, comprised in the corporeality group, is the truth of suffering.

Part I • Basic Practice

Preparatory Stage

If you sincerely desire to develop contemplation and attain insight in this your present life, you must give up worldly thoughts and actions during the training. This course of action is for the purification of conduct, the essential preliminary step towards the proper development of contemplation. You must also observe the rules of discipline prescribed for laymen, (or for monks as the case may be) for they are important in gaining insight. For lay people, these rules comprise the eight precepts which Buddhist devotees observe on Sabbath days (uposatha) and during periods of meditation.[1] An additional rule is not to speak with contempt, in jest, or with malice to or about any of the noble ones who have attained states of sanctity.[2] If you have done so, then personally apologize to him or her or

[1] **The eight Uposatha precepts are:** abstention from 1) killing, 2) stealing, 3) all sexual intercourse, 4) lying, 5) intoxicants, 6) taking food after noon, 7) dance, song, music, shows (attendance and performance), the use of perfumes, ornaments, etc., and 8) using luxurious beds.

[2] There are four noble individuals (ariya-puggala). They are those who have obtained a state of sanctity:

a. The stream-winner (sotāpanna) is one who has become free from the first three of the ten fetters which bind him to the sensuous sphere, namely, personality belief, sceptical doubt, and attachment to mere rules and rituals.

b. The once-returner (sakadāgāmi) has weakened the fourth and fifth of the ten fetters, sensuous craving and ill-will.

c. The non-returner (anāgāmi) becomes fully free from the above-mentioned five lower fetters and is no longer reborn in the sensuous sphere before reaching nibbāna.

d. Through the path of holiness one further becomes free of the last five fetters: craving for fine material existence (in celestial worlds), craving for immaterial (purely mental) existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

make an apology through your meditation instructor. If in the past you have spoken contemptuously to a noble one who is at present unavailable or deceased, confess this offence to your meditation instructor or introspectively to yourself.

The old masters of Buddhist tradition suggest that you entrust yourself to the Enlightened One, the Buddha, during the training period, for you may be alarmed if it happens that your own state of mind produces unwholesome or frightening visions during contemplation. Also place yourself under the guidance of your meditation instructor, for then, he can talk to you frankly about your work in contemplation and give you the guidance he thinks necessary. These are the advantages of placing trust in the Enlightened One, the Buddha, and practising under the guidance of your instructor. The aim of this practice and its greatest benefit is release from greed, hatred and delusion, which are the roots of all evil and suffering. This intensive course in insight training can lead you to such release. So work ardently with this end in view so that your training will be successfully completed. This kind of training in contemplation, based on the foundations of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna), had been taken by successive Buddhas and noble ones who attained release. You are to be congratulated on having the opportunity to take the same kind of training they had undergone.

It is also important for you to begin your training with a brief contemplation on the 'four protections' which the Enlightened One, the Buddha, offers you for reflection. It is helpful for your psychological welfare at this stage to

reflect on them. The subjects of the four protective reflections are the Buddha himself, loving-kindness, the loathsome aspects of the body, and death. First, devote yourself to the Buddha by sincerely appreciating his nine chief qualities in this way:

> Truly, the Buddha is holy, fully enlightened, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a welfarer, world-knower, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and mankind, the awakened one and the exalted one.

Secondly, reflect upon all sentient beings as the receivers of your loving-kindness and identify yourself with all sentient beings without distinction, thus:-

> May I be free from enmity, disease and grief. As I am, so also may my parents, preceptors, teachers, intimate and indifferent and inimical beings be free from enmity, disease and grief. May they be released from suffering.

Thirdly, reflect upon the repulsive nature of the body to assist you in diminishing the unwholesome attachment that so many people have for the body. Dwell on some of its impurities, such as stomach, intestines, phlegm, pus, blood.[3] Ponder on these impurities so that the absurd fondness for the body may be eliminated.

The fourth protection for your psychological benefit is to reflect on the phenomenon of ever-approaching death. Buddhist teachings stress that life is uncertain,

[3] The thirty-two parts of the body as used in body contemplation are: head-hair, body-hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, lymph, tears, serum, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid, urine and brain.

but death is certain; life is precarious but death is sure. Life has death as its goal. There is birth, disease, suffering, old age, and eventually, death. These are all aspects of the process of existence.

To begin training, take the sitting posture with the legs crossed. You might feel more comfortable if the legs are not inter-locked but evenly placed on the ground, without pressing one against the other. If you find that sitting on the floor interferes with contemplation, then obtain a more comfortable way of sitting. Now proceed with each exercise in contemplation as described.

Basic Exercise I

Try to keep your mind (but not your eyes) on the abdomen. You will thereby come to know the movements of rising and falling of it. If these movements are not clear to you in the beginning, then place both hands on the abdomen to feel these rising and falling movements. After a short time the upward movement of exhalation will become clear. Then make a mental note of *rising* for the upward movement, *falling* for the downward movement. Your mental note of each movement must be made while it occurs. From this exercise you learn the actual manner of the upward and downward movements of the abdomen. You are not concerned with the form of the abdomen. What you actually perceive is the bodily sensation of pressure caused by the heaving movement of the abdomen. So do not dwell on the form of the abdomen but proceed with the exercise. For the beginner it is a very effective method of developing the faculties of attention,

concentration of mind and insight in contemplation. As practice progresses, the manner of the movements will be clearer. The ability to know each successive occurrence of the mental and physical processes at each of the six sense organs is acquired only when insight contemplation is fully developed. Since you are only a beginner whose attentiveness and power of concentration are still weak, you may find it difficult to keep the mind on each successive rising movement and falling movement as it occurs. In view of this difficulty, you may be inclined to think, "I just don't know how to keep my mind on each of these movement.' Then simply remember that this is a learning process. The rising and falling movements of the abdomen are always present and therefore there is no need to look for them. Actually it is easy for a beginner to keep his or her mind on these two simple movements. Continue with this exercise in full awareness of the abdomen's rising and falling movements. Never verbally repeat the words, rising, falling, and do not think of rising and falling as words. Be aware only of the actual process of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. Avoid deep or rapid breathing for the purpose of making the abdominal movements more distinct, because this procedure causes fatigue that interferes with the practice. Just be totally aware of the movements of rising and falling as they occur in the course of normal breathing.

Basic Exercise II

While occupied with the exercise of observing each of the abdominal movements, other mental activities may

occur between the noting of each rising and falling. Thoughts or other mental functions, such as intentions, ideas, imaginings, are likely to occur between each mental note of rising and falling. They cannot be disregarded. A mental note must be made of each as it occurs.

If you imagine something, you must know that you have done so and make a mental note, *imagining*. If you simply think of something, mentally note, *thinking*. If you reflect, *reflecting*. If you intend to do something, *intending*. When the mind wanders from the object of meditation which is the rising and falling of the abdomen, mentally note, *wandering*. Should you imagine you are going to a certain place, note *going*. When you arrive, *arriving*. When, in your thoughts, you meet a person, note *meeting*. Should you speak to him or her, *speaking*. If you imaginarily argue with that person, note *arguing*. If you envision or imagine a light or colour, be sure to note *seeing*. A mental vision must be noted on each occurrence of its appearance until it passes away. After its disappearance continue with Basic Exercise 1, by being fully aware of each movement of the rising and falling abdomen. Proceed carefully, without slackening. If you intend to swallow saliva while thus engaged, make a mental note *intending*. While in the act of swallowing, *swallowing*. If you spit, *spitting*. Then return to the exercise of noting rising and falling.

Suppose you intend to bend the neck, note *intending*. In the act of bending, *bending*. When you intend to straighten the neck, *intending*. In the act of straightening the neck, *straightening*. The neck movements of bending

and straightening must be done slowly. After mentally making a note of each of these actions, proceed in full awareness with noticing the movements of the rising and falling abdomen.

Basic Exercise III

Since you must continue contemplating for a long time while in one position, that of sitting or lying down[4], you are likely to experience an intense feeling of fatigue, stiffness in the body or in the arms and legs. Should this happen, simply keep the knowing mind on that part of the body where such feelings occur and carry on the contemplation, noting tired or stiff. Do this naturally; that is, neither too fast nor too slow. These feelings gradually become fainter and finally cease altogether. Should one of these feelings become more intense until the bodily fatigue or stiffness of joints is unbearable, then change your position. However, do not forget to make a mental note of *intending*, before you proceed to change your position. Each movement must be contemplated in its respective order and in detail.

If you intend to lift the hand or leg, make a mental note *intending*. In the act of lifting the hand or leg, *lifting*. Stretching either the hand or the leg, *stretching*. When you bend it, *bending*. When putting it down, *putting*. Should either the hand or leg touch, *touching*. Perform all of these actions in a slow and deliberate manner. As soon as you are settled in the new position, continue

[4] It is not advised that the meditator should use the lying posture except when it is time to sleep.

with the contemplation in another position keeping to the procedure outlined in this paragraph.

Should an itching sensation be felt in any part of the body, keep the mind on that part and make a mental note, *itching*. Do this in a regulated manner, neither too fast nor too slow. When the itching sensation disappears in the course of full awareness, continue with the exercise of noticing the rising and falling of the abdomen. Should the itching continue and become too strong and you intend to rub the itchy part, be sure to make a mental note, *intending*. Slowly lift the hand, simultaneously noting the actions of *lifting*; and *touching*, when the hand touches the part that itches. Rub slowly in complete awareness of *rubbing*. When the itching sensation has disappeared and you intend to discontinue rubbing be mindful by making the usual mental note of *intending*. Slowly withdraw the hand, concurrently making a mental note of the action, *withdrawing*. When the hand rests in its usual place touching the leg, *touching*. Then again devote your time to observing the abdominal movements.

If there is pain or discomfort, keep the knowing mind on that part of the body where the sensation arises. Make a mental note of the specific sensation as it occurs, such as *painful, aching, pressing, piercing, tired, giddy*. It must be stressed that the mental note must not be forced nor delayed but made in a calm and natural manner. The pain may eventually cease or increase. Do not be alarmed if it increases. Firmly continue the contemplation. If you do so, you will find that the pain will almost always cease. But if, after a time, the pain has

increased and becomes unbearable, you must ignore the pain and continue with the contemplation of rising and falling.

As you progress in mindfulness you may experience sensations of intense pain: stifling or choking sensations, such as pain from the slash of a knife, the thrust of a sharp-pointed instrument, unpleasant sensations of being pricked by sharp needles, or of small insects crawling over the body. You might experience sensations of itching, biting, intense cold. As soon as you discontinue the contemplation you may also feel that these painful sensations cease. When you resume contemplation you will have them again as soon as you gain in mindfulness. These painful sensations are not to be considered as something wrong. They are not manifestations of disease but are common factors always present in the body and are usually obscured when the mind is normally occupied with more conspicuous objects. When the mental faculties become keener you are more aware of these sensations. With the continued development of contemplation the time will come when you can overcome them and they will cease altogether. If you continue contemplation, firm in purpose, you will not come to any harm. Should you lose courage, become irresolute in contemplation and discontinue for some time, you may encounter these unpleasant sensations again and again as your contemplation proceeds. If you continue with determination you will most likely overcome these painful sensations and may never again experience them in the course of contemplation.

Should you intend to sway the body, then knowingly note *intending*. While in the act of swaying, *swaying*. When contemplating you may occasionally discover the body swaying back and forth. Do not be alarmed; neither be pleased nor wish to continue to sway. The swaying will cease if you keep the knowing mind on the action of swaying and continue to note *swaying* until the action ceases. If swaying increases in spite of your making a mental note of it, then lean against a wall or post or lie down for a while. Thereafter proceed with contemplation. Follow the same procedure if you find yourself shaking or trembling. When contemplation is developed you may sometimes feel a thrill or chill pass through the back or the entire body. This is a symptom of the feeling of intense interest, enthusiasm or rapture. It occurs naturally in the course of good contemplation. When your mind is fixed in contemplation you may be startled at the slightest sound. This takes place because you feel the effect of sensory impression more intensely while in a state of concentration.

If you are thirsty while contemplating, notice the feeling, *thirsty*. When you intend to stand, *intending*. Keep the mind intently on the act of standing up, and mentally note *standing*. When you look forward after standing up straight, note *looking, seeing*. Should you intend to walk forward, *intending*. When you begin to step forward, mentally note each step as *walking, walking*, or *left, right*. It is important for you to be aware of every moment in each step from the beginning to the end when you walk. Adhere to the same procedure when strolling or when taking walking exercise. Try to make a mental note of each step in two sections as follows:

lifting, putting, lifting, putting. When you have obtained sufficient practice in this manner of walking, then try to make a mental note of each step in three sections; *lifting, pushing, putting*; or *up, forward, down.*

When you look at the tap or water-pot on arriving at the place where you are to take a drink, be sure to make a mental note, *looking, seeing.*

When you stop walking, *stopping.*
When you stretch out the hand, *stretching.*
When you touch the cup, *touching.*
When you take the cup, *taking.*
When dipping the cup into the water, *dipping.*
When bringing the cup to the lips, *bringing.*
When the cup touches the lips, *touching.*
When you swallow, *swallowing.*
When returning the cup, *returning.*
When withdrawing the hand, *withdrawing.*
When you bring down the hand, *bringing.*
When the hand touches the side of the body, *touching.*
If you intend to turn round, *intending.*
When you turn round, *turning.*
When you walk forward, *walking.*
On arriving at the place where you intend to stop, *intending.*
When you stop, *stopping.*

If you remain standing for some time continue the contemplation of rising and falling. But if you intend to sit down, note *intending.* When you go to sit down, *walking.* On arriving at the place where you will sit,

arriving. When you turn to sit, *turning.* While in the act of sitting down, *sitting.* Sit down slowly, and keep the mind on the downward movement of the body. You must notice every movement in bringing the hands and legs into position. Then resume the practice of contemplating the abdominal movements.

Should you intend to lie down, note *intending.* Then proceed with the contemplation of every movement in the course of lying down: *lifting, stretching, putting, touching, lying.* Then take as the object of contemplation every movement in bringing the hands, legs and body into position. Perform these actions slowly. Thereafter, continue with noting rising and falling. Should pain, fatigue, itching, or any other sensation be felt, be sure to notice each of these sensations. Notice all feelings, thoughts, ideas, considerations, reflections; all movements of hands, legs, arms and body. If there is nothing in particular to note, put the mind on the rising and falling of the abdomen. When sleepy, make a mental note, *sleepy.* After you have gained sufficient concentration in contemplating you will be able to overcome drowsiness and you will feel refreshed as a result. Take up again the usual contemplation of the basic object. If you are unable to overcome the drowsy feeling, you must continue contemplating drowsiness until you fall asleep.

The state of sleep is the continuity of sub-consciousness. It is similar to the first state of rebirth consciousness and the last state of consciousness at the moment of death. This state of consciousness is feeble and therefore, unable to be aware of an object. When you

awake, the continuity of sub-consciousness occurs regularly between moments of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking. Because these occurrences are of brief duration they are not usually clear and therefore not noticeable. Continuity of sub-consciousness remains during sleep — a fact which becomes obvious when you wake up; for it is in the state of wakefulness that thoughts and sense objects become distinct.

Contemplation should start at the moment you wake up. Since you are a beginner, it may not be possible yet for you to start contemplating at the very first moment of wakefulness. But you should start with it when you remember that you are to contemplate. For example, if on awakening you reflect on something, you should become aware of the fact and begin your contemplation by a mental note, *reflecting*. Then proceed with the contemplation of rising and falling. When getting up from the bed, mindfulness should be directed to every detail of the body's activity. Each movement of the hands, legs and rump must be performed in complete awareness. Are you thinking of the time of day when awakening? If so, note *thinking*. Do you intend to get out of bed? If so, note *intending*. If you prepare to move the body into position for rising, note *preparing*. As you slowly rise, *rising*. Should you remain sitting for any length of time, revert to contemplating the abdominal movements.

Perform the acts of washing the face or taking a bath in due order and in complete awareness of every detailed movement; for instance, *looking, seeing, stretching,*

holding, touching, feeling cold, rubbing. In the acts of dressing, making the bed, opening and closing doors and windows, handling objects, be occupied with every detail of these actions in sequence.

You must attend to the contemplation of every detail in the action of eating;

When you look at the food, *looking, seeing*.
When you arrange the food, *arranging*.
When you bring the food to the mouth, *bringing*.
When you bend the neck forwards, *bending*.
When the food touches the mouth, *touching*.
When placing the food in the mouth, *placing*.
When the mouth closes, *closing*.
When withdrawing the hand, *withdrawing*.
Should the hand touch the plate, *touching*.
When straightening the neck, *straightening*.
When in the act of chewing, *chewing*.
When you are aware of the taste, *knowing*.
When swallowing the food, *swallowing*.
While swallowing the food, should the food be felt touching the sides of the gullet, *touching*.

Perform contemplation in this manner each time you take a morsel of food until you finish your meal. In the beginning of the practice there will be many omissions. Never mind. Do not waver in your effort. You will make fewer omissions if you persist in your practice. When you reach an advanced stage of the practice you will also to be able to notice more details than those mentioned here.

Advancement in Contemplation

After having practised for a day and a night you may find your contemplation considerably improved. You may be able to prolong the basic exercise of noticing the abdominal movements. At this time you will notice that there is generally a break between the movements of rising and falling. If you are in the sitting posture, fill in this gap with a mental note of the fact of sitting in this way: *rising, falling, sitting.* When you make a mental note of sitting, keep your mind on the erect position of the upper body. When you are lying down you should proceed with full awareness as follows: *rising, falling, lying.* If you find this easy, continue with noticing these three sections. Should you notice that a pause occurs at the end of the rising as well as at the end of the falling movement, then continue in this manner: *rising, sitting, falling, sitting.* Or when lying down: *rising, lying, falling, lying.* Suppose you no longer find it easy to make a mental note of three or four objects in the above manner. Then revert to the initial procedure of noting only the two sections; rising and falling.

While engaged in the regular practise of contemplating bodily movements you need not be concerned with objects of seeing and hearing. As long as you are able to keep your mind on the abdominal movements of rising and falling it is assumed that the purpose of noticing the acts and objects of seeing is also served. However, you may intentionally look at an object; two or three times, note as *seeing.* Then return to the awareness of the abdominal movements. Suppose some person comes into your view. Make a mental note of *seeing,* two or

three times and then resume attention to the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. Did you happen to hear the sound of a voice? Did you listen to it? If so make a mental note of *hearing, listening* and revert to rising and falling. But suppose you heard loud noises, such as the barking of dogs, loud talking or shouting. If so, immediately make a mental note two or three times, *hearing,* then return to your basic exercise. If you fail to note and dismiss such distinctive sounds as they occur, you may inadvertently fall into reflections about them instead of proceeding with intense attention to rising and falling, which may then become less distinct and clear. It is by such weakened attention that mind-defiling passions breed and multiply. If such reflections do occur, make a mental note *reflecting,* two or three times, then again take up the contemplation of rising and falling. Should you forget to make a mental note of body, leg or arm movements, then mentally note *forgetting,* and resume your usual contemplation on abdominal movements. You may feel at times that breathing is slow or that the rising and falling movements are not clearly perceived. When this happens, and you are in the sitting position, simply move the attention to *sitting, touching;* or if you are lying down, to *lying, touching.* While contemplating touching, your mind should not be kept on the same part of the body but on different parts successively. There are several places of touch and at least six or seven should be contemplated.[5]

[5] Some of these points where the body sensation may be observed are: where thigh and knee touch, or where the hands are placed together, or finger to finger, thumb to thumb, closing of the eyelids, the tongue inside the mouth, the lips touching when the mouth is closed.

Basic Exercise IV

Up to this point you have devoted quite some time to the training course. You might begin to feel lazy after deciding that you have made inadequate progress. By no means give up. Simply note the fact, *lazy*. Before you gain sufficient strength in attention, concentration and insight, you may doubt the correctness or usefulness of this method of training. In such a circumstance turn to contemplation of the thought, *doubtful*. Do you anticipate or wish for good results? If so, make such thoughts the subject of your contemplation; *anticipating*, or *wishing*. Are you attempting to recall the manner in which the training was conducted up to this point? Yes? Then take up contemplation on *recollecting*. Are there occasions when you examine the object of contemplation in order to determine whether it is mind or matter? If so, then be aware of *examining*. Do you regret that there is no improvement in your contemplation? If so, attend to the feeling of regret. Conversely, are you happy that your contemplation is improving? If you are, then contemplate the feeling of being happy. This is the way in which you make a mental note of every item of mental behaviour as it occurs, and if there are no intervening thoughts or perceptions to note, you should revert to the contemplation of rising and falling. During a strict course of meditation, the time of practice is from the first moment you wake up until the last moment before you fall asleep. To reiterate, you must be constantly occupied either with the basic exercise or with mindful attention throughout the day and during those night hours when you are not asleep.

There must be no relaxation. Upon reaching a certain stage of progress with contemplation you will not feel sleepy in spite of these prolonged hours of practise. On the contrary, you will be able to continue the contemplation day and night.

Summary

It has been emphasized during this brief outline of the training that you must contemplate on each mental occurrence, good or bad; on each bodily movement large or small; on every sensation (bodily or mental feeling) pleasant or unpleasant; and so on. If, during the course of training, occasions arise when there is nothing special to contemplate upon, be fully occupied with attention to the rising and falling of the abdomen. When you have to attend to any kind of activity that necessitates walking, then, in complete awareness, each step should be briefly noted as *walking, walking* or *left, right*. But when you are taking a walking exercise, contemplate on each step in three sections; *up, forward, down*. The student who thus dedicates himself or herself to the training day and night, will be able in not too long a time, to develop concentration to the initial stage of the fourth degree of insight (knowledge of arising and passing away)[6] and onward to higher stages of insight meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā).

[6] Taruna-udayabbaya-ṭāṇa - On the degrees of insight knowledge see the Progress of Insight by the Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw (Published by The Forest Hermitage, Kandy, Sri Lanka).

Part II • Progressive Practice

When as mentioned above, by dint of diligent practice, mindfulness and concentration have improved, the meditator will notice the pairwise occurrence of an object and the knowing of it, such as the rising and awareness of it, the falling and awareness of it, sitting and awareness of it, bending and awareness of it, stretching and awareness of it, lifting and awareness of it, putting down and awareness of it. Through concentration attention (mindfulness) he knows how to distinguish each bodily and mental process: "The rising movement is one process; the knowing of it is another". He realises that each act of knowing has the nature of 'going towards an object.' Such a realisation refers to the characteristic function of the mind as inclining towards an object, or cognising an object. One should know that the more clearly a material object is noticed, the clearer becomes the mental process of knowing it. This fact is stated thus in the Visuddhimagga:

> "For in proportion as materiality becomes quite definite, disentangled and quite clear to him, so the immaterial states that have that materiality as their object become plain of themselves too". ('*The Path of Purification*', translated by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli).

When the meditator comes to know the difference between a bodily process and a mental process, should he be a simple man, he would reflect from direct experience thus: "There is the rising and the knowing it; the falling and knowing it, and so on and so forth. There is nothing else besides them. The words 'man' or

'woman' refer to the same process; there is no 'person' or 'soul'." Should he be a well-informed man, he would reflect from direct knowledge of the difference between a material process as object and a mental process of knowing it, thus: "It is true that there are only body and mind. Besides them there none such entities as man or woman. While contemplating one notices a material process as object and a mental process of knowing it; and it is to that pair alone that the terms of conventional usage 'being', 'person' or 'soul', 'man' or 'woman' refer. But apart from that dual process there is no separate person or being, I or another, man or woman". When such reflections occur, the meditator must note "reflecting, reflecting" and go on observing the rising of the abdomen, and its falling.[7]

With further progress in meditation, to the conscious state of an intention is evident before a bodily movement occurs. To the meditator first notices that intention. Though also at to the start of his practice, he does notice "intending, intending" (for instance, to bend an arm), yet he cannot notice that state of consciousness distinctly. Now, at this more advanced stage, he clearly notices to the consciousness consisting of to the intention to bend. So he notices first to the conscious state of an intention to make a bodily movement; then he notices to the particular bodily movement. At to the beginning, because of omission to notice an intention, he thinks that bodily movement is quicker than to the mind knowing it. Now, at this advanced stage, mind appears to

[7] The preceding section describes the 'analytical knowledge of body and mind' (nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ṭāṇa), belong to the 'Purification of View'.

be to the forerunner. To the meditator readily notices the intention of bending, stretching, sitting, standing, going, and so on. He also clearly notices to the actual bending, stretching, etc. So he realises to the fact that mind knowing a bodily process is quicker than to the material process. He experiences directly that a bodily process takes place after a preceding intention. Again he knows from direct experience that to the intensity of heat or cold increases while he is noticing "hot, hot" or "cold, cold." In contemplating regular and spontaneous bodily movements such as to the rising and falling of to the abdomen, he notices one after another continuously. He also notices to the arising in him of mental images such as to the Buddha, an arahat, as well as any kind of sensation that arises in his body (such as itch, ache, heat), with attention directed on to the particular spot where to the sensation occurs. One sensation has hardly disappeared, then another arises, and he notices them all accordingly. While noticing every object as it arises he is aware that a mental process of knowing depends on an object. Sometimes, to the rising and falling of to the abdomen is so faint that he finds nothing to notice. Then, it occurs to him that there can be no knowing without an object. When no noticing of to the rising and falling is possible one should be aware of sitting and touching or lying and touching. Touching is to be noticed alternatively. For example, after noticing "sitting", notice to the touch sensation at to the right foot (caused by its contact with to the ground or seat). Then, after noticing "sitting", notice to the touch sensation at to the left foot. In to the same manner, notice to the touch sensation at several places. Again, in noticing

seeing, hearing, to the meditator comes to know clearly that seeing arises from to the contact of eye and visual object and hearing arises from to the contact of ear and sound.

Further he reflects: "Material processes of bending, stretching and so on, follow mental processes of intending to bend, stretch and so forth. He goes on to reflect: "One's body becomes hot or cold because of to the element of heat or cold; to the body exists on food and nourishment; consciousness arises because there are objects to notice: seeing arises through visual objects; hearing through sounds, and also because there are to the sense organs, eye, ear etc., as conditioning factors. Intention and noticing result from previous experiences; feelings (sensations) of all kinds are to the consequences of previous kamma in to the sense that material processes and mental processes take place ever since birth because of previous kamma. There is nobody to create this body and mind, and all that happens has causal factors". Such reflections come to the meditator while he is noticing any object as it arises. He does not stop doing so to take time to reflect. While noticing objects as they arise these reflections are so quick that they appear to be automatic. To the meditator, then, must note: "Reflecting, reflecting, recognising, recognising", and continue noticing objects as usual. After having reflected that material processes and mental processes being noticed are conditioned by to the previous processes of to the same nature, to the meditator reflects further that body and mind in to the former existences were conditioned by to the preceding causes, that in to the following existences body and mind

will result from to the same causes, and apart from this dual process there is no separate 'being' or 'person', only causes and effects taking place. Such reflections must also be noticed and then contemplation should go on as usual.[8] Such reflections will be many in to the case of persons with a strong intellectual bent and less in to the case of those with no such bent. Be that as it may, energetic noticing must be made of all these reflections. Noticing them will result in their reduction to a minimum, allowing insight to progress unimpeded by an excess of such reflections. It should be taken for granted that a minimum of reflections will suffice here.

When concentration is practised in an intensive manner, to the meditator may experience almost unbearable sensations, such as itching, aches, heat, dullness and stiffness. If mindful noticing is stopped, such sensations will disappear. When noticing is resumed, they will reappear. Such sensations arise in consequence of to the body's natural sensitivity and are not to the symptoms of a disease. If they are noticed with energetic concentration they fade away gradually.

Again, to the meditator sometimes sees images of all kinds as if seeing them with his own eyes; for example, to the Buddha comes into to the scene in glorious radiance; a procession of monks in to the sky; pagodas (dagobas) and images of to the Buddha; meeting with beloved ones; trees or woods, hills or mountains, gardens, buildings; finding oneself face to face with bloated dead bodies or skeletons; swelling of one's body, covered with

[8] The preceding section refers to 'knowledge by discerning conditionality' (paccaya-pariggaha-ṭāṇa), belonging to to the 'Purification by Overcoming Doubt'.

blood, falling into pieces and reduced to a mere skeleton, seeing in one's body to the entrails and vital organs and even germs; seeing to the denizens of to the hells and heavens. These are nothing but creatures of one's imagination sharpened by intense concentration. They are similar to what one comes across in dreams. They are not to be welcomed and enjoyed, nor need one be afraid of them. These objects seen in to the course of contemplation are not real; they are mere images or imaginations, whereas to the mind that sees those objects is a reality. But purely mental processes, unconnected with fivefold sense impressions, cannot easily be noticed with sufficient clarity and detail. Hence principal attention should be given to sense objects which can be noticed easily, and to those mental processes which arise in connection with sense perceptions. So whatever object appears, to the meditator should notice it, saying mentally, "seeing, seeing" until it disappears. It will either move away, fade away or break asunder. At to the outset, this will take several noticings, say about five to ten. But when insight develops, to the object will disappear after a couple of noticings. However, if to the meditator wishes to enjoy to the sight, or to look closely into to the matter, or gets scared of it, then it is likely to linger on. If to the object be induced deliberately, then through delight it will last a long time. So care must be taken not to think of or incline towards extraneous matters while one's concentration is good. If such thoughts come in, they must be instantly noticed and dispelled. In to the case of some persons they experience no extraordinary objects or feelings and, while contemplating as usual, become

lazy. They must notice this laziness thus: "lazy, lazy", until they overcome it. At this stage, whether or not to the meditators come across extraordinary objects or feelings they know clearly to the initial, to the intermediate and to the final phases of every noticing. At to the beginning of to the practice, while noticing one object, they had to switch onto a different object that arose, but they did not notice clearly to the disappearance of to the previous object. Now, only after cognising to the disappearance of an object, they notice to the new object that arises. Thus they have a clear knowledge of to the initial, to the intermediate and to the final phases of to the object noticed.

At this stage when to the meditator becomes more practised he perceives in every act of noticing that an object appears suddenly and disappears instantly. His perception is so clear that he reflects thus: "All comes to an end; all disappears. Nothing is impermanent; it is truly impermanent". His reflection is quite in line with what is stated in to the Commentary to to the Pali Text: "All is impermanent, in to the sense of destruction, non-existence after having been". He reflects further, "It is through ignorance that we enjoy life. But in truth, there is nothing to enjoy. There is a continuous arising and disappearing by which we are harassed ever and anon. This is dreadful indeed. At any moment we may die and everything is sure to come to an end. This universal impermanence is truly frightful and terrible". His reflection agrees with to the commentarial statement: "What is impermanent is painful, painful in to the sense of terror; painful because of oppression by rise and fall". Again, experiencing severe pains he reflects thus: "All is

pain, all is bad". This reflection agrees with what to the Commentary states: "He looks on pain as a barb; as a boil; as a dart". He further reflects: "This is a mass of suffering, suffering that is unavoidable. Arising and disappearing, it is worthless. One cannot stop its process. It is beyond one's power. It takes its natural course". This reflection is quite in agreement with to the Commentary: "What is painful is not self, not self in to the sense of having no core, because there is no exercising of power over it". To the meditator must notice all these reflections and go on contemplating as usual.

Having thus seen to the three characteristics by direct experience, to the meditator, by inference from to the direct experience of to the objects noticed, comprehends all to the objects not yet noticed as being impermanent, subject to suffering, and without a self.

In respect of objects not personally experienced, he concludes: "They too are constituted in to the same way: impermanent, painful and without a self". This is an inference from his present direct experience. Such a comprehension is not clear enough in to the case of one with less intellectual capacity or limited knowledge who pays no attention to a reflection but simply goes on noticing objects. But such a comprehension occurs often to one who yields to reflection, which, in some cases, may occur at every act of noticing. Such excessive reflecting, however, is an impediment to to the progress of insight. Even if no such reflections occur at this stage, comprehension will nevertheless become increasingly clear at to the higher stages. Hence, no attention should be given to reflections. While giving more attention to to

the bare noticing of objects, to the meditator must, however, also notice these reflections if they occur, but he should not dwell on them.[9]

After comprehending to the three characteristics, to the meditator no longer reflects but goes on with noticing those bodily and mental objects which present themselves continuously. Then at to the moment when to the five mental faculties, namely, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and knowledge, are properly balanced, to the mental process of noticing accelerates as if it becomes uplifted, and to the bodily and mental processes to be noticed also arise much quicker. In a moment of in-breathing to the rising of to the abdomen presents itself in quick succession, and to the falling also becomes correspondingly quicker. Quick succession is also evident in to the process of bending and stretching. Slight movements are felt spreading all over to the body. In several cases, prickly sensations and itching appear in quick succession momentarily. By and large, these are feelings hard to bear. To the meditator cannot possibly keep pace with to the quick succession of varied experiences if he attempts to notice them by name. Noticing has here to be done in a general manner, but with mindfulness. At this stage one need not try to notice details of to the objects arising in quick succession, but one should notice them generally. If one wishes to name them, a collective designation will be sufficient. If one attempts to follow them in a detailed manner, one will get tired soon. To the important thing is

[9] The preceding paragraphs refer to to the 'knowledge of comprehension' samasana-ṭāṇa.

to notice clearly and to comprehend what arises. At this stage, to the usual contemplation focused on a few selected objects should be set aside and mindful noticing should attend to every object that arises at to the six sense doors. Only when one is not keen on this sort of noticing, then one should revert to to the usual contemplation.

Practical Vipassanā Meditation Exercises

The following is a talk by the Ven. Mahāsī Sayādaw (Aggamahāpaṇḍita) given to meditators on their induction at Mahāsī Meditation Centre, Rangoon, Burma. It was translated from the Burmese by U Nyi Nyi, and edited in 1997 by Bhikkhu Pesala.

The practice of Vipassanā or Insight Meditation is the effort to understand correctly the nature of the mental and physical phenomena within one's own body. Physical phenomena are the things or objects that one clearly perceives around and within one. The whole of one's body constitutes a group of material qualities (rūpa). Mental phenomena are acts of consciousness or awareness (nāma). These are clearly perceived whenever things are seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched, or thought of. We must make ourselves aware of these mental phenomena by observing them and noting thus: 'Seeing, seeing', 'hearing, hearing', 'smelling, smelling', 'tasting, tasting', 'touching, touching', or 'thinking, thinking'.

Every time one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches, or thinks, one should make a note of the fact. However, in the beginning of one's practice, one cannot make a note all of these events. One should, therefore, begin with noting those events which are conspicuous and easily perceivable.

With every act of breathing, the abdomen rises and falls — this movement is always evident. This is the material quality known as the element of motion (vāyodhātu).

One should begin by noting this movement, which may be done by mentally observing the abdomen. You will find the abdomen rising when you breathe in, and falling when you breathe out. The rising should be noted mentally as 'rising', and the falling as 'falling'. If the movement is not evident by just noting it mentally, keep touching the abdomen with the palm of your hand. Do not alter the manner of your breathing. Neither slow it down, nor make it faster. Do not breathe too vigorously, either. You will tire if you change the manner of your breathing. Breathe steadily as usual and note the rising and falling of the abdomen as they occur. Note it mentally, not verbally.

In vipassanā meditation, what you name or say doesn't matter. What really matters is to know or perceive. While noting the rising of the abdomen, do so from the beginning to the end of the movement just as if you are seeing it with your eyes. Do the same with the falling movement. Note the rising movement in such a way that your awareness of it is concurrent with the movement itself. The movement and the mental awareness of it should coincide in the same way as a stone thrown hits the target. Similarly with the falling movement.

Your mind may wander elsewhere while you are noting the abdominal movement. This must also be noted by mentally saying, 'wandering, wandering'. When this has been noted once or twice, the mind stops wandering, in which case you return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If the mind reaches somewhere, note as 'reaching, reaching'. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. If you imagine meeting somebody, note

as 'meeting, meeting'. Then return to the rising and falling. If you imagine meeting and talking to somebody, note as 'talking, talking'.

In short, whatever thought or reflection occurs should be noted. If you imagine, note as 'imagining'. If you think, 'thinking'. If you plan, 'planning'. If you perceive, 'perceiving'. If you reflect, 'reflecting'. If you feel happy, 'happy'. If you feel bored, 'bored'. If you feel glad, 'glad'. If you feel disheartened, 'disheartened'. Noting all these acts of consciousness is called cittānupassanā.

Because we fail to note these acts of consciousness, we tend to identify them with a person or individual. We tend to think that it is 'I' who is imagining, thinking, planning, knowing or perceiving. We think that there is a person who, from childhood onwards, has been living and thinking. Actually, no such person exists. There are instead only these continuing and successive acts of consciousness. That is why we have to note these acts of consciousness and know them for what they are. So we have to note each and every act of consciousness as it arises. When so noted, it tends to disappear. We then return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

When you have sat meditating for a long time, sensations of stiffness and heat will arise in your body. These are to be noted carefully too. Similarly with sensations of pain and fatigue. All of these sensations are dukkhavedanā (feeling of unsatisfactoriness) and noting them is vedanānupassanā. Failure or omission to note these sensations makes you think, "I am stiff, I am feeling hot, I am in pain. I was alright a moment ago. Now I am uneasy with these unpleasant sensations." The

identification of these sensations with the ego is mistaken. There is really no 'I' involved, only a succession of one new unpleasant sensation after another.

It is just like a continuous succession of new electrical impulses that light up an electric lamp. Every time unpleasant contacts are encountered in the body, unpleasant sensations arise one after another. These sensations should be carefully and intently noted, whether they are sensations of stiffness, of heat, or of pain. In the beginning of one's meditation practice, these sensations may tend to increase and lead to a desire to change one's posture. This desire should be noted, after which the meditator should return to noting the sensations of stiffness, heat etc.

There is a saying, "Patience leads to Nibbāna." This saying is particularly relevant in meditation practice. One must be patient to meditate. If one shifts or changes one's posture too often because one cannot bear the sensation of stiffness or heat that arises, good concentration (samādhi) cannot develop. If concentration cannot develop, insight cannot result and there can be no attainment of the path (magga), the fruit of that path (phala) or nibbāna. That is why patience is needed in meditation. It is mostly patience with unpleasant sensations in the body like stiffness, heat, pain and other unpleasant sensations. On the appearance of such sensations one should not immediately change one's posture. One should continue patiently, just noting as 'stiff, stiff' or 'hot, hot'. Moderate unpleasant sensations will disappear if one

notes them patiently. When concentration is strong, even intense sensations tend to disappear. One then reverts to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

One will, of course, have to change one's posture if the sensations do not disappear even after noting them for a long time, or if they become unbearable. One should then begin by noting 'wanting to change, wanting to change'. If one raises the arm, note as 'raising, raising'. If one moves, note as 'moving, moving'. This change should be made gently and noted as 'raising, raising', 'moving, moving' and 'touching, touching'.

If the body sways, note 'swaying, swaying'. If you raise the foot, note 'raising, raising'. If you move it, note 'moving, moving'. If you drop it, note 'dropping, dropping'. When there is no more movement, return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. There must be no gaps, but continuity between a preceding act of noting and a succeeding one, between a preceding state of concentration and a succeeding one, between a preceding act of intelligence and a succeeding one. Only then will there be successive and ascending stages of maturity in the meditator's understanding. Knowledge of the path and it fruition are attained only when there is this kind of accumulated momentum. The meditative process is like that of producing fire by energetically and unremittingly rubbing two sticks of wood together to generate enough heat to make fire.

In the same way, the noting in vipassanā meditation should be continuous and unremitting, without any interval between acts of noting, whatever phenomena may arise. For instance, if a sensation of itchiness

intervenes and the meditator desires to scratch because it is hard to bear, both the sensation and the desire to get rid of it should be noted, without immediately getting rid of the sensation by scratching.

If one perseveres, the itchiness will generally disappear, in which case one reverts to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If the itchiness does not disappear, one may eliminate it by scratching, but first the desire to do so should be noted. All the movements involved in the process of eliminating the itch should be noted, especially the touching, pulling and pushing, and scratching movements, eventually returning to the rising and falling of the abdomen.

Whenever you change your posture, begin by noting your intention or desire to change, and note every movement closely, such as rising from the sitting posture, raising the arm, moving and stretching it. You should note the movements at the same time as making them. As your body sways forward, note it. As you rise, the body becomes light and rises. Focus your mind on this, you should gently note as 'rising, rising'.

A meditator should behave like a weak invalid. People in normal health rise easily and quickly, or abruptly. Not so with feeble invalids, who do so slowly and gently. The same is the case with people suffering from backache who rise gently lest the back hurts and causes pain. So also with meditators. They shoud make changes of posture gradually and gently; only then will mindfulness, concentration and insight be clear. Begin, therefore, with gentle and gradual movements. When rising, the meditator must do so gently like an invalid, at the same

time noting as 'rising, rising'. Not only this: though the eye sees, the meditator must act as if blind. Similarly when the ear hears. While meditating, the meditator's concern is only to note. What one sees and hears are not one's concern. So whatever strange or striking things one may see or hear, one must behave as if one does not see or hear them, merely noting carefully.

When making bodily movements, the meditator should do so slowly, gently moving the arms and legs, bending or stretching them, lowering the head and raising it up. When rising from the sitting posture, one should do so gradually, noting as 'rising, rising'. When straightening up and standing, note as 'standing, standing'. When looking here and there, note as 'looking, seeing'. When walking, note the steps, whether they are taken with the right or the left foot. You must be aware of all the successive movements involved, from the raising of the foot to the dropping of it. Note each step taken, whether with the right foot or the left foot. This is the manner of noting when one walks fast.

It will be enough if you note thus when walking fast and walking some distance. When walking slowly or pacing up and down, three stages should be noted for each step: when the foot is raised, when it is pushed forward, and when it is dropped. Begin with noting the raising and dropping movements. One must be fully aware of the raising of the foot. Similarly, when the foot is dropped, one should be fully aware of the 'heavy' falling of the foot.

One must walk noting as 'raising, dropping' with each step. This noting will become easier after about two days.

Then go on to noting the three movements as described above, as 'raising, pushing forward, dropping'. In the beginning, it will suffice to note one or two movements only, thus 'right step, left step' when walking fast and 'raising, dropping' when walking slowly. If when walking thus, you want to sit down, note as 'wanting to sit down, wanting to sit down'. When actually sitting down, note attentively the 'heavy' falling of your body.

When you are seated, note the movements involved in arranging your legs and arms. When there are no such movements of the body, note the rising and falling of the abdomen. If, while noting thus, stiffness or sensation of heat arise in any part of your body, note them. Then return to 'rising, falling'. If a desire to lie down arises, note it and the movements of your legs and arms as you lie down. The raising of the arm, the moving of it, the resting of the elbow on the floor, the swaying of the body, the stretching of the legs, the listing of the body as one slowly prepares to lie down — all these movements should be noted.

To note thus as you lie down is important. In the course of this movement (that is, lying down), you can gain distinctive knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the path and its fruition). When concentration and insight are strong, distinctive knowledge can come at any moment. It can arise in a single 'bend' of the arm or in a single 'stretch' of the arm. That was how Venerable Ānanda became an arahant.

Venerable Ānanda was trying strenuously to attain Arahantship overnight on the eve of the First Buddhist Council. He was practising the whole night the form of

vipassanā meditation known as kāyagatāsati, noting his steps, right and left, raising, pushing forward and dropping of the feet; noting, event by event, the mental desire to walk and the physical movements involved in walking. Although this went on until it was nearly dawn, he had not yet attained Arahantship. Realising that he had practised walking meditation to excess and that, in order to balance concentration and effort, he should practise meditation in the lying posture for a while, he entered his room. He sat on the bed and then lay down. While doing so and noting, 'lying, lying', he attained Arahantship in an instant.

Venerable Ānanda was only a stream-winner (sotāpanna) before he lay down. From the stage of a stream-winner he reached the stages of a once-returner (sakadāgāmi) a non-returner (anāgāmi) and an arahant (the final stage of the path). Reaching these three successive stages of the higher path took only a moment. Remember this example of Venerable Ānanda's attainment of Arahantship. Such attainment can come at any moment and need not take long.

That is why meditators should always note diligently. One should not relax one's effort, thinking, "this little lapse should not matter much." All movements involved in lying down and arranging the arms and legs should be carefully and unremittingly noted. If there is no movement, return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. Even when it is getting late and time for sleep, the meditator should not stop the noting. A really serious and energetic meditator should practise mindfulness as if forgoing sleep altogether. One should go on meditating

until one falls asleep. If mindfulness has the upper hand, one will not fall asleep. If, however, drowsiness is stronger, one will fall asleep. When one feels sleepy, one should note as 'sleepy, sleepy', if one's eyelids droop, as 'drooping'; if they become heavy or leaden, as 'heavy'; if the eyes smart, as 'smarting'. Noting thus, the drowsiness may pass and the eyes may become clear again. One should then note as 'clear, clear' and continue noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. However determined one may be, if real drowsiness intervenes, one does fall asleep. It is not difficult to fall asleep; in fact, it is easy. If you meditate in the lying posture, you soon become drowsy and easily fall asleep. That is why beginners should not meditate too much in the lying posture; they should meditate much more in the sitting and walking postures. However, as it grows late and becomes time for sleep, one should meditate in the lying position, noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. One will then naturally fall asleep.

The time one is asleep is the resting time for the meditator, but the really serious meditator should limit sleep to about four hours. This is the 'midnight time' permitted by the Buddha. Four hours sleep is quite enough. If the beginner thinks that four hours sleep is not enough for health, one may extend it to five or six hours. Six hours sleep is clearly enough.

When one wakes up, one should immediately resume noting. The meditator who is really intent on attaining the path and its fruition should rest from meditation only when asleep. At other times, in all waking moments, one

should be noting continually and without let up. That is why, as soon as one awakens, one should note the awakening state of mind as 'awakening, awakening'. If one cannot yet be aware of this, one should begin with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

If one intends to get up from the bed, one should note as 'intending to get up, intending to get up'. One should then note the movements one makes as one moves one's arms and legs. When one raises one's head and rises, one notes as 'rising, rising'. When one is seated, one notes as 'sitting, sitting'. If one makes any movements as one arranges one's arms and legs, all of these movements should also be noted. If there are no such changes, one should revert to noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen.

One should note when one washes one's face and when one takes a bath. As the movements involved in these acts are rather quick, as many of them should be noted as possible. There are then the acts of dressing, of tidying up the bed, of opening and closing the door; all these should also be noted as precisely as possible.

When one has one's meal and looks at the table, one should note as 'looking, seeing, looking, seeing'. When one extends one's hand towards the food, touches it, collects it and arranges it, handles it and brings it to the mouth, bends one head and puts the morsel into one's mouth, drops one's arm and raises one's head again, all these movements should be duly noted. (This way of noting is in accordance with the Burmese way of taking a meal. Those who use fork and spoon or chopsticks should note the movements in an appropriate manner.)

When one chews the food, one should note as 'chewing, chewing'. When one comes to know the taste of the food, one should note as 'knowing, knowing'. As one relishes the food and swallows it, as the food goes down one's throat, one should note all these events. This is how the meditator should note when taking each morsel of food. As one takes soup, all the movements involved such as extending the arm, handling the spoon, scooping with it and so on, should all be noted. To note thus at meal-times is rather difficult as there are so many things to observe and note. The beginner is likely to miss several things that should be noted, but one should resolve to note them all. One cannot, of course, help overlooking some, but as one's concentration deepens, one will be able to note all of these events precisely.

I have mentioned so many things for the meditator to note, but in brief, there are only a few things to remember. When walking fast, note as 'right step', 'left step', and as 'raising, dropping' when walking slowly. When sitting quietly, just note the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note the same when you are lying down, if there is nothing particular to note. While noting thus and if the mind wanders, note the acts of consciousness that arise. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note also the sensations of stiffness, pain, aching and itchiness as they arise. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note also, as they arise, the bending, stretching and moving of the limbs, the bending and raising of the head, the swaying and straightening of the body. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen.

As one goes on noting thus, one will be able to note more and more of these events. In the beginning, as the mind wanders here and there, one may miss many things, but one should not be disheartened. Every beginner encounters the same difficulty, but as one becomes more skilled, one becomes aware of every act of mind-wandering until, eventually, the mind does not wander any more. The mind is then rivetted onto the object of its attention, the act of mindfulness becoming almost simultaneous with the object of its attention. In other words, the rising of the abdomen becomes concurrent with the act of noting it, and similarly with the falling of the abdomen.

The physical object of attention and the mental act of noting occur as a pair. There is in this occurrence no person or individual involved, only the physical object and the mental act of noting it, occurring in tandem. The meditator will, in time, actually and personally experience these occurrences. While noting the rising and falling of the abdomen one will come to distinguish the rising of the abdomen as physical phenomenon and the mental act of noting it as mental phenomenon; similarly with the falling of the abdomen. Thus the meditator will distinctly realise the simultaneous occurrence in pairs of these psycho-physical phenomena.

With every act of noting, the meditator will come to know clearly that there are only this material quality which is the object of awareness or attention and the mental quality that makes a note of it. This discriminating knowledge is called analytical knowledge

of mind and matter (nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ṭāṇa), which is the beginning of insight knowledge (vipassanā-ṭāṇa). It is important to gain this knowledge correctly. This will be succeeded, as the meditator continues, by knowledge by discerning conditionality (paccaya-pariggaha-ṭāṇa).

As one goes on noting, one will see for oneself that what arises passes away after a short while. Ordinary people assume that both the material and mental phenomena persist throughout life, that is, from youth to adulthood. In fact, that is not so. There is no phenomenon that lasts for ever. All phenomena arise and pass away so rapidly that they do not last even for the twinkling of an eye. One will come to know this personally as one goes on noting. One will then become convinced of the impermanency of all such phenomena. Such conviction is called aniccānupassanā-ṭāṇa.

This knowledge will be succeeded by dukkhānupassanā-ṭāṇa, which realises that all this impermanency is suffering. The meditator is also likely to encounter all kinds of hardship in the body, which is just an aggregate of suffering. This is also dukkhānupassanā-ṭāṇa. Next, the meditator will become convinced that all these psycho-physical phenomena are occurring of their own accord, following nobody's will and subject to nobody's control. They constitute no individual or ego-entity. This realisation is anattānupassanā-ṭāṇa.

When, as one continues meditating, one comes to realise firmly that all these phenomena are anicca, dukkha and anatta, one will attain nibbāna. All the former Buddhas, Arahants and Ariyas realised nibbāna

by following this very path. All meditating meditators should recognize that they themselves are now on this satipaṭṭhāna path, in fulfilment of their wish for attainment of knowledge of the path, it fruition and nibbāna, following the ripening of their perfections (pāramī). They should feel glad at the prospect of experiencing the noble kind of tranquillity brought about by concentration and the supramundane knowledge or wisdom experienced by the Buddhas, Arahants and Ariyas, which they themselves have never experienced before. It will not be very long before they experience this knowledge for themselves. In fact, it may be within a month or twenty days of meditation practice. Those whose perfections are exceptional may have these experiences within seven days.

One should therefore be content in the faith that one will attain these insights in the time specified above, and that one will be freed of personality-belief and doubt, and thus saved from the danger of rebirth in the lower worlds. One should continue one's meditation practice optimistically with this faith.

May you all be able to practise meditation well and quickly attain that nibbāna which the Buddhas, Arahants and Ariyas have experienced!

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Well done! Well done! Well done!

The Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw

A Biographical Sketch

The Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw was born in the year 1904 at Seikkhun, a large, prosperous and charming village lying about seven miles to the west of the historic Shwebo town in Upper Burma. His parents, peasant proprietors by occupation, were U Kan Taw and Daw Oke. At the age of six he was sent to receive his early monastic eduction under U Ādicca, presiding monk of Pyinmana Monastery at Seikkhun. Six years later, he was initiated into the monastic Order as a novice (sāmaṇera) under the same teacher and given the name of Shin Sobhana (which means Auspicious).

The name befitted his courageous features and his dignified behaviour. He was a bright pupil, making remarkably quick progress in his scriptural studies. When U Ādicca left the Order, Shin Sobhana continued his studies under Sayādaw U Parama of Thugyi-kyaung Monastery, Ingyintaw-taik. At the age of nineteen he had to decide whether to continue in the Order and devote the rest of his life to the service of the Buddha Sāsana or

THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

Venerable U Sīlānanda

Edited by
Ruth-Inge Heinze, Ph.D.

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INTRODUCTION

The Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness is important for those who practice *vipassanā* meditation, because all instructions are directly or indirectly based on the teachings contained in this *sutta.* If you are serious about *vipassanā* meditation, you should know this *sutta* well.

We will use a revised translation of the original *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.* I call it "revised," because I used several translations and selected whatever was agreeable to me and combined my findings with my own translation. In this way, I came up with a somewhat new translation.

This exposition is based on the ancient commentary, the subcommentary, and the Burmese commentary written by the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw. At the invitation of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, he visited this country in 1979. The Venerable was a famous and successful meditation teacher, perhaps the best known Burmese meditation teacher in the West. Before he passed away in August 1982, he gave many talks on *vipassanā* meditation and other discourses of the Buddha. Records of his talks and some of his books have been translated into English and published in this country.

The full name of this *sutta* in Pāli is *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta,* which means *The Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness* or *The Setting Up of Mindfulness.* In this *sutta,* the Buddha gave instructions on how to practice *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation. There are four foundations of mindfulness explained in this *sutta* and also in this exposition.

Whenever Buddhists undertake something, they first pay homage to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. Therefore, whenever people write about a Buddhist topic, they first put the words, *Namō*

Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhasa, at the beginning of the book. We also will begin with "Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One."

Thus have I heard.[1]

Every *sutta* in the *Collection of Discourses* is introduced with the words, "Thus have I heard." The word "I" refers to the Venerable Ānanda who was the first cousin of the Buddha. Ānanda was his permanent personal attendant for twenty-five years. It is said that he was of the same age as the Buddha because he was born on the same day as the Buddha. The Buddha taught for forty-five years, but for the first twenty years had no permanent attendant. Sometimes, one *bhikkhu* served as his attendant and, at other times, another *bhikkhu.* From the twenty-first year onward, however, the Venerable Ānanda became his permanent personal attendant.

It is interesting to learn how the Venerable Ānanda was given this position. In the twenty-first year of his teaching, the Buddha announced that he needed a personal attendant. When he made this announcement, many of his chief disciples sought to become his attendant, but the Buddha refused to accept them. Then, in the assembly, some *bhikkhus* asked Ānanda to offer his services to the Buddha, but Ānanda said, "If Buddha really wants me to be his attendant he will ask me himself. I will not offer myself unless I am asked by the Buddha." So, eventually, the Buddha asked Ānanda to become his attendant.

Ānanda replied that he would accept the position only on certain conditions. There were actually eight conditions. The first four we call "rejections," and the other four "acquisitions." The four rejections were: First, the Buddha must not give him any robes for being his attendant. Second, he should not be given good food received by the Buddha for being his attendant. Third, he should not be asked to stay in the Buddha's fragrant cell or have a separate cell for himself. Fourth, if anyone should invite the Buddha to visit his house and partake of food, Ānanda should not be included in the invitation. These are the "four conditions of rejection." Venerable Ānanda did not want in any way to materially benefit from his relationship to the Buddha.

The "four conditions of acquisition" are: First, he must have the right to accept any invitation for the Buddha, and, once Ānanda had accepted the invitation, the Buddha must go to the place he had been invited to. Second, he should be permitted to bring to the Buddha, at any time, a devotee coming from a far-off place. Third, he should be permitted to place before the Buddha any problem as soon as it arose. If Ānanda had any doubt about anything, he should have the right to approach the Buddha and ask him to remove his doubts. That means, Buddha must always be available to him to answer any questions. Fourth, the Buddha should repeat to him any discourse delivered in Ānanda's absence. This last point is very important with respect to the words, "Thus have I heard."

Because the Buddha agreed to these conditions and the Venerable Ānanda became the personal attendant to the Buddha on these conditions, the Buddha always repeated to Ānanda any discourse delivered in the latter's absence. Therefore, the Venerable Ānanda knew all the discourses and teachings delivered by the Buddha.

In the book called *Expositor,* the commentary to the first book of the *Abhidhamma,* you find these words of praise for the Venerable Ānanda:

> The Elder was indeed of wide experience, a student of the Three *Pitakas* [the Three Divisions of the Buddha's Teachings]. He could learn, recite and preach, as he stood [that means, in one standing, he could learn, recite or preach] one thousand and five hundred stanzas or sixty thousand feet, as easily as though he were gathering creepers and flowers. That was the Elder's single course of exposition. None but the Buddha was able to teach or attain the distinction of teaching, so that this Elder knew the actual text word by word.[2]

Ānanda possessed a quick and keen intellect. The Buddha was the only person who could teach him, so, the Venerable Ānanda came to know everything the Buddha taught.

These words, "Thus have I heard" and the following were uttered by the Venerable Ānanda at the First Buddhist Council, held about

three months after the death of the Buddha. After the Buddha had died, the chief disciple, Mahā Kassapa, decided to hold a council and chose five hundred *arahats* to participate. At that council, all teachings of the Buddha were collected and carefully scrutinized. Only when the assembly was satisfied that these were the authentic teachings of the Buddha were these teachings admitted to the collection and recited in unison. Reciting in unison indicated that the teachings had been accepted unanimously by the council to be the authentic words of the Buddha. Because, at that time, it was not the practice to write down the Buddha's teachings, they were recorded by way of recitation.

Not only were the teachings recorded, but they were also classified into different collections. The most popular division was the division into *Pitakas.* These are the *Vinaya Pitaka,* the Division of Rules for Monks and Nuns; the *Sutta Pitaka,* the Division of Discourses; and the *Abhidhamma Pitaka,* the Division of the Higher Teachings. The *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* belongs to the Division of Discourses.

The collection of the teachings thus recorded was handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth until about five hundred years after the death of the Buddha when they were written down on palm leaves in Sri Lanka.

As mentioned above, at the First Buddhist Council, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa raised questions about the authenticity of the Buddha's teachings and there were two venerables who answered the questions of Mahā Kassapa. For the *Vinaya,* Division of Rules for Monks and Nuns, the Venerable Upali gave the answers and it was the Venerable Ānanda who responded for the *suttas,* the 84,000 sermons the Buddha taught.

When the Venerable Mahā Kassapa posed questions about the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta,* the Venerable Ānanda gave answers beginning with "Thus have I heard." By saying, "Thus have I heard," the Venerable Ānanda effaced himself and bore witness to the Master. He finalized the Buddha's words and established the Dhamma as the guide. When disclaiming that the words were his own invention and disclosing that he had previously heard these words uttered by the Buddha, he annihilated lack of faith in this Dhamma in gods and human beings. He instilled excellence of faith by saying: "This was acquired by me in the very presence of the Blessed One, so there need

be neither hesitation nor doubt about meaning or ideas or phrases or syllables."

> *Thus have I heard: At one time, the Blessed One was living in Kurus, where there was a market town of the Kurus, named Kammasadamma.*

"At one time": Although the exact time of delivering this *sutta* was known to the Venerable Ānanda, for the sake of brevity he only said, "at one time." For him it is a saving of labor, perhaps, but for us who belong to another era, it is definitely not a blessing, because we do not know exactly when this *sutta* was taught, at what time and in what year. If the Venerable Ānanda had mentioned all these details, we would be able to put this *sutta* and all the other teachings in chronological order, but now we cannot. We can only guess which *suttas* might have been taught before the others.

"In Kurus": "Kurus" is the name of a district or a small country in India. The Pāli term requires that the word be in the plural. Originally, it was the name of the people who first inhabited this district. When the name later was applied to the district, the plural lingered on. So, although the district was only one, in Pāli it requires the plural, hence, *kurusu,* "in Kurus."

"Where there was a market town of the Kurus, named Kammasadamma": The market town was called "Kammasadamma" because a cannibal king by the name of Kammasapada ("Speckled Foot") was subdued there. Some preferred the spelling "Kammāsadhamma" and explained that it was called *"kammāsa-dhamma"* because the traditional virtuous practice of the Kurus had been stained *(kammasa).*

> *There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus," and the bhikkhus replied, "Venerable Sir." And the Blessed One spoke as follows:*

The Buddha always addressed the monks as *bhikkhus. Bhikkhus* were the excellent persons who accepted his teachings. But this does not mean that, in saying *bhikkhus,* other people who were not monks

were not addressed. Moreover, anybody who accepts and follows the Buddha's teachings can be called a *bhikkhu* (in Pāli). So, when the Buddha said, *"bhikkhus,"* it must be understood that monks as well as nuns and lay people are addressed.

> *This is the only way, bhikkhus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for reaching the Noble Path, for the realization of nibbāna, namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.*

"This is the only way": To understand the explanation you should know the Pāli words for the "only way." It is, in Pāli, *ekāyana. Eka* means "one," and *āyana* means "way," so *ekāyana* means "one way." The word *ekāyana* is explained in five ways.

The first explanation is that it is the "single way" that does not branch off. There are no branches in this way, so that you can follow this way with assurance from beginning to deliverance.

The second explanation is that this way has to be trodden "alone." In practicing meditation, you are making this journey alone, without companions. You may be in a group, you may be in a retreat, but actually you are going your own way. You are alone. Nobody is with you. Nobody can give his or her concentration or wisdom to you and you cannot give any of your concentration or wisdom to anybody else. So, although you may be in a group, you are really practicing alone. Therefore, this is the "only way," the "way to be trodden alone."

The third explanation is that this is the "way of the One." The "way of the One" means the "way of the Excellent One," the way discovered by the Buddha.

The fourth explanation is that it is the "only way" because it is the way that leads only to one destination, that is, to *nibbāna.* So, when you go along this way, you will surely reach the destination. *Nibbāna* will be the only destination you reach, when you go along this way.

The fifth explanation is that this is the "only way to reach *nibbāna.*" There is no other way. The *satipaṭṭhāna* or mindfulness way is the only way to *nibbāna,* the end of suffering, the destruction of mental defilements.

"For the purification of beings": That means for the purification of the minds of all beings. The minds of all beings are tainted with or contaminated by different defilements. Most of the time your minds are not pure. There are attachments or craving, greed, hatred or anger, ignorance, pride, envy, jealousy, and so forth. Attachments defile your minds. The *satipaṭṭhāna* method helps to purify your minds. This is the only way for the purification of the minds of all beings. When you practice *vipassanā* meditation, you do not have greed or hatred or delusion or pride or other defilements. All these things are absent from your mind during meditation. When you have reached the destination, then your mind will be absolutely free from mental defilements. By going along this path, you will reach the highest stage of attainment and your mind will be absolutely pure.

"For the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation": Sorrow and lamentation can be overcome by this meditation. When you practice *vipassanā* meditation, you are instructed to be aware of everything that is happening to you, to notice everything that comes to you at the present moment. When you are aware of everything, when you observe everything during meditation, the defilements will disappear. When you reach the final stage of arahathood, you will have overcome sorrow and lamentation altogether. After you have reached such a stage, sorrow and lamentation will never come to you again. There are many persons whose sorrow and lamentation have been overcome by the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation.

"For the disappearance of pain and grief": Pain means physical pain and grief means mental pain. Physical pain and mental pain can be overcome by *vipassanā* meditation. When you have sat for some time, you feel pain in the body; but when you persevere in watching the pain or taking note of pain, and your concentration becomes powerful, then the pain will go away and you will have overcome pain. You can also overcome grief through the practice of *vipassanā* meditation. When you have reached the highest stage, you will have overcome pain and grief once and for all.

"For reaching the Noble Path": The Noble Path here means a type of consciousness that appears at the moment of realization. When meditators realize the truth, which is *nibbāna,* there arises in them a type of consciousness that is called "path consciousness." It is called

"path consciousness" because when you have reached this stage of consciousness, you can be certain to reach *nibbāna* on this path. It surely will lead there.

There are four stages of realization and so there are four types of path consciousness. Each path consciousness eradicates some mental defilements completely so that after reaching the fourth-path consciousness, all of them are altogether eradicated. The defilements eradicated by path consciousness will not return to you. For reaching the Noble Path, for attaining this type of consciousness that can eradicate the mental defilements altogether, *satipaṭṭhāna* is the only way.

"For the realization of *nibbāna*": We can say that reaching the Noble Path means reaching the "state of path consciousness," and realizing *nibbāna* means reaching the "state of fruition consciousness." Immediately after the path consciousness comes the fruition consciousness. Some knowledge of the *Abhidhamma* will help you to understand this more clearly. Suffice it to say that both the path consciousness and the fruition consciousness take *nibbāna* as their object, they both perceive *nibbāna* directly. Either of these two moments can be called moments of realizing *nibbāna.*

In brief, the Buddha said, this is the only way to purify your mind, to overcome sorrow and lamentation, to overcome pain and grief, to reach the Noble Path and to realize *nibbāna.* And what is this only way? This only way is none other than the way of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

> *What are the four? Herein [in this teaching], bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardently, clearly comprehending and mindful, removing covetousness and grief in the world.*

This is, briefly, the statement of mindfulness meditation. Meditators are contemplating the body in the body. This is how they practice mindfulness meditation. You contemplate or keep yourself mindful of the body in the body. Here the word "body" is repeated to make sure that you contemplate the body in the body and not in the feelings, not in the consciousness, and not in the *dhammas.*

"Ardently, clearly comprehending and mindful": This is important, because it shows how you should meditate. When you meditate, when you contemplate the body in the body, that is, when you make yourself aware of everything that is in the body, you must do it ardently, clearly comprehending and mindful. "Ardently" means, you must be energetic, put forth effort to be mindful or to watch whatever is in the body. "Ardently" refers, therefore, to the energy or effort you invest. Without effort you cannot keep your mind on the object, you cannot meditate. So a certain amount of energy or effort is needed to practice meditation. It is not an easy thing to keep your mind on the object. Therefore, energy or effort is a requirement for the practice of meditation.

You must be "clearly comprehending and mindful." When you practice meditation, you must always be mindful. You must be mindful of your breath, the movements of your abdomen, the different deportments and the small activities of the body. Mindfulness is something like a stone hitting a wall. In order to throw a stone, you must put out energy. You throw the stone with energy and it hits the wall. Like the stone hitting the wall, mindfulness hits the object. Whatever the objects are—the breath, or the movements of the abdomen, or the activities of the body—your mind, as it were, goes to these objects. That hitting of the object is mindfulness.

When you have mindfulness, combined with energy or effort, your mind stays with the object for some time. The stone, after hitting the wall, when it is a wet mud wall, stays with the wall. It gets stuck in the wall. In the same way, the mind goes to the object and, when it is helped by energy and mindfulness, stays with the object. That staying of the mind with the object is what we call concentration. So, when you have mindfulness, you will achieve concentration. Only when you have developed concentration, will you have wisdom and the understanding of the nature of things. You will have clear comprehension of things. So when it is said that you should be mindful and clearly comprehending, this means you also must have concentration. It is indispensable to clear comprehension, which is wisdom.

Moreover, mindfulness and concentration belong to the group of concentration. There are eight factors of the Path, namely, Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

These eight factors are divided into three groups, namely, the morality group, the concentration group, and the wisdom group. Effort, mindfulness, and concentration belong to the concentration group. When one is practiced, the others have also to be practiced. Therefore, mindfulness here also means concentration.

When you have concentration, when your mind stays with the object for some time, you come to see the nature of mind and body. You see that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory, insubstantial. You will come to see the rising and passing of things, when you have sufficient concentration. Different thoughts come to you. You take note of them and they go away. You come to see this clearly only when you have the necessary concentration.

Four things are needed so that your meditation is good. First, you have to ardently make effort. Second, you have to practice mindfulness. Third, you have to develop concentration. And fourth, you have to understand and comprehend. These four constituents are indispensable for good meditation. By saying, "ardently, clearly comprehending and mindful," the Buddha showed you how to meditate, how to observe things, how to watch your breath, the movements of your abdomen and other activities of your body as well as your feelings, consciousness, and the *dhammas*. Therefore, it is important when you meditate to have energy to back up mindfulness, so that you can generate sufficient concentration to penetrate the nature of things.

"Removing covetousness and grief in the world": When the Buddha said, "in the world," it means here the body, the aggregates of clinging. "Covetousness" means craving or greed or attachment, and "grief" means ill will or hatred or anger or depression. By these words, the Buddha showed the constituents that have to be removed. He showed the results of meditation, the results of being ardent, clearly comprehending, and mindful, the results of having concentration.

When you make effort, are mindful, have concentration and a penetrating knowledge or wisdom, then you can remove covetousness and grief. You can remove greed and hatred, which are the two gross hindrances. There are altogether five hindrances, but these are the grosser ones. When you can remove the two grosser ones, you will be

able to remove the other ones as well. When you clearly comprehend your breath or the movements of your abdomen or your feelings or other activities in your body, you will have neither craving nor attachments, neither ill will nor hatred at that time. At every moment, you remove these factors from your mind.

There are two kinds of removal. Let us call them "momentary removal" and "temporary removal." During "momentary removal," the hindrances are removed momentarily. At one moment, they will not be present, but the next moment, they may show up again. They are removed only at the moment when they make room for wholesome mental states. "Temporary removal" means removal for some time, longer than momentary removal. Mahāsi Sayadaw explained the temporary removal as follows:

> When a meditator is constantly observant of every mental and physical phenomenon and comprehends each [of the phenomena] clearly as impermanent, unsatisfactory, insubstantial and not beautiful, effort, mindfulness, and concentration will develop in him. Because of this development, the mind becomes so refined that even on the non-observed objects, attachment and ill will don't arise.
>
> Even when he is resting, gross attachment and ill will do not arise in him to such an extent that he comes to think that gross attachment and ill will cannot arise in him at all. Thus, the subdued state of defilements even on the non-observed objects, by the fact of observing the present objects, is what is called "temporary removal," by the group of concentration members present at each observing act.
>
> This is temporary removal of greed and hatred. A meditator experiences these two kinds of removal—momentary removal on the objects observed and temporary removal on the non-observed objects, every time he is observing. To get these two benefits of removal, a meditator must practice contemplation of his body, observing every physical phenomenon which is evident at the present moment. This is what the Buddha meant.

The meditation instructions of Mahāsi Sayadaw are described in more detail in Part Three.

Now, when you keep your mind on your breath, for example, and mentally note "in-out," "in-out," even before you get steady concentration, you will have moments of concentration. Then you will have distractions and then concentration again and then distractions, and so on. At that time, your removal of covetousness and grief is said to be "momentary." At one moment, you remove the defilements, and, the next moment, they may be present in your mind again.

After some time, when you build up your practice and can keep your mind on the object for a longer time, you will be able to remove the defilements temporarily, that is, for a longer period of time. You will come to see that, even on the objects not observed, the defilements remain subdued. When you have reached this stage, you are said to have gotten rid of your defilements by "temporary removal." Since this removal is temporary, the defilements will come back to you, when you give up meditation altogether.

There is one more removal, and that is "total removal." It is achieved at the moment of path consciousness, at the moment of realizing *nibbāna.* So, when you reach path consciousness, you remove, abandon, annihilate, or eradicate the hindrances and other defilements altogether. Once removed, they will not come back to you at all. This "total removal" is not referred to here, since only the mundane and not the supramundane path is shown. (The word "removal" is used here in the technical sense of "not letting the defilements arise.")

> *He dwells contemplating the feeling in the feelings, ardently, clearly comprehending and mindful, removing covetousness and grief in the world.*

When the Buddha said, "in the world," it means here "in the feelings." Meditators are mindful of their feelings. They observe and take note of their feelings. There are three kinds of feelings, namely, pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and indifferent feelings. Meditators are aware of any of their feelings that are present at the moment. You contemplate on your feelings as you contemplate on your body.

> *He dwells contemplating the consciousness in the consciousness, ardently, clearly comprehending and mindful, removing covetousness and grief in the world.*

When the Buddha said, "in the world," it means here "in the consciousness." The object of meditation here is to observe the different types of consciousness. There is consciousness accompanied by greed, by hatred, by delusion, and so on. When you want something and you are aware of this want, as "wanting, wanting, wanting" you are contemplating on the consciousness that is accompanied by greed. Similarly, when you are angry, and so forth.

> *He dwells contemplating the dhammas in the dhammas, ardently, clearly comprehending and mindful, removing covetousness and grief in the world.*

When the Buddha said, "in the world," it means here "in the *dhammas.*" The word *dhammas* denotes many things. It is the most difficult word in Pāli to translate into another language. Some translate it as "mental objects." Although this is not altogether wrong, it does not cover what is covered by *dhammas. So,* it is better to leave this word untranslated.

You will know what *dhammas* (see glossary) are when you reach the section on the contemplation of the *dhammas.* In brief, they are the five mental hindrances, the five aggregates of clinging, the six internal and six external sense-bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Four Noble Truths. When you have desire in your mind and you are aware of that as "desire, desire, desire," you are contemplating on the *dhammas.* They are mental hindrances. The same is true for anger, etc.

This is a brief statement of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which are the Contemplation of the Body, the Contemplation of the Feelings, the Contemplation of the Consciousness, and the Contemplation of the *dhammas.*

You will find many repetitions in the *sutta;* they cannot be avoided. You should understand that this *sutta* and all other teachings belong to the age where there were no books, so teachings had to be memorized.

When you memorize a passage, you have to repeat it again and again. By these repetitions, you gain deeper understanding of it. Also, when you are listening to a talk, you cannot go back, as you can when you are reading. Repetitions help you to understand more fully so that you can grasp the meaning more thoroughly. Although repetitions may be tedious, they cannot be left out.

1

CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY IN THE BODY

THE FIRST FOUNDATION OF MINDFULNESS is the Contemplation of the Body in the Body. The Buddha described it in fourteen different ways. In other words, he taught fourteen different topics for the Contemplation of the Body in the Body. The first of these topics is breathing. The Buddha said,

> *And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu dwell, contemplating the body in the body? Here now, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, to a secluded place, sits down cross-legged, keeps his upper body erect, and directs his mindfulness to the object of his meditation. Ever mindful, he breathes in, ever mindful, he breathes out.*

With the words, "having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, to a secluded place," the Buddha indicated suitable places for meditation. The first is the "forest," meaning any kind of forest that offers the bliss of seclusion. Since the place must be secluded, it should be a forest where nobody lives, away from the sounds and noises of people living in villages, towns, or cities. In some texts, a forest is defined as a place about five hundred bow lengths away from human habitation. One bow length is equivalent to six feet, so it means about three thousand feet away from any human habitation. When a place is that far away from people, seclusion can be found there. These days, it is difficult to find a really secluded place. Even in a forest you may still hear the noise of airplanes.

The second place mentioned in the sutta is "the foot of a tree." The foot of any tree is a suitable place for meditation, but it should be in as quiet a place as a forest. The third place is just "a secluded place." It may be in a city or a village, but has to be secluded. With regard to these places, seclusion is the most important condition. Therefore, any place that offers seclusion is a suitable place for meditation.

In other *suttas,* traditional lists of secluded places are given: a forest, the root of a tree, a rock, a hill cleft, a mountain cave, a charnel ground (cemetery), a jungle thicket, open space, and a heap of straw.[3] With reference to these lists, the last seven places, beginning with "a rock," are also to be taken as "secluded places."

These places are mentioned because they are most suitable for beginners who need a place that is both quiet and free from distractions. A retreat center or meditation monastery may provide a secluded environment for practice. For those who have experience and whose concentration has matured to some extent, any place is the right place for meditation.

"[He] sits down cross-legged, keeps his upper body erect and directs his mindfulness to the object of his meditation": With these words, the Buddha showed how you should prepare yourself for meditation, and what posture you should select. He mentions the traditional posture of sitting "cross-legged." People in the East are accustomed to sitting on the floor, so sitting cross-legged comes naturally to them. They have no difficulty sitting in this position. It is a very good posture for meditation and it is a peaceful one, neither conducive to idleness nor to agitation.

There are three different forms of sitting cross-legged. The first one is the "full-lotus position" which is most difficult to maintain. When you have no practice, you cannot sit in this posture for a long time. When your legs are intertwined, you will feel pain after you have sat in this position for a few minutes. The second posture is the "half-lotus position." You put one leg on top of the other, but they are not intertwined. You can sit longer in this position; however, you will still feel some kind of pressure and your feet will get numb after some minutes. The third is the "easy position." In this position, you sit with one leg in front of and not on the other. This position is described in some books as the "Burmese position." In Burma, most

people sit this way. This posture may be the best for beginners. Since it is the most comfortable one, beginners will be able to sit in this posture for a longer period of time, without much discomfort.

Some people find it very painful to sit cross-legged, so painful that it interferes with their practice of meditation. Such people may sit on a cushion, a chair, or a bench, since some degree of comfort is necessary for practicing meditation. Though there should not be too much comfort, some is necessary to continue with the practice of meditation.

"He keeps his upper body erect," means meditators keep their body straight when they sit cross-legged. When you sit straight, your spine is also straight. When your spine is straight, the eighteen vertebrae in the spine are resting one on top of the other. When you sit straight, your muscles, sinews, skin, and flesh are not twisted, so painful feelings do not so readily arise as when your muscles, etc., are twisted. Your mind can become unified in meditation and, instead of collapsing when the pain increases, can attend to the growth of mindfulness.[4]

Sitting cross-legged and keeping your upper body erect is, therefore, a very suitable position that is conducive to concentration.

MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING

"He directs his mindfulness to the object of meditation," means that practitioners focus their mind on the object of meditation. Here, the object of meditation will be the breath. So, you set your mind, that is, you focus, on the incoming and outgoing breath.

"Ever mindful, he breathes in, ever mindful, he breathes out": This explains the practice of meditation. When you practice meditation, you keep your mind on the breath. You breathe in and out mindfully. Actually, you put your mind at the entrance of your nostrils and observe the breath as "in-out, in-out," and so on. Your mind must stay at the tip of your nose, it must not follow the breath into and out of your body. You must try to see the in-breath and the out-breath as two separate things. The in-breath is not existing at the time of breathing out and the out-breath is not existing at the time of breathing in.

When you practice breathing meditation, you can observe your breath in many different ways.[5] Four of these ways are shown in this *sutta.*

> *Breathing in a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing in long"; breathing out a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing out long."*

During the course of observing their breath, meditators sometimes happen to breathe long breaths. Then meditators should know, "we are breathing in long." That means they do not fail to notice it when they pay sufficient attention to the breath. It does not mean that you should deliberately breathe long in order to know that you are breathing long. To "know" here means to know thoroughly and not superficially.

> *Breathing in a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing in a short breath"; breathing out a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing out a short breath."*

Sometimes, meditators happen to breathe short breaths. At such a time, they know thoroughly that they are breathing short breaths; they do not fail to notice that they are doing so. Here also, it must be understood that you should not deliberately make your breaths short. You should just know that you are breathing short breaths.

> *"Making clear the entire in-breath body, I shall breathe in," thus he makes efforts [literally, he trains himself]; "making clear the entire out-breath body, I shall breathe out," thus he makes efforts.*

When you observe your breaths, you must try to see all the breaths clearly. "Making clear" means making the breaths known, making them plain, trying to see them vividly. In the original Pāli text, the word for "the entire in-breath body" is *sabbakāya,* which literally means the entire body. But *kāya* or body here does not mean the entire physical body. It means the breath body. The Pāli word *kāya* can mean the physical body as well as a group. It is similar to when

you talk about a body of members. Here it means not the entire physical body but just the breath, and "entire" here means, the beginning, the middle, and the end. So, meditators must try to see thoroughly the beginning, the middle, and the end of each breath. You must also not forget that this section is on mindfulness of breathing so that the object of this meditation must be the breathing and not the entire physical body.

The following explanation is given in *The Path of Purification:*

> He trains thus, "I shall breathe in making known, making plain the beginning, middle, and end of the entire in-breath body. I shall breathe out making known, making plain, the beginning, middle, and end of the entire out-breath body," thus he trains himself. Making the breaths known, making them plain, in this way, he both breathes in and breathes out with consciousness, associated with knowledge.[6]

You must have noticed the future tense in this passage. It is to show that in the previous observations of the breath, you did not need so much knowledge, so much effort to distinguish the long from the short breaths, but from here on, you must make effort to gain knowledge, to see the breaths clearly and thoroughly. That is why the future tense is used here and in the following passages.

It does not mean that meditators should breathe more vigorously so that the breathing may become clear to them. Their concentration and knowledge or understanding are said to be deep and thorough only when they can perceive the beginning, the middle, and the end of each breath clearly. When they see the breaths clearly because they breathe more vigorously, that means they see the breaths clearly not because of their concentration and knowledge but because of the grossness of the object. Therefore, meditators should not breathe more vigorously just to see their breaths more clearly. When they do so, they will tire themselves out in a short time. Therefore, breathing should be normal.

When you practice this kind of meditation, you should try to put forth effort and gain knowledge in order to see all in-breaths and

out-breaths clearly, while you breathe normally. How many things do you need in order to see the breaths clearly? How many factors are involved in each act of clear observation? You need effort, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding.

> *"Calming the gross in-breath [literally, body-conditioned things], I shall breathe in," thus he makes efforts; "calming the gross out-breath, I shall breathe out," thus he makes efforts.*

In this passage, the breath is called "body-conditioned thing." The Pāli word for "body-conditioned thing" is *kāya saṅkhāra. Kāya* means "body" and *saṅkhāra* means "conditioned." Therefore, it means a "thing conditioned by the body." It is said that breath is caused by consciousness or the mind. But when there is no body, there cannot be any breath. So, although it is caused by the mind, the breath depends on the body for its arising, that is, for its appearance. Therefore, it is called *kāya saṅkhāra,* a "thing conditioned by the body."

Saṅkhāra is a difficult word in the Pāli language. It can mean many things, depending on the context. Sometimes it means "volition," which we call *kamma.* In the teachings of the Dependent Origination, *saṅkhāra* means just this. Sometimes, it means the "fifty mental factors," headed by volition, as in *saṅkhāra khandha,* the aggregate of *saṅkhāra.* Sometimes, *Saṅkhāra* means "everything in the world, everything that is conditioned," for example, when you say, "all *saṅkhāra* are impermanent." Sometimes, it means "encouraging" or "prompting," as in the *Abhidhamma* term, *asaṅkhārika.* Here, it has the meaning of "conditioning." So, *kāya-saṅkhāra* here means the "breath that is conditioned by the body."

This word *kāya-saṅkhāra* has also been translated in different ways. In the *Buddhist Dictionary,* it is translated as "bodily functions," while Soma Thera, in *The Way of Mindfulness,* translated it as "activities of the body." Nyānamoli, in *The Path of Purification,* translated it as "bodily formations," and Nyānaponika, in *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation,* translated it as "bodily functions." Nyānasatta Thera sees it as "the activities of the body." What is meant here by the term is just "the breath." Here it should be taken as the gross breath, because it has to be calmed down.

The expression, "calming the gross in-breath," should not be taken to mean that meditators should deliberately calm down, inhibit, and still their breath. What is meant is that when the breath becomes very subtle, meditators must try hard, pay attention, and apply more effort to discern it. The breath is not like the other objects of meditation which become clearer and clearer with the increase in concentration and understanding. When meditators progress further and further, the objects, e.g., the *kasina* (earth disks) or other meditation objects become clearer and clearer in their mind. It is not the same with the breath which becomes subtler and more and more difficult to perceive, according to your progress.

When you are not meditating, your mind and body are not restful. Your breaths, which depend on the condition of your mind and body, will then arise in gross form. But when you continue to meditate, your mind and body become rested and tranquil and the breaths become subtle. The more you progress toward the achievement of concentration, the subtler your breaths become, so much so that you have to investigate whether they exist or not. They may become so subtle that, at one point, you will doubt whether they are there at all. Since you do not find anything to perceive, you may think the breath is simply lost. At such a time, you should say to yourself, "I am not dead, I have not drowned. I am still alive. But I cannot perceive the breaths because they are too subtle and my concentration and understanding are not keen and developed enough. Therefore, I must develop them more, pay more attention to the meditation object, and try to perceive these subtle breaths." When you continue with your efforts and gain more understanding, you will be able to perceive the breaths however subtle they may be.

When, in the course of meditation, the breaths become imperceptible, do not give up your meditation. You must encourage and exert yourself to perceive the subtle breaths until they become clear to you again. This is what is meant by "calming the gross in-breath." You must increase your effort.

In the *sutta,* the Buddha has shown four ways of breathing meditation. When you practice this meditation, you should perceive fully the long breaths, the short breaths, the duration of the breaths, and the subtle, almost imperceptible, breaths.

Thus, you have now four ways of breathing mindfully. First, when breathing in with a long breath, you must note that you are breathing in with a long breath. Second, you must note when you are breathing out with a long breath. Third, you note when you are breathing in with a short breath. Fourth, note when you are breathing out with a short breath. These are the four rules of breathing mindfully.

The Buddha gave a simile so that the *bhikkhus* could understand this teaching more clearly. When he said,

> *as a skillful operator of a lathe and his apprentice are making a long turn,*

"making a long turn" means, when making something big like a drum, operators have to make a long turn on the lathe. "When making a short turn" means, when making something small, such as ivory needles, operators have to make short turns on the lathe. Making these turns, practitioners should be aware of what turn is being made.

> *Thus, he dwells contemplating the body in the body internally, or...externally, or...[both] internally and externally.*

What is meant by "contemplating internally"? It means that meditators contemplate or keep themselves mindful of their own in-breaths and out-breaths. When they keep their mind on their own breathing, they are said to be "contemplating the body in the body internally." When you have gained some practice in keeping your mind on your own breaths, occasionally you may think of other people's breaths as well. "Just as my breaths have a beginning and an end, appear and disappear, so do the breaths of other people." In this way, you contemplate on the breaths of other people. In doing this, you are said to be "contemplating the body in the body externally." It does not mean that you look at other people and contemplate their breathing. However, when you happen to contemplate other people's breaths, you should be mindful of them, too. Sometimes, you contemplate your own breathing and then the breathing of other people and then your own breathing again. You go back and forth between your breathing and

that of others. When you do that you are said to be "contemplating the body in the body internally and externally." It doesn't mean that you should look at your and other people's breathing.

> *He dwells contemplating the origination factors of the breath body, or he dwells contemplating the dissolution factors of the breath body, or he dwells contemplating both, the origination and dissolution factors of the breath body.*

Here, "origination factors" means the factors that bring about the breath. The commentator explained it with a simile. When a blacksmith wants to produce fire, he uses the bellows. There are the bellows and there is something at the end of the bellows which is called the spout, and there are the efforts of the blacksmith. Depending on these three things, air is produced to make fire with the bellows, the spout, and the effort of the smith. In the same way, in order to produce breath, you need a physical body, the nasal aperture, and a mind. Depending on these three things, each breath is produced in the body. Without them, there can be no breath. Therefore, these three things are called "origination factors of the breath." When you are practicing meditation on the breath, sometimes the thought may come to you, "because there is a body, because there is a nasal aperture, and there is a mind, there is this breath." When you are contemplating this, you are said to contemplate on the "origination factors of your breath."

"Dissolution factors" means the opposite. When there is no physical body, there can be no breath. When there is no nasal aperture, there can be no breath. And when there is no mind, there can be no breath. These three things—breaking up of the body, destruction of the nasal aperture, and the cessation of the mind to function—are called the "dissolution factors of the breath." So, when you contemplate on these three factors, you are said to contemplate on the "dissolution factors" of the breath. And when you are contemplating on all six factors, you are said to contemplate on both, the "origination" and the "dissolution factors" of the breath.

This should not be interpreted to mean that you should deliberately search for these origination and dissolution factors. What is meant is

that when, during meditation, the thought of these factors should arise, you should just recognize the origination or dissolution of the breath. These explanations are given in the ancient commentaries.

Mahāsi Sayadaw had something to add. He said that the observing of the arising and disappearing of the breath is also meant in this passage. The Pāli word for "origination factors" is *samudaya dhammas.* It can mean "factors by which something arises," but it can also mean "the state or nature of arising" or just "arising." The same is true for the "dissolution factors." The Pāli word for "dissolution factors" is *vaya dhammas* which can mean "factors by which something dissolves." It can also mean "the state of dissolving" or just "dissolution."

Therefore, in the Venerable's opinion, meditators who closely observe the arising of breath, bit by bit, at every moment and at any place (such as the breath touching the tip of the nose) are said to be contemplating the *samudaya dhammas* of the breath or the arising of the breath. Also, meditators who closely observe the disappearance, bit by bit, at every moment and at any place (such as the breath touching the tip of the nose) can be said to be contemplating the *vaya dhammas* of the breath or the dissolution of the breath.

When you watch the breath, first you see the beginning of the breath; then the breath ends and you watch it disappear. When you watch closely, you observe the arising and disappearance of the breath. It is, therefore, more natural and probable that you will see the arising and disappearance of the breath than that you will see the factors of its arising and disappearing. However, you cannot rule out the seeing of the cause of its arising and disappearing during meditation. Thus, both explanations in this passage are applicable. For a second meaning, the translation could read, "He dwells contemplating the arising nature in the breath body, or he dwells contemplating the dissolving nature in the breath body, or he dwells contemplating both, the arising and the dissolving nature in the breath body."

> *Or his mindfulness is established as "there is only the breath body."*

There are many usages of the word *kāya* in this *sutta.* You have to interpret the meaning, according to its context. Here you have the

section on breathing. So, wherever you find the word *kāya,* "body," you must understand that it means the "breath body." Therefore, when practitioners keep themselves mindful of the breath, their mindfulness is established on "there is only the breath body." When you keep your mind on the breath, you see nothing else but breath. There is only breath, no person, no being, no woman, no man, no individual, no I, nothing pertaining to the I, no soul, nothing pertaining to the soul, and so on. There is only breath, but no one who is regulating the breath or who is giving orders to the breath, who creates the breath; just the breath. In this way, mindfulness is established.

> *And that mindfulness is established to the extent necessary for further measure of knowledge and mindfulness.*

This means mindfulness that "there is that breath body only" is established for the purpose of further knowledge and mindfulness. When you practice breathing as *vipassanā* meditation, you go from one stage to the other, from a lower stage of knowledge to a higher stage of knowledge and then to the highest knowledge. Mindfulness is established to help you go on to the higher stages of knowledge and concentration. When you don't see that "there is only breath" but see this breath as being permanent or having an owner, a soul, or a self, or any permanent entity, you will not be able to progress on the path of *vipassanā* knowledge. Therefore, mindfulness that "there is only the breath body" is necessary for the development of knowledge.

> *Not depending on (or attached to) anything through craving and wrong views, he dwells.*

When you keep your mind on the breath, watch it, and come to see it as coming and going every moment, you cannot see anything to be attached to. The breath comes and goes, the breath is nothing to be attached to; it is just breath. When you reach the higher stages of *vipassanā* knowledge, you will come to see the arising and disappearing of all phenomena, both the mental and physical ones. You won't find anything to be attached to by way of craving or by way of wrong views. You are sometimes attached to or crave for things. You

want something, you like something, and you are attached to it. Sometimes, you have wrong views about these things. When you think that things are permanent, you have wrong views. You think that they will last forever, that they are lovely, or, if it is a person, that there is a permanent entity or soul. When you hold such views, you are said to have wrong views. So, through wrong views or through craving, you become attached to things. However, when you come to see the true nature of the breath as well as the mind and the body, you will not find anything to be attached to or to depend on.

> *Nor does he cling to anything in the world of the five aggregates of clinging.*

"Five aggregates of clinging" means the five aggregates that are objects of clinging or grasping. They are the aggregate of corporeality, the aggregate of feeling, the aggregate of perception, the aggregate of mental formations, and the aggregate of consciousness. In brief, everything in the world belongs to one or the other of these five aggregates. Seeing the true nature of things, practitioners of *vipassanā* meditation do not cling to anything in the world because there is no longer craving, let alone clinging, to anything.

> *Thus too, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body.*

This indicates that the teachings on breathing meditation have come to an end.

Breathing meditation can be practiced as *samatha* or *vipassanā* meditation. *Samatha* meditation means tranquillity meditation which leads to gaining good concentration or *jhāna. vipassanā* meditation leads to eradication of the mental defilements. When you practice *samatha* meditation, you practice differently than when you practice *vipassanā* meditation. When you practice *samatha* meditation on breathing, keep your mind on your breath and count each breath. When you count, neither count below five nor past ten. Counting is to be done from one to five, one to six, up to one to ten, whatever is more appropriate for you. For example, "in one, out one; in two, out two; in three, out

three; in four, out four; in five, out five," and then again, "in one, out one," etc. Or you may count up to six. Or you may count up to ten.

At first, you should count slowly. The purpose of counting is to help you in keeping your mind on the object; it can be compared to tying the object with a rope. Once you gain concentration through counting and can stay with an object without distraction, you can give up counting and just keep yourself aware of the in-breath and the out-breath. First, you count, and then you practice what we call connecting or collecting the mind and the breath without counting. You just keep your awareness on the breath and it will become more and more subtle.

Sometimes, you may see signs or visions. Different visions come to different people. There are neither a definite number nor definite kinds of visions a person may see. If you ask ten people, you may get ten different answers. Different individuals have different inclinations, dispositions, perceptions; therefore, their visions will vary. In the scriptures, visions are described as appearing "like stars." You may see them "like stars." You may see the sign appear like a star or a cluster of gems or pearls, or it may appear to have a rough touch like that of silk cotton seeds or a peg made of hardwood, or a long braided string or a wreath of flowers or a puff of smoke or a stretched-out cobweb or a cloud or a lotus flower or a chariot wheel or the disk of the moon or the sun. Any of these signs or visions may come to meditators reaching a certain level of concentration. They will then enter the absorptions or *jhānas,* and from the *jhānas* can shift to *vipassanā.*

When you practice breathing as *vipassanā* meditation, you do not count the breaths. You just keep your mindfulness on the breath and practice according to the four stages—breathing long, breathing short, comprehending clearly the entire breath body, and calming the gross breath.

You may not see signs or visions in *vipassanā* meditation. However, if you see them, you just stay aware of them as "seeing, seeing, seeing," and so on. After some time, you will see mind and body clearly, and you will progress more and more, until you reach the stage of realization.

In this *sutta,* emphasis is on *vipassanā* and not *samatha* meditation, because contemplating the "origination factors" and the "dissolution factors" is only possible in *vipassanā* meditation. In *samatha*

meditation, you do not contemplate on the arising or the disappearing of the objects. You just keep your mind on the objects, just that. When it is said that you contemplate on the origination and the arising or on the dissolution and the falling, you are neither attached to nor clinging to anything. This means *vipassanā* and not *samatha.* In this *sutta,* every object of meditation is directed toward *vipassanā,* although in the early stages, it can be *samatha* meditation. When you practice *vipassanā* meditation, you keep your awareness on the breath and also everything that comes to you through the six sense doors at the present moment. When you see something, you become aware of it. When you hear something, you do the same. When you think of something or there are distractions or stray thoughts, you become aware of them too. This is the difference between *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation. In the former you keep your awareness only on the meditation object and ignore everything else. In the latter, you keep your awareness on everything that is present, everything that comes to you at the present moment.

In this *sutta,* you know each subject of meditation is directed toward *vipassanā* because at the end of each section you find the passage: "He dwells on contemplating the origination factors...."

THE POSTURES OF THE BODY

The second subsection on the Contemplation of the Body is called "The Postures of the Body." "Postures" here means the four deportments of the body: going or walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. Practitioners are to use all four postures in mindfulness meditation.

The Buddha said,

> *And again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu knows, "I am going," when he is going; he knows, I am standing," when he is standing; he knows, "I am sitting," when he is sitting; he knows, I am lying down," when he is lying down or just as his body is disposed, so he knows it.*

Here, "a *bhikkhu* knows" means, meditators know thoroughly, they know deeply. It is not just a superficial knowledge, it is a deep knowledge of what is going on. Meditators clearly know the going, standing, sitting, and lying down. You must clearly know, "I am going," when going; "I am walking," when walking; "I am standing," when standing; "I am sitting," when sitting, and "I am lying down," when lying down. Mindfulness must be applied to all postures of the body.

The last statement, "just as his body is disposed, so he knows it," allows different interpretations. The commentator interprets this sentence to be a general statement for all four postures, not differing much from the statements made earlier. That means, when meditators are going, they must know "I am going." When they are standing, they must know "I am standing," and so on. The author of the subcommentary, however, added another interpretation to this statement. According to him, in the statement, "a *bhikkhu* knows, 'I am going,' when he is going," and so on, the different postures are emphasized, but in the last statement, "just as his body is disposed, so he knows it," the body as a whole is emphasized. Therefore, when you know that your body as a whole is going, standing, sitting, or lying down, you may be following the instructions given in the last statement. But when you know, "I am going," when going, and so on, you may be following the instructions given in the previous statement.

Mahāsi Sayadaw had something else to add. He said that the statement covers all the small deportments or postures of the body as well; not only going, standing, sitting and lying down but also the small movements like stretching, bending, or looking forward or sideways. Yogis practicing meditation, especially *vipassanā* meditation, cannot afford to be unmindful of the small movements and deportments. When you fail to make note of these small movements, there may be a tendency to cling to them, by way of craving or wrong views. When practicing *vipassanā* meditation, you must be aware of everything that is present at the moment.

Therefore, in the statement, "just as his body is disposed, so he knows it," all other deportments have to be included. *Vipassanā* must be practiced not only in the four main postures but also in the various small postures. *Vipassanā* must be practiced all the time, not only when you are on a retreat.

There have been some misunderstandings with regard to this statement or instruction. These misunderstandings did not arise recently.

MINDING CLOSELY

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some of the wisest voices in the Buddhist tradition. There are no disagreements or sectarian issues here; in fact, there is a strong congruence in the usage of these two key terms throughout the Indian, Theravadin, Zen, and Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

Mindfulness

The term "mindfulness" (Skt. *smriti*; Pali *sati*) is enormously important in Buddhism and has been defined by the Buddha and many of the greatest Buddhist commentators. The four close applications of mindfulness have been splendidly presented and extensively practiced for over two thousand years in the Theravadin tradition, from which we will examine two classic definitions. The first was given by the Indian Buddhist monk Nagasena, a liberated being who realized the culmination of nirvana (Skt. *arhat*), as taught by the Buddha in his early discourses recorded in the Pali Canon.

Nagasena conducted the first East-West dialogue on record, in the second century BCE, with a Greek king who governed one of the principalities created during Alexander the Great's (356–323 BCE) brief and unfortunate occupation of India. King Menander I, known in Pali as Milinda, was a well-educated Greek citizen who eventually converted to Buddhism. In the *Milindapañha*, the text recording their dialogue, the king asked Nagasena what is meant by the term "mindfulness." Nagasena was very generous in his answers to the king's many questions, and he responded that mindfulness has both the characteristic of "calling to mind" and the characteristic of "cultivating":

> Mindfulness, when it arises, calls to mind wholesome and unwholesome tendencies, with faults and faultless, inferior and refined, dark and pure, together with their counterparts . . .
>
> Mindfulness, when it arises, follows the courses of beneficial and unbeneficial tendencies: these tendencies are beneficial, these unbeneficial; these tendencies are helpful, these unhelpful. Thus one who practices yoga rejects unbeneficial tendencies and cultivates beneficial tendencies.[36]

In this quote, "counterparts" means the other concomitant mental factors operating simultaneously with mindfulness. "One who practices yoga" refers to a follower of the spiritual path. Mindfulness requires discerning, ethical concern. Which processes and activities arising in the body and mind give rise to beneficial results? Which give rise to detrimental results? We must differentiate, applying mindfulness strategically and discerningly because we care about ourselves. Are we flourishing, or are we sowing the seeds of our own misery and discontent? According to Nagasena, mindfulness means attending closely to what is occurring in the mind and body.

For the second definition, we look to the most authoritative commentator in the Theravadin tradition, Buddhaghosa. In his extraordinary compendium, *The Path of Purification,* which draws on over nine hundred years of Buddhist contemplative study and practice, he says first of mindfulness: "By means of it they [that is, the concomitant, or simultaneous mental processes] remember, or it itself remembers, or it is simply just remembering, thus it is mindfulness."

Buddhaghosa conveys the sense that mindfulness itself recollects or remembers. The very experience of recalling something is his first emphasis in defining mindfulness, and it was also the Buddha's emphasis when he defined this term. We would call it memory because it means retaining something in the mind. What did you have for breakfast? Where did you live when you were six years old? What's your mother's name? How many fingers do you have? The faculty that remembers accurately is mindfulness. It is the capacity to retain, recollect, and bear in mind that which has been known.

But mindfulness is not confined to past events, let alone distant past events. Present-centered mindfulness is focused face-to-face on something that is arising in the present moment, an ongoing recollection that overcomes the entropy of the mind. The force of entropy leads to disarray, fragmentation, and disintegration of mindfulness, as the mind becomes disoriented, excited, or distracted. Mindfulness means holding everything together, not with grasping, but with presence that can be directed to immediate experience as well as to past events.

Buddhaghosa's definition of mindfulness continues: "Its characteristic is not floating." In our practice of mindfulness, it's very easy to float. When we are not latched on to something, whether it's our body, mind, possessions, or another object of grasping, then it's very easy to simply space out and float. We are so accustomed to compulsively grasping, clinging, identifying with our thoughts, and mistaking them for their referents that when we release our grasp and simply try to be present, we often find ourselves floating—or sleeping! Mindfulness means not floating, not forgetting, and not disengaging.

Buddhaghosa continues, "Its property is not losing; its manifestation is guarding, or the state of being face to face with an object." This is the goal of our practice. We may closely apply mindfulness to whatever presents itself, from moment to moment, in any of the six fields of experience, fully engaged and attentive, as if we were gazing face-to-face with someone. We are not spacing out or grasping but mindfully present. Mindfulness of the tactile sensations of the breath means being face-to-face, from moment to moment, with the respiration. We are not remembering past breaths, and we are not lost or floating—we remain focused continuously on the current sensations of the breath.

Mindfulness can also be prospective. For example, if you must drive to an appointment at three o'clock, remember to leave on time. Bearing a future occurrence in mind, without forgetting, is prospective mindfulness, which is very useful in these practices as well as in everyday life.

Buddhaghosa's definition continues: "Its basis is strong noting, or the close application of mindfulness to the body, and so on." This means that the basis of mindfulness is strongly engaged attention that notes well, without grasping or clinging. Then, in the very definition of mindfulness, he mentions the practice that we are learning. Finally he says, "It should be seen as like a post due to its state of being firmly set in the object, and as like a gatekeeper because it guards the gate of the eye, and so on."[37] Mindfulness focused upon its object is planted like a post or engaged like a guard.

These two authoritative voices from the Buddhist tradition define mindfulness very clearly, with retrospective, present-centered, and prospective modes. Our practice—approaching bare attention, being focused and attentive from moment to moment, and not reacting to

whatever is arising—is not yet comprehensive, but it is a fundamental expression of mindfulness.

Introspection

The second key term appearing in the Buddha's discourses on the matrix of vipashyana or insight practices is introspection (Skt. *samprajaña*; Pali *sampajañña*), which is often translated as "clear comprehension." The great bodhisattva Shantideva (eighth century CE) is another wise voice of Buddhism, from the Mahayana tradition. He defines this corollary faculty, immensely important for practicing the four close applications of mindfulness, very succinctly. "In brief, this alone is the definition of introspection: the repeated examination of the state of one's body and mind."[38]

The faculty of introspection is reflexive. While mindfulness may be directed anywhere—to galaxies, electrons, mental states, or to your feet—introspection means attending to phenomena arising within the field of reality that we call "I and mine." I attend to my body, the position of my hands, the sensations in my abdomen, the movements of my mind, and the sound of my voice. Introspection is attending reflexively to the state and actions of one's body, speech, and mind embedded in an environment.

Introspection is an expression of intelligence (Skt. *prajña*) because it is discerning. Given current circumstances, is this mode of comporting my body appropriate or inappropriate? Should I gesture with my hands and smile now? Are the content and tone of my voice too harsh, too soft, or just what's needed? Likewise, as it monitors the processes arising in the mind—attending to thoughts, desires, intentions, and so forth, embedded in reality—introspection asks: Are they suitable or unsuitable? Helpful or unhelpful? Monitoring during meditation may include mindfully attending to the sensations of the breath, while introspection monitors the meditative process. Am I practicing correctly or not? Am I sustaining a flow of mindfulness, or have I fallen into distraction, excitation, laxity, or dullness? Introspection is the quality control monitor for the entire process, repeatedly examining the state of one's body and mind.

Asanga (fourth century CE), of the Mahayana tradition, sums up the two terms "mindfulness" and "introspection," and he is quoted a thousand years later by Tsongkhapa (1357–1419), who found no need to improve upon Asanga's definitions: "Mindfulness and introspection are taught, for the first prevents the attention from straying from the meditative object." In other words, mindfulness is face-to-face, engaged, and present, without losing, floating, or straying. It prevents the attention from straying from its object.

Asanga's definition of introspection follows: "The second recognizes that the attention is straying."[39] Introspection monitors the meditative process and recognizes attentional imbalances: spacing out, laxity, dullness, sleepiness, restlessness, excitation, distraction, agitation, and so forth. It alerts us, "This isn't working; please regain your balance!" With intelligence and will, we can balance the attention. Mindfulness prevents the attention from straying, and introspection recognizes when it has strayed: two key faculties of mind.

In our practice, we are seeking to sustain an ongoing flow of sanity—not losing our minds, not being carried away by obsessive thinking and grasping, and not compulsively equating whatever arises in our minds with objective reality. Conceptualization can be very useful, but the very nature of a flow of discursive conceptualization about reality locks us into constructs that are isolated from reality. Such is the nature of thoughts.

As soon I think of John, I think of something very nice that John did. While I'm focusing on this, I've forgotten the rest of John. Replaying my memory of his actions, I think, "John's such a nice person, and so generous." Fixated upon this pleasant memory—and isolated from the complex fabric of his actual life—my imaginary video clip becomes John: what a jolly good fellow! This is conceptualization, and it can be very powerful. We all use it a great deal. But this conceptualization isolates, freezes, and decontextualizes the actual John, who continues to evolve, embedded in his environment, and does not exist as my caricature.

In this practice, rather than getting caught up in conceptualization, to the best of our ability we simply sustain an ongoing flow of sanity. We practice wholeness rather than fragmentation. Concepts entail

fragmentation and isolation, locking on to a construct that is divorced from the rest of reality. The flow of sanity to be sustained is open, attentive, intelligent, and not fixated on any aspect or fragment extracted from the whole. We are open to whatever appears from moment to moment, maintaining an ongoing flow of wholeness and sanity.

Guided Meditation: Mindfulness IV

Sustain unwavering mindfulness of all appearances—monitoring with introspection

Begin, as always, by settling the body in its natural state, imbued with the three qualities of relaxation, stillness, and vigilance. Round off this process by taking three slow, deep breaths and settling your respiration in its natural rhythm, effortless and spontaneous.

With your eyes at least partially open, settle your mind in its natural state. Let your awareness rest in its own space, illuminating all appearances to the six portals of experience in all directions. Allow these appearances to arise and pass of their own accord, without latching on to them or interpreting them. Simply perceive them for what they are, without distraction and without grasping.

With the faculty of introspection, note whenever you have been carried away by thoughts. Let your initial response be to relax more deeply and release all grasping. If you note that you have become spaced-out or lethargic, reignite your interest, freshen your awareness, and pay closer attention. Monitor the balance of mindfulness with introspection, maintaining an ongoing flow of engaged but nonreactive attentiveness to whatever appearances arise in the present moment.

Anālayo

SATIPAṬṬHĀNA

The Direct Path to Realization

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are mentioned twice (for example, in regard to the body, one is to contemplate the body). I will then explore the significance of the first two qualities mentioned in the "definition": "diligent" (*ātāpī*) and "clearly knowing" (*sampajāna*). The remaining qualities, mindfulness and the absence of desires and discontent, will be the subjects of Chapters III and IV.

II.1 CONTEMPLATION

The "definition" of right mindfulness is concerned with "contemplating". The corresponding Pāli verb *anupassati* can be derived from the verb "to see", *passati*, and the emphatic prefix *anu*, so that *anupassati* means "to repeatedly look at", that is, "to contemplate" or "to closely observe".[2] The discourses often speak of contemplation in order to describe a particular way of meditation, an examination of the observed object from a particular viewpoint. In the case of the body, for example, such observation can involve contemplating the body as impermanent (*aniccānupassī, vayānupassī*), and therefore as something which does not yield lasting satisfaction (*dukkhānupassī*); or as unattractive (*asubhānupassī*) and not-self (*anattānupassī*), and therefore as something to let go of (*paṭinissaggānupassī*).[3]

These various forms of contemplation emphasize how the object is to be perceived. That is, as used in the discourses "contemplation" implies that particular features of the object are to be given prominence, such as its impermanence, or its selfless nature. In the present context, however, the feature to be contemplated appears to be the same as the object of contemplation. Literally translated, one "contemplates body in body", or "feelings in feelings", etc.[4] This slightly peculiar expression requires further consideration.

2 T.W. Rhys Davids 1993: p.38. Cf. also Upali Karunaratne 1989: p.484, who translates *anupassati* as "observing or seeing properly"; Ñāṇārāma 1997: p.11, who speaks of "special modes of attention ... cognitive evaluations"; and Vajirañāṇa 1946: p.47, who has "analytical reflection" as a translation. According to Sasaki 1992: p.16, "*anu*" has a particularly emphatic function in Pāli. Another relevant nuance of *anu* is "along with", which in the present context could be taken to point to the process character of all experience, revealed during contemplation. According to Vism 642, "*anu*"-*passati* implies observation of an object repeatedly and in diverse ways, that is, from different angles.

3 Cf. e.g. S IV 211; A III 142; and A V 359.

4 Hamilton 1996: p.173, translates: "body qua body"; Ñāṇamoli 1995: p.145: "body as a body"; Ṭhānissaro 1993: p.97: "body in and of itself".

Taking the first *satipaṭṭhāna* as an example, the instructions are: "in regard to the body abide contemplating the body". Here, the first instance of "body" can be understood in the light of the *satipaṭṭhāna* "refrain". The "refrain" explains that to contemplate the body applies to internal and external bodies.[5] According to the commentaries, "internal" and "external" here represent one's own and another person's body.[6] On this understanding, the first instance of "body" (in the locative case) could be translated as "where one's own or another's body is concerned", or "in regard to one's own or another's body", delineating the compass of this *satipaṭṭhāna*.

For the second instance of "body", the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* offers detailed specifications: to contemplate "body" can be undertaken by contemplating the breath, or the postures of the body, or activities of the body, or the anatomical constitution of the body, or the four elementary qualities of the body, or the decomposition of the body after death. Thus the second occurrence of "body" stands for a particular aspect from the general area of contemplation, a "sub-body" in the "overall body", so to speak.[7]

The *satipaṭṭhāna* "refrain" also contains additional information about the significance of "contemplation" in the present context. The same term is used, with the specification that the "arising" and the "passing away" of phenomena is the focus of contemplation.[8] That is, to speak of contemplation in the present context refers to directing awareness to the body and in particular to a specific feature of it, namely its impermanent nature.

In drawing from other parts of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, one can thus expand the somewhat puzzling instruction: "in the body abide contemplating the body" to read: "in regard to your own body or the bodies of others, direct awareness to its (or their) impermanent

5 M I 56: "he abides contemplating *dhammas* internally ... externally ... internally and externally."

6 Ps I 249. A more detailed discussion of this commentarial explanation can be found on page 95.

7 This suggestion can claim support from M III 83, where the Buddha spoke of the process of breathing as a "body among bodies". A similar position is also taken by several modern meditation teachers; cf. e.g. Buddhadāsa 1976: p.64; Maha Boowa 1994: p.101; and Ñāṇasaṃvara 1974: p.41.

8 M I 56: "he abides contemplating the nature of arising ... of passing away ... of both arising and passing away." Such contemplation of impermanence can then lead on to an understanding of the other two characteristics of conditioned existence, *dukkha* and *anattā*. Cf. Paṭis II 232 and Ps I 243. Ps I 242 moreover speaks of overcoming the wrong notion of substantiality.

nature evident in different aspects of the body, such as the process of breathing, or its postures and activities, or its anatomical constitution, or its elementary qualities, or its decay at death."

According to the commentaries, the repetition of the object of contemplation also indicates emphasis, implying that the object of contemplation should be considered simply as perceived by the senses, and in particular without taking it to be "I" or "mine".[9] In this way the repetition – body in body – underlines the importance of direct experience, as opposed to mere intellectual reflection.[10] One should let the body speak for itself, so to say, disclosing its true nature to the scrutiny of the meditator.

II.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING DILIGENT (*ĀTĀPĪ*)

According to the "definition", the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* requires the establishment of four particular mental qualities (cf. Fig. 2.1 below), which can be taken to represent the mental faculties of energy, wisdom, mindfulness, and concentration.[11]

diligent (*ātāpī*)
clearly knowing (*sampajāna*)
mindful (*sati*)
free from desires and discontent (*vineyya abhijjhādomanassa*)

Fig. 2.1: Key characteristics of *satipaṭṭhāna*

9 Ps I 242; also Debvedi 1990: p.23; and Ñāṇamoli 1982b: p.206 n.17. Here it needs to be pointed out that although the discourses do use repetition in order to express emphasis, this is usually done by repeating the same phrase without case variations. In contrast, in the present instance the repetition occurs in a different case. Ps I 241 also offers another explanation, suggesting that the repetition implies that each area of contemplation should be kept separate from the other areas (cf. also Ñāṇaponika 1992: p.33; and Sīlananda 1990: p.20). This commentarial suggestion is questionable, since in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (M III 83) the Buddha clearly showed that an object of body contemplation, the breath, can be used to contemplate feelings, mind, and *dhammas*, rather than keeping breath contemplation restricted to the area of body contemplation only.

10 Lily de Silva (n.d.): p.6.

11 Nett 82 correlates *ātāpī* with energy (*viriya*), *sampajāna* with wisdom (*paññā*), and *vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassa* with concentration (*samādhi*). Paṭis II 15 further expands the correlation with all five faculties.

The first of these four is the quality of diligence. The term diligent (*ātāpī*) is related to the word *tapas*, which connotes self-mortification and ascetic practices. The use of such vocabulary is surprising, since the Buddha did not consider self-mortification to be conducive to the realization of *Nibbāna*.[12] To better understand the Buddha's position, the historical context should be considered.

A substantial number of wandering ascetics in ancient India regarded self-mortification as the model path to purification. Jain and Ājīvika ascetics considered death by ritual suicide to be the ideal expression of successful realization.[13] Commonly accepted means for spiritual development were prolonged fasting, exposure to extremes of temperature, and the adoption of particularly painful postures.[14] Although the Buddha did not categorically reject such practices in their entirety,[15] he openly criticized the belief that self-mortification was necessary for realization.[16]

Before his awakening, the Buddha himself had been influenced by the belief that spiritual purification requires self-mortification.[17] Based on this mistaken belief, he had pursued ascetic practices to considerable extremes, without being able to realize awakening in this way.[18] He found ultimately that awakening does not depend on mere asceticism, but requires mental development, in particular the development of *sati*.[19]

Therefore, the form of "asceticism" the Buddha later taught was predominantly a mental one, characterized by a firm opposition to unwholesome thoughts and tendencies.[20] In an intriguing statement found in the discourses, the cultivation of the awakening factors is

12 Cf. S I 103 and S V 421.

13 Basham 1951: p.88.

14 Bronkhorst 1993: pp.31–6, and 51.

15 At D I 161 and at S IV 330 the Buddha rejected the false report that he was categorically against all austerities. At A V 191 the Buddha explained that he was neither in favour of nor against austerities, since what really mattered was whether any particular austerity or practice led to an increase of either wholesome or unwholesome states of mind.

16 At A II 200. Cf. also M I 81, where the Buddha, after listing the ascetic practices he had performed previous to awakening, concluded that these had not led him to realization because of the absence of wisdom.

17 M II 93.

18 The *bodhisatta*'s ascetic practices are described in detail at M I 77–81 and at M I 242–6. Mil 285 explains that none of the previous Buddhas ever practised austerities, Gotama being the only case, owing to his immature knowledge at the time.

19 Cf. S I 103, where the recently awakened Buddha congratulated himself on having left asceticism behind and having gained awakening through mindfulness instead.

referred to as the highest form of exertion.[21] Such subtler forms of "austerity" did not easily receive recognition by contemporary ascetics, and on several occasions the Buddha and his followers were ridiculed for their seemingly easy-going attitude.[22]

Another point worth considering is that in ancient India there were a variety of deterministic and fatalistic teachings.[23] In contrast, the Buddha emphasized commitment and effort as essential requirements for achieving realization. According to him, only by way of desire, effort, and personal commitment can desirelessness be realized.[24] Effort, as an expression of wholesome desire, leads along the path until with full realization all desire will be abandoned.[25] In this context, the Buddha at times reinterpreted expressions commonly used within ascetic circles to express his own position.[26]

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20 This can be gathered from his humorous reply to the accusation of being a *tapassī* himself at Vin I 235; Vin III 3; A IV 175; and A IV 184; where he pointed out that his form of self-mortification was to "mortify" what is unwholesome. Cf. also Collins 1982: p.235; and Horner 1979: p.97.

21 D III 106. The association of the awakening factors with "exertion" (*padhāna*) occurs also at D III 226; A II 16; and A II 74. S I 54 even goes so far as to associate them with "austerity": *bojjhaṅgatapasā* (however, Bodhi 2000: p.390 n.168, suggests the reading *bojjhā tapasā* instead).

22 D III 130 speaks of other ascetics accusing the Buddha's disciples of living a life devoted to indulgence in pleasure. At M I 249 the Buddha faced criticism because he sometimes slept during the day. The same topic comes up again at S I 107, where Māra poked fun at the Buddha for being still asleep at sunrise (after a night spent in walking meditation), cf. also S I 110. At Vin IV 91 the Buddha was derisively called a "shaven-headed householder" by an Ājīvika ascetic, presumably because of the abundance of food received by Buddhist monks. Cf. further Basham 1951: p.137; and Chakravarti 1996: p.51.

23 Compare e.g. Makkhali Gosāla's view (at D I 53 or at S III 210) that there is no power or energy (to take decisions or influence one's destiny in any way), a view which the Buddha strongly censured (e.g. at A I 286); or Pūraṇa Kassapa's view (at D I 52) that there is neither evil nor good. (S III 69 seems to confuse these two teachers, putting Gosāla's view into Kassapa's mouth.)

24 Cf. e.g. M II 174; Dhp 280; It 27; and Th 1165. Cf. also Pande 1957: p.519; and C.A.F. Rhys Davids 1898: p.50.

25 At S V 272, Ānanda countered the proposal that to overcome desire using desire would be a task without end with the argument that the desire for realization will automatically subside once realization is gained. Similarly, according to A II 145 it is on the basis of "craving" (for the destruction of the influxes) that craving (in general) will be overcome. Cf. also Sn 365, where the Buddha spoke approvingly of someone longing to attain *Nibbāna*. The importance of "desire" as an aspect of the path leading to realization is also exemplified in the canonical presentation of the four roads to power (*iddhipāda*), one of which is desire (*chanda*). Cf. also Burford 1994: p.48; Katz 1979: p.58; and Matthews 1975: p.156. A helpful distinction between various types of desire in this context can be found in Collins 1998: pp.186–8.

26 A typical instance of such reinterpretation is Dhp 184, where patience is identified as the highest austerity. Cf. also Kloppenborg 1990: p.53.

The quality of being diligent (*ātāpī*) in the *satipaṭṭhāna* context appears to be one such instance.

A different example of rather forceful vocabulary can be found in those passages in which the Buddha described his firm resolution prior to awakening: "let my flesh and blood dry up, I will not give up",[27] or "I will not change my posture unless realization has been gained".[28] Concerning the resolve to refrain from changing posture, it needs to be kept in mind that the Buddha was able to achieve deep meditative absorption, so he could sit for long periods of time in the same posture without pain.[29] Thus what these expressions point to is not so much the endurance of a painful sitting posture as a strong and unwavering commitment.[30] Similar expressions are used by some of his disciples on the brink of realization.[31] Since the breakthrough to realization can only take place in a balanced state of mind, it might be best not to take these expressions too literally.

In a similar way, the expression "diligent" (*ātāpī*) might not have carried the same literal connotations for the Buddha as it did for his more ascetically-inclined contemporaries. In fact, in the *Kāyagatāsati Sutta* diligent (*ātāpī*) comes up in relation to experiencing the bliss of absorption.[32] Similarly, in a passage from the *Indriya Saṃyutta* the quality of diligence is combined with pleasant feelings, mental and physical.[33] In these instances, "diligent" has clearly lost any relation to self-mortification and its concomitant physical pain.

Since both deficiency of effort and excessive tension can obstruct one's progress,[34] the quality of "diligence" is best understood as a

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27 A I 50.

28 M I 219.

29 M I 94. This ability of the Buddha to sit without moving for seven days is also documented at Vin I 1; Ud 1–3; Ud 10; and Ud 32. Thī 44 and Thī 174 each report the same for a realized nun. It is telling if one contrasts the Buddha's experience of sitting without moving for seven days experiencing only bliss with a description of sitting "with determination" in Maha Boowa 1997: p.256: "sitting ... for many hours ... the painful feelings quickly spread to all parts of the body ... even the backs of the hands and feet feel as if they are on fire ... inside the body it seems as if ... bones ... are about to break apart and separate ... the body ... as if it were burning in a mass of flames externally ... internally as if it was being beaten by hammers and stabbed with sharp steel daggers ... the whole body is in agony."

30 In fact at M I 481 the Buddha used the expression "let my blood dry up" etc. in order to admonish monks who were unwilling to give up eating in the evening. As 146 glosses this expression with "firm and steadfast effort".

31 e.g. at Th 223; Th 313; and Th 514.

32 M III 92.

33 S V 213.

balanced but sustained application of energy.[35] Such balanced endeavour avoids, on the one hand, passive submission to "destiny", a higher will, or personal idiosyncrasies, and on the other, excessive effort, self-assertive striving, and self-inflicted suffering in the name of a higher goal.

The Buddha once compared the balanced effort needed for proper progress to the tuning of a lute, whose strings should be neither too tight nor too loose.[36] This comparison of mental cultivation to the tuning of a musical instrument illustrates the well-adjusted effort and sensitivity required for the development of the mind.[37] The notion of a "middle path" of wise balance, avoiding the extremes of excessive and insufficient effort, has of course been one of the Buddha's central teachings since the time of his first discourse.[38] It was this balanced "middle path" approach, avoiding the two extremes of stagnation and excessive striving, which had enabled him to gain awakening.[39]

The practical implications of being "diligent" can best be illustrated with two maxims from the discourses, both of which use the word diligent (*ātāpī*): "right now is the time to practise diligently",

34 Cf. e.g. M III 159, where both are listed as possible obstructions to developing a concentrated mind. The need for an intelligent maintenance of balance in meditation practice is also reflected at M II 223, according to which the path to freedom from *dukkha* at times requires the application of effort, while at other times it just requires equanimous observation.

35 Other translations of *ātāpī* reflect similar shades of meaning, it being variously rendered as "conscientious", as "active", or as the input of energy that "revives the decreasing morale" (Hamilton 1996: p.173; Katz 1989: p.155; and Pandey 1988: p.37). The nuance of continuity can be seen at A III 38 and A IV 266, which associate *ātāpī* with being continuously active. Another relevant instance is at M III 187, where *ātāpī* occurs in what might refer to spending a night in meditation (following Ñāṇapoṇika 1977: p.346, for *bhaddekaratta*). Similarly Dhīravaṃsa 1989: p.97, understands *ātāpī* as "perseverance"; and Ñāṇārāma 1990: p.3, as "unbroken continuity".

36 Vin I 182 and A III 375; (also Th 638–9); and in the *satipaṭṭhāna* subcommentary, Ps-pṭ I 384, in order to illustrate the need for balanced energy in *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation. The need for balance is also stressed by Kor 1985: p.23.

37 Khantipālo 1986: p.28; and Vimalaraṃsi 1997: p.49, warn against the dangers of overstraining or forcing meditation and the emotional disturbances and hardening of the mind that may ensue. Mann 1992: p.120, based on comparing the common character type in ancient Indian and the typical modern "western" mind, warns against indiscriminately applying to "hate" type meditators instructions developed mainly for the "craving" type. Cf. also W.S. Karunaratne 1988a: p.70.

38 S V 421.

39 At S I 1 the Buddha pointed out that by avoiding stagnation and excessive striving he had been able to "cross the flood". Cf. also Sn 8–13, which similarly recommend neither going too far nor lagging behind.

and "you yourself have to practise with diligence."[40] Similar connotations underlie the occurrence of the quality of "diligence" in those passages that describe the serious commitment of a monk who retires into seclusion for intensive practice after having received a brief instruction from the Buddha.[41]

Applying these nuances to *satipaṭṭhāna*, to be "diligent" then amounts to keeping up one's contemplation with balanced but dedicated continuity, returning to the object of meditation as soon as it is lost.[42]

II.3 CLEARLY KNOWING (*SAMPAJĀNA*)

The second of the four mental qualities mentioned in the "definition" is *sampajāna*, a present participle of the verb *sampajānāti*. *Sampajānāti* can be divided into *pajānāti* (he or she knows) and the prefix *saṃ* (together), which often serves an intensifying function in Pāli compounds.[43] Thus *sam-pajānāti* stands for an intensified form of knowing, for "clearly knowing".[44]

The range of meaning of "clearly knowing" (*sampajāna*) can be conveniently illustrated by briefly surveying some of its occurrences in the discourses. In a discourse found in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, clearly knowing stands for consciously experiencing one's own life as an embryo in a womb, including the event of being born.[45] In the *Majjhima Nikāya* one finds clearly knowing representing the presence of deliberateness, when one "deliberately" speaks a falsehood.[46] In a passage from the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, clearly knowing refers to awareness of the impermanent nature of feelings and thoughts.[47] A discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* recommends clear

40 M III 187 and Dhp 276.

41 e.g. at S II 21; S III 74–9; S IV 37; S IV 64; S IV 76; and A IV 299. T.W. Rhys Davids 1997: p.242, and Singh 1967: p.127, relate *tapas* in a secondary sense to retirement into solitude in the forest, which parallels the use of *ātāpī* together with "dwelling alone and secluded" in the standard description of such a monk's going into seclusion for intensive practice.

42 Jotika 1986: p.29 n.15. This parallels the commentarial understanding of the related term *appamāda* as undistracted mindfulness, *satiyā avippavāso* (e.g. Sv I 104 or Dhp-a IV 26).

43 T.W. Rhys Davids 1993: pp.655 and 690.

44 The *Satipaṭṭhāna* subcommentary, Ps-pṭ I 354, explains *sampajāna* as "knowing in every way and in detail". Guenther 1991: p.85, speaks of "analytical appreciative understanding"; Ñāṇārāma 1990: p.4, of "investigative intelligence"; and van Zeyst 1967a: p.331, of "deliberate, discriminative knowledge".

45 D III 103 and D III 231.

knowledge (*sampajañña*) for overcoming unwholesomeness and establishing wholesomeness.[48] Finally, the *Itivuttaka* relates clearly knowing to following the advice of a good friend.[49]

A common denominator suggested by these examples selected from all five *Nikāyas* is the ability to fully grasp or comprehend what is taking place. Such clear knowledge can in turn lead to the development of wisdom (*paññā*). According to the *Abhidhamma*, clear knowledge does in fact already represent the presence of wisdom.[50] Considered from an etymological viewpoint, this suggestion is convincing, since *paññā* and *(sam-)pajānāti* are closely related. But a close examination of the above examples suggests that clearly knowing (*sampajāna*) does not necessarily imply the presence of wisdom (*paññā*). When one utters a falsehood, for example, one might clearly know one's speech to be a lie, but one does not speak the falsehood "with wisdom". Similarly, while it is remarkable enough to be clearly aware of one's embryonic development in the womb, to do so does not require wisdom. Thus, though clear knowing might lead to the development of wisdom, in itself it only connotes "to clearly know" what is happening.

In the *satipaṭṭhāna* instructions, the presence of such clear knowledge is alluded to by the frequently recurring expression "he knows" (*pajānāti*), which is found in most of the practical instructions. Similar to clearly knowing, the expression "he knows" (*pajānāti*) at times refers to rather basic forms of knowing, while in other instances it connotes more sophisticated types of understanding. In the context of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the range of what a meditator "knows" includes, for example, identifying a long breath as long, or recognizing one's physical posture.[51] But with the later *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplations, the meditator's task of knowing evolves until it comes to include the presence of discriminative understanding,

46 M I 286 and M I 414. Furthermore A II 158 distinguishes between the threefold action being done either *sampajāna* or else *asampajāna*, a context which also merits rendition as "deliberateness".

47 S V 180.

48 A I 13.

49 It 10.

50 e.g. Dhs 16 and Vibh 250. *Sampajañña* is also related to wisdom by Ayya Khemindа (n.d.): p.30; Buddhadāsa 1989: p.98; Debvedi 1990: p.22; Dhammasudhi 1968: p.67; Ñāṇaponika 1992: p.46; and Swearer 1967: p.153.

51 M I 56: "breathing in long, he knows 'I breathe in long'"; M I 57: "he knows accordingly however his body is disposed."

such as when one is to understand the arising of a fetter in dependence on a sense door and its respective object.[52] This evolution culminates in knowing the four noble truths "as they actually are", a penetrative type of deep understanding for which again the expression "he knows" is used.[53] Thus both the expression "he knows" (*pajānāti*) and the quality of "clearly knowing" (*sampajāna*) can range from basic forms of knowing to deep discriminative understanding.

II.4 MINDFULNESS AND CLEAR KNOWLEDGE

Clearly knowing, apart from being listed in the "definition" part of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, is mentioned again under the first *satipaṭṭhāna*, with regard to a set of bodily activities.[54] Expositions of the gradual path of training usually refer to such clear knowing in regard to bodily activities with the compound *satisampajañña*, "mindfulness and clear knowledge".[55] On further perusing the discourses one finds that this combination of mindfulness with clear knowledge (or clearly knowing) is employed in a wide variety of contexts, paralleling the above documented flexible usage of clearly knowing on its own.

The Buddha, for instance, taught his disciples, went to sleep, endured an illness, relinquished his life-principle, and prepared for death – each time endowed with mindfulness and clear knowledge.[56] Even in his previous life he was already in possession of mindfulness and clear knowledge when he arose in heaven, stayed there, passed away from there, and entered his mother's womb.[57]

Mindfulness and clear knowledge also contribute towards improving one's ethical conduct and overcoming sensuality.[58] In the

52 e.g. M I 61: "he knows the eye, he knows forms, and he knows the fetter that arises dependent on both."

53 M I 62: "he knows as it really is, 'this is *dukkha*' ... 'this is the arising of *dukkha*' ... 'this is the cessation of *dukkha*' ...'this is the way leading to the cessation of *dukkha*.'"

54 M I 57: "when going forward and returning he acts clearly knowing; when looking ahead and looking away he acts clearly knowing...." I will consider this exercise in more detail on page 141.

55 e.g. at D I 70.

56 Maintaining equanimity towards attentive or non-attentive disciples at M III 221; going to sleep at M I 249; enduring illness and pain at D II 99; D II 128; S I 27; S I 110; and Ud 82; giving up his life principle at D II 106; S V 262; A IV 311; and Ud 64; lying down to die at D II 137. The presence of both at the time of death is recommended to the monks in general at S IV 211.

57 M III 119 (parts of this also at D II 108).

58 A II 195 and S I 31.

context of meditation, mindfulness and clear knowledge can refer to contemplating feelings and thoughts; they can mark a high level of equanimity in the context of perceptual training; or they can take part in overcoming sloth-and-torpor.[59] Mindfulness and clear knowledge become particularly prominent during the third meditative absorption (*jhāna*), where the presence of both is required to avoid a relapse into the intense joy (*pīti*) experienced during the second absorption.[60]

This broad variety of occurrences demonstrates that the combination of mindfulness with clear knowledge is often used in a general manner to refer to awareness and knowledge, without being restricted to its specific use as clearly knowing bodily activities in the gradual path scheme or in the *satipaṭṭhāna* context of body contemplation.

Such cooperation of mindfulness with clear knowledge, which according to the "definition" is required for all *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplations, points to the need to combine mindful observation of phenomena with an intelligent processing of the observed data. Thus "to clearly know" can be taken to represent the "illuminating" or "awakening" aspect of contemplation. Understood in this way, clear knowledge has the task of processing the input gathered by mindful observation, and thereby leads to the arising of wisdom.[61]

These qualities of clear knowledge and mindfulness thus remind one of the development of "knowledge" and "vision" of reality (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*). According to the Buddha, to both "know" and "see" are necessary conditions for the realization of *Nibbāna*.[62] It might not be too far-fetched to relate such growth of knowledge (*ñāṇa*) to the quality of clearly knowing (*sampajāna*), and the accompanying aspect of "vision" (*dassana*) to the activity of watching represented by mindfulness (*sati*).

59 Contemplating feelings and thoughts at A IV 168; (cf. also A II 45); perceptual training at D III 250 and D III 113; and overcoming sloth-and-torpor e.g. at D I 71.

60 e.g. at D II 313; cf. also the comment at Vism 163; Guenther 1991: p.124; and Gunaratana 1996: p.92.

61 The interaction between *sati* and wisdom is described at Ps I 243, according to which wisdom contemplates what has become an object of awareness. Cf. also Vibh-a 311, which distinguishes between *sati* with and without wisdom, showing that wisdom is not an automatic result of the presence of *sati*, but needs to be deliberately developed. On the importance of combining *sati* with *sampajañña* cf. Chah 1996: p.6; and Mahasi 1981: p.94.

62 S III 152 and S V 434.

More remains to be said about this quality of clear knowledge.[63] In order to do this, however, some additional ground has to be covered, such as examining in more detail the implications of *sati*, which I will do in Chapter III.

63 I will consider *sampajañña* again when discussing the practice of mental labelling (page 113) and when investigating clearly knowing in regard to bodily activities as one of the body contemplations (page 141).

shows that even accomplished practitioners considered walking meditation a worthwhile practice. According to the discourses, walking meditation benefits bodily health and digestion, and leads to the development of sustained concentration.[92] The commentaries document the insight potential of walking meditation with instances of its use that led to full realization.[93]

Unlike the way in which walking meditation is usually practised nowadays, the standard instructions for walking meditation found in the discourses take mental events as their main object of observation. The instructions in this context do not mention awareness of one's bodily posture or of the dynamics of walking, but speak of purifying the mind from obstructive states.[94] Since the same expression is also used for sitting meditation, it simply implies a continuation of the same meditation that has earlier been practised while seated, albeit in a different posture.

A discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* recommends walking meditation as an antidote for drowsiness. In this case, however, the instructions are different from the standard descriptions: the meditator is to focus on the walking path, to keep the senses withdrawn, and to prevent the mind from getting distracted outwardly.[95]

To cultivate awareness in regard to the reclining posture, meditators should lie down mindfully on their right side to rest during the middle part of the night, keeping in mind the time to wake up.[96] The instructions for falling asleep mindfully appear to be mainly concerned with waking up at a predetermined time.[97] According to other passages, falling asleep with awareness improves

92 A III 29. Improvement in health and digestion as benefits of walking meditation are also documented at Vin II 119. On the practice of walking meditation cf. also Khantipālo 1981: p.95; Kundalābhivaṃsa 1993: pp.75–8; and Ṭhitavaṇṇo 1988: pp.120–2.

93 Ps I 257 relates the story of a monk who realized arahantship after twenty years of sustained walking meditation. Ps I 258 records the same realization for another monk after sixteen years of walking meditation.

94 M I 273: "while walking and sitting, we will purify our minds of obstructive states." The expression "obstructive state" is a synonym for the five hindrances (cf. e.g. S V 94).

95 A IV 87.

96 e.g. at M I 273. The recommendation to sleep on one's right side (in the "lion's posture") could arise from the fact that in this way the smooth working of the heart during sleep is less obstructed by the weight of the body than when sleeping on one's left side (which can cause unpleasant dreams).

97 Ñāṇavīra 1987: p.158.

the quality of one's sleep and prevents bad dreams and nocturnal emissions.[98]

By way of conclusion it should be underlined that, in spite of these various perspectives on developing insight related to the four postures, what the instructions in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* itself suggest is simply awareness of the whole body in general, and of its disposition in space.

Once mindfulness of the four postures has led to a grounding of awareness in the body, one can turn to the next contemplation introduced in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*: clear knowing (*sampajāna*) in regard to a range of bodily activities.[99] The instructions for such clear knowing are:

> **When going forward and returning he acts clearly knowing; when looking ahead and looking away he acts clearly knowing; when flexing and extending his limbs he acts clearly knowing; when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl he acts clearly knowing; when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting he acts clearly knowing; when defecating and urinating he acts clearly knowing; when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent he acts clearly knowing.**[100]

Apart from being one of the body contemplations in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, this exercise also forms a distinct step in the gradual path of training, referred to as "mindfulness and clear knowledge" (*satisampajañña*).[101] In the sequence of this gradual path of training, mindfulness and clear knowledge in regard to bodily activities occupy a transitional place between a preparatory development and actual

98 Vin I 295 and A III 251.

99 Cf. A III 325, according to which awareness of the four postures forms the basis for mindfulness and clear knowledge.

100 M I 57. It is notable that most of the Pāli verb forms in this instruction are past participles, giving a nuance of passivity to the activities under observation. According to Kalupahana 1999: p.283, the Buddha used passive forms as a pedagogical device to highlight the characteristic of not-self. Another point worth considering is that the postures mentioned in the previous exercise recur in the present context. The commentary, Ps I 269, explains that the difference between contemplating walking, standing, and sitting under contemplation of the postures and in the present exercise is that here they are of comparatively shorter duration. The point the commentary is trying to make could be that clear knowledge is particularly relevant to the moment when one assumes a particular posture (in terms of purpose and suitability etc.), whereas postural awareness is more profitably applied to being in a posture.

101 e.g. at D I 70.

sitting meditation.[102] To be more precise, mindfulness and clear knowledge complete the preliminary stages concerned with ethical conduct, restraint, and contentment, and form the starting point for the formal practice of meditation, when one resorts to a secluded place in order to overcome the hindrances, to progress through the levels of absorption, and to gain realization.[103] Thus the development of mindfulness and clear knowledge is a foundation for more formal meditations such as, in the present context, the remaining contemplations described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.[104]

The combined expression "mindfulness and clear knowledge" indicates that, in addition to being mindful of the activities mentioned, the presence of "clear knowledge" plays an important role. Since "clearly knowing" on its own, and also in combination with *sati*, occurs in the discourses in a variety of contexts and can assume a broad range of meanings,[105] the question arises of the implications of "clear knowledge" in regard to the various activities mentioned.

102 On the basis of the common characteristics of the gradual path of training, as it is described in various discourses (e.g. at D I 63–84; M I 179–84; M I 271–80; and M I 354–7), this pattern can be subsumed under five main stages: I. initial conviction and going forth; II. foundational training in ethical conduct and contentment; III. sense-restraint and mindfulness and clear knowledge in regard to bodily activities; IV. abandonment of the hindrances and development of absorption; V. realization. These five steps represent, to some extent, the five faculties/powers: I. confidence, II. energy, III. mindfulness, IV. concentration, and V. wisdom; cf. Crangle 1994: p.163. However, it should be added that the five faculties and powers are not to be developed only sequentially, but should be brought into being together. Barnes 1981: p.237, suggests an alternative scheme of six steps by distinguishing between sense-restraint, on the one hand, and mindfulness and clear knowledge, on the other, as two separate stages.

103 Several discourses (e.g. M I 181; M I 269; and M I 346) explicitly mention clearly knowing in regard to activities as a precondition for subsequent formal sitting meditation. This foundational role is echoed at Ps I 290 and Ps-pṭ I 380, which recommend clearly knowing in regard to activities as a basis for developing *sati* as an awakening factor. Cf. also Bronkhorst 1985: p.311; and Bucknell 1984: p.29.

104 The difference in character between clear knowledge of activities and the later body contemplations has led Schmithausen 1976: pp.253–5, to the conclusion that the contemplations of the anatomical parts, of the elements, and of a corpse could be later additions, because their character is somewhat different from the type of awareness practised during contemplation of bodily postures and clearly knowing in regard to bodily activities. However, several discourses (e.g. D II 94; A V 116; and A V 119) mention clear knowledge in regard to bodily activities separately from the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, indicating that both existed independently. This suggests that, if there was any later addition, it was clear knowledge in regard to bodily activities that was added to the *satipaṭṭhāna* scheme.

105 Cf. page 41.

Neither the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* nor the expositions of the gradual path offer further information. The commentaries make up for this by presenting a detailed analysis of clear knowledge into four aspects (cf. Fig. 6.3 below). According to them, clear knowledge should be directed to the purpose of an activity and also to its suitability. Moreover one should clearly understand how to relate this activity to one's meditation practice (one's "pasture") and one should also develop "non-delusion" by clearly understanding the true nature of reality.[106] A closer inspection of the discourses brings to light several passages that support or further clarify this commentarial presentation.

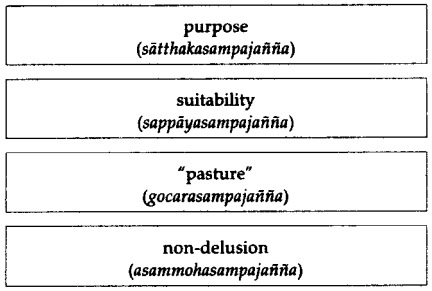

Fig. 6.3 Four aspects of "clear knowledge" in the commentaries

According to the *Mahāsuññata Sutta*, talking can be carried out clearly knowing by refraining from topics unsuitable for one who has gone forth.[107] Here, "clearly knowing" implies that one discusses topics related to contentment, seclusion, concentration, wisdom, etc., since in this way speech becomes "purposeful" in regard to one's progress on the path. This instance parallels the first aspect of clear knowledge mentioned in the commentaries, which is concerned with the purpose of an activity.

Several of the activities listed in this part of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, such as "going forward and returning", "looking ahead and looking away", "flexing and extending one's limbs", and "wearing one's robes and carrying one's outer robe and bowl", occur as a set

106 At Ps I 253–61.

107 M III 113. This parallels an explanation found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna* subcommentary, Ps-pṭ I 364, which relates the development of clear knowledge in regard to speech to refraining from topics unsuitable for conversation.

elsewhere in the discourses.[108] These instances do not explicitly mention clear knowledge, but are instructions given to monks regarding proper behaviour. What the discourses emphasize in regard to these activities, is that they should be performed in a graceful and pleasing way (*pāsādika*).[109] Similarly, the Chinese *Madhyama Āgama* speaks of a monk's "dignified and quiet behaviour" when practising clear knowledge in regard to bodily activities.[110] Judging from these passages, this particular set of activities stands for a careful and dignified way of behaving, appropriate to one who is living as a monk or nun.

The need to maintain such standards of good conduct has found its expression in the numerous training rules for the monastic community. These regulate, in great detail, various aspects of daily conduct.[111] The importance accorded to the externals of conduct in ancient India is also evident in the *Brahmāyu Sutta*, where a close examination of the Buddha's daily conduct formed part of an attempt to assess his spiritual accomplishment.[112] This need for a monk or nun to behave in a careful and dignified manner parallels the second aspect of clear knowledge mentioned in the commentaries, which relates it to the suitability of an action.

A passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* associates clearly knowing with the activity of looking. This passage reports the monk Nanda, who was a particularly lustful character, marshalling all his effort in order to avoid the arising of desires and discontent (*abhijjhādomanassa*) when looking in any direction.[113] The terminology used in this instance shows that this form of clearly knowing is related to sense-restraint. A similar nuance can be found in the

108 At M I 460 and A II 123 as part of an instruction to a monk how to perform these bodily activities properly. At A IV 169 the whole set occurs again as a reference to proper behaviour, where a bad monk is trying to hide behind proper outer behaviour.

109 e.g. at A II 104 and at A V 201; cf. also Th 927 and Pp 44. Th 591 has the same qualification for the four postures. Law 1922: p.81, translates *sampajañña* in this context as "deliberately."

110 Minh Chau 1991: p.83.

111 These are in particular the seventy-five *sekhiya* rules, Vin IV 184–206. The importance of such outward behaviour is noted by Collins 1997: p.198. Holt 1999: p.102, points out that "the *sekhiya* rules ... are much more than mere social etiquette: they are outward reflections of the inner state of a bhikkhu's mental condition". A convenient exposition of the *sekhiya* rules can be found in Ṭhānissaro 1994: pp.489–510.

112 M II 137, giving a detailed account of the Buddha's way of performing various activities such as walking, looking, sitting down, etc.

113 A IV 167.

Mahāsuññata Sutta, which relates clearly knowing in regard to the four postures to sense-restraint.[114] Both passages correspond to the third aspect of clear knowledge mentioned in the commentaries, which speaks of "pasture". The same expression came up earlier in relation to *sati* imagery, depicting *satipaṭṭhāna* as the proper pasture of a monk, while improper pasture represented sensual distraction.[115] This suggests that clear knowledge in regard to "pasture" refers in particular to sense-restraint.

The fourth aspect mentioned in the commentaries, which associates clear knowledge with the absence of delusion (*asammoha*), goes beyond the context of body contemplation. To have a clear understanding of the true nature of reality is a task of clearly knowing (*sampajāna*) in general, a quality that, according to the "definition", needs to be developed with all the *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplations.

The commentarial presentation of the four aspects inherent in clear knowledge can be seen to follow a progressive sequence, with clearly knowing in regard to purpose (one's progress to awakening) establishing the background for corresponding "suitable" conduct, which in turn facilitates sense-restraint and one's meditative development, which then enables insight into the true nature of reality to arise. In this way, the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice of developing clear knowledge in regard to activities combines purposeful and dignified conduct with sense-restraint in order to build up a foundation for the arising of insight. In fact, both proper conduct and sense-restraint overlap to some degree, since several aspects of a monk's or a nun's code of conduct are intended to facilitate sense-restraint, while on the other hand one's bodily activities will become more graceful and dignified if a certain degree of mental equilibrium through the absence of sensual distractions has been established.

Compared to contemplation of the four postures, clear knowledge in regard to activities introduces an additional element, since the former consists only in bare awareness of whatever posture or movement occurred naturally, while the latter includes purposely adopting a restrained and dignified behaviour.

114 M III 113.

115 A V 352 and S V 149; cf. also page 56.

XV

CONCLUSION

The Buddha once said he would be able to answer questions about *satipaṭṭhāna* without repeating himself or exhausting his answers, even if the inquiry were to continue for a whole century.[1] If the topic of *satipaṭṭhāna* could not be exhausted by the Buddha, then clearly the present work can at best attempt only to offer a starting point for further discussion and exploration. Nevertheless, the time has now come to sum up the present discussion by attempting to highlight some key aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna*. In addition, I will place *satipaṭṭhāna* within a wider context by considering its place and importance in the context of the Buddha's teaching.

XV.1 KEY ASPECTS OF *SATIPAṬṬHĀNA*

The "direct path" to *Nibbāna* described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* presents a comprehensive set of contemplations that progressively reveal ever subtler aspects of subjective experience. The mental qualities required for this direct path of *satipaṭṭhāna* are, according to the "definition" part of the discourse, a balanced and sustained application of effort (*ātāpī*), the presence of clearly knowing (*sampajāna*), and a balanced state of mind, free from desires (*abhijjhā*) and discontent (*domanassa*). These three qualities revolve like the three spokes of a wheel around the central mental quality of *sati*.

1 M I 82. The commentary on this passage, Ps II 52, has each of the four questioners specialize in one of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.

As a mental quality, *sati* represents the deliberate cultivation and a qualitative improvement of the receptive awareness that characterizes the initial stages of the perceptual process. Important aspects of *sati* are bare and equanimous receptivity, combined with an alert, broad, and open state of mind. One of the central tasks of *sati* is the de-automatization of habitual reactions and perceptual evaluations. *Sati* thereby leads to a progressive restructuring of perceptual appraisal, and culminates in an undistorted vision of reality "as it is". The element of non-reactive watchful receptivity in *sati* forms the foundation for *satipaṭṭhāna* as an ingenious middle path which neither suppresses the contents of experience nor compulsively reacts to them.

This mental quality of *sati* has a broad variety of possible applications. Within the context of *satipaṭṭhāna*, *sati* can range from the coarsest activities, such as defecation and urination, all the way up to the most sublime and exalted state, when *sati* is present as a mental factor during the breakthrough to *Nibbāna*. A similar breadth of applications can be found in the context of calmness meditation, where the tasks of *sati* range from recognizing the presence of a hindrance, to emerging with awareness from the highest meditative absorption.

On the basis of the central characteristics and qualities of *satipaṭṭhāna* described in the "definition" and in the "refrain", the main thrust of *satipaṭṭhāna* can be summed up as:

Keep Calmly Knowing Change

With the injunction "keep" I intend to cover both continuity and comprehensivity in *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation. Continuity of awareness underlies the quality "diligent" (*ātāpī*) mentioned in the "definition". The element of comprehensiveness comes up in the "refrain", which enjoins to contemplate both internally (*ajjhatta*) and externally (*bahiddhā*), that is, to comprehensively contemplate both oneself and others.

The qualification "calmly" stands for the need, mentioned in the "definition" and the "refrain", to undertake *satipaṭṭhāna* free from desires and discontent (*vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ*), and also free from any clinging or dependence (*anissito ca viharati, na ca kiñci loke upādiyati*).

The verb "knowing" echoes the frequent use of the verb *pajānāti* in the discourse. Such "knowing" represents the quality of bare mindfulness (*sati*) combined with clearly knowing (*sampajāna*), both

mentioned in the "definition". Both occur also in the "refrain", which speaks of contemplating merely for the sake of "bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness" (*ñāṇamattāya paṭissatimattāya*).

The "refrain" also explains the particular aspect of body, feelings, mind, and *dhammas* to which this quality of knowing is to be directed, namely their arising and passing away (*samudaya-vaya-dhammānupassī*). Such contemplation of impermanence can either lead to an understanding of conditionality, or form the basis for understanding the other two characteristics of conditioned phenomena, *dukkha* and *anattā*. It is this growth of insight into the unsatisfactory and empty nature of conditioned existence, based on the direct realization of impermanence, to which I intend to refer with the term "change".

The essential features of *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation can also be brought out visually. In Fig. 15.1 below I have attempted to illustrate

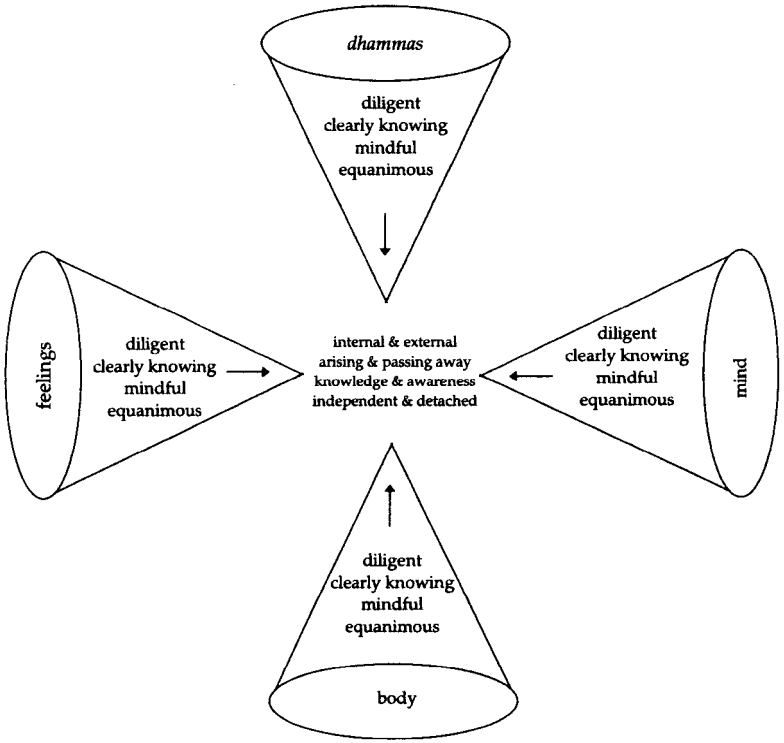

Fig. 15.1 Central characteristics and aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna*

the relationship between the "definition", the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, and the "refrain". The central aspects mentioned in the "refrain" are in the centre of the figure, while the qualities listed in the "definition" are repeated in each cone. These four cones represent the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, each of which can become the main focus of practice and lead to deep insight and realization.

As the diagram indicates, undertaking *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation of body, feelings, mind, or *dhammas* requires the combination of all the four qualities listed in the "definition". Such contemplation leads to the development of the four aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna* found in the centre of the above figure and mentioned in the "refrain" of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

In this diagram I intend to show that each of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* constitutes a "door" or perhaps a "stepping-stone". The contemplations included under the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are not ends in themselves, rather, they are only tools for developing the central aspects described in the "refrain". Whichever door or stepping-stone is used to develop insight, the main task is to employ it skilfully in order to gain a comprehensive and balanced vision of the true nature of subjective experience.

In the *Saḷāyatanavibhaṅga Sutta* the Buddha spoke of three "*satipaṭṭhānas*" distinct from the practices listed in the four *satipaṭṭhāna* scheme.[2] This suggests that the contemplations described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* do not determine the only proper and suitable ways for carrying out "*satipaṭṭhāna*" contemplation, but only recommendations for possible applications. Thus the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* is not necessarily restricted to the range of objects explicitly listed in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

The contemplations in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* progress from gross to subtle aspects of experience. It should be kept in mind, however, that this discourse represents a theoretical model of *satipaṭṭhāna*, not a case study. In actual practice, the different contemplations described in the discourse can be combined in a variety of ways and it would be a misunderstanding to take the progression in the discourse as prescribing the only possible sequence for the development of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

The flexible interrelation of the *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplations in actual practice can be illustrated by taking a cross-section, as it were,

2 M III 221 (cf. also page 30).

through the direct path of *satipaṭṭhāna*. Such a sectional view would resemble a twelve-petalled flower (see Fig. 15.2 below), with the main object of contemplation (here the breath is used as an example) constituting the centre of the "flower".

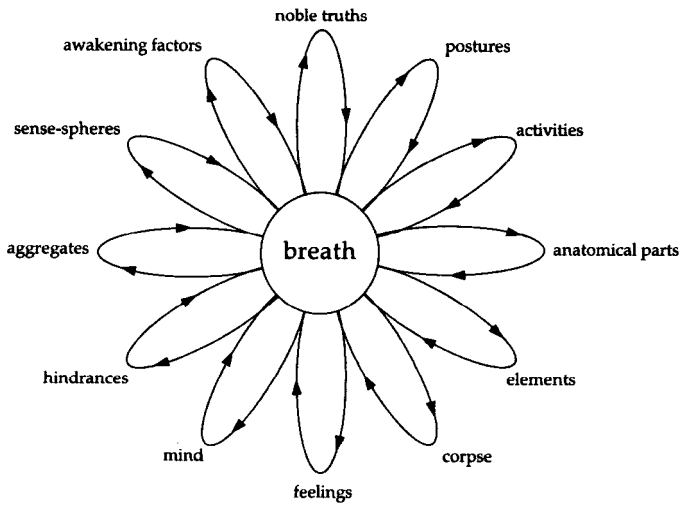

Fig. 15.2 Dynamic interrelation of the *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplations

From awareness of the main object of meditation, the dynamics of contemplation can at any given moment lead to any of the other *satipaṭṭhāna* exercises, and then revert to the main object. That is, from being aware of the process of breathing, for example, awareness might turn to any other occurrence in the realm of body, feelings, mind, or *dhammas* which has become prominent, and then revert to the breath. Otherwise, in the event that the newly-arisen object of meditation should require sustained attention and deeper investigation, it can become the new centre of the flower, with the former object turned into one of the petals.

Any meditation practice from the four *satipaṭṭhānas* can serve as the main focus of insight contemplation and lead to realization. At the same time, meditations from one *satipaṭṭhāna* can be related with those from other *satipaṭṭhānas*. This indicates the flexibility of the *satipaṭṭhāna* scheme, which allows freedom for variation and combination according to the character and level of development of the meditator. Understood in this way, practising *satipaṭṭhāna* should

not be a question of practising one or another *satipaṭṭhāna*, but of contemplating one as well as the others. In fact, during the deeper stages of the practice, when one is able to abide "independent and free from clinging to anything in the world", the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* progresses from any particular object or area to a more and more comprehensive form of contemplation that embraces all aspects of experience. Expressed in the terms of Fig. 15.2 it would be as if, when the sun was about to set, the twelve petals of the flower gradually came together to form a single bud. Practised in this way, *satipaṭṭhāna* becomes an integrated four-faceted survey of one's present experience, taking into account its material, affective, and mental aspects from the perspective of the *Dhamma*. In this way one's present experience becomes an occasion for swift progress on the direct path to realization.

XV.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF *SATIPAṬṬHĀNA*

The Buddha recommended the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* to newcomers and beginners, and also included advanced practitioners and *arahants* among the cultivators of *satipaṭṭhāna*.[3]

For the beginner embarking on *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, the discourses stipulate a basis in ethical conduct and the presence of "straight" view as necessary foundations.[4] According to a passage in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* leads to overcoming weakness with regard to the five precepts.[5] This suggests that the ethical foundation required to begin *satipaṭṭhāna* might be weak at the outset, but will be strengthened as practice proceeds. Similarly, the "straight" view mentioned earlier might refer to a preliminary degree of motivation and understanding that will develop

3 S V 144. That different levels of disciples should practise *satipaṭṭhāna* comes up again at S V 299. (Woodward 1979: vol.V p.265, translates this passage as if the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* "should be abandoned". This rendering is not convincing, since in the present context the Pāli term *vihātabba* is better translated as a future passive form of *viharati*, not of *vijahati*.)

4 The need for a basis in ethical conduct before embarking on *satipaṭṭhāna* is stated e.g. at S V 143; S V 165; S V 187; and S V 188. Cf. also S V 171, according to which the very purpose of ethical conduct is to lead up to the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*. S V 143 and 165 add "straight view" (*diṭṭhi ca ujukā*) to the necessary conditions for *satipaṭṭhāna*.

5 A IV 457.

Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam

of Vasubandhu

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Such are the characteristics of the loathsome.

***

12a-c. Mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasmṛti*) is *prajñā*, belonging to the five spheres, having wind for its object, and it is cultivated by beings in Kāmadhātu.[83]

Āna is in-breathing, the entry of wind; *apāna* is out-breathing, the leaving of the wind. The mindfulness (*smṛti*) that bears on both of these is *ānāpānasmṛti*.[84]

[Mindfulness of breathing is by nature *prajñā*, a knowledge bearing on in-breathing and out-breathing.] This *prajñā* is called mindfulness, *smṛti*, the same as the applications of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthānas*), because this knowledge of in-breathing and out-breathing, *ānāpānaprajñā*, is provoked by the force of mindfulness.[85]

It can be cultivated in five spheres, namely the first three *sāmantakas*, *dhyānāntara*, and Kāmadhātu, because it is associated with indifference (see viii.7, 23, etc.).[86] In fact, says the School, agreeable and painful sensations [in Kāmadhātu] are favorable to imagining: thus mindfulness of breathing, which is the opposite of imagining, cannot be associated with happiness or with suffering. On the other hand, the two agreeable sensations [of the Dhyānas] form an obstacle to the application of the mind to any object, and mindfulness of breathing can only be realized by this application.

But according to the masters who believe that the fundamental Dhyānas include the sensation of indifference (*Vibhāṣā*, *TD* 27, p. 134bll), mindfulness of breathing can exist in eight spheres, by adding the first three Dhyānas: higher spheres are no longer spheres in which one breathes (see viii.7).

The object of the mindfulness of breathing is wind.

Its support is Kāmadhātu, that is, it is cultivated by humans

and by the gods of Kāmadhātu, because imagination abounds there. It is obtained either by detachment or by cultivation. It is attention bearing on a real thing (*tattvamanasikāra*).[87] It belongs only to the Buddhists.

12c. Not to outsiders.

In fact, on the one hand, the teaching of mindfulness of breathing is absent among them;[88] and on the other hand, they are incapable of discovering the subtle *dharmas* by themselves.

12d. It has six aspects, counting, etc.

It is perfect when it is endowed with six operations: counting, following, fixing, observing, modifying, and purifying.[89]

i. Counting. One fixes the mind on in-breathing and out-breathing, without effort or contention; one lets the body and mind be as they are;[90] and one counts from one to ten only in the mind. One does not count to less than ten, nor to more than ten, for fear of contention and of mental distraction (vii.11).

There are three faults to avoid: a. to omit counting, by taking two for one; b. counting too high, by taking one for two; c. counting in a confused manner, by taking in-breathing for out-breathing, and vice versa. The counting that avoids these faults is correct. If, in the course of this cultivation the mind becomes distracted, then one should count anew from the beginning until absorption (*samādhi*) is attained.

ii. Following. Without contention, follow the progress of the air which enters and leaves until it goes into two senses: does the air breathed in occupy all of the body or does it go into only one part of the body? The ascetic follows the air breathed in into the throat, the heart, the navel, the kidneys, the thigh, and so on to the two feet; the ascetic follows the air breathed out to a distance of a

hand and a cubit.

According to other masters,[91] he follows the air breathed out to the "circle of air" (*vāyumaṇḍala*)[92] which holds up the universe and to the Vairambha Winds.[93]

This opinion is not admissible, for mindfulness of breathing is an attention to things as they really are (*tattvamanasikāra*).

iii. Fixing.[94] Fix the attention on the tip of the nose, or between the eyebrows, or in another area all the way down to the toes; fix the mind; see the breath held in the body like the thread of a pearl necklace;[95] state that it is cold or hot, unfavorable or favorable (*Vibhāṣā, TD* 27, p. 135a15).

iv. Observing. Observe that "These breaths are not only air, but the four primary elements, and again physical matter derived from these four; and the mind with its mental *dharmas* rests on them": in this way the ascetic discovers the five *skandhas* through analysis.

v. Modifying. The ascetic modifies the mind that had the air as its object and now directs his mind to better and better *dharmas* [for example, to the *smṛtyupasthānas*, vi.14, and the *uṣmagatas*, vi.17, etc.] up to and including the transworldly *dharmas* (vi.19b).

vi. Purifying. The ascetic enters the Path of Seeing (vi.26) and the Path of Meditation.

According to some other masters (*Vibhāṣā, TD* 27, p. 135a27), modification is progressive elevation from the foundations of mindfulness (the *smṛtyupasthānas*) up to Vajropamasamādhi (vi.44c). Purifying is the Knowledge of Extinction (*kṣayajñāna*), the Knowledge of Non-Arising (*anutpādajñāna*) and the Right Views of the Arhat (*aśaikṣī samyagdṛṣṭi*, vi.50c).

There is a summarizing stanza: "One teaches that the mindfulness of breathing has six aspects: counting, following, fixing, observing, modifying, and purifying."

13a. In-breathing and out-breathing are like the body.[96]

The two breaths, being part of the body, belong to the same sphere as does the body.

In-breathing and out-breathing do not exist among beings in Ārūpyadhātu, among embryonic beings, among non-conscious (*acitta*) beings, and among beings who have entered into the Fourth Dhyāna: their existence therefore presupposes a body [and bodies do not exist in Ārūpyadhātu], a certain body [a body has cavities, which embryonic beings do not have], a mind [which is absent among non-conscious beings], and a certain type of mind [which is absent in the Fourth Dhyāna]. When the body has cavities in it, and when the mind belongs to a sphere in which there is breathing, then there is in-breathing and out-breathing (*Vibhāṣā, TD* 27, p. 132bl).

There is in-breathing at birth and at the moment when one leaves the Fourth Dhyāna. There is out-breathing at death and at the moment when one enters the Fourth Dhyāna.

13b. It belongs to living beings.

It belongs to living beings, and not to non-living beings (i.10b).

13b. It is not taken up.

It does not form part of any sense organ (i.34c-d).

13c. It is an outflowing.[97]

It diminishes when the body increases; cut off, it recovers: therefore it is not an increase (*aupacayikī*, i.37), and it does not arise from retribution. In fact, the physical matter arisen from retribution does not recover after having been cut off (i. English translation note 156).

13c-d. It is not observed by an inferior mind.[98]

In-breathing and out-breathing is observed by a mind of its own sphere or by a mind in a higher sphere; but not by an *airyāpathika* mind, nor by a *nairmāṇika* mind of a lower sphere.

***

We have spoken of the two teachings, the visualization of loathsome things, and mindfulness of breathing. Having attained absorption (*samādhi*) by these two portals, now, with a view to realizing insight (*vipaśyanā*),

14a-b. Having realized stilling, he will cultivate the foundations of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthānas*).[99]

How is this?

14c-d. By considering the twofold characteristics of the body, sensation, the mind, and the *dharmas*.

By considering the unique characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*) and the general characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*)[100] of the body, sensation, the mind, and the *dharmas*.

"The unique characteristics" means its self nature (*svabhāva*).

"The general characteristics" signifies the fact that "All conditioned things are impermanent; all impure *dharmas* are suffering; and that all the *dharmas* are empty (*śūnya*) and not-self (*anātmaka*)."

What is the unique nature of the body? The primary elements and physical matter derived from these primary elements (i.12,

ii.65).

"*Dharmas*" means the *dharmas* which are neither the body, nor sensation, nor the mind. (*Vibhāṣā, TD* 27, p. 937a18).

According to the School, foundation of mindfulness of the body (*kāyasmṛtyupasthāna*) is realized when, being absorbed (*samāhita*), one sees the atoms and the succesive moments (*kṣaṇa*) of the body.

***

What is the nature of the foundations of mindfulness?

Foundation of mindfulness is threefold: foundation of mindfulness in and of itself (*svabhāva*), foundation of mindfulness through connection, and foundation of mindfulness in the quality of being an object.

Foundation of mindfulness in and of itself is

15a. *Prajñā.*[101]

What is *prajñā?*

15a. Proceeding from hearing, etc.

Prajñā proceeds from hearing, from reflection, and from meditation. The foundations of mindfulness are likewise threefold, proceeding from hearing, reflection, and meditation.

15b. The others, through connection and as object.

The other *dharmas* which are not *prajñā,* are, when they are *dharmas* coexistent with *prajñā,* foundations of mindfulness

through connection; when they are the object of *prajñā* and of the *dharmas* coexistent with *prajñā* [in other words, when they are the object of the foundation of mindfulness in and of itself and of the foundation of mindfulness through connection], they are a foundation of mindfulness as object.

***

How do we know that the foundation of mindfulness in and of itself is *prajñā?*

Because it is said in the Sūtra, "His attention is set having the body for its object" (*kāye* [var. *kāme*] *kāyānupaśyanā smṛtyupasthānam*).[102]

What is *anupaśyanā?* It is *prajñā.* In fact, through *prajñā,* one who is endowed with *prajñā* becomes an *anupaśya.*[103] Therefore the Sūtra further says, "He dwells in attention to the body, the internal body" (*madhyātmaṁ kāye kāyānupaśyī viharati*). The word *kāyānupaśyin* is explained as follows: one who possesses *anupaśya* or *darśana*[104] is called an *anupaśyin;* and one who is an *anupaśyin* with respect to the body is called a *kāyānupaśyin.*

***

What is *prajñā?*

The Blessed One said that it is the foundation of mindfulness.

[Why give the name of foundation of mindfulness to *prajñā?*]

The Vaibhāṣikas say: By reason of the preponderant role of attention, [which presents the object to *prajñā*]; as a wedge (*kīla*) contributes to the splitting of wood;[105] it is due to the force of mindfulness that *prajñā* is active with respect to the object.[106]

But the best explanation is the following: Mindfulness is applied (*upatiṣṭhate*)[107] by it; thus the *prajñā* is a foundation of

mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna* = *smṛter upasthānam*); in fact, as the object is seen by the *prajñā*, so too it is expressed, that is to say, grasped by the attention. Therefore the Blessed One said, "He dwells having an exact notion of the body with respect to the body (*kāye kāyānupaśyī viharati*): his attention is set and fixed having the body for its object" (*Saṁyutta*, v.294). And the Blessed One said, "He dwells with his attention fixed having his body for its object; his attention is applied, unexhausted" (see *Saṁyutta*, v.331).

***

Objection: Nevertheless the Sūtra says, "Oh monks, how is the origin, how is the disappearance of the foundations of mindfulness? Through the origin of food, there is the origin of the body; through the disappearance of food, there is the disappearance of the body; through the origin of contact, there is the origin of sensation . . . ; through the origin of *nāmarūpa* . . . ; through the origin of *manasikāra* . . . " (*Saṁyukta*, *TD* 2, p. 171a27). Therefore foundation of mindfulness is the body, etc.

Answer: In this Sūtra we are not dealing with a foundation of mindfulness in and of itself, but a foundation of mindfulness in the quality of being an object: the attention is applied to it, and therefore it is a foundation of mindfulness. The name differs according to the object.

***

Each foundation of mindfulness is threefold accordingly as it is considered as oneself, as another, or as oneself and another. [The ascetic has in view his own body, the body of another . . .]

15b-c. The order is that of their production.

Why are they produced in this order? According to the Vaibhāṣikas, because one first sees that which is the coarsest. Or rather: the body (1) is the support of sensual attachment which has its origin in the desire for sensation (2); this desire takes place because (3) the mind is not calmed; and the mind is not calmed because (4) the defilements are not abandoned.

15c-d. Four, oppositions to errors.[108]

The foundations of mindfulness are taught in this order as oppositions to the four errors, belief in purity, happiness, permanence, and self (v.9). They are therefore four, no more and no less.

Of the four foundations of mindfulness, three have an unmixed object; the fourth is of two types: when it bears only on the *dharmas*, its object is not mixed; when it bears on two, or three, or four things at one and the same time, its object is mixed [or universal, *samasta*].

***

Having thus cultivated the foundations of mindfulness having the body, etc., for their objects

16. Placed in the foundation of mindfulness having the *dharmas* as its universal object, he sees that the *dharmas* are impermanent, suffering, empty, and not-self.[109]

Placed in the foundation of mindfulness having the *dharmas* as its mixed object, placing together the body, sensation, etc., he sees them under the fourfold aspect of impermanence, suffering, empty, and not-self.

***

17a. From this there arises the Heat.[110]

From this cultivation of the foundation of mindfulness having the *dharmas* as its object, there finally[111] arises a root of good called *Uṣmagata* ("Heat attained"), because it is similar to heat (*uṣma*), being the first indication or the anticipation of the Noble Path, a fire which burns the fuel which are the defilements.

17b. Which has the Four Truths for its object.

Since it is prolonged for a certain period of time, *Uṣmagata,* the Heat, has the Four Truths for its object.

17c. Which has sixteen aspects.

The seeing of suffering as suffering, impermanent, empty, and not-self; seeing arising or origin as arising, appearance, cause, and condition; seeing extinction as extinction, calm, excellent, and definitive salvation; and the seeing of the Path as path, truth, obtaining, and definitive release. We shall define these different aspects later (see vii.13).

***

17c-d. From Heat, the Summits.

The Heat develops, weak, medium, and strong; there finally arises the Summits (*mūrdhan*).

17d. Which are similar to it.

Like Heat, the Summits have the Four Truths for their object and include the sixteen aspects: they receive another name by reason of their excellence.

They are called Summits (or "Heads"), because they are the most elevated or the head of the unfixed roots of good, that is, those from which one can fall away; or one can fall away from the Summits; or one goes beyond them by penetrating into a Patience (*kṣānti*).[112]

18a. It is through *dharma* that these two imprint.[113]

It is through the foundation of mindfulness that has the *dharmas* for its object that Heat and the Summits imprint. What does "imprint" mean? This refers to the first application of the different aspects of the Truths.[114]

18b. They grow through the others also.[115]

Heat and the Summits grow by means of the four foundations of mindfulness together. The progressing ascetic does not manifest the previously acquired roots of good, because he does not esteem them very much.

***

The Summits have grown by passing through weak, medium, and strong states:

18c. From that, Patience.[116]

Patience (*kṣānti*) is so-called because in this stage, the Truths please (*kṣamate*) extremely much. In the Heat they please weakly,

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four aspects of correct renunciation; and in the final phase, the four bases of supernormal powers. On the path of linkage, during the anticipatory phases of meditative warmth and the peak experience, one develops the five governing powers, and during the phases of patient acceptance and the highest state of mundane experience, one develops the five strengths.[10] On the path of seeing, one develops the seven aids to enlightenment, and on the path of meditation, the noble eightfold path.[11] [70b]

A. The Path of Accumulation in the Shravaka Approach

1. Initial Phase: The Four Applications of Mindfulness

The first step on all the paths is the initial phase of the path of accumulation. Beginners who have entered this phase develop the application of mindfulness on the basis of the body, as an antidote to attachment to their own and others' bodies. That is, to counteract patterns of desire in general, one neutralizes this attachment by meditating on one's own and others' bodies, and all that one perceives, as skeletons. *The Treasury of Abhidharma* states:

> . . . skeletons in all situations that involve attachment.[12]

As specific antidotes, one meditates on eight mental images, such as a decomposing corpse, a swollen corpse, and a maggot-ridden corpse.[13] Once free of attachment, one develops the application of mindfulness by closely examining one's body, occasionally using methods such as meditating on it as if it were a hollow reed.

Then one develops the application of mindfulness on the basis of sensations. One meditates on one's perception of the three kinds of sensations—pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral—being painful and without pith or essence, like a hollow reed. As a sutra says:

> Whatever sensations you may feel, you should know all of these to be painful.

Next, one develops the application of mindfulness on the basis of mind. That is, one focuses on one's inhalation and exhalation using the techniques of calm abiding and profound insight. For shravakas, the relative level of truth entails the continuum of ordinary mind and the calm-

ing of thoughts, whereas the ultimate level of truth entails irreducible moments of consciousness (when the continuum of ordinary mind is further examined). In that context, [71a] one meditates on the fact that none of this constitutes personal identity.[14]

Next, one develops the application of mindfulness on the basis of phenomena. Regarding the phenomena included in the aggregates of formative factors and consciousness, one meditates on the nature of all external and internal entities being such that they lack any identity, are impermanent, are like illusions, and so forth.

Then, using the aggregates of form, sensation, and discernment, one meditates by applying mindfulness to the three aspects of body, sensations, and mind, experiencing these to be without finite essence and so forth. Using the two aggregates of discernment and consciousness, one meditates by applying mindfulness to those phenomena. Thus, in various ways, one removes the afflictive states that entail overt fixation on all phenomena included in the five mind-body aggregates. Then, having suppressed the coarser factors to be eliminated, one advances on the path. The following verse is found in *The Treasury of Abhidharma:*

> Regarding the body, sensations, mind, and phenomena,
> thoroughly investigate these with respect to both kinds of characteristics.[15]

That is, one should meditate on each of these with respect to both their general and specific characteristics, experiencing the body as unclean by nature, sensations as painful by nature, the mind as impermanent by nature, and mental phenomena as lacking identity by nature.

2. Intermediate Phase: The Four Aspects of Correct Renunciation

Next, when the intermediate phase of the path of accumulation commences, having aroused one's diligence one meditates to prevent negative tendencies that have not developed from doing so, to control those that have developed, to cause positive tendencies that have not developed to do so, and to cause those that have developed to increase. Because this results in the correct renunciation of all that is negative, [71b] these are termed "the aspects of correct renunciation."

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> they are aware of things as they are and, with appropriate words, make this evident in order to benefit beings.[175]

This means that one should understand what *The Garlands of Buddhas* says about the purification of the entire range of perception:

> Bodhisattvas entering a building should give rise to the attitude, "May all beings attain the citadel of liberation!" By extension, [104b] they should give rise to the following attitudes: when lying down, "May beings attain the kaya of buddhahood"; when dreaming, "May beings realize that all phenomena are like dream images"; when waking from sleep, "May beings awaken from their ignorance"; on arising, "May beings attain the rupakaya of buddhahood"; when dressing, "May beings be clad in self-respect and modesty"; when fastening a sash or belt, "May beings be united with fundamentally positive qualities"; and when taking a seat, "May beings attain a vajra seat."

One practices according to passages such as this.

Attention to the breath as one inhales and exhales can be used skillfully as a precursor to the accomplishment of meditative absorption, for it is a method of taming thought. One tames the thinking process by paying attention to the cycles of respiration, following the exhalation about a yard from the mouth or nose and then the returning inhalation. Subsequently, one can cultivate the relative aspect of bodhichitta (the four immeasurable attitudes of love and so forth) and its ultimate aspect (meditation in the context of emptiness, without any of the usual proliferation and subsiding of thoughts). *Engaging in the Conduct of a Bodhisattva* states:

> One should pacify thoughts
> and cultivate bodhichitta.[176]

In the second case, the distinctive instructions on meditation refer to three phases. During the initial phase of the path of accumulation, one cultivates the four applications of mindfulness. For the first application, that of mindfulness based on the body, during meditative equipoise one meditates on the body as being like space, and during the postmeditation phase one meditates on it as being impure or like an illusion and so forth. For the application based on sensations, during meditative equipoise one meditates on sensations as having no origin, and during the postmedita-

tion phase one regards any sensation at all as painful yet without any pith or essence, like a hollow reed. [105a] For the application based on mind, during meditative equipoise one meditates on mind as empty by nature, and during the postmeditation phase one meditates on mind as unimpeded and not abiding in any fixed way. For the application based on phenomena, during meditative equipoise one meditates on the equalness of phenomena, and during the postmeditation phase one meditates on the eight analogies concerning the illusoriness of things and other topics.

In this way, the cultivation of the four applications of mindfulness during the initial phase of the path of accumulation leads one to the four noble truths as they are experienced on the path of seeing. The first application results in an understanding that the body produces suffering, which in turn leads one to an understanding of suffering. The second application, understanding that sensations produce suffering, leads one toward the elimination of the universal origin of suffering. Meditation on the mind as impermanent leads one toward the full experience of the cessation of suffering—that is, the cessation of the belief that things are permanent. Meditation on phenomena lacking any identity leads one to the cultivation of the path, by undermining one's fixation on identity. *Thoroughly Distinguishing Between Center and Extremes* states:

> Because they reveal the perpetuation of ignoble states, the causes
> of craving,
> the ground of being, and the absence of delusion,
> they lead one to the four truths.
> Meditate on the applications of mindfulness.[177]

During the intermediate phase of the path of accumulation, one makes an effort to prevent negative factors that have not yet occurred from occurring, to halt the flow of those that have occurred, to cause positive factors that have not yet occurred to occur, and to cause those that have occurred to increase. To these ends, one uses antidotes such as meditating on the nonexistence of identity and on the experience of the dream state or illusions. The same source explains:

> With a thorough understanding of counterproductive factors
> and their antidotes in every detail, [105b]
> one is diligent in eliminating what is negative.
> The four aspects occur in the most excellent way.[178]

The final phase of the path of accumulation consists of cultivating the

four bases of supernormal powers. This involves accomplishing desirable goals such as achieving deep levels of insight, sublime states of perception, and supernormal powers through an inner process of meditative absorption that focuses the mind one-pointedly, integrating calm abiding and profound insight. In *Thoroughly Distinguishing Between Center and Extremes,* we read the following:

> Remaining in that state brings pliancy.
> One fulfills all one's goals.[179]

In this context, the bases of supernormal powers referred to are the strengths of a mind rendered pliant through meditative stability, by means of which these supernormal powers and so forth are accomplished. There are four aspects: the meditative absorption of intention, that of diligence, that of attention, and that of analysis.

Thus, initially one's mind focuses on a single object of attention. If thoughts proliferate when one's mind is resting in this very stable manner, without indulging in them one immediately focuses one-pointedly on the object of attention, repeatedly meditating in that way. *The Ornament of the Sutras* states:

> Focusing on the object of attention itself,
> one should not become distracted.
> Swiftly realizing when there is distraction,
> one should return repeatedly to that object.[180]

2. The Path of Linkage

The explanation of the second path, that of linkage, also has two aspects: the foundation of the path and its nature. The foundation is twofold. The physical foundation can be the circumstances of beings in any of the five classes, and the mental foundation can be any one of six stages of meditative stability.[181]

The nature of this path is discussed in relation to three things: its cause, its result, and what it is in essence. [106a] Its cause is the Mahayana path of accumulation. *Thoroughly Distinguishing Between Center and Extremes* states:

> Having given rise to what is conducive to liberation, . . .[182]

Its result is the three subsequent paths of seeing, meditation, and no more

The Bodhicaryavatara by Shantideva
Chapter Nine Wisdom
Outline As Presented in the Commentary
The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech
by Kunzang Pelden

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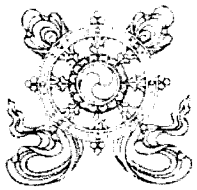
The NECTAR of MANJUSHRI'S SPEECH

A Detailed Commentary on Shantideva's *Way of the Bodhisattva*



Kunzang Pelden

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mind to overcome [the belief in] the inherently existent self. After all, our natures have been imbued with it from time without beginning.

Once again, these two cases are not the same.[218] The sense of self that is just a label arises through the power of interdependence, and it is impossible for reasoning to prove that it does not appear in the experience of ordinary people. Moreover, there is no need to do so. On the other hand, belief in the inherently existing self may be annihilated by a mind that meditates on No-Self and realizes the nature of phenomena, just as darkness is scattered by the presence of light. This has the backing of perfectly coherent logic as well as reality itself. The view of self is a temporary deviation of the mind away from the nature of things and is due to extrinsic circumstances. Through the application of scriptural authority and reasoning, this aberration is overthrown. The mind thus penetrates the nature of phenomena, and since this is also the nature of the mind, the nature of things and the nature of the mind can never be separated. It is said in the *Pramanavarttika,* "The nature of the mind is luminous clarity; all stains are adventitious."

To sum up therefore, belief in selfhood is the root of samsaric existence. As long as this is not eliminated, no matter what practices one undertakes, whether austerities or meditation, one cannot get beyond samsara. Consequently, it has been said that those graced with good fortune who wish for liberation should constantly make their practice a remedy to self-clinging.

3. Meditation on the absence of self in phenomena

4. Close mindfulness of the body

5. Examination of the body in general

[verse 78] What we call "the body" is a mere imputation; it does not exist inherently. Our reason for saying this is that if a body, which is apprehended as a single (partless) whole complete with all its sense faculties, existed as such, it would have to be present in its members, for example the hand. But the various body parts, the foot, the shins and calves, are not the body. The thighs and hips, the waist and loins, the belly, back, chest and arms, and so on and so forth—none of these is the body. As Shantideva

says [verse 79]: The body is not ribs or hands, armpits, shoulders, bowels or entrails such as lungs and heart. It is not the head and it is not the throat. What is the "body," then, in all of this? None of these different elements in fact conforms to the actual definition of the whole body. Indeed, they appear to be related to each other, but like body parts scattered on a charnel ground, they do not make up a single whole. How could any member, left to itself, constitute the body? Moreover, a hand may be amputated, but the body is still considered to remain. What, therefore, is this so-called body, this aggregate of many parts? In itself, it is nothing.

Here it will be objected that, granted that the individual parts are not the body, the body nevertheless is a reality and is present throughout its parts. It should be pointed out, however, that if this is so, it means either that one "body" with all its parts is present throughout our whole anatomy or that an entire body is present in each of our physical parts (thus implying a multiplicity of bodies). [verse 80] If it is meant that the parts of the "body" coincide with the physical parts, hands and so forth, this means that the body's parts correspond to the physical members in which it is present. But if we examine to see where this body, whole and entire, is actually located, checking off each part one by one, no single, pervasive body is found. [verse 81] If, on the other hand, an entire body, complete with all its parts, subsists in the hand and all the other members, this means that there are as many bodies as there are bodily parts. But this is impossible, since we cling to the body as a single whole.

[verse 82] Therefore, since there is no body, or rather since no body appears, when we search for it analytically within the outer and inner fields of the sense faculties, how can the body be said to exist in its parts? Obviously, it cannot. Finally, since there is no ground of imputation for the body, other than its parts, how can it be said to exist at all? It cannot. The root verse 78, beginning with the words "What we call the body . . ." shows that the body is not one with its parts. Root verse 80, which starts "If the 'body' . . ." indicates that the body is not something different from its interrelated parts.

[verse 83] Consequently, although the body does not exist as such, it is through ignorance that the idea "body" occurs to the mind on the basis of the assemblage of physical parts. Aside from being a mere label, the "body" has in fact no existence. It is just as when a pile of stones is mistaken for a man, on account of the similarity of its appearance. [verse 84] As long as the conditions are fulfilled with regard to a specific shape, the body will

continue to appear as a man or a woman. But when these conditions are not complete, it will not do so, as when a change of sex occurs or during the development of an unborn child or when the body is cremated and only ashes are left. In just the same way, as long as the circumstances for the imputation of the body are found (that is, the interconnected physical parts), a body will appear. But in themselves these parts are not the body; they are just pieces of flesh and bone.

5. Specific examination of physical parts

But even if the body does not exist, can we not still say that its limbs, the arms and so on, which we can see before our very eyes, really exist? [verse 85] No, just as the body itself does not exist truly, likewise the hand is simply a collection of fingers and so on, and is merely ascribed to the assembly of its parts. It does not exist as such. The fingers also are themselves assemblages of joints, and they too are therefore without true existence; and the joints in turn are divided into their separate sides and are therefore composite, not single units. [verse 86] Again, these parts may be progressively subdivided, from the comparatively gross down to the most subtle particles, and even the tiniest particle may be split sixfold—above, below, and in the four directions. Ultimately, not one truly existent fragment can be found in any of these directional segments; even the fragments themselves disappear. Thus, if all apparent forms, for example the hand, are assessed by dissecting them in this way, going from comparatively gross to more subtle fragments, down to the directional segments of the infinitesimal particle, they are seen to be empty, like space; they have no existence as physical forms. Even the infinitesimal particle does not exist.

5. The need for relinquishing attachment to one's body

[verse 87] On investigation of its true mode of being, how could anyone cling to this physical form, which is so like a dream, appearing but devoid of inherent existence? It does not make sense to cling to it! Since the body is thus without inherent existence, what is the status of its particular character as man or woman? Neither category has ultimate existence.

Just as one analyzes one's own body, so too should one analyze the bodies of other living beings, as well as other phenomena in the outer universe, such

as mountains and continents, arriving at the firm conviction that they are like space, without inherent existence. Once this has been understood, and when all dualistic clinging to one's body and the bodies of others has been rejected, all that manifests in the postmeditative state should be regarded as illusory—appearing but without inherent existence. And when meditating, one should rest in the natural state, spacious and free from conceptual activity. As it is said in the sutras, "Whoever, O Manjushri, sees that his body is like space is applying to his body the close mindfulness of the body."

4. Close mindfulness of the feelings

5. Examination of the nature of the feelings

[verse 88] If the feelings of suffering in the mind stream are ultimately and by nature real, how is it that they do not prevent the occurrence of happiness? For they ought to stop happiness from ever arising, whereas obviously they do not do so definitively. The same would also apply in the case of an ultimately real happiness with regard to suffering, and there is no need to discuss it separately. Feelings are thereby shown to be without true existence in the mind. The text goes on to prove that, in respect of the external world, feelings such as pleasure are not inherent in outer objects either. If a beautiful form or a sweet taste and so on, are intrinsically pleasurable, how is it that delicious food or an interesting sight do not make people happy when, for instance, they are in agony over the death of their child or when they are out of their minds with fear? If in pleasant tastes and other phenomena, pleasure were intrinsically present, it would have to be felt, like the heat of fire. But this is obviously not the case.

[verse 89] Again, it might be thought that discomfort is present in the mind but that it may be overwhelmed by a particularly powerful sense of inner joy and therefore not experienced, in exactly the same way as the stars are outshone by the sun. But how can something that is not at all experienced be a feeling—lacking, as it does, any such qualification?

[verse 90] Even if this last point is conceded, however, it could still be argued that when a powerful sense of pleasure supervenes, it is not that pain is not experienced at all, but that it is present in a very subtle form and therefore it is not recognized or felt, just as when a tiny drop of brine falls into a large quantity of molasses. But it is impossible for a subtle form of pain and a powerful sense of pleasure to coexist within a single mind

stream. If it were, it ought to be possible for them to be felt at the same time, whereas this never happens. And since it was contended earlier that the powerful, gross aspect of pain may be suppressed by feelings of pleasure, how is it that the subtle aspect is not dispelled likewise, in the face of such a powerful antidote, as when something cold touches a surface that is totally suffused with a fierce heat?

Perhaps it could be said that the subtle pain does, nevertheless, exist, but that it is prevented from acting like pain. It is transformed by the powerful sense of bliss into a sensation of mere pleasurableness; it is experienced as a sort of subtle pleasure. It nevertheless remains what it is, like a clear crystal stained with vermilion, which looks red but is still a clear crystal underneath. To this it must be said that the subtle pain classified as mere pleasurableness is a form of pleasure; it is not pain at all. What purpose is served by calling it "pain"? And what difference is there in a mere pleasurableness that is pain experienced as subtle pleasure and a mere pleasurableness that is a subtler form of pleasure? What is the point of racking one's brains to find such nonexistent distinctions, like trying to tie knots in the sky! These examples are themselves incoherent, yet they have been adduced as proofs. But what can they prove? Nothing at all!

[verse 91] Again, one might think that when the antithesis of pain, namely, a powerful sense of pleasure arises, pain is not experienced because its causes are not all present. But in that case, if the word "feeling" is attributed to something that has no reality, surely this is a clear case of merely conceptual imputation. For according to circumstances as they arise by turns, one can see that, when the mind experiences pleasure, there is no pain; when pain is experienced, there is no pleasure. Therefore to consider that so-called pleasure and pain exist in and of themselves and to strive purposely to gain the one and avoid the other is delusion. Aside from the imputation of pleasure and pain by the mind itself, there is no such thing as self-subsistent pleasure and pain, whether inside the mind or outside it. This can be exemplified by the effect of melted butter on a hungry person as compared with someone who is sick and nauseous, or the effect of a heap of manure on a person obsessed with cleanliness as compared with a pig, or the effect of a woman on a lustful man as compared with one who is meditating on the body's impurities. Pleasure, and so on, arise by virtue of the subject's thought; there is no such thing as a sensation that is intrinsically pleasant or otherwise.

[verse 92] For this reason, the remedy for clinging to pleasure and other

feelings as though they were real and the delusory chain of thoughts connected therewith (wanting this, not wanting that) is the meditation that examines and shows that feelings have no inherent existence in themselves. Apart from this meditation, there is no other antidote to grasping at the supposed reality of feelings—something that convulses the world with a kind of collective insanity. The contemplation or meditation on the unreality of feelings, arising from such a rich field of analysis, is the food enjoyed by yogis. Just as food satisfies and nourishes the body, likewise yogis, through the experience of pleasure free from desire, nourish the body of the qualities of realization.

Since feelings are the root of craving and constitute the main grounds for all disagreements and quarrels, it has been said that it is of vital importance to come to a clear-cut conviction that they are without any inherent existence, and to become accustomed to this. Whether one performs analytical or resting meditation as described above, the most important thing in the beginning is to acquire wisdom through listening to the teachings. It has been said that among the disciples of Buddha Shakyamuni, those who realized the truth were the ones who had imbibed the teachings of the preceding Buddha Kashyapa. In the future, therefore, when the Buddha Maitreya appears, those who listen to the teachings now will be born as the first of his followers and will see the truth.

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5. Examination of the cause of the feelings

[verse 93] A physical sense faculty and its physical object such as form are either separated by space, or they are not so separated. If they are separated, how can contact take place? If they are not conjoined, they do not meet, but are like two mountains, one in the east and one in the west. On the other hand, if there is no gap between the faculty and the object, the two become one. In that case, what faculty encounters what object? It would be meaningless to say, for example, that the eye is in contact with itself.

But could it not be argued that the faculty and the object simply touch each other, like the palms of one's hands joining? No, the contact is only apparent and not real, merely attributed by thought. The reason for this is that a sense organ and a physical object do not have omnidirectional contact. If contact is made from the front, no contact is made from behind. According to this kind of analysis, particles that are separated from each other by other particles cannot be said to touch.

On the other hand, it might be thought perhaps that infinitesimal particles, unseparated by other particles, of the faculty and the object, should meet. [verse 94] Yet, the infinitesimal atomic particle of the sense faculty cannot penetrate the infinitesimal atomic particle of the object. Since they are partless, they lack all dimension with which to accommodate any kind of joining or intermingling. In relation to each other, they enjoy a status of perfect parity. On the other hand, if the two particles touch on one side only, but do not have contact throughout, they cannot be partless.

Leaving aside the particles that do not have contact, and considering those particles that do, if they were to have contact in all their parts, they must mutually interpenetrate and fuse into one. They do not however interpenetrate since neither of them has the volume that would enable them to do so. If there is no interpenetration, the particles do not intermingle. If there is no intermingling, there is no contact. For if two partless entities meet, they must have uniform contact in every direction; contact from only one side is impossible. [verse 95] How, therefore, is it acceptable to speak of contact between partless entities? It is impossible for them to have contact either from one side or from all sides. And so, Shantideva demands rhetorically, if ever contact has been observed between partless entities, let it be demonstrated and it will be established. He knows, of course, that such a demonstration is impossible.

Thus, with regard to the so-called union of object, sense power, and consciousness, Shantideva has demonstrated that the sense power and the object do not meet. [verse 96] If, however, it is contended that there is, nevertheless, contact between the mind and objects, he replies that it is unacceptable to speak of a meeting between a physical thing and the mind, which is incorporeal. One might just as well say that one could touch the sky with one's hand or meet with the child of a barren woman. Of course, it will be said that it is inappropriate to cite such examples with regard to the mind, because the mind exists. It is not inappropriate, however, because the point at issue is the possibility of contact [between a material] and an immaterial thing. Even so, given that there is no meeting or touching, surely there must be some sort of convergence of object, sense power, and consciousness? But no, even this putative "gathering" is unreal, as was shown in the earlier investigations, for example in verse 85, "Likewise, since it is a group of fingers . . ."

[verse 97] Therefore, if there is no contact acting as cause, from where do feelings result? Feelings themselves have no existence on the ultimate

level, and if that is so, what sense is there in exhausting ourselves in demanding pleasure and turning away from pain? The pleasures that people desire and work for are nonexistent. It is the same with suffering. Therefore, what suffering is tormenting whom? It is just the delusion of the mind, and the mind is itself illusory.

5. Examination of the Result of the Feelings

If craving arises constantly in all sentient beings, how could feeling, which is its cause, be nonexistent? The answer is that craving too is no more than a delusion; it is not real. [verse 98] That which feels, namely, the mind and the self, and that which it experiences, namely, the feeling, have no inherent existence at all. When it is realized that that which feels and that which is felt are both without true existence, how could the result of feeling, namely, craving, *not* be averted, since its cause is removed?

5. Examination of the Feeling Subject

If both the feelings and the one who feels do not exist, how is it possible to admit such perceptions as sight and hearing? [verse 99] By mentioning sight with regard to form and tactility with regard to physical contact, which are the first and last of the sense feelings, the root verse indicates the whole range of sensory experience: sight, sound, smell, and so on. None of them has true existence; they appear like dreams and mirages; they are simply our unexamined designations. They are mere appearances without true existence. Ultimately there is nothing to be found.

The question could be asked whether feeling and the conscious experiencer of it are simultaneous or not. Let us consider simultaneity first. If the conscious experiencer and the feeling itself were to occur at one and the same time, with the one coming neither before nor after the other, it would be impossible for the mind to observe the feeling. If distinct entities occur at exactly the same time, without the one preceding the other, they must both be completely independent of each other. Being different, they are unconnected. Therefore experience is impossible.

But what if they are not simultaneous, but rather the feeling comes first and consciousness later; what if the mind assumes the aspect of the feeling [and is thus able to experience it]? [verse 100] If a feeling precedes and the

consciousness of it follows, it must be admitted that when the consciousness arises, the feeling is no longer present: It is just a recollection. Now all thoughts of things past are memories, and what is past does not exist in the present moment, and cannot, now, be really and clearly experienced. Feeling thus becomes impossible. If we examine the memory of something in the past, we find something that is deceptive. For what is past no longer abides as an object in the present. The consciousness of the past moment—the subject when the feeling was being experienced—is now no more; it can no longer experience anything. And logic proves that the feeling cannot be experienced by the present and future moments of consciousness. Consequently, the past feeling can now be experienced only as memory; the present feeling cannot be experienced; and the future is not yet here and so obviously cannot be felt by the present consciousness.

Neither can it be right to say that feeling is "self-feeling," since it is contradictory to say that a sensation acts on itself. This argument is similar to the refutation of the self-knowing mind. [verse 101] On the other hand, as we have just explained, the consciousness that is distinct from the feelings cannot experience them either. That which experiences the feelings, the agent of sensation, has no true existence. Thus, such feelings are devoid of intrinsic reality. How then can this agent of experience, self-less and like a mirage or dream-vision, composed of a collection of aggregates, be affected by a feeling designated as "suffering" but which has no inherent existence? In truth, such an agent can neither be helped nor harmed.

4. Close Mindfulness of the Mind

5. The Mind is Without Inherent Existence

[verse 102] No matter where we look for the mind, we cannot find it. It is not located in the six organs of sense, like the eyes, nor in the six objects of sense: form and so on. Neither is it somewhere in between these two poles of experience. The mind cannot be located somewhere inside the torso, nor within the body's outer limbs; and it cannot be found elsewhere. [verse 103] Whatever is body is not mind. But while the mind is not to be found separate from a body, as it were in exterior objects, neither does it mingle and merge with the body. But since it can have no independent existence, not even slightly, apart from the body, the root verse says, "Beings by their

nature are beyond the reach of suffering." As it is said in the *Ratnakuta,* "The mind is not within; the mind is not without; neither is it both. You cannot point to it." And later, "The mind, O Kashyapa—even all the Buddhas have never seen it! They do not see it and they never shall!" And as the *Prajnaparamita-sutra* in eight thousand verses says, "The mind indeed is not a 'mind'; the nature of the mind is lucent clarity."

5. The mind is unborn

[verse 104] If the mind, for example a visual consciousness, exists prior to its object of cognition (in this case a visible form), in respect of what object is this consciousness produced? For at that earlier moment, no object had presented itself, with the result that no subject could be generated. If, on the other hand, the consciousness and the object of cognition arise simultaneously, once again, in respect of what object is consciousness produced? If there is no consciousness present, a perceptual condition does not occur, and so it is unable to generate the consciousness. For if a perceptual condition has arisen, there must have already been a consciousness present, perceiving it. It is thus inappropriate to say that the object is the origin of that consciousness, since both terms are in that case (causally) unrelated.

[verse 105] If, however, consciousness arises subsequent to its object, again, from what does it arise, since the object of its perception has ceased to be? Does the object that has ceased continue to exist or not? If it still exists, it has not yet ceased and thus becomes simultaneous with the perceiving consciousness. If, on the contrary, something derives from it even though it does not exist, then we would have to say that a plant can arise from a burnt seed or that even a rabbit's horns can give rise to a visual consciousness!

4. Close mindfulness of phenomena

5. Actual close mindfulness of phenomena

As we have just explained, the way in which phenomena, whether compounded or uncompounded, arise is beyond our conceptual grasp. Phenomena do not come into being before, after, or simultaneously with their cause; they do not arise from themselves nor from something else nor from both nor from neither. They are without origin; and what is without origin can have no abiding or cessation. Indeed, as it has been said:

Do not cease to be and do not come to be.
They have no ending and they are not permanent.
They do not come; they do not go.
They are not different; they are not the same.

5. Refutation of objections

6. Eliminating the objection that the two truths are untenable

[verse 106] It will be objected that if phenomena never arise or subside, and so on, the relative truth—which is itself characterized by origin and cessation, coming and going—collapses. And if the relative truth is not asserted, the ultimate cannot be retained either. What then happens to the two truths? They are reduced to one.

To this it must be said that the system of the two truths is propounded solely for didactic purposes, as an entry to the path. On the ultimate level, the division into two truths has no place. There is only the inconceivable dharmadhatu, pure suchness, the ultimate mode of being. As it is written in the sutra:

There is but one truth, absence of all origin,
But some will crow about there being four.
Yet in the essence of enlightenment,
Not one is found, why speak of four?

But whereas on the ultimate level, the two truths are not posited, on the relative level, they are. For there is certainly a difference between the way things are and the way they appear; and this corresponds to two truths as was declared earlier.[219]

It may be objected that if, of the two truths thus posited, the specifically characterized things of the relative do not exist, the so-called relative is necessarily posited by something other than it, namely, by the mind. Being so posited, [the relative] occurs in the mind, which means that beings will never pass beyond suffering. For as long as beings last, their minds last; as long as their minds last, the mind-posited relative truth also lasts.[220] Therefore nirvana, in which all dualistic conceptions of object and subject are exhausted, will never occur.

PRACTICING WISDOM

The Perfection of Shantideva's Bodhisattva Way

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

Translated and edited by Geshe Thupten Jinpa

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9. THE NATURE OF PHENOMENA

COMMENTARY

The Whole and Its Parts

Next follows Shantideva's presentation of the identitylessness, or selflessness, of phenomena, which is explained first by means of the *four mindfulnesses*—mindfulness of the body, of feelings, of mind, and of phenomena. So, according to Shantideva's text, first we reflect upon the nature of our own body. This is done by contemplating the body's general and specific characteristics. These include, for example, the aging process and the impure substances that constitute bodily existence. I won't go into the details of this contemplation here.

Generally speaking, meditating on the mindfulness of body, reflecting upon the nature of our own body, is the approach explained in the Hinayana scriptures. However, we can extend this contemplation to the nature of the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena of all beings, who are limitless like space. Then it becomes a training of the mind according to the Mahayana path. When we contemplate the emptiness of these four factors—body, feelings, mind, and phenomena—we are practicing a mindfulness meditation focused on the ultimate truth.

The Way of the Bodhisattva gives us a systematic practice for these four mindfulness meditations on emptiness. Let us take as our example the human body. It is composed of many different parts—head, arms, legs, and so on. There is also the whole—the body as a complete unit. Generally when we think of *body,* it appears to our mind, at least on the surface, as if there is a single entity that we can point to as a tangible, unitary reality. Based on this commonsense view, we can speak of various characteristics and parts of the body. In other words, we feel as if there is fundamentally a thing called *body,* and we can speak about its parts. Yet if we search for this "body" apart from its various parts, we come to realize that it is actually not to be found.

This is what Shantideva means in the following verses.

78. What we call the body is not feet or shins,
The body, likewise, is not thighs or loins.
It's not the belly nor indeed the back,
And from the chest and arms the body is not formed.

79. The body is not ribs or hands,
Armpits, shoulders, bowels, or entrails;
It is not the head or throat:
From none of these is "body" constituted.

We have a concept of our body as a unitary entity, which we hold to be precious and dear. Yet if we look more carefully, we find that the body is not the feet, nor the calves, the thighs, the hips, the abdomen, the back, the chest, the arms, the hands, the side of the torso, the armpits, the shoulders, the neck, nor the head or any other parts. So where is "body" to be found? If, on the other hand, the body were identical to the individual parts of the body, then the very idea of the body as a unitary entity would be untenable.

80. If "body," step by step,
Pervades and spreads itself throughout its members,
Its parts indeed are present in the parts,
But where does "body," in itself, abide?

81. If "body," single and entire,
Is present in the hand and other members,
However many parts there are, the hand and
all the rest,
You'll find an equal quantity of "bodies."

If this unitary, single entity called *body* is identical to, or exists separately in, each individual part, then just as there are various parts of the body, the body too will become multiple.

Therefore, continues Shantideva, the body does not exist as identical to the individual parts of the body, nor can it exist separately and independently of these parts.

82. If "body" is not outside or within its parts,
How is it, then, residing in its members?
And since it has no basis other than its parts,
How can it be said to be at all?

83. Thus there is no "body" in the limbs,
But from illusion does the idea spring
And is affixed to a specific shape,
Just as when a scarecrow is mistaken for a man.

So how can this body be autonomous, independent, and self-existent? If we carefully examine the nature of the body, we find that the body is nothing more than a designation that we assign on the basis of the aggregation of various parts. We might ask, "What then is the body?" Due to circumstantial conditions such as the lighting, appearance of the object, and so on, we can sometimes mistake a certain shape as a human being.

Similarly, says Shantideva, as long as the appropriate conditions and factors are assembled that give rise to the sense of there being a person, then we can conventionally posit the concept of *body* on that basis.

84. As long as the conditions are assembled,
A body will appear and seem to be a man.
As long as all the parts are likewise present,
It's there that we will see a body.

However, if we search for the true referent behind the term *body,* then we will find nothing. The upshot is that we arrive at the conclusion that "body" is, in the final analysis, a conventional construction—a relative truth—that comes into being only by depending on various causes and conditions.

This above analysis can also be extended to the individual parts of the body, as Shantideva does in the next verses.

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85. Likewise, since it is a group of fingers,
The hand itself is not a single entity.
And so it is with fingers, made of joints;
And joints themselves consist of many parts.

86. These parts themselves will break down into atoms,
And atoms will divide according to direction.
These fragments, too, will also fall to nothing.
Thus atoms are like empty space—they have
no real existence.

When we speak of a hand, we find that it also is a composite of various parts. If a hand existed intrinsically and independently, this would contradict its having the nature of being dependent on other factors. If we search for a hand itself, we do not find a hand separate from the various parts that form it. Just as with a hand, a finger too is a composite that when dissected loses its

existence. So with any part of the body, if we search for the true referent behind its name, nothing is to be found.

When we dissect the parts even into their elemental constituents—molecules, atoms, and so on—these too become unfindable. We can carry on dividing even the atoms themselves in terms of their directional surfaces and find, again, that the very idea of *atom* is a mental construct. If we carry on still further, we find that the very idea of matter, or atoms, becomes untenable. In order for anything to be characterized as material, it must have parts. Once we go beyond that and dissect further, what remains is nothing but emptiness.

To our commonsense view, things and events appear as if they have some form of independent and objective status. However, as Shantideva points out in the next verse, if we search for the true nature of such phenomena, we eventually arrive at their unfindability.

87. All form, therefore, is like a dream,
And who will be attached to it, who thus
investigates?
The body, in this way, has no existence;
What is male, therefore, and what is female?

So, we can see that there is nothing absolute about the objects of our anger and attachment. Nothing is desirable or perfect in the absolute sense, neither is anything undesirable and repulsive in the absolute sense. Therefore, in reality, there is no ground for extreme emotional reactions to things and events. Since the body cannot be found when sought through critical analysis, so the designations we make on the basis of the existence of the body—such as differences of gender and race—are also ultimately devoid of essence. So now, what grounds do we have to generate extreme and volatile emotional responses to people of different gender or race?

How Do Things Exist?

When we examine the phenomenological experience of emotions coming and going within us, there is, generally speaking, the appearance that all the things and events each have an independent and objective reality. This is especially so with a strong negative emotion like hatred. We impose a kind of concreteness upon the object such that the object appears to us in sharper contrast, with a very solid reality of its own. In reality, there are no such tangible, concrete objects. However, we have to ask, if these objects are unfindable, does this mean they do not exist at all? This is not the case. Of course they do exist. The question is not *whether* they exist but *how* they exist. They exist, but not in the manner in which we perceive them. They lack any discrete, intrinsic reality. This absence, or emptiness, of inherent existence is their ultimate nature.

The analytic process that seeks the true referents of our terms and concepts is not so complex, and it's not that difficult to arrive at the conclusion that things and events are unfindable when sought through such a process. However, this absence we arrive at after discerning the unfindability of phenomena through such analysis is not the final emptiness. Once we have arrived at this unfindability of things and events, then we can ask in what manner they actually do exist. We would then realize that the existence of things and events must be understood in terms of their relativity. And when we understand things and events as dependent for their existence on causes and conditions—and also as mere designations—we come to realize that things and events lack independence or self-determining authority. We see their nature clearly as dependent on other factors. And as long as anything exists only in dependence on other factors—governed by other forces—it cannot be said to be independent. For independence and dependence are mutually exclusive; there is also no third possibility.

It is critical to understand that a Madhyamika does not say that things are absent of inherent existence merely because they cannot be found when sought through critical analysis. This is not the full argument. Things and events are said to be absent of

inherent or intrinsic existence because *they exist only in dependence on other factors*. This is the real premise. This style of reasoning eliminates two extremes—the extreme of nihilism, because one accepts a level of existence in terms of interdependence, and the extreme of absolutism, because one denies the intrinsic existence of phenomena.

The Buddha stated in sutra that anything that comes into being through dependence on conditions has the nature of being unborn. What does *unborn* mean here? Certainly we are not talking about the unborn nature of a nonexistent entity, such as the horn of a rabbit. Likewise, we are not denying the origination of things and events on a conventional level. What we are saying is that all phenomena that depend on conditions have the nature of emptiness. In other words, anything that depends on *other* factors is devoid of its own independent nature, and this absence of an independent nature is emptiness.

In his *Stanzas on the Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way,* Nagarjuna says that things and events, which are dependently originated, are empty, and thus are also dependently designated. He says dependent origination is the path of the Middle Way, which transcends the extremes of absolutism and nihilism. This statement is followed by another passage, which reads:

> There is no thing
> That is not dependently orginated;
> Therefore there is no thing
> That is not empty [of intrinsic existence].[17]

Nagarjuna concludes there is nothing that is not empty, for there is nothing that is not dependently originated. Here we see the equation between dependent origination and emptiness.

When we read the passages in *The Way of the Bodhisattva* dealing with the unfindability of things and events, it is crucial not to let ourselves be drawn into nihilism. This is the false conclusion that nothing really exists, and therefore, nothing really matters. This extreme must be avoided.

PRACTICING WISDOM

Beyond the Intellectual Understanding

An intellectual understanding of emptiness is different from a full realization of emptiness, wherein there is no cognition of the dependent origination of things. The Buddha states in a sutra cited in Nagarjuna's *Compendium of Sutras (Sutrasamuchaya)* that if in our meditations on emptiness we have even the slightest affirmative element—for instance, "This is emptiness," or "Things must exist"—then we are still caught in the web of grasping. As far as the cognitive content of our meditative experiences of emptiness is concerned, it must be a total absorption within the mere negation, the absence of intrinsic existence. There should be no affirmative elements within that meditative state.

However, when you have gained a very deep understanding of emptiness, you will get to a point where your very concept of existence and nonexistence changes. At this stage, even with regard to familiar objects, you will see a marked difference in your perception and your attitude toward them. You will recognize their illusion-like nature. That is, when the recognition dawns that although things appear to be solid and autonomous they do not exist in that way, this indicates that you are really arriving at an experiential understanding of emptiness. This is known as *perceiving things as illusion-like*. In fact, when you have gained a deep realization of emptiness, there is no need to make separate efforts to attain this perspective. After your own profound realization and experience of the emptiness of phenomena, things will appear spontaneously and naturally in the nature of illusion.

As your understanding of emptiness deepens and becomes a full experience of emptiness, you will be able to not only confirm the emptiness of phenomena by merely reflecting on dependent origination, but also your ascertainment of emptiness will reinforce your conviction in the validity of cause and effect. In this way, your understanding of both emptiness and dependent origination will reinforce and complement each other, giving rise to powerful progress in your realization.

You might think that when your understanding deepens in this way, you have reached such a high level of realization that you are at the threshold of becoming fully enlightened! This is definitely not the case. At this initial stage, on what is called the *path of accumulation,* your understanding of emptiness is still inferential. In deepening your understanding of emptiness further, it is essential to develop another mental factor—the faculty of single-pointedness. It is possible that we can, by using the analytic approach, arrive at a single-pointedness of the mind, but it is more effective and easier is to first have stability of the mind, and then, using that stability, reflect on the empty nature of phenomena. In any case, it is essential to attain tranquil abiding *(shamata)*. Once you have gained tranquil abiding, you then use that stable mind to meditate on emptiness. In this way you arrive at a union of tranquil abiding *(shamata)* and penetrative insight *(vipashyana)*.

You have now arrived at the *path of preparation*. From this point onward there will be a gradual reduction in dualistic appearances during meditative equipoise on emptiness. This gradual diminishing of dualistic appearances will culminate in a direct and utterly nonconceptual realization of emptiness. Such a state, free from dualism and grasping at intrinsic existence, is known as the *true path*. At this point, you have become an *arya,* a "superior being."

The true path results in the attainment of a true cessation—the cessation of certain levels of deluded states and afflictions. This is when we have an unmediated, experiential knowledge of the true Dharma, one of the three objects of refuge. Only at this stage do we really have the first opportunity to say "hello" to the true Dharma jewel. We have yet to tread the subsequent stages of the path in order to attain full enlightenment. During the first two paths of accumulation and preparation, the first incalculable eon of the accumulation of merit is completed. Through the first seven bodhisattva levels, which begin upon reaching the true path, the accumulation of merit of the second incalculable eon is completed. At the eighth bodhisattva level, we finally overcome all the afflictive emotions and thoughts. We then progress

through the *pure grounds*—the eighth, ninth, and tenth bodhisattva levels—which are *pure* in that they are free from the stains of afflictions. It is during these three levels that the accumulation of merit of the third incalculable eon is perfected. So you can see that it takes a long time to attain complete enlightenment!

At the last instance of the tenth bodhisattva level, we generate an extremely powerful wisdom of emptiness that acts as an antidote to remove even the habitual patterns, predispositions, and imprints formed by all our past afflictions and deluded states of mind, and this then culminates in the attainment of full omniscience, or buddhahood.

The Crucial Sense of Commitment and Courage

We can see that there is a systematic "plan" for attaining enlightenment. You don't have to grope around in the dark without any direction. The layout of the entire path and its correlation to the accumulation of merit over a period of these incalculable eons illustrate a clear direction. Practitioners need to be aware of this fact and on that basis try to develop a deep determination and commitment to their spiritual pursuits. If you then supplement your practice with tantric Vajrayana methods, your approach will definitely be sound and well grounded.

If, on the other hand, when thinking of three incalculable eons, you become totally disheartened and discouraged and then try to seek an easier path for yourself through tantric practice, that's a totally wrong attitude. Furthermore, this would reflect that your commitment to Dharma practice is not strong. What is crucial is a sense of commitment and courage that is prepared—if necessary—to go through three incalculable eons to perfect the conditions for full enlightenment. If on the basis of such determination and courage you then embark on the Vajrayana path, your approach would be well grounded and powerful. Otherwise, it is like building a large structure without a firm foundation. Without doubt, there is great profundity in the tantric approach. However, whether that can be utilized depends on the capacity of the individual.

Of course, I am speaking here on the basis of my own personal observation. I too used to feel that three incalculable eons was too long. This time frame seemed unimaginable, something that I could not accept, whereas the time frame envisioned for enlightenment in tantra seemed more manageable. Understandably the swiftness of the Vajrayana path held a particular attraction. However, gradually my feelings have changed, especially toward the time frame of three incalculable eons. I have slowly grown to feel attracted toward the sutra approach and have actually begun to see the tremendous beneficial effects it can have in deepening our dedication to spiritual practice.

COMMENTARY

Mindfulness of the Emptiness of Feelings

Next is the meditation on the mindfulness of feelings, which Shantideva presents by analyzing the emptiness of feelings. We read the following:

88. If suffering itself is truly real,
Then why is joy not altogether quenched thereby?
If pleasure's real, then why will pleasant tastes
Not comfort and amuse a man in agony?

89. If the feeling fails to be experienced
Through being overwhelmed by something stronger,
How can "feeling" rightly be ascribed
To that which lacks the character of being felt?

90. Perhaps you say that only subtle pain remains,
Its grosser form has now been overmastered,
Or rather it is felt as mere pleasure.
But what is subtle still remains itself.

91. If, through presence of its opposite,
Pain and sorrow fail to manifest,
To claim with such conviction that it's felt
Is surely nothing more than empty words.

If the sensations of suffering and pain existed independently, they would not depend on other factors, and joyful experiences would be impossible. Similarly, if happiness existed independently, it would preclude grief, pain, and illness. And if the sensations of joy and pleasure existed intrinsically, then even were a person confronting an agonizing tragedy or pain, that person would still derive the same pleasure from food and comforts that he or she normally does.

Since feeling is in the nature of sensation, it must exist in relation to circumstances. We also find in our personal experiences that sensations can overwhelm one another. For example, if we are gripped by strong grief, that can permeate our entire experience and prevent us from experiencing any joy. Similarly, if we feel intense joy, that too can permeate our experience such that adverse news and mishaps do not cause us serious concern.

However, if we were to insist that underlying all of this is an independent event called *feeling,* the Madhyamika would respond, "Wouldn't that event depend on other factors, such as its causes and conditions?" So the idea of an independent feeling is only a fiction, a fantasy. There is no independently existing feeling that is not in the nature of pleasure, pain, or neutrality. There cannot be sensation or feeling that is not in the nature of any of these three basic patterns of experience.

Having established the absence of intrinsic existence of phenomena, Shantideva goes on to say that we should use this understanding as an antidote to our grasping at true existence—in this particular case, our grasping at feelings as if they have an independent, concrete reality.

92. Since so it is, the antidote
Is meditation and analysis.

Investigation and resultant concentration
Is indeed the food and sustenance of yogis.

Such single-pointed meditation on the emptiness of feeling is like the fuel for generating penetrative insight into emptiness. At the beginning of this ninth chapter, Shantideva stated that first we must cultivate single-pointedness of mind and attain tranquil abiding, and then generate penetrative insight. Through the combination of tranquil abiding and penetrative insight, the meditator will be able to engage in the profound yoga focused on emptiness. "The food and sustenance of yogis" refers to meditative absorption arrived at through contemplation on the emptiness of feelings.

Feelings, then, arise due to contact, which is their cause.

93. If between the sense power and a thing
There is a space, how will the two terms meet?
If there is no space, they form a unity,
And therefore, what is it that meets with what?

However, if sought through critical analysis, the contact that gives rise to feelings does not exist in any absolute sense either. This verse presents an analysis of the nature of contact. *Contact,* a mental factor, is defined as the meeting point between a sense faculty and an object. It arises when consciousness, the object, and the sense faculty all come together. Shantideva asks, "If there is an interval of space between the sense organs and sensory objects, where is the contact?" For example, if two atoms are totally intermingled, then they become identical; we cannot speak of a distinction between the two. So we read in the following verses:

94. Atoms and atoms cannot interpenetrate,
For they are equal, lacking any volume.
But if they do not penetrate, they do not mingle;
And if they do not mingle, there is no encounter.

95. For how could anyone accept
That what is partless could be said to meet?
And you must show me, if you ever saw,
A contact taking place between two partless things.

Not only that, Shantideva continues, but also, since consciousness is immaterial, how can we define it with the word *contact,* which relates to matter? "What can come into contact with consciousness?" he asks:

96. The consciousness is immaterial,
And so one cannot speak of contact with it.
A combination, too, has no reality,
And this we have already demonstrated.

97. Therefore, if there is no touch or contact,
Whence is it that feeling takes its rise?
What purpose is there, then, in all our striving,
What is it, then, that torments what?

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Who could be harmed by painful experiences, since there is no such thing as intrinsically and absolutely existing painful sensations? Therefore, by examining contact—the cause of sensation—and by examining the nature of sensation itself, we find no intrinsically real sensation or feeling. The conclusion is that these exist only in dependence on other factors, and that nothing whatsoever can exist independently and intrinsically.

Through such analysis, we arrive at the important conclusion that neither the experiencer nor its object—the feeling—is truly existent. Once we have recognized this truth, the next logical step is to avert craving. This is presented in the following verse:

98. Since there is no subject for sensation,
And sensation, too, lacks all existence,
Why, when this you clearly understand,
Will you not pause and turn away from craving?

Furthermore, says Shantideva, when we think of the nature of sensation, what grounds do we have to claim that an independently existing feeling or sensation arises? The consciousness, or mind, that is simultaneous to the sensation cannot perceive such an autonomously real sensation.

99. Seeing, then, and sense of touch
Are stuff of insubstantial dreams.
If perceiving consciousness arises simultaneously,
How could such a feeling be perceived?

100. If the one arises first, the other after,
Memory occurs and not direct sensation.
Sensation, then, does not perceive itself,
And likewise, by another it is not perceived.

101. The subject of sensation has no real existence,
Thus sensation, likewise, has no being.
What damage, then, can be inflicted
On this aggregate deprived of self?

Nor can the moments of consciousness that precede and succeed the sensation perceive that sensation. The preceding moments are no longer present and remain only as imprints at the time of the sensation. And during the subsequent moments of consciousness the sensation remains only an object of recollection. Furthermore, there is no experiencer of the sensation as such. The conclusion we draw from this is that there is no sensation or feeling with independent reality. This completes the meditation on the mindfulness of feelings.

Mindfulness on the Emptiness of Mind

Next comes the meditation on the mindfulness of mind. It begins with the negation of any independent or intrinsic reality of mental consciousness.

102. The mind within the senses does not dwell;
It has no place in outer things, like form,
And in between, the mind does not abide:
Not out, not in, not elsewhere can the mind be found.

103. Something not within the body, and yet nowhere else,
That does not merge with it nor stand apart—
Something such as this does not exist, not even slightly.
Beings have nirvana by their nature.

The mind cannot exist within the body, as the body, or somewhere in between; nor can the mind exist independently of the body. Such a mind is not to be found; the mind is therefore devoid of intrinsic existence. And when beings recognize this nature of their mind, liberation can take place.

Although we know that consciousness exists, if we analyze and try to locate it within earlier or later moments of its continuum, the idea of consciousness as a unitary entity begins to disappear, just as with the analysis of the body. Through such analysis we arrive at the absence of intrinsic existence of consciousness. This applies equally to sensory experiences, such as visual perceptions, as they also share the same nature.

104. If consciousness precedes the cognized object,
With regard to what does it arise?
If consciousness arises with its object,
Again, regarding what does it arise?

105ab. If consciousness comes later than its object,
Once again, from what does it arise?

If a consciousness, such as a sensory perception, arises simultaneously with its object, then they cannot be maintained as sequential—that is, the object exists and then consciousness cognizes it. If they were simultaneous, how could an object give rise to a cognition?

If, on the other hand, the object exists first and then consciousness of it comes later, cognition comes only after the cessation of the object. If this were the case, what would that cognition be aware of, for the object has ceased to exist? When we subject sensory perceptions to this kind of critical analysis, they too are revealed to be unfindable, just as in the case of mental consciousness.

Mindfulness of the Emptiness of All Phenomena

105cd. Thus the origin of all phenomena
Lies beyond the reach of understanding.

Generally, the argument used to establish the substantial reality of phenomena is that things and events have functions, where specific conditions give rise to certain things and particular circumstances lead to particular events. So we assume that things and events must be real, that they must have substantial reality. This principle of functionality is the key premise the Realists use in asserting the independent existence of things and events. If the Madhyamika is successful in negating the intrinsic existence of these functional entities, then—as Nagarjuna put it in *Stanzas on the Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*—it becomes easier to negate the intrinsic existence of more abstract entities, such as space and time.

Many of these arguments seem to use the principles of the Madhyamaka reasoning known as *the absence of identity and difference*. For example, the divisible and composite nature of material phenomena is explained in terms of directional parts. In the case of consciousness, its composite nature is explained mainly from the point of view of its continuum of moments. With regard to such abstract entities as space and time, we can understand their composite nature in terms of their directions. So, as long as a thing is divisible—as long as we can break it into composite parts—we can establish its nature as dependent upon its parts. If, on the other hand, a thing were to exist intrinsically

as a substantial reality, then that thing would not be dependent upon its parts; it would instead exist as an indivisible and completely discrete entity.

MEDITATION

Meditate now according to your individual choice. You may wish to meditate on emptiness, on impermanence, or on suffering.

10. COUNTERING OBJECTIONS

PRACTICING WISDOM

Dualistic Elaborations

At the beginning of his *Stanzas on the Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way,* Nagarjuna pays homage to Buddha Shakyamuni. The manner in which he extols the Buddha's virtues and pays homage to him outlines his two main themes—the teaching of emptiness and the principle of dependent origination. In two verses, Nagarjuna salutes the Buddha as someone who has the capacity to teach the philosophy of emptiness and dependent origination with authority and with full knowledge of the appropriate timing, and of the spiritual needs, mental capacities, and temperaments of his listeners.

In these two verses he states that dependently originated phenomena—things and events—possess characteristics such as origination, cessation, and mobility. In terms of characteristics, there are such qualities as origination and cessation. In terms of time, there are existence and nonexistence, as well as mobility—going and coming. In terms of identity, there are oneness and multiplicity. All of these characteristics exist on the conventional level. These characteristics do not inhere in things and events as their ultimate natures. From the ultimate perspective of the

The Four Foundations Of Mindfulness

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Basic prajna includes the three principal prajnas, which are the prajna of listening, the prajna of contemplating and the prajna of meditation. In the Mahayana tradition, mindfulness is regarded as wisdom, as transcendental knowledge, which is known as prajna in Sanskrit. The mindfulness practices we are about to discuss are the basic method of developing these three principal prajnas. A more clear and detailed expression of the three prajnas is found in the practices of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, in the tradition of the Mahayana path, are explained in five basic points. These are the five basic stages we go through as we study, cultivate the wisdom of prajna, integrate that into our experience, and develop that experience into the full state of realization or prajna. We begin by looking at this mindfulness practice at the most fundamental starting point of hearing, or learning, and contemplating. There are five points to contemplate in order to understand this notion of mindfulness, the Foundations of Mindfulness practice.

Point One: The Object, Essence And Support Of Mindfulness

The first point is the object of intention, or the object of our meditation. In the path of the Four Mindfulnesses, there are four objects of intention or meditation. The first of the four objects is the body. Feeling is the second, and the mind is the third. The fourth object is called phenomena or dharmas in Sanskrit.

When we relate with these four objects in a samsaric way, we are clinging to them, each in a different style. We have different samsaric relationships with each of these four objects. Because of clinging onto these four objects and because of the persistence of our basic tendencies to relate with these four objects in a most neurotic way, the whole universe, the whole world of samsara, is created. For that reason, in the practice of mindfulness we use these four objects as the objects of our meditation, as the objects of our intention, and by using them we develop a sane, a more profound relationship with these objects. We develop a more profound understanding of these four objects and more profound ways of dealing with them. Through the development of this deeper understanding and more skillful methods, we are trying to transcend our relationship with these four objects.

The four objects are referred to, in the ordinary samsaric sense, as body, feeling, mind, and phenomena. The object of body is related to as the basis of clinging to oneself as an entity, as an existent, permanent ego. The body serves as the basis of that clinging, to which we add feeling, which is seen as something to be experienced, something to be enjoyed by this self in the most basic sense. Then we have mind in the third stage, which we relate to as the real self. When we try to point to the self, the ego, we usually point to our consciousness, our basic stream of mind or basic sense of mind. That becomes the actual object of self-clinging, the actual object of ego-clinging, which cannot exist without body and feeling. Mind cannot really express itself without the existence of body (body here is referring to form), and the object of feeling. Therefore mind, as the third object, the third stage of mindfulness, is the basic notion of consciousness. It is the basic notion of awareness. Then we have the fourth object, the object of phenomena. Ordinarily, we relate to that object as the basis of all confusion. However, from this perspective, all confusion arises from these phenomena, and all aspects of liberation also arise in these phenomena as well. So phenomena is seen as the basis of confusion and liberation, or samsara and nirvana. Samsara or nirvana appears or is experienced on the basis of the fundamental phenomena, the basic sense of dharmas or existence.

These four unhealthy relationships, or misunderstandings of these four objects, lead us in a vicious circle of samsara. We are involved in a continual game of illusion. The game of illusion arises from a lack of prajna in our relationships with these four objects. Therefore, we're trying to develop the understanding of prajna in order to realize how we can relate with these four objects more profoundly, as well as more basically. The main point presented in the first stage of mindfulness practice is to recognize these four objects.

Point Two: Understanding the Essence

The second point of mindfulness practice is understanding the essence, understanding the true essence or true nature of mindfulness. What is mindfulness? What does it mean? This practice of mindfulness is actually the nature of prajna, as we discussed earlier. The essence or the nature of mindfulness here is the prajna of seeing, the prajna of understanding, the prajna of experiencing the true nature of form or the body, the true nature of feeling, the true nature of mind, and the true nature of phenomena. That prajna is the nature of mindfulness. This mindfulness is known as dran pa in Tibetan. It's called dran pa nye bar zhak pa (dren pa nye war bzhag pa). It's very simple. Dran pa literally means "recollection" or "mindful" or "being watchful." And that dran pa is the wisdom, the prajna of seeing, the prajna of simply experiencing without any labels. Zhak pa means "placing" and nye bar means "utterly or closely." And so it means closely placing your mind, closely focusing your mind, closely relating your mind with these situations and objects more directly. Dran pa nye bar zhak pa is basically the wisdom or the prajna of seeing and relating with these four objects closely. Relating with these four objects most directly with our prajna, with our mind, is what we call the practice of mindfulness. It is simply seeing what form is, simply experiencing what form is, simply being there with the form, simply going through these experiences with all of the four objects.

If you look at the nature or the essence of these mindfulness practices, you will see that their essence is simply the prajna of relating with these four objects very directly. It is the prajna of understanding or experiencing these four objects without any barrier between you as a knower, you as the experiencer, and the experienced object. The absence of any barrier is what prajna is here. The actual prajna is also without coloring. Therefore, we see the objects' most basic, fundamental state and relate with that. The fundamental state of simplicity of the object is the essence or nature of mindfulness.

Point Three: Assistant or Support
This leads us into the third stage, which is called the assistant or support. Mindfulness of the four objects of intention, body, feeling, mind, and dharmas, is practiced through the two supports of mindfulness and awareness. We must maintain these two supports, these two assistants. Without having these two disciplines developed in our practice, in our mundane experiences, there's no way we can really truly be mindful. There's no way we can really truly relate to the four objects with prajna. Therefore, the real tool or support, so to speak, is the development of the discipline of mindfulness and the discipline of awareness. These two disciplines are known as the assistants or the support for our practice of mindfulness and for the development of our relationship with the four objects.

Point Four: Mindfulness Of Body And Mindfulness Of Feeling
This leads us to the fourth stage, which is the actual point of our discussion. The fourth stage is the method of practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. That method begins with working with the mindfulness of body, working with the mindfulness of form. If you really examine these four mindfulnesses, you will recognize that they are in the nature of working with the five skandhas. The first mindfulness, which is the mindfulness of body, relates to the skandha of form. The second mindfulness, the mindfulness of feeling, relates to the skandha of feeling. That is very straightforward. The third mindfulness is also very straightforward. The mindfulness of mind relates to the skandha of consciousness, which is the fifth skandha. And the mindfulness of dharmas, or phenomena, relates to the other two skandhas, which are perception and concept or formation. So mindfulness of phenomena is working with these two skandhas. Keeping this in mind helps us to fully understand these four mindfulnesses.

First Foundation: Mindfulness of Body

We begin with the mindfulness of body. There are two ways of viewing the practice of mindfulness of body. The first is the general Buddhist approach, which is the most fundamental way of looking at this mindfulness. The second approach reflects the more specific Mahayana point of view. To begin with the most basic and general approach, the mindfulness of body or form relates to our fundamental sense of existence, which normally is not stable, not grounded, due to our samsaric pattern of tendencies. Our existence is very wild. It's very crazy, like the mad elephant that we talked about earlier. For that reason, we work with our form, the existence of form, at the first stage of mindfulness practice. In particular, we work with three different levels of form. These

are the outer form of our physical existence, the inner form of our perceptions, and the innermost form, which is related to the Mahayana understanding of the selflessness of body.

The General Buddhist Approach: The Outer Form of Body
In the most basic sense of the general Buddhist approach, we're working with the outer form of our physical existence. With this method of mindfulness, we're trying to bring our mind to the realization and understanding of what this existence is, what this physical form is. We're trying to bring it to the state of mindfulness, bring it to the most physical level of our experience of body. Usually, we experience our physical body as existing "out there" somewhere. We generally feel that our body exists outside of our mind. We feel that the body exists in a definite form, in a very solid way, of our mind. That is our fundamental experience of body, and that experience of body goes wild in our usual situation of life. In this path of mindfulness, we're bringing the wildness of our physical existence down to a level of calmness, to a certain level of groundedness. By simply bringing it into the present, we're bringing it to what it actually is, rather than thinking about what it actually is.

What we are working towards, at this level of mindfulness, is to see the outer form, outer existence, outer nature of our body, regardless of whether it's matter or mind. Forget about such philosophical or theoretical divisions. We're simply relating with what it is, and that is the mindfulness of body. Simply being there with our body, with our physical sense of existence, is the mindfulness of body. If we approach this with too much philosophy, too much analysis, it becomes too complicated. Trying to see if body is mind or matter, if it's a projection or not, becomes an obstacle and prevents us from directly relating to what it is. The Buddha talks about this basic approach in the sutras when he says things like, "When you see, just see. When you smell, just smell. When you touch, simply touch. And when you feel, simply feel."

We are using very basic logic here in order to relate to the most fundamental level of our experience. For example, when we sit down on a meditation cushion, we have a basic sense of feeling, of the sensation of our body, of our existence, of this gravity. Just simply being there with that, just simply being there with our existence, is what we call mindfulness of body, in the most basic sense. That mindfulness is not just simply being there, but it also involves a certain prajna of understanding what it actually is.

General Buddhist Approach: The Inner Form of the Body
That experience takes us into the inner state of physical existence; which is seeing the true nature of our body, seeing the true reality of the relative existence of relative self. This begins with seeing the most fundamental level of the presence of our body. That is to say, we're experiencing the most fundamental existence of our presence. That is a very simple experience. We just simply sit and be with our body, not with our mind, so to speak. In that exercise, it's possible for us to have some sense of this profound existence, the profound presence of our body, the profound experience of just being whatever it is. Simply being that experience is the inner experience of the physical self, the physical existence. At this stage of the mindfulness of the inner form of body, we go

further into the depth of experiencing that being, that presence. We're going into the subtlety of our physical nature. We're seeing our own impermanent nature, and seeing that is a very profound level of mindfulness.

Experiencing the impermanent nature of our body is the subtle experience of the mindfulness of body. That experience is a profound understanding and a profound realization. Buddha said that of all the footprints that the animals make in nature, the deepest imprint is the footprint of the elephant. And Buddha said, in a similar way, the most precious and the deepest impression that any thought can make in the progress of our path is the thought of impermanence. It leaves a very strong impression. It is a very strong and deep experience on our path. And therefore, the realization of the impermanence of our body is a very profound mindfulness practice.

Mahayana Approach: The Innermost Form of the Body

Through the practice of reflecting on our physical self, our physical existence, we develop the mindfulness of body, which is seeing with awareness. When we are working with that physical experience, then we are getting into the depth of the Mahayana approach of working with the mindfulness of body. At that level, we go beyond the simple physical presence of a body. At that point, we are relating with the way the body is experienced by an individual being. The way we experience the existence of our body is simply our perception, simply our reflection, our projection. There's nothing really solid beyond that; there's no real existence of a physical body outside, as far as the Mahayana path is concerned. At this point, we are seeing a much deeper level of physical self, physical presence of mindfulness. We're discovering that mindfulness is seeing the true nature of that experience. We're approaching the level of absolute reality, rather than remaining on the relative level, where we are seeing the relative nature of mind, the relative nature of our body, the relative nature of our mindfulness. We are going more into the depth of mindfulness, which is the absolute truth. Therefore, when we talk about this mindfulness, in the Mahayana sense, we are talking about the selflessness of the body, which is very different from the general Buddhist approach.

The Dream Example

At this level we are dealing with our projections. We are dealing with the understanding and mindfulness of our projections. We're seeing that the physical world that we experience here is not necessarily solid and real. This can be understood clearly through the example of the dream. When we are dreaming, we have subject, we have object, and we have the action between the subject and the object, which is the experience of the threefold situation. As long as we remain in the dream state, those three things equally exist. We experience these three things as solid. We experience a real world, real phenomena, real body. Our own physical existence is there, the physical existence of the object is there, and the physical existence of the action is there. All three are simply existing in the dream state.

But if you look at your dream from the point of view of waking up, of the awakened state, it does not exist, right? If you look back at last night's dream, and if you look back at yesterday's experience of life, which is not really a dream (like yesterday's experience

of this shrine room, yesterday's experience of our sitting, yesterday's experience of our talking), if you look back, they both equally do not exist. Your experience of yesterday is not solid; your dream of last night is not solid, as far as today is concerned. If you look back from the point of view of today, which is the awakened state, relatively speaking, then both of those equally do not exist, you know. There's no solid reason to say yesterday was more solid than last night's dream. There's no solid logical reason, so to speak, except that we cling to our dream-like experience of yesterday more than to our experience of last night's dream.

Therefore, in the Mahayana path, our whole experience of the body, our entire experience of the physical world, is simply a projection of our mind, a projection or a production of our karmic mind, and that experience is simply existing as long as we remain in this dream of samsara.

Two Aspects of the Dream

For that reason, in the Mahayana path, we talk about two aspects of dream. We talk about the "real dream," and we talk about the "exemplary dream." So what is the real dream? Here, the real dream is our daily life experience, and the exemplary dream is the dream that we have at night when we are sleeping. These are the examples that show us which dream is the real dream. The real dream is this experience of our life, this experience of our body, this experience of our physical presence and existence. The real dream is this experience of a solid self, and therefore, our physical existence is simply regarded as a dream in the Mahayana Path. Maintaining the discipline of seeing the dream-like nature of our body and bringing our mind back to the awareness of that experience is the mindfulness of body in the Mahayana path. The Mahayana discipline of mindfulness of body is strongly related with the notion of selflessness, strongly related with the notion of the non-existence of body, rather than relating with the existence of body. Consequently, there's a very big difference between the Theravadin meditation of mindfulness of body and the Mahayana meditation of mindfulness of body. There's a big difference in its approach to its meditation technique.

The Four-Fold Emptiness

Thus, mindfulness of body in the Mahayana sense refers to the original vipashyana meditation on selflessness of form, emptiness of form. The mindfulness of body here is the practice of the four-fold emptiness in the Heart Sutra, which says, "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness is no other than form...." That four-fold emptiness of form taught in the Heart Sutra by Lord Buddha is the Mahayana discipline of mindfulness of body. It is simply relating with the dream-like nature of our physical existence, the physical world of body, and relating with the notion of emptiness of body, the notion of selflessness of form. That practice is what we call the mindfulness of body in the Mahayana tradition.

Method of Practice: Analytical Meditation

How do we practice this? The Mahayana path is strongly connected to the practice of analytical meditation. There's no way we can really practice mindfulness of body, in the Mahayana sense, without understanding and practicing analytical meditation. Because

of this, the development of the three stages of prajna becomes extremely important for the Mahayana path. In order to really practice mindfulness of body, we must begin with the Theravadin approach of simply being there in the physical sense, experiencing the presence of our body, first. This begins with sitting in the meditation posture. It begins with meditation or reflection that focuses on every aspect of feeling, every sensation of the body (a more detailed description of the sensation of feeling will come with the next stage). For example, when we sit in the meditation posture with our hands resting on our knees, there's a sense of touching. There's a sensation, a feeling. There's an experience of body here, right here, in our hands. There's an experience of body when we touch our meditation cushion. There's an experience of our whole body sitting upright in the Seven Point Posture, right? The Seven, or Eight Points of Posture, or the Five or Seven or Eight Points of Posture of the meditation technique. (laughs) Yes, there are different ways of counting, you know. Our legs are crossed, so there is the sensation of body there. Our backbone is straight and upright, and there is a strong sense of body there. Our shoulders are evenly stretched, and our hands are in the meditation mudra. Relating with that complete sense of being there is what we call mindfulness of body in the most basic sense.

That mindfulness of body does not happen if we are not participating fully in our sitting posture, with all of these Seven Points. Just being there, just simply breathing with your body, is the mindfulness of body. We don't have to acquire something new. Mindfulness of body is just simply being with your body, being aware and mindful. Going further into the experience of body is seeing the illusory nature, the dream-like nature of your body as a reflection of your mind. Then going into the depth of that experience, you are seeing it as the four-fold emptiness, and that is the complete practice of mindfulness of body in general. That is the practice of the first mindfulness. Practices such as sitting or walking meditation are situations where we can have strong experiences of this mindfulness. In contrast, we usually go mindless in our regular existence in the world, and we do not really experience our own presence on the physical level.

The Second Foundation: Mindfulness of Feeling

General Buddhist Approach: Fear and the Three Objects

The second stage of mindfulness is the mindfulness of feeling, which is simply relating to or working with our basic existence in the world as samsaric beings. In the general Buddhist approach, "feeling" refers to the feeling of working with our basic fear. That feeling is the fear of suffering, or the fear of fear. Actually, fear itself is not fear, but the fear of fear becomes the most troubling presence in the realm of our feeling. Therefore, the mindfulness of feeling relates with the three objects of our existence in the samsaric world, that is the pleasant object, the unpleasant object, and the neutral object. In relation to these three objects, we experience three different states or aspects of fear. Towards the pleasant object, we have a fear of attachment. We have a fear of desire. Towards the unpleasant object, we have a fear of hatred. We have a fear of aggression. We have a fear of anger. And towards the neutral object, we have a fear of neutral feeling. We have a fear of becoming numb, of getting into a state of numbness, a state of

stupidity, so to speak. We regularly experience these three aspects of feeling in just surviving our daily existence in the samsaric world.

In relation to these three feelings, Buddha taught that we have to relate to the three objects properly, by understanding them and working with their nature. He said that when we examine the nature of these three feelings and their three objects, we discover that their fundamental nature is suffering. The pleasant object, the unpleasant object, and the neutral object all exist in the same nature of suffering, regardless of whether we're relating to attachment, aggression or a neutral state of mind, such as ignorance. Consequently, practicing mindfulness of suffering is the mindfulness of feeling. And relating with the three objects is the means of relating with the three levels of suffering that are so frequently talked about.

The Three Levels of Suffering

The mindfulness practice here is to contemplate or meditate on suffering and the three expressions of suffering, and to therefore experience their nature. So what is the nature of suffering here? Buddha said there is one word that can describe the meaning of suffering, and that is "fear." Fear is what suffering means. But what is this fear? It is the fear of losing something that is very pleasant, something that is very pleasurable, something that is very dear and loving, something to which you have become attached. It is the fear of losing that. Fear is also the fear of gaining something. That fear is the fear of gaining something that is unpleasant, something that you don't want. You always get what you don't want, and you don't get what you really want. That's what suffering here is. Fear is being expressed in these two manifestations, so to speak. The second manifestation of fear is gaining something that you don't want, that you don't expect. That begins with the flu and goes all the way up to whatever experiences we might go through. These three natures of suffering are connected with the nature of fear, basically, and therefore, we have three levels of suffering, which we call the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and the all pervasive suffering. These are the three sufferings.

All Pervasive Suffering

The nature of all pervasive suffering is this fundamental fear, which exists within every level of our feeling, whether we're feeling really high, really feeling happy, or whether we are really feeling down with suffering. All of our feelings are pervaded by this fundamental fear, and that's why it is called "all pervasive suffering." This is explained in the traditional Buddhist literature with various examples. First, it is similar to developing a fatal disease, which is not yet fully ripened. The disease is growing, but you haven't really seen it. You haven't really experienced it yet, but its presence is there all of the time. Every minute, every second, it's growing. It's developing. That kind of fundamental situation is known as all pervasive suffering, which grows into the suffering of change.

The Suffering of Change

The traditional example for the suffering of change is like having a very delicious cookie baked with poison. It's very delicious, but it's deadly poisonous. When you eat that

cookie, it's still very pleasurable, very sweet, you know. In order to show that more dramatically, Shantideva, in the Bodhicaryavatara, gave this example: the suffering of change is like honey on a razor blade. He said that when you lick this honey on the razor blade, it's very pleasant, it's very sweet. It's honey, you know. And because of our desire, our attachment, we lick this honey harder. We want more and more and more all the time. Because of our poverty mentality, we lick the honey harder each time we experience its sweetness. The harder we lick the honey, the deeper we cut our tongue. So in a similar way, the suffering of change is experienced as perhaps a more pleasurable, more pleasant, more pleasing experience of feeling, but it leads us to the result of pain, the result of suffering. This is what we call the "suffering of change."

The Suffering of Suffering

The suffering of change leads us to the suffering of suffering, the most obvious suffering, which is noticing that our tongue is gone after experiencing the delicious honey. When we notice that our tongue is gone, we realize that we won't have to experience the honey again for many months (or lifetimes, I don't know).

As we work with and examine these three levels of experience, feelings of suffering, as well as pleasant feelings and neutral feelings, we can see that they are all related with the three sufferings. If you look at pleasurable feelings, they are connected to the suffering of change. If you look at feelings associated with unpleasant objects, they are connected to the suffering of suffering. If you look at the feelings of the neutral state of mind, they are connected to fundamental suffering, all-pervasive suffering. Therefore, we practice by observing these three feelings and working with our experience of them in a most mindful way. If we're truly experiencing these three states of suffering, three states of feeling, just as they arise, that is the mindfulness of feeling. So the mindfulness of feeling is being totally watchful, totally present with every level of our fear, and working with that in the most fundamental way. This is the mindfulness of feeling from the perspective of the general Buddhist approach.

Mahayana Approach: Fearlessness and Selflessness

The Mahayana tradition looks at mindfulness of feeling as seeing the selfless nature of suffering, the selfless nature of fear, which is seeing the true nature of fear as not being fear. This is how we originally began our discussion. We see that the fear of fear is simply a disturbing fear, and that relating to this fundamental fear without fear is the way to practice Mahayana mindfulness of feeling. Therefore, what we are doing here is simply looking at our fear. We are simply experiencing our suffering, our so-called suffering, nakedly, without any filters of fear. That's how the Mahayana mindfulness works. Through this method and through having more detailed instructions on how to work with this fear, we transcend our fear and becomes a fearless warrior on the Mahayana path. Without working with the second mindfulness, the mindfulness of feeling, which deals directly with our fear, it is very difficult to follow the path of Mahayana. Without it there's no way to become a fearless warrior.

This second mindfulness becomes very important, especially for the Mahayana path of transcending our fear and working with our basic suffering. On the most fundamental

level, that basic suffering is just fear of being in the state of fear. Instead of being paranoid about fear, instead of being troubled by fear, and dragging ourselves into this endless pull of fear, we are looking at the fear itself in the state of Mahayana mindfulness. Through looking at the fear directly, most directly, face to face, we are transcending our fear. That is the path of the Mahayana mindfulness of feeling, which is the second stage of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

The Third Foundation: Mindfulness Of Mind

General Buddhist Approach

We have discussed the first two aspects of mindfulness briefly: the mindfulness of body and the mindfulness of feeling. Now we will look at the third mindfulness which is known as the mindfulness of mind. At this point, the third stage of mindfulness is working directly with our basic state of mind, our consciousness or awareness.

"The mind" here in Buddhism refers to a detailed classification of mind. We're not speaking simply of one giant nature of mind. There's no such thing as one giant all-pervasive mind, so to speak. Our practice of mindfulness of mind here is working with every single, individual experience of our consciousness, which is divided into six different categories known as the six consciousnesses, in the general Buddhist approach. At the Mahayana level, it is divided into eight categories called the eight consciousnesses. And if you want to go into more detail (laughs), then the mind is further explained in the Abhidharma literature as having the basic mind and fifty one mental factors. So we have a very detailed explanation of mind, generally speaking, in this path of spirituality. But what we are fundamentally dealing with, here, is developing the mindfulness of simply experiencing every individual movement of our mind, every individual fragment of our mind, and every individual living state of our consciousness. Accordingly, at this stage, we have the method of mindfulness of mind to help us relate to and simply be present with the momentary movement of mind, the momentary experience of every living, individual incident of our thoughts or perceptions or memories, which we call mind.

Mahayana Approach: The Meditation State

This mindfulness is closely connected or related to the meditative state of our experience. It's basically working with our mind in the meditation state, beginning with our practice of shamatha and vipashyana, and continuing all the way up to tantra. The Vajrayana practices are closely connected to this mindfulness of mind. In this practice, we are developing the discipline of simply watching our mind, simply guarding our mind, simply bringing our mind down to some sense of groundedness. Right now, our mind is up in the air, perhaps in the form of that wild elephant we talked about. The mad elephant. It's totally in the state of dreaming, in the state of non-reality, in the state of non-existence. This mindfulness is actually doing the work of bringing that mind down to the basic, fundamental state of nowness, nowness of this reality, of this moment. Basically, that is the mindfulness of mind.

Dwelling in the Past and Anticipating the Future

Because of this total state of dreaming, what's happening in our basic experience of mind is that we have never, ever lived. We have never, ever lived in all of these years. We think we are living. We believe we are living. We dream we are living. Although we imagine we are living, we have never actually lived. We are either in the state of having lived or will be living, but we have never lived; we are never living. That's how our mind functions in our basic world, in our samsaric world. On the one hand, our mind is in the state of dwelling in the past, dreaming about the past. Such good old experiences of the past have always occurred in our mind, and we have always been "sort of living" in the state of past memories. Or we have been bothered, disturbed, and totally destroyed, in some sense, by certain memories of the past which keep reoccurring in our present lives. Our mind has never been free to live in the present. It's always been under the dictatorship of our memories of the past or living as a service for the future.

We've been living for, dreaming of, or anticipating the future, where we have a multitude of dreams, typical American dreams, pure American dreams. We have many dreams, which is not bad in itself, but they are dreams of the future. We have a list of plans miles and miles long for how we will really live in the future, how we will practice, how we will achieve this and that. And so we invest our energy, our time, our effort in these dreams. As a result of investing all of our time, effort, and energy towards these achievements, we may actually achieve a certain part of our list in the present. We may have already achieved a certain number of these things, and we will achieve others. But when the future becomes the present, we don't have time to experience it. We don't have time to appreciate it. We don't have the prajna to relate with it. We don't have the space, the freedom, to totally be with and enjoy our own dreams that have come true in the present. We have totally forgotten how we planned to live at this stage.

We have totally, totally gone out of control. We have lost our freedom and our dreams, along with our basic beliefs in those dreams. Our idea of living has altogether disappeared, slipped out of our hands, like the present moment. Therefore, this practice of mindfulness teaches us to bring our mind to a greater state of freedom. It teaches us to free our mind from the imprisonment of dwelling in anticipation of the future. In the freedom of that space, we are able to experience the actual sense of living, the simplicity of completely being present with our state of mind, as a living mind.

The Present Moment

Hence, this mindfulness of mind works with that basic principle of freedom, and when we look at that principle, the present state of our mind is a very tiny spot. It's a very tiny and slippery spot. It's so tiny and slippery that we always miss it. It's so tiny that it's an infinite spot. The whole purpose of this mindfulness of mind is to bring us back to this tiny spot of the present momentary nature of our mind and to the experience of the infinite space and freedom within that speck of existence. In order to do that, we must experience the lively nature of our mind, which is so present and so momentary and so fresh. Every individual moment and every individual fragment of that mind is completely pure and fresh in its own state.

The whole point here is to experience that freshness, that genuineness, the honest face of that tiny spot, without really coloring it with our memories, concepts, philosophy, theory, or expectations. Totally experiencing it without all of these is what we call simply being there. And that cannot happen if we can't let go of our memories and thoughts, if we can't let go of our memories of our understanding, our memories of our expectations. We have to simply understand our thoughts. We have to see the nature of our thoughts directly and genuinely to be there, rather than living in our memories of understanding, our memories of meditation, or memories of our expectations of our meditation. If we are living in the memory of thoughts, then we are still not being there; we are still not experiencing the fundamental, tiny, infinite spot.

Imprisonment

To the extent that we are living in this memory of thoughts, we are not experiencing any of the freedom of space. To the extent that we are living in the memory of understanding, while we may have good memories or a good understanding, it's like we are decorating our prison. Our prison may look a little different; it may look a little better and more refreshing, but we still are living within that limited space, within that barrier. We haven't freed ourselves from the prison of memory, from the prison of dwelling in the past, from the prison of anticipating the future. Therefore the total sense of mindfulness of mind is just simply being there in that tiny spot, that infinite space. That experience only comes through letting go, totally letting go of our expectations. When we totally let go of our clinging, when we totally let go of our thoughts, we totally free our thoughts.

Dressing Up Our Thoughts

In a way our thoughts are imprisoning us. On the other hand, we are imprisoning our thoughts. We are imprisoning our thoughts in the same way that our thoughts are imprisoning us. We're not just simply letting thought be thought. We're imprisoning our thoughts and trying to turn them into something else. We're not simply letting these thoughts be thoughts in their own state. We're not giving them the freedom to be thought. We are coloring them. We are clothing them. We are dressing up our thoughts. We're painting the face of our thoughts. We're putting hats and boots on them.

It's very uncomfortable for the thoughts. (laughter) We may not realize it. We may not recognize it, but if you really look at the state of the thoughts themselves, it's very uncomfortable. It's very uncomfortable for them to be what we want them to be. It's like your parents or your society putting great expectations on you to be someone else, someone you don't want to be. At that point, you can feel the imprisonment. You can feel clearly and strongly the imprisonment of samsara. In a similar way, our thoughts are experiencing this imprisonment by our expectations, by the way we color and clothe them. It's really equally uncomfortable, you know, with all these hats and boots on. It's like dressing up a monkey in the circus. We have monkeys, chimpanzees, all dressed up in beautiful tuxedos and bow ties, with dignified hats and beautiful shiny boots. But you can imagine the discomfort the chimpanzee feels at that point. No matter how beautiful he may look, no matter how dignified this monkey may appear to be, from the point of

view of the monkey's basic instinct, it's so uncomfortable to put up with all these expectations of your human boss.

Recognition of the Arisal of Thoughts: Freeing our Thoughts and Ourselves
In a similar way, our thoughts are going through the same torture when we put labels and different expectations on them. When we color these thoughts with philosophy, religious beliefs, and theoretical understandings, they feel tortured by all of these things that we're going through. Therefore, mindfulness of mind is simply freeing our thoughts, freeing our mind, and coming back to this basic spot, infinitesimal spot, that is the state of our thoughts or the state of our mind. Coming back to and experiencing the infinite space of freedom within that spot of nowness, that tiny spot of the present moment, is what we call the mindfulness of mind. It's simply being there, and simply letting it be whatever it is.

In that process of letting it be, how do we practice? In our meditation and post meditation exercises, we have to recognize the first stage of the arisal of our thoughts and emotions. We have to be clear about and acknowledge all of these thoughts and emotions that are arising and coming to our door as our guests. We have to be aware of, acknowledge, and recognize these people, these little beings, these fragments of beings, in their own way. We have to recognize them. We have to acknowledge them at the first stage of their arisal. That's our method here. For example, if a strong anger or aggression arises in your mind during the state of meditation or post meditation, the first thing to do is simply recognize it. However, we have to recognize it again and again, because it only exists in this tiny spot. Every moment, every fragment is a new anger. It's a new guest. It's a new state of Mr. Anger. So whenever a new guest arrives, first he or she rings your doorbell, then you have to acknowledge that guest, recognize him or her and let your guest in. In a similar way, we have to recognize our anger, in every moment. One anger may have hundreds of moments, and we have to distinguish these moments as many times as possible. When we identify a moment of anger, we just simply let the anger be anger. We give some freedom to the anger. As much as we want freedom from our anger, our anger is striving for freedom from us. Therefore, at this stage of recognition, we must let it go. We must let it go, allow it to be in it's own state. We must not bind our anger to our sofa. We must not chain our anger to our chair. He or she is simply our guest, so we must respect this guest in order to be a more civilized meditator. There is a great need for us to practice this, because recognition is the first stage in working with our thoughts, the first stage of freeing our thoughts and freeing ourselves.

Recognition: The Speed Bump
My usual analogy for recognition is a speed bump. What does a speed bump do? It slows us down; it slows down the speed of our car. The purpose of the speed bump is not to stop the car. We must understand that. And the purpose of recognizing our anger is not to stop our anger. It's not to chain down or hold onto our anger. It's purpose is the same as the speed bump. It slows down the speed of our klesha mind. No matter whether it's anger, aggression, passion, or jealousy that we're feeling, it slows down the speed of that klesha mind, that thought, that memory, that anxiety. In the process of slowing down, we are creating more space. And the greater space that is created here

with this simple moment of recognition is the space of wisdom, the space of compassion, the space of love, the space of prajna, and the space of mindfulness. That space will help us handle this car we are driving. And when we develop more control, more space, it gives a greater sense of safety, not only to the driver, but to the pedestrians who are walking on the street. We must look at it both ways, you know. It's not just creating more space for ourselves, but for others too, the pedestrians who are crossing the road. We're creating some space between ourselves and our anger, between ourselves and our emotions, between ourselves and our klesha mind. The space we experience from the speed bump is this tiny spot, which is infinite space. This is the beginning of experiencing our infinite space.

This aspect of mindfulness practice, recognition of the first stage of arisal, is very much emphasized, not only in the general Buddhist journey of mindfulness, but also in the most supreme vehicle of the Mahayana.

Three Stages of Recognition

Because the process of recognition is so strongly emphasized, we should look at it in more detail. There are three stages of recognition. The first stage is, recognizing the very tip of the arisal of thought. This is the very first moment, the very first tiny spot, so to speak, of the movement of thought, of the movement of emotion. Recognition of the very first moment is the foremost way of recognizing thought, which happens only after we have some shinjang, some development or sense of suppleness in our practice. The second stage of recognition is recognizing thought when it has arisen. At this stage, our thoughts are a little bit blown-up, or grown-up. It's like diagnosing a disease at a later stage of development. Because it has already developed, its treatment requires a little more work. It's a little bit late, but still manageable. The third stage of recognition is recognizing thought after everything has happened. We don't recognize it until after it has arisen and grown to the full-blown stage. By then it has destroyed everything, and at that time we recognize it. This is like recognizing our monkey in the zoo. We recognize our monkey wearing the full tuxedo. Maybe he's doing a tango. (laughter) Something like that. It's a little late, because we have totally imprisoned him at that stage; we have totally imprisoned our emotions, our thoughts, and ourselves. This is the stage where our disease is fully grown, and there's nothing much we can do except to take pain killers and wait.

These are the three stages of recognition, and the Mahayana Path very much emphasizes the first method. Through the development of our courage, skill, and compassion, we increase our power to recognize thought at the first stage, which is...? (Students: Tip of its arisal.) Yes, the tip of its arisal, the first tiny spot of the existence of any thought, which is, you know, infinite space.

Manure for the Seed of Enlightenment

In another analogy from the Sutra tradition, Mahayana people are regarded as farmers and Hinayana people are regarded as city dwellers or city slickers. The reason for this comparison is that, from the Hinayana point of view, practitioners relate to their emotions like city people relate to their human waste. From that point of view, we are

trying to get rid of it and get away from it, as soon and as far away as possible. There's no sense of really needing to keep it, because we see our human waste as a total waste. So the Hinayana view of emotions is similar to the city person's view of human waste. Whereas in the view of the Mahayana Path, the practitioner is more like a farmer who sees that human waste is great manure. It can be recycled and used effectively so that it becomes a great help and support for us in growing the seed of enlightenment. This seed of enlightenment sown by the Mahayana farmers cannot grow without this manure. It cannot grow without fertilization. So without the manure of our emotions and our thoughts, we cannot cultivate any seed of enlightenment.

Guarding the Crops of Enlightenment

The process of cultivating our crops, in the Mahayana Path, involves guarding our farm. We must guard from intruders the seeds of enlightenment that we have sown. In the history of Mahayana farming, there has always been some disturbing being, like a pig, that comes around and breaks into our farm. This pig has destroyed many of our seeds. As soon as it enters our fields, it starts digging up everything. All of the seeds that we've sown have been totally destroyed by this pig. The Mahayana method of dealing with this is simply to wait. We wait for this intruder with a strong, solid club. We just wait at the gate, or any possible entrance, and when the pig is about to enter, the first thing we'll see is the snout, right? In the general Buddhist view, the pig symbolizes ignorance. So as soon as we see the snout entering our property, we have to use the club and hit the pig on the snout with as much force as possible, with great love and compassion. (laughter) You have to strike it directly on the snout. It's very different than hitting the hip or body, which doesn't provide as much of a lesson. It's more forcefully chased away by hitting its snout. It's a very painful form of compassion. We can only hit the snout of the pig if we catch it at the very beginning stage of its entrance into our farm. Then we can hit it as hard as possible and be most effective. If the pig has slipped by us and already entered, then we can only strike it on its back. We'll never get the snout. In the same way, the Mahayana method is like hitting the snout of the pig, which means you're recognizing the arisal of the movement of mind right at its very beginning stage, at the first moment. Isn't that a great compassionate analogy? Yes, it is because the pig is destroying the seed of enlightenment, so it's a bad karma.

With that analogy, we can see how the recognition process takes place. As soon as any thoughts or emotions arise, at the very first trace of their arisal, we must try to maintain this mindfulness. In this process, we're letting emotions be emotions and letting mind be mind. We simply observe the movement of mind and work with it. When we experience that tiny spot of the nowness of our mind, of our emotions, of our thoughts, we are experiencing the infinite space of our mind, infinite space of our thoughts, infinite space of our emotions. We are freeing our emotions, and we are freeing ourselves at that very moment. In a way, it's a very simple process. At the same time, it takes many words. This fundamental process of working with our mind begins with working with our meditation process. In the practice of meditation, we repeatedly bring our mind back to its present state of nowness or to the present momentary fragment of our mind. That's why we use different techniques, to come back to that very tiny spot and experience the infinite space, which is the whole purpose of our meditation.

The Fourth Foundation: Mindfulness Of Phenomena

General Buddhist Approach: Interdependence

The fourth mindfulness is called the mindfulness of phenomena or mindfulness of dharmas. After working with the development of the mindfulness of mind, this mindfulness brings us to the next stage, which is the experience of panoramic awareness of the phenomenal world. The phenomenal world is not only within our thoughts, within our mind. The phenomenal world is also the object of our mind, the world that is experienced around us with body, speech, and mind. Having a sense of relating with these surrounding phenomena in a mindful way is what we call the mindfulness of phenomena. That mindfulness is basically the recognition of the interdependent relationship of our mind and the phenomenal world. It is working with the relationship of each individual phenomenon existing around us as the object of our experience. In order to understand that particular phenomenon and relate with it properly, we must develop the mindfulness of phenomena. And that, in some sense, is not really separated from awareness.

This mindfulness is very much related to the notion of awareness, of having a three hundred sixty degree awareness of the phenomenal world existing around us. When we can relate that kind of panoramic awareness with the simple, present nature of phenomena, that is what we call the mindfulness of phenomena. It is simply having the prajna to relate with the phenomenal world outside more directly, more precisely, without any fear, and without any conceptions. Without any philosophical conceptions, we simply relate to the most fundamental state of phenomena.

The Six Objects

What we are working with here is the six objects of our six sensory perceptions. That's pretty straightforward. We are working with form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and dharmas. The sixth object is a little more complicated. The object of mind, the sixth sensory perception, which is called the mind perception, is known as dharmas. So working with the six objects in a precise way is the full understanding of the true nature of pratityasamutpada, the interdependent origination of the phenomenal world. Relating to the phenomenal world in its own interdependent state is called the mindfulness of phenomena, which means not conceptualizing, not labeling the phenomenal world as something else. We experience it as it is, with its own interdependent nature. Understanding that interdependent nature begins with the understanding of the twelve links of interdependent origination, known as the twelve nidanas.

Mahayana Interdependence

Beginning with the twelve nidanas, we have the Mahayana understanding of interdependent origination, which is basically the understanding that everything arises from emptiness and everything dissolves into emptiness. There is no separation between form, or appearance, and emptiness. Emptiness arises from appearance, and appearance arises from emptiness. There is no emptiness without appearance, and there is no appearance with out emptiness. That is what we call the interdependent nature. If

there is no phenomenal world appearing, then there's no emptiness of that phenomenal world. If there's no emptiness, there's no appearance of the phenomenal world. That's pretty simple, right? (laughs) It's very simple; it's very easy.

Actually, it's a somewhat complicated notion, which has to be looked at in greater depth to really be understood. But in the most basic sense, we are talking about the inseparability or the dependent nature of the two truths. There is no absolute truth without the relative truth, and there's no relative truth without the absolute truth. They are dependent on each other. Especially when viewed from the ordinary level of understanding, then the phenomenal world is seen to be totally in the nature of dependent origination, or the interdependent state. Therefore, in the Mahayana sense of relating with the phenomenal world, the mindfulness of phenomena is simply understanding the realization of emptiness, the selflessness of phenomena, the emptiness of phenomena, the egolessness of phenomena. That understanding, experience, and realization is what is known as the mindfulness of phenomena. That realization is basically developed through the cultivation of the three prajnas of hearing, contemplating, and meditating which we discussed earlier. By going through this three-stage process of analyzing the phenomenal world from the Mahayana perspective, we can reach the level of the realization of emptiness, the realization of the egolessness of phenomena, the realization of the non-existence of these outer phenomena, which we ordinarily believe are solidly real.

Not only do we arrive at this insight through the process of philosophical analysis, but we can also see this in the development of today's science. Although I've not personally studied modern physics, friends and people who know a little more about it tell me that modern physicists now say they can't find the existence of atomic particles, at any level. All they can find existing at this level is something called a "quark" or a form of energy or light, which is still better than saying "emptiness." We feel a little bit more comfortable, you know, with these terms, because there's still something to hold onto. Other than that, I think we're reaching pretty much the same level of seeing the non-existence of phenomena. Furthermore, this wisdom resulting from the development of modern science was discovered and taught by Lord Buddha Shakyamuni 2,500 years ago. The process presented to us by the Buddha to lead us to that stage of understanding is very much like the development of science. It's very interesting. At the first stage of his teaching, Buddha taught about the existence of atomic particles. Following that, the Buddha went into the details of how these atoms function, how they form gross objects, and how these indivisible particles cannot be perceived. All of these things, which are very similar to the view of science, were introduced gradually by the Buddha up to the level of seeing the selflessness of phenomena, the egolessness of phenomena. Therefore, the Mahayana mindfulness of dharmas, or phenomena, is working with this realization and understanding of the selflessness of phenomena.

Analytical Meditation: The Gong

In general, we practice this mindfulness by taking the objects of our sensory perceptions as the objects of our meditation and analyzing them by simply being present with that particular object in the tiny spot of its existence. This state of nowness, the state of the

present, clicks us into the experience of infinite space through the analytical meditation process.

My analogy for the analytical meditation process is the ringing of a gong. The actual beauty of the sound, the beautiful humming of the gong, is produced by our effort. First, we pick up the striker with our hand, then we move our hand and striker to ring the gong. From there the sound is produced, the beautiful humming sound, which is beyond our hand, our effort, the striker, and the bell itself. It is beyond all of this, beyond the combination. It is beyond all this existence.

As beginners, we get attached to the beauty of that sound. As soon as we hear it, we become totally passionate about it, so we unskillfully grasp the gong. We want to hug the gong and make it all our own and say, "Yes, I got it." In that process, we have already frozen this beautiful humming sound. As soon as we say, "I got it," it's gone miles away. And so in that process, we are screwing ourselves up on the path of analytical meditation. But at the same time, we don't have to be discouraged by that. We still are holding the striker, and we still have the gong in front of us. We still have our hand, which can move and hit the gong. Therefore, we can still produce the beautiful humming sound of the gong again and again, as often as we want. And we can touch it; we can hold it. We can hug the gong over and over, as much as we want until we get totally tired of hugging the gong. Then there's a certain point where we reach the peak of holding onto the gong.

At that point, we can totally let go. We can totally let go of the thought of hugging; we can totally let go of the thought of touching, the thought of making it mine. Only then can we live in the presence of this beautiful sound of humming.

Resting Meditation: Freedom from Clinging

It is through analytical meditation that this beautiful humming sound of the experience of selflessness, the shunyata experience, is produced. The analytical process is the ringing of the gong that leads us to the effortless enjoyment of the beautiful humming sound, which is resting meditation. And that resting meditation experience of egolessness, or selflessness, is very difficult to attain without the analytical process of meditation. How can you get the gong humming without ringing it? It's pretty difficult. Maybe you can do that in virtual reality later, but now we need to have this method of ringing the gong in order to experience the humming sound of the bell. In order to totally let go of holding onto the gong, of our attachment to the gong, we need to ring the bell again and again. As far as vipashyana, as far as mindfulness is concerned, that is the whole process we work through in analytical meditation, which leads us to the stage of resting meditation.

That's a brief discussion on the techniques or the methods of practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which was the fourth point. We have talked about different points, and that was the fourth point, if you still remember, if it has not become gigo. "Garbage in, garbage out." (laughs) But it's good garbage. It's mindfulness.

The Results Of Mindfulness

The fifth point, in our description of the five points of mindfulness practice, is the result. To review these points, they are the five main stages that we progress through in our study and cultivation of the wisdom of prajna, and which then become the means for integrating that understanding into our own experience. We progressively develop that experience into the full state of realization or prajna. Point one is the "object of intention." Point two is "understanding the essence." Point three is "assistant or support." Point four is "the method of practicing," where we have the actual description of the Four Foundations practices. And point five is "the result" of mindfulness practice. As I mentioned earlier, the mindfulness practices are the basic method of developing the three principle prajnas.

On the most basic Buddhist level, the result of these four mindfulnesses is fundamentally the realization or actualization of the Four Noble Truths. It is said that through the mindfulness of body and the mindfulness of feeling, we come to the realization of the truth of suffering, and the causes, or origins, of the truth of suffering. With the mindfulness of mind, we come to the realization of the truth of cessation, of completely being freed. This means the complete experience of the freedom of thoughts, freedom of emotions, freedom of oneself, and the total sense of spacing out in this tiny spot, in this infinite space. That is the truth of cessation. And the fourth mindfulness, the mindfulness of dharmas, or phenomena, brings us to the realization or actualization of the truth of the path that leads to cessation. If you understand the interdependent nature of all phenomena, if you can relate with all phenomena as selflessness, emptiness, shunyata, egolessness, then that is the actual cause, which is the path leading us to the actual result of nirvana or cessation.

So that is the basic result of this mindfulness practice, the fifth point. From the Mahayana point of view, the result of these four mindfulnesses is basically the realization of two fold egolessness, the egolessness of self and the egolessness of phenomena, or selflessness of person and selflessness of phenomena. That is essentially what this mindfulness is all about.

Mahayana View: Fourteen Points of Difference with the Hinayana

In general, there are fourteen very small points of difference in the basic Buddhist view of mindfulness and the Mahayana view. I'll give you a brief account of these fourteen.

The first point is called the basis or origin, the difference in the basis or the origin.

The second point is the antidote. In the Mahayana path, the antidote is to overcome all aspects of ego-clinging, all aspects of elaboration, whereas in the Hinayana path, the antidote is that which overcomes only one aspect of ego clinging and one aspect of elaboration. It's not an antidote for all aspects. So you can think about that.

The third point is the entrance. Entrance here refers to the object of our contemplation of mindfulness or to the person who's entering into this path of mindfulness. In the Hinayana path, one enters alone into this path of mindfulness through the Four Noble

Truths. Whereas, in the Mahayana state, we do not enter alone. We enter with all sentient beings, with bodhicitta, the supreme ambition. At this level, we're entering the path of the Four Noble Truths but not alone; we're entering together with all sentient beings. That's the difference.

The fourth point is called the object. In the Mahayana Path, the object is all phenomena. If you look at the four mindfulnesses, according to our prior discussion, the object of the four mindfulnesses in Mahayana becomes the whole of phenomena. All dharmas are the object of mindfulness.

The fifth point is attention or engagement. The difference in attention or engagement of mind is that, in the Mahayana sense, all dharmas are regarded as projections of our mind. All dharmas are seen as illusory. All dharmas are seen as egolessness, selflessness. That's the difference here.

The sixth difference is the attainment. Attainment is the resultant stage. Through the basic mindfulness practice in Hinayana, the attainment is cessation, the nirvana which is the complete state of thoughtlessness, complete state of mindfulness. Whereas, in the Mahayana view, the result, or the attainment, is the state of enlightenment. The complete state of enlightenment goes even beyond the truth of cessation, beyond the notion of thoughtlessness, and beyond the notion of just simply nirvana being peace. That is the difference here in the attainment.

The seventh point is called agreement. Agreement here refers to the fact that all of the Mahayana Path practices of mindfulness are in agreement with the practices of six paramitas. No matter which mindfulness you may be engaged in, it is related or connected to the six paramita practices.

The eighth point is appropriateness. In the Mahayana Path, mindfulness is practiced in accordance with what is appropriate for all sentient beings and what is appropriate for the whole environment, rather than practicing it for the sake of oneself alone.

The ninth point is called utterly understanding or true understanding. In the Mahayana Path, true understanding is understanding the body as illusory body, understanding feeling as a dream-like feeling, understanding the mind to be like space, and understanding all phenomena as sudden arisal, as suddenly arising like the clouds. That's the general sense. There's a lot of meaning behind these analogies.

The tenth one is the attainment of power. In the Mahayana sense, we attain the power of transcending our emotions even though we constantly come back to the samsaric world to benefit sentient beings. It's not like the Hinayana arhats who practice mindfulness to leap out of samsara, to completely leave samsara behind. The intention of the Mahayana practice of mindfulness is to come back and do whatever beneficial work we can for the benefit of all living beings. And when we come back again and again to help and work on the development of one's own path, as well as the paths of other sentient beings, we have attained the power of not being attached to that samsaric world, even though we are

living in it. We have the power of not being attached to our emotions, not being attacked by our emotions, even though we live with emotions and use emotions as our path. That is the attainment of power here.

The eleventh point is outshining others' greatness. Isn't that interesting? This means that, even though we are beginners on the path of Mahayana, even though we have very little practice, very little achievement as a result, because of the power of our courageous heart, because of the power of this infinite compassion and love and bodhicitta, the qualities of the Mahayana practitioner outshine all of the achievements of any other realization. Any other attainments of greatness are outshown or overpowered by the simple seed of bodhicitta, the simple seed of love and compassion, and the simple method of being skillful.

The twelfth point is called the quality of excellence. That's simple; that's excellent.

The thirteenth point is called infinite meditation, which means the Mahayana path has a variety of meditation methods so that our development does not simply end at the state of cessation. Cessation is attained, and then we go further, beyond cessation, to a greater development in meditation.

And the fourteenth point is the result. The difference in result is that in the Mahayana path, the result attained is the ten bhumis. We progress through the result of the ten bhumis, attaining Buddhahood at the end of the tenth bhumi. That is the Mahayana result.

We have briefly touched on the topics of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness from both the general Buddhist view and the view of the supreme Mahayana path. We are trying to develop this genuine path of spirituality through the three principal prajnas, which are naturally cultivated through our study, contemplation, and meditation on the practices of mindfulness.

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The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

"As far as meditation practice is concerned, in meditation we work on this *thing, rather than on trying to sort out the problem from the outside. We work on the projector rather than the projection. We turn inward, instead of trying to sort out external problems of* A, B, *and* C. *We work on the creator of duality rather than the creation. That is beginning at the beginning."*

For the follower of the *buddhadharma,* the teachings of Buddhism, there is a need for great emphasis on the practice of meditation. One must see the straightforward logic that mind is the cause of confusion and that by transcending confusion one attains the enlightened state. This can only take place through the practice of meditation. The Buddha himself experienced this, by working on his own mind; and what he learned has been handed down to us.

Mindfulness is a basic approach to the spiritual journey that is common to all traditions of Buddhism. But before we begin to look closely at that approach, we should have some idea of what is meant by spirituality itself. Some say that

Remarks on meditation practice, 1973 Vajradhatu Seminary.

spirituality is a way of attaining a better kind of happiness, transcendental happiness. Others see it as a benevolent way to develop power over others. Still others say the point of spirituality is to acquire magical powers so we can change our bad world into a good world or purify the world through miracles. It seems that all of these points of view are irrelevant to the Buddhist approach. According to the buddhadharma, spirituality means relating with the working basis of one's existence, which is one's state of mind.

There is a problem with one's basic life, one's basic being. This problem is that we are involved in a continual struggle to survive, to maintain our position. We are continually trying to grasp onto some solid image of ourselves. And then we have to defend that particular fixed conception. So there is warfare, there is confusion, and there is passion and aggression; there are all kinds of conflicts. From the Buddhist point of view, the development of true spirituality is cutting through our basic fixation, that clinging, that stronghold of something-or-other, which is known as ego.

In order to do that we have to find out what ego is. What is this all about? Who are we? We have to look into our already existing state of mind. And we have to understand what practical step we can take to do that. We are not involved here in a metaphysical discussion about the purpose of life and the meaning of spirituality on an abstract level. We are looking at this question from the point of view of a working situation. We need to find some simple thing we can do in order to embark on the spiritual path.

People have difficulty beginning a spiritual practice because they put a lot of energy into looking for the best and easiest way to get into it. We might have to change our attitude and give up looking for the best or the easiest way. Actually, there is no choice. Whatever approach we take, we will have to deal with what we are already. We have to look

at who we are. According to the Buddhist tradition, the working basis of the path and the energy involved in the path is the mind—one's own mind, which is working in us all the time.

Spirituality is based on mind. In Buddhism, mind is what distinguishes sentient beings from rocks or trees or bodies of water. That which possesses discriminating awareness, that which possesses a sense of duality—which grasps or rejects something external—that is mind. Fundamentally, it is that which can associate with an "other"—with any "something" that is perceived as different from the perceiver. That is the definition of mind. The traditional Tibetan phrase defining mind means precisely that: "That which can think of the other, the projection, is mind."

So by mind we mean something very specific. It is not just something very vague and creepy inside our heads or hearts, something that just happens as part of the way the wind blows and the grass grows. Rather, it is something very concrete. It contains perception—perception that is very uncomplicated, very basic, very precise. Mind develops its particular nature as that perception begins to linger on something other than oneself. Mind makes the fact of perceiving something else stand for the existence of oneself. That is the mental trick that constitutes mind. In fact, it should be the opposite. Since the perception starts from oneself, the logic should be: "I exist, therefore the other exists." But somehow the hypocrisy of mind is developed to such an extent that mind lingers on the other as a way of getting the feedback that it itself exists, which is a fundamentally erroneous belief. It is the fact that the existence of self is questionable that motivates the trick of duality.

This mind is our working basis for the practice of meditation and the development of awareness. But mind is something more than the process of confirming self by the dualis-

tic lingering on the other. Mind also includes what are known as *emotions,* which are the highlights of mental states. Mind cannot exist without emotions. Daydreaming and discursive thoughts are not enough. Those alone would be too boring. The dualistic trick would wear too thin. So we tend to create waves of emotion which go up and down: passion, aggression, ignorance, pride—all kinds of emotions. In the beginning we create them deliberately, as a game of trying to prove to ourselves that we exist. But eventually the game becomes a hassle; it becomes more than a game and forces us to challenge ourselves more than we intended. It is like a hunter who, for the sport of practicing his shooting, decides to shoot one leg of a deer at a time. But the deer runs very fast, and it appears it might get away altogether. This becomes a total challenge to the hunter, who rushes after the deer, now trying to kill it completely, to shoot it in the heart. So the hunter has been challenged and feels defeated by his own game.

Emotions are like that. They are not a requirement for survival; they are a game we developed that went wrong at some point—it went sour. In the face of this predicament we feel terribly frustrated and absolutely helpless. Such frustration causes some people to fortify their relationship to the "other" by creating a god or other projections, such as saviors, gurus, and mahatmas. We create all kinds of projections as henchmen, hitmen, to enable us to redominate our territory. The implicit sense is that if we pay homage to such great beings, they will function as our helpers, as the guarantors of our ground.

So we have created a world that is bittersweet. Things are amusing but, at the same time, not so amusing. Sometimes things seem terribly funny but, on the other hand, terribly sad. Life has the quality of a game of ours that has trapped us. The setup of mind has created the whole thing. We

might complain about the government or the economy of the country or the prime rate of interest, but those factors are secondary. The original process at the root of the problems is the competitiveness of seeing oneself only as a reflection of the other. Problematic situations arise automatically as expressions of that. They are our own production, our own neat work. And that is what is called mind.

According to the Buddhist tradition, there are eight types of consciousness and fifty-two types of conceptions and all kinds of other aspects of mind, about which we do not have to go into detail. All these aspects are based largely on the primeval dualistic approach. There are the spiritual aspects and the psychological aspects and all sorts of other aspects. All are bound up in the realm of duality, which is ego.

As far as meditation practice is concerned, in meditation we work on *this* thing, rather than on trying to sort out the problem from the outside. We work on the projector rather than the projection. We turn inward, instead of trying to sort out external problems of *A, B,* and *C.* We work on the creator of duality rather than the creation. That is beginning at the beginning.

According to the Buddhist tradition, there are three main aspects of mind, which in Tibetan are called *sem, rikpa,* and *yi.* The basic mind, the simple capacity for duality we have already described, is *sem. Rikpa* literally means "intelligence" or "brightness." In colloquial Tibetan, if you say that somebody has rikpa, it means he is a clever, sharp fellow. This sharpness of rikpa is a kind of side function that develops from the basic mind; it is a kind of lawyer's mentality that everybody develops. Rikpa looks at a problem from various angles and analyzes the possibilities of different ways of approaching it. It looks at a problem in every possible way—inside-out and outside-in.

The third aspect, *yi,* is traditionally classified as the sixth

sense consciousness. The first five sense consciousnesses are sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch, and the sixth is yi. Yi is mental sensitivity. It is associated with the heart and is a kind of balancing factor that acts as a switchboard in relation to the other five sense consciousnesses. When you see a sight and hear a sound at the same time, the sight and sound are synchronized by the sixth sense to constitute aspects of a single event. Yi does a kind of automatic synchronization, or automatic computerization, of the whole process of sense experience. You can see, smell, hear, taste, and feel all at the same time, and all of those inputs are coherently workable. They make sense to you because of yi.

So yi is a sort of central-headquarters switchboard which coordinates experience into a coherent whole. In some sense it is the most important of all the three aspects of mind. It is not as intelligent in the sense of manipulation as sem. Sem has something of a political attitude toward one's relationship with the world; it is somewhat strategy oriented. The sixth sense is more domestic in function. It just tries to maintain the coordination of experience so that all information comes through efficiently and there is no problem of being out of communication with anything that is going on. On the other hand, rikpa, which is the intelligence—the research worker, as it were—in this administration of mind, takes an overall view of one's whole situation. It surveys the relationship between mind and the sixth sense and tries to search out all the possibilities of where things are going wrong, where things might go wrong, where things have gone wrong, how things could be put right. This research worker does not have the power actually to take action on the level of external relations. It is more like an advisor to the State Department.

These three principles of sem, rikpa, and yi are the most important for us to be aware of at this point. Many other aspects of mind are described in the traditional literature, but these three will suffice for our present understanding.

We should consider this understanding not so much as something that we have been told and therefore we should believe in. The experience described here can actually be felt personally. It can be worked on, related to. A certain part of our experience is organized by basic mind, a certain part by the sixth sense, and a certain part by intelligence. In order to understand the basic functions of mindfulness-awareness practice, I think it is very important for us to understand and realize these complexities of mind.

A gigantic world of mind exists to which we are almost totally unexposed. This whole world—this tent and this microphone, this light, this grass, the very pair of spectacles that we are wearing—is made by mind. Minds made this up, put these things together. Every bolt and nut was put in by somebody-or-other's mind. This whole world is mind's world, the product of mind. This is needless to say; I am sure everybody knows this. But we might remind ourselves of it so that we realize that meditation is not an exclusive activity that involves forgetting this world and getting into something else. By meditating, we are dealing with the very mind that devised our eyeglasses and put the lenses in the rims, and the very mind that put up this tent. Our coming here is the product of our minds. Each of us has different mental manifestations, which permit others to identify us and say, "This guy is named so-and-so, this girl is named so-and-so." We can be identified as individuals because we have different mental approaches, which also shape the expressions of our physical features. Our physical characteristics are part of our mental activity as well. So this is a living world, mind's world. Realizing this, working with mind is no longer a remote or mysterious thing to do. It is no longer dealing with something that is hidden or somewhere else.

Mind is right here. Mind is hanging out in the world. It is an open secret.

The method for beginning to relate directly with mind, which was taught by Lord Buddha and which has been in use for the past twenty-five hundred years, is the practice of mindfulness. There are four aspects to this practice, traditionally known as the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

Mindfulness of Body

Mindfulness of body, the first foundation of mindfulness, is connected with the need for a sense of being, a sense of groundedness.

To begin with, there is some problem about what we understand by *body*. We sit on chairs or on the ground; we eat; we sleep; we wear clothes. But the body we relate with in going through these activities is questionable. According to the tradition, the body we think we have is what is known as psychosomatic body. It is largely based on projections and concepts of body. This psychosomatic body contrasts with the enlightened person's sense of body, which might be called *body-body*. This sense of body is free from conceptualizations. It is just simple and straightforward. There is a direct relationship with the earth. As for us, we do not actually have a relationship with the earth. We have some relationship with body, but it is very uncertain and erratic. We flicker back and forth between body and something else—fantasies, ideas. That seems to be our basic situation.

Even though the psychosomatic body is constituted by projections of body, it can be quite solid in terms of those projections. We have expectations concerning the existence of this body, therefore we have to refuel it, entertain it, wash it. Through this psychosomatic body we are able to experience a sense of being. For instance, as you listen to this talk,

you feel that you are sitting on the ground. Your buttocks are resting on the earth; therefore you can extend your legs and lean back a little so you have less strain on your body. All of this affects your sense of being. You have some sense of relaxation as opposed to how it would be if you were standing—standing on your feet, standing on your toes, or standing on your palms. The posture that you are adopting at the moment seems to be an agreeable one; in fact it is one of the most congenial postures that one could ever think of. So being in this posture, you can relax and listen—you can listen to something other than the demands of your body.

Sitting down now, you feel somewhat settled. On the other hand, if the ground were very damp, you would not feel so settled. Then you would begin to perch on the ground, like a bird on a branch. This would be another matter altogether. If you are intensely concerned with some event about to happen or if you are worried about some encounter you are about to have—for example, if you are being interviewed for a job by some executive—you don't really sit on your chair, you perch on it. Perching happens when some demand is being made on you and you feel less of your body and more of your tension and nervousness. It involves a very different sense of body and of being than if you are just sitting, as you are doing now.

Right now you are sitting on the ground, and you are so completely sitting down that you have been able to shift gears and turn on your tape recorders, or even start taking notes, and you do not regard that as doing two things at once. You sit there, you have totally flopped, so to speak, and, having done that, you can turn to your other perceptions—listening, looking, and so on.

But your sitting here at this point is not actually very much a matter of your *body* per se sitting on the ground; it is far more a matter of your psychosomatic body sitting on

the ground. Sitting on the ground as you are—all facing in one direction, toward the speaker; being underneath the roof of the tent; being attracted to the light that is focused on the stage—all gives you a particular idea; it creates a certain style of participation, which is the condition of your psychosomatic body. You are somewhat involved in sitting per se, but at the same time you are not. Mind is doing it; concept is doing it. Your mind is shaping the situation in accordance with your body. Your mind is sitting on the ground. Your mind is taking notes. Your mind is wearing glasses. Your mind has such-and-such a hairdo; your mind is wearing such-and-such clothes. Everyone is creating a world according to the body situation, but largely out of contact with it. That is the psychosomatic process.

Mindfulness of body brings this all-pervasive mind-imitating-body activity into the practice of meditation. The practice of meditation has to take into account that mind continually shapes itself into body*like* attitudes. Consequently, since the time of Buddha, sitting meditation has been recommended and practiced, and it has proved to be the best way of dealing with this situation. The basic technique that goes with sitting meditation is working with the breath. You identify with the breath, particularly with the outbreath. The inbreath is just a gap, a space. During the inbreath you just wait. So you breathe out and then you dissolve and then there is a gap. Breathe out . . . dissolve . . . gap. An openness, an expansion, can take place constantly that way.

Mindfulness plays a very important role in this technique. In this case, mindfulness means that when you sit and meditate, you actually do sit. You actually do sit as far as the psychosomatic body is concerned. You feel the ground, body, breath, temperature. You don't try specifically to watch and keep track of what is going on. You don't try to

formalize the sitting situation and make it into some special activity that you are performing. You just sit. And then you begin to feel that there is some sense of groundedness. This is not particularly a product of being deliberate, but it is more the force of the actual fact of being there. So you sit. And you sit. And you breathe. And you sit and you breathe. Sometimes you think, but still you are thinking sitting thoughts. The psychosomatic body is sitting, so your thoughts have a flat bottom.

Mindfulness of body is connected with the earth. It is an openness that has a base, a foundation. A quality of expansive awareness develops through mindfulness of body—a sense of being settled and of therefore being able to afford to open out.

Going along with this mindfulness requires a great deal of trust. Probably the beginning meditator will not be able simply to rest there, but will feel the need for a change. I remember someone who had just finished a retreat telling me how she had sat and felt her body and felt grounded. But then she had thought immediately how she should be doing something else. And she went on to tell me how the right book had "just jumped" into her lap, and she had started to read. At that point one doesn't have a solid base anymore. One's mind is beginning to grow little wings. Mindfulness of body has to do with trying to remain human, rather than becoming an animal or fly or etheric being. It means just trying to remain a human being, an ordinary human being.

The basic starting point for this is solidness, groundedness. When you sit, you actually sit. Even your floating thoughts begin to sit on their own bottoms. There are no particular problems. You have a sense of solidness and groundedness, and, at the same time, a sense of being.

Without this particular foundation of mindfulness, the

rest of your meditation practice could be very airy-fairy—vacillating back and forth, trying this and trying that. You could be constantly tiptoeing on the surface of the universe, not actually getting a foothold anywhere. You could become an eternal hitchhiker. So with this first technique you develop some basic solidness. In mindfulness of body, there is a sense of finding some home ground.

Mindfulness of Life

The application of mindfulness has to be precise. If we cling to our practice, we create stagnation. Therefore, in our application of the techniques of mindfulness, we must be aware of the fundamental tendency to cling, to survive. We come to this in the second foundation of mindfulness, which is mindfulness of life, or survival. Since we are dealing with the context of meditation, we encounter this tendency in the form of clinging to the meditative state. We experience the meditative state and it is momentarily tangible, but in that same moment it is also dissolving. Going along with this process means developing a sense of letting go of awareness as well as of contacting it. This basic technique of the second foundation of mindfulness could be described as *touch-and-go:* you are there—present, mindful—and then you let go.

A common misunderstanding is that the meditative state of mind has to be captured and then nursed and cherished. That is definitely the wrong approach. If you try to domesticate your mind through meditation—try to possess it by holding onto the meditative state—the clear result will be regression on the path, with a loss of freshness and spontaneity. If you try to hold on without lapse all the time, then maintaining your awareness will begin to become a domestic hassle. It will become like painfully going through housework. There will be an underlying sense of resentment, and the practice of meditation will become confusing. You will begin to develop a love-hate relationship toward your practice, in which your concept of it seems good, but, at the same time, the demand this rigid concept makes on you is too painful.

So the technique of the mindfulness of life is based on touch-and-go. You focus your attention on the object of awareness, but then, in the same moment, you disown that awareness and go on. What is needed here is some sense of confidence—confidence that you do not have to securely own your mind, but that you can tune into its process spontaneously.

Mindfulness of life relates to the clinging tendency not only in connection with the meditative state, but, even more importantly, in connection with the level of raw anxiety about survival that manifests in us constantly, second by second, minute by minute. You breathe for survival; you lead your life for survival. The feeling is constantly present that you are trying to protect yourself from death. For the practical purposes of the second foundation, instead of regarding this survival mentality as something negative, instead of relating to it as ego-clinging as is done in the abstract philosophical overview of Buddhism, this particular practice switches logic around. In the second foundation, the survival struggle is regarded as a steppingstone in the practice of meditation. Whenever you have the sense of the survival instinct functioning, that can be transmuted into a sense of being, a sense of having already survived. Mindfulness becomes a basic acknowledgment of existing. This does not have the flavor of "Thank God, I have survived." Instead, it is more objective, impartial: "I am alive, I am here, so be it."

We may undertake the practice of meditation with a sense

of purity or austerity. We somehow feel that by meditating we are doing the right thing, and we feel like good boys or good girls. Not only are we doing the right thing, but we are also getting away from the ugly world. We are becoming pure; we are renouncing the world and becoming like the yogis of the past. We don't actually live and meditate in a cave, but we can regard the corner of the room that we have arranged for meditation as a cave. We can close our eyes and feel that we are meditating in a cave in the mountains. That kind of imagination makes us feel rather good. It feels fitting; it feels clean and secure.

This strong tendency is an attempt to isolate the practice of meditation from one's actual living situation. We build up all kinds of extraneous concepts and images about it. It is satisfying to regard meditation as austere and above life. But mindfulness of life steers us in just the opposite direction. The approach of mindfulness of life is that if you are meditating in a room, you are meditating in a room. You don't regard the room as a cave. If you are breathing, you are breathing, rather than convincing yourself you are a motionless rock. You keep your eyes open and simply let yourself be where you are. There are no imaginations involved with this approach. You just go through with your situation as it is. If your meditation place is in a rich setting, just be in the midst of it. If it is in a simple setting, just be in the midst of that. You are not trying to get away from here to somewhere else. You are tuning in simply and directly to your process of life. This practice is the essence of here and now.

In this way, meditation becomes an actual part of life, rather than just a practice or exercise. It becomes inseparable from the instinct to live that accompanies all one's existence. That instinct to live can be seen as containing awareness, meditation, mindfulness. It constantly tunes us in to what is happening. So the life force that keeps us alive and that

manifests itself continually in our stream of consciousness itself becomes the practice of mindfulness. Such mindfulness brings clarity, skill, and intelligence. Experience is brought from the framework of intense psychosomatic confusion into that of the real body, because we are simply tuning into what is *already* happening, instead of projecting anything further.

Since mindfulness is part of one's stream of consciousness, the practice of meditation cannot be regarded as something alien, as an emulation of some picturesque yogi who has a fixation on meditating all the time. Seen from the point of view of mindfulness of life, meditation is the total experience of any living being who has the instinct to survive. Therefore meditating—developing mindfulness—should not be regarded as a minority-group activity or as some specialized, eccentric pursuit. It is a worldwide approach that relates to all experience: it is tuning in to life.

We do not tune in as part of trying to live further. We do not approach mindfulness as a further elaboration of the survival instinct. Rather we just see the sense of survival as it is taking place in us already. You are here; you are living; let it be that way—that is mindfulness. Your heart pulsates and you breathe. All kinds of things are happening in you at once. Let mindfulness work with that, let that be mindfulness, let every beat of your heart, every breath, be mindfulness itself. You do not have to breathe specially; your breath *is* an expression of mindfulness. If you approach meditation in this way, it becomes very personal and very direct.

Having such an outlook and such a relationship with the practice of meditation brings enormous strength, enormous energy and power. But this only comes if one's relationship to the present situation is accurate. Otherwise there is no strength because we are apart from the energy of that situation. The accuracy of mindfulness, on the other hand, brings

not only strength, but a sense of dignity and delight. This is simply because we are doing something that is applicable that very moment. And we are doing it without any implications or motives. It is direct and right on the point.

But again it is necessary to say, once you have that experience of the presence of life, don't hang onto it. Just touch and go. Touch that presence of life being lived, then go. You do not have to ignore it. "Go" does not mean that we have to turn our backs on the experience and shut ourselves off from it; it means just being in it without further analysis and without further reinforcement. Holding onto life, or trying to reassure oneself that it is so, has the sense of death rather than life. It is only because we have that sense of death that we want to make sure that we are alive. We would like to have an insurance policy. But if we feel that we *are* alive, that is good enough. We do not have to make sure that we actually do breathe, that we actually can be seen. We do not have to check to be sure we have a shadow. Just living is enough. If we don't stop to reassure ourselves, living becomes very clear-cut, very alive, and very precise.

So mindfulness here does not mean pushing oneself toward something or hanging onto something. It means allowing oneself to be there in the very moment of what is happening in one's living process and then letting go.

Mindfulness of Effort

The next foundation of mindfulness is mindfulness of effort. The idea of *effort* is apparently problematical. Effort would seem to be at odds with the sense of being that arises from mindfulness of body. Also, pushing of any kind does not have an obvious place in the touch-and-go technique of the mindfulness of life. In either case, deliberate, heavy-handed effort would seem to endanger the open precision of the

process of mindfulness. Still we cannot expect proper mindfulness to develop without some kind of exertion on our part. Effort is necessary. But the Buddhist notion of *right effort* is quite different from conventional definitions of effort.

One kind of conventional effort is oriented purely toward the achievement of a result: there is a sense of struggle and pushing, which is egged on by the sense of a goal. Such effort picks up momentum and begins to thrive on its own speed, like the run of a roadrunner. Another approach to effort is fraught with a sense of tremendous meaningfulness: there is no sense of uplift or inspiration in the work. Instead there is a strong feeling of being dutiful. One just slogs along, slowly and surely, trying to chew through obligations in the manner of a worm in a tree. A worm just chews through whatever comes in front of its mouth; the channel that its belly passes through is its total space.

Neither of these kinds of effort has a sense of openness or precision. The traditional Buddhist analogy for right effort is the walk of an elephant or tortoise. The elephant moves along surely, unstoppably, with great dignity. Like the worm, it is not excitable, but unlike the worm, it has a panoramic view of the ground it is treading on. Though it is serious and slow, because of the elephant's ability to survey the ground there is a sense of playfulness and intelligence in its movement.

In the case of meditation, trying to develop an inspiration that is based on wanting to forget one's pain and on trying to make one's practice thrive on a sense of continual accomplishment is quite immature. On the other hand, too much solemnity and dutifulness creates a lifeless and narrow outlook and a stale psychological environment. The style of right effort, as taught by the Buddha, is serious but not *too* serious. It takes advantage of the natural flow of instinct to

bring the wandering mind constantly back to the mindfulness of breathing.

The crucial point in the bringing-back process is that it is not necessary to go through deliberate stages: first preparing to do it, then getting a hold on one's attention, then finally dragging it back to the breathing as if we were trying to drag a naughty child back from doing something terrible. It is not a question of forcing the mind back to some particular object, but of bringing it back down from the dream world into reality. We are breathing, we are sitting. That is what we are doing, and we should be doing it completely, fully, wholeheartedly.

There is a kind of technique, or trick, here that is extremely effective and useful, not only for sitting meditation, but also in daily life, or meditation-in-action. The way of coming back is through what we might call the *abstract watcher.* This watcher is just simple self-consciousness, without aim or goal. When we encounter anything, the first flash that takes place is the bare sense of duality, of separateness. On that basis, we begin to evaluate, pick and choose, make decisions, execute our will. The abstract watcher is just the basic sense of separateness—the plain cognition of being there before any of the rest develops. Instead of condemning this self-consciousness as dualistic, we take advantage of this tendency in our psychological system and use it as the basis of the mindfulness of effort. The experience is just a sudden flash of the watcher's being there. At that point we don't think, "I must get back to the breath" or "I must try and get away from these thoughts." We don't have to entertain a deliberate and logical movement of mind that repeats to itself the purpose of sitting practice. There is just suddenly a general sense that something is happening here and now, and we are brought back. Abruptly, immediately, without a name, without the application of any kind of concept, we

have a quick glimpse of changing the tone. That is the core of the mindfulness of effort practice.

One of the reasons that ordinary effort becomes so dreary and stagnant is that our intention always develops a verbalization. Subconsciously, we actually verbalize: "I must go and help so-and-so because it is half-past one" or "This is a good thing for me to do; it is good for me to perform this duty." Any kind of sense of duty we might have is always verbalized, though the speed of conceptual mind is so great that we may not even notice the verbalization. Still, the contents of the verbalization are clearly felt. This verbalization pins the effort to a fixed frame of reference, which makes it extremely tiresome. In contrast, the abstract effort we are talking about flashes in a fraction of a second, without any name or any idea with it. It is just a jerk, a sudden change of course which does not define its destination. The rest of the effort is just like an elephant's walk—going slowly, step by step, observing the situation around us.

You could call this abstract self-consciousness *leap* if you like, or *jerk,* or *sudden reminder;* or you could call it *amazement.* Sometimes it could also be also felt as panic, unconditioned panic, because of the change of course—something comes to us and changes our whole course. If we work with this sudden jerk, and do so with no effort in the effort, then effort becomes self-existing. It stands on its own two feet, so to speak, rather than needing another effort to trigger it off. If the latter were the case, effort would have to be deliberately manufactured, which would run counter to the whole sense of meditation. Once you have had that sudden instant of mindfulness, the idea is not to try to maintain it. You should not hold onto it or try to cultivate it. Don't entertain the messenger. Don't nurse the reminder. Get back to meditation. Get into the message.

This kind of effort is extremely important. The sudden

flash is a key to all Buddhist meditation, from the level of basic mindfulness to the highest levels of tantra. Such mindfulness of effort could definitely be considered the most important aspect of mindfulness practice. Mindfulness of body creates the general setting; it brings meditation into the psychosomatic setup of one's life. Mindfulness of life makes meditation practice personal and intimate. Mindfulness of effort makes meditation workable: it connects the foundations of mindfulness to the path, to the spiritual journey. It is like the wheel of a chariot, which makes the connection between the chariot and the road, or like the oar of a boat. Mindfulness of effort actualizes the practice; it makes it move, proceed.

But we have a problem here. Mindfulness of effort cannot be deliberately manufactured; on the other hand, it is not enough just to hope that a flash will come to us and we will be reminded. We cannot just leave it up to "that thing" to happen to us. We have to set some kind of general alarm system, so to speak, or prepare a general atmosphere. There must be a background of discipline which sets the tone of the sitting practice. Effort is important on this level also; it is the sense of not having the faintest indulgence toward any form of entertainment. We have to give something up. Unless we give up our reservations about taking the practice seriously, it is virtually impossible to have that kind of instantaneous effort dawn on us. So it is extremely important to have respect for the practice, a sense of appreciation, and a willingness to work hard.

Once we do have a sense of commitment to relating with things as they actually are, we have opened the way to the flash that reminds us: *that, that, that.* "That what?" does not apply any more. Just *that,* which triggers an entirely new state of consciousness and brings us back automatically to mindfulness of breathing or a general sense of being.

We work hard at not being diverted into entertainment. Still, in some sense, we can enjoy the very boring situation of the practice of sitting meditation. We can actually appreciate not having lavish resources of entertainment available. Because of having already included our boredom and ennui, we have nothing to run away from and we feel completely secure and grounded.

This basic sense of appreciation is another aspect of the background that makes it possible for the spontaneous flash of the reminder to occur more easily. This is said to be like falling in love. When we are in love with someone, because our whole attitude is open toward that person somehow or other we get a sudden flash of that person—not as a name or as a concept of what the person looks like; those are afterthoughts. We get an abstract flash of our lover as *that.* A flash of *that* comes into our mind first. Then we might ponder on that flash, elaborate on it, enjoy our daydreams about it. But all this happens afterward. The flash is primal.

Openness always brings that kind of result. A traditional analogy is that of the hunter. The hunter does not have to think of a stag or a mountain goat or a bear or any specific animal; he is looking for *that.* When he walks and hears some sound, or senses some subtle possibility, he does not think of what animal he is going to find; just a feeling of *that* comes up. Anybody in any kind of complete involvement—on the level of the hunter, the lover, or the meditator—has the kind of openness that brings about sudden flashes. It is an almost magical sensation of thatness, without a name, without concept, without idea. This is the instant of effort, concentrated effort, and awareness follows after that. Having disowned that sudden experience, awareness very slowly comes and settles back to the earthy reality of just being there.

Mindfulness of Mind

Often mindfulness is referred to as *watchfulness.* But that should not give the impression that mindfulness means watching something happening. Mindfulness means *being* watchful, rather than watching some *thing.* This implies a process of intelligent alertness, rather than the mechanical business of simply observing what happens. Particularly the fourth foundation—mindfulness of mind—has qualities of an aroused intelligence operating. The intelligence of the fourth foundation is a sense of light-handedness. If you open the windows and doors of a room the right amount, you can maintain the interior feeling of roomness and, at the same time, have freshness from outside. Mindfulness of mind brings that same kind of intelligent balance.

Without mind and its conflicts, we could not meditate or develop balance, or develop anything at all for that matter. Therefore, conflicts that arise from mind are regarded as a necessary part of the process of mindfulness. But at the same time, those conflicts have to be controlled enough so that we can come back to our mindfulness of breathing. A balance has to be maintained. There has to be a certain discipline so that we are neither totally lost in daydream nor missing the freshness and openness that come from not holding our attention too tightly. This balance is a state of wakefulness, mindfulness.

People with different temperaments bring different approaches to the practice of meditation. Some people are extremely orthodox, in fact dictatorial, with themselves. Others are extraordinarily loose; they just hang out, so to speak, in the meditation posture and let everything happen. Other people struggle back and forth between those two extremes, not knowing exactly what to do. How one approaches the sitting situation will depend on one's moods and the type of

person one is, obviously. But always a certain sense of accuracy is required, and a certain sense of freedom is required.

Mindfulness of mind means being with one's mind. When you sit and meditate, you are there: you are being with your body, with your sense of life or survival, with your sense of effort, and at the same time, you are being with your mind. You are being there. Mindfulness of mind suggests a sense of presence and a sense of accuracy in terms of being there. You are there, therefore you can't miss yourself. If you are not there, then you might miss yourself. But that also would be a doubletake: if you realize you are not there, that means you are there. That brings you back to where you are—back to square one.

The whole process is very simple, actually. Unfortunately, explaining the simplicity takes a lot of vocabulary, a lot of grammar. However, it is a very simple matter. And that matter concerns you and your world. Nothing else. It does not particularly concern enlightenment, and it does not particularly concern metaphysical comprehension. In fact, this simple matter does not particularly concern the next minute, or the minute before this one. It only concerns the very small area where we are now.

Really we operate on a very small basis. We think we are great, broadly significant, and that we cover a whole large area. We see ourselves as having a history and a future, and here we are in our big-deal present. But if we look at ourselves clearly in this very moment, we see we are just grains of sand—just little people concerned only with this little dot which is called *nowness.*

We can only operate on one dot at a time, and mindfulness of mind approaches our experience in that way. We are there and we approach ourselves on the very simple basis of *that. That* does not particularly have many dimensions, many perspectives; it is just a simple thing. Relating di-

rectly to this little dot of nowness is the right understanding of austerity. And if we work on this basis, it is possible to begin to see the truth of the matter, so to speak—to begin to see what nowness really means.

This experience is very revealing in that it is very personal. It is not personal in the sense of petty and mean. The idea is that this experience is *your* experience. You might be tempted to share it with somebody else, but then it becomes their experience, rather than what you wished for: your/their experience, jumbled together. You can never achieve that. People have different experiences of reality, which cannot be jumbled together. Invaders and dictators of all kinds have tried to make others have their experience, to make a big concoction of minds controlled by one person. But that is impossible. Everyone who has tried to make that kind of spiritual pizza has failed. So you have to accept that your experience is personal. The personal experience of nowness is very much there and very obviously there. You cannot even throw it away!

In sitting practice, or in the awareness practice of everyday life, for that matter, you are not trying to solve a wide array of problems. You are looking at one situation that is very limited. It is so limited that there is not even room to be claustrophobic. If it is not there, it is not there. You missed it. If it is there, it is there. That is the pinpoint of mindfulness of mind, that simplicity of total up-to-dateness, total directness. Mind functions singly. Once. And once. One thing at a time. The practice of mindfulness of mind is to be there with that one-shot perception, constantly. You get a complete picture from which nothing is missing: that is happening, now that is happening, now that is happening. There is no escape. Even if you focus yourself on escaping, that is also a one-shot movement of which you could be

mindful. You can be mindful of your escape—of your sexual fantasy or your aggression fantasy.

Things always happen one at a time, in a direct, simple movement of mind. Therefore, in the technique of mindfulness of mind, it is traditionally recommended that you be aware of each single-shot perception of mind as thinking: "I am thinking I hear a sound." "I am thinking I smell a scent." "I am thinking I feel hot." "I am thinking I feel cold." Each one of these is a total approach to experience—very precise, very direct, one single movement of mind. Things always happen in that direct way.

Often we tend to think that we are very clever and we can get away from that direct nature of things. We feel we can get around that choiceless simplicity by approaching something from the back door—or from above, from the loft. We feel that we can prove ourselves to be extremely intelligent and resourceful that way. We are cunning and shifty. But somehow it does not work. When we think we are approaching something from the back door, we do not understand that it is an illusion that there is *something else* to approach. At that moment there is only the back-doorness. That one-shot back-doorness is the totality of what is. We *are* the back door. If we are approaching from the loft, you, me, everybody, all of us are up there. The whole thing is up there, rather than there being something else for us to go down and invade and control. There isn't anything else at all. It is a one-shot deal. That one-shot reality is all there is. Obviously we can make up an illusion. We can imagine that we are conquering the universe by multiplying ourselves into hundreds of aspects and personalities: the conquering and the conquered. But that is like the dream state of someone who is actually asleep. There is only the one shot; everything happens only once. There is just *that*. Therefore mindfulness of mind is applicable.

So meditation practice has to be approached in a very simple and very basic way. That seems to be the only way that it will apply to our experience of what we actually are. That way, we do not get into the illusion that we can function as a hundred people at once. When we lose the simplicity we begin to be concerned about ourselves: "While I'm doing this, such-and-such is going to happen. What shall I do?" Thinking that more than *that* is happening, we get involved in hope and fear in relation to all kinds of things that are not actually happening. Really it does not work that way. While we are doing *that*, we are doing that. If something else happens, we are doing something else. But two things cannot happen at once; it is impossible. It is easy to *imagine* that two things are happening at once, because our journey back and forth between the two may be very speedy. But even then we are doing only one thing at a time.

The idea of mindfulness of mind is to slow down the fickleness of jumping back and forth. We have to realize that we are not extraordinary mental acrobats. We are not all that well trained. And even an extraordinarily well-trained mind could not manage that many things at once—not even two. But because things are very simple and direct, we can focus on, be aware and mindful of, one thing at a time. That one-pointedness, that bare attention, seems to be the basic point.

It is necessary to take that logic all the way and realize that even to apply bare attention to what we are doing is impossible. If we try, we have two personalities: one personality is the bare attention; the other personality is doing things. Real bare attention is being there all at once. We do not apply bare attention *to* what we are doing; we are not mindful *of* what we are doing. That is impossible. Mindfulness is the act as well as the experience, happening at the same time. Obviously, we could have a somewhat dualistic

attitude at the beginning, before we get into real mindfulness, that we are willing to be mindful, willing to surrender, willing to discipline ourselves. But then we do the thing; we just do it. It is like the famous Zen saying "When I eat, I eat; when I sleep, I sleep." You just do it, with absolutely no implication behind what you are doing, not even of mindfulness.

When we begin to feel implications of mindfulness, we are beginning to split ourselves. Then we are faced with our resistance, and hundreds of other things seemingly begin to attack us, to bother us. Trying to be mindful by deliberately looking at oneself involves too much watcher. Then we have lost the one-shot simplicity. Perhaps we could have a discussion.

STUDENT: I don't understand how *sem* works.

TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: Sem is basic mind. But instead of using the word *mind* as a noun, it might be more helpful to think of it as a verb, as in "minding one's business." Sem is an active process, because you cannot have mind without an object of mind. Mind and its object are one process. Mind only functions in relation to a reference point. In other words, you cannot see anything in the dark. The function of sight is to see something that is not darkness—to see an object, in the light. In the same way, the function of mind is to have a reference point, a relative reference point which survives the mind, the minding process. That is happening right now, actually, everywhere.

STUDENT: I was wondering if you could speak a little more about how mind, or "minding," creates the world. Are you talking about creating in the sense that if we are not mindful of the world the world does not exist? I feel you're saying something else besides that.

APPENDIX II – TRANSCRIPTS OF SEVEN TALKS BY TRUNGPA RINPOCHE

The following are transcripts of seven talks given by Trungpa Rinpoche. These talks are not available in print form, but are available on the website "Chronicles of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche": (http://www.chronicleproject.com/CTRlibrary) I have transcribed all six talks that comprised the "Training the Mind" Seminar given at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in August, 1974. I have also transcribed talk four of the "Techniques of Mindfulness" seminar given at Tail of the Tiger in August 1974. (The other talks in this seminar are available in edited form as the presentation on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness in *The Heart of the Buddha*. However, the editor of this book, Judy Lief, chose to substitute the talk on Mindfulness of Effort from the 1973 Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna seminary in place of the one given at Tail of the Tiger in August 1974.)

Training the Mind Seminar, Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, August 1974.
Transcription by Tom Weiser, July, 2010, from audio files on the website "Chronicles of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche"
(http://www.chronicleproject.com/CTRlibrary/training_the_mind.html accessed July 2010)

Talk 1
August 18, 1974

CTR: As I remember correctly, the theme of this seminar is training the mind. Is that the case? Yes?

[Audience: Yes.]

CTR: Good. In that case, we should try to find out what we're going to do; what we're going to study. It seems that the situation that we have here, and the collection of such people like yourselves, is as I see it, the cream of the milk. People who have managed to stand beyond the energies of Naropa -- still, you survived and you wanted to come out here; people who are interested thoroughly and completely and wanted to make the journey out here to study. This gathering is rather smaller in scale than the usual seminars that take place. Still I feel that this is a rather important group and therefore during this seminar, I would like to work with you in terms of trying to understand the basic meaning of training the mind. It is very important for us, not only because it will do good for you, but it is important for all of us, myself and you, that we are hearing something together. That is the basic important point, rather than me purely talking to you, and you taking notes down in your notebook, or whatever. Maybe you could write down that, if you like.

The important point here is that we wanted to talk about mind. Trying to find out what is meditation; who is meditating; what happens when you begin to meditate. I don't think that we have to go through too many details of the advertisement level – how it is great if you meditate. But we could get into the nitty-gritty of the basics at this point by

looking into what we mean by mind. Since this approach is training the mind, we have to understand what do we mean by mind. And there is linguistic, experiential and also phenomenological jargon that exists whenever anybody talks about mind or consciousness -- so many definitions have been made completely or half-heartedly.

So we have somewhat of a problem here. We have to understand what we're doing, and we have to be quite clear about who we are at this point. That seems to be the basic point. We could start on that as the seed question: who are we? Well, I am so-and-so by name. I was born and brought up in Texas, Arizona, New England, Alaska. But that isn't quite the point of who you are, what you are. That's kind of passport language, that you present when filling in forms in order to get out of a country -- you write certain definitions of who you are and what you are. Or if you try to obtain a visa for another country, you do that. But we're not concerned with that -- we're planning to settle down in this country and experience the raw ruggedness of America and practice meditation. So our particular aim is not so much to gallivant around the world, but it is more of settling down at this point.

So let us look again once more: who are we and what are we? Well, quite possibly you will say, "This thing happens in me which feels I am myself. And I feel myself very powerfully, very strongly, because there is no other choice. I feel that I am what I am. And beyond even my name, I feel my *thingness* inside me. I feel *me.*" Obviously, those statements that you might present are connected with emotionalism of some kind. You feel lonely; therefore you want to say, "I am what I am." Or you feel extremely angry, so therefore you have to assert yourself being *me:* "I'm angry and I have a right to fight or to say my stuff -- my things, my line -- to the object of my anger." And if I feel lustful, my lover, my object of passion also has to be acknowledged. I feel a certain way, therefore that particular person has to surrender to me, and we have to work things together. The main point is that I am what I am; that I have to acknowledge myself before we do anything. I somehow have a strong message of some kind or another that I'm going to tell you. Quite possibly, we try to be generous after that flashing thought, and we say, quite possibly, "Maybe you have something to say about me, and please come and say it." We try to be more ingratiating. But that was an afterthought in some sense. Nevertheless, even when you said to me what you think of me and think of yourself, I still wanted to have another talk with you. Let us get together again, or let us talk on the spot by saying that this is what's happening. This is a very strong energy situation that's happening. I feel very powerful about this particular situation. And how about some kind of trade, some kind of deal in which you'll make me happy and I'll make you happy. Or I'll make you feel Richard, and you make me feel Richard. We'll have a duel. We'll fight to the death. Whatever.

So what is this? What is this particular point? This thing that is highly-strung like a wild horse or a paranoid dog. This, which is in us, is very tough and so seductive, sometimes extremely good, sometimes extremely wicked. This thing that we're talking about is mind, obviously. We're not particularly talking about our body or our situation, but our mind. The definition of mind from this point of view is "that which experiences the sense of separateness." You are going to conduct your business with somebody, either passion or aggression or whatever. You are dealing with something; you're trying to manage something or other. As long as that attitude of *thisness* is involved, obviously *otherness* is involved automatically. It is impossible to exist without

that or without this. That couldn't survive or this couldn't survive. There's a basic notion that you want to hang onto something or other. That's called a mind.

The Sanskrit word that's often used is *citta* which literally means "heart" – that's the direct translation – but if you could look into the implication behind the whole thing, we are not talking purely in terms of a heart alone, but we are talking in terms of that which feels need for something, to reinforce one's existence; eagerly looking for an enemy, and eagerly looking for a lover of different degrees. That's what it boils down to. The enemy notion is not necessarily that the enemy is such a person that you extremely hate, and that you feel terribly sick of that particular person. And the lover question is not that you absolutely love that person, particularly. There are all kinds of large areas of love and hate. Sometimes they're mixed together at the borderlines, and sometimes there's more emphasis on the need for reinforcement of your strength – that you're a powerful person and that you could strike at somebody, and that person would acknowledges you, and gives into you. Or that person could be seduced into your territory, and begin to give into you, and would like to open to you in the realm of passion or lust.

The question of mind. The word "mind" seems to be somewhat isolated from what it should mean. We have a grammatical problem there. If you use the word mind as a noun, which is an isolated term, at the same time it is active, so it should be used as a verb. And the closest verb that we can find is "minding", which is a continual thing: you are minding. Your mind is minding -- constantly looking for a reference point, looking for a connection of some kind. Fundamentally we feel that we don't exist. Fundamentally we feel are inadequate. There's a basic panic involved, which is that we don't feel so good to be ourselves. Obviously you can say, "I'm having a fantastic life. I've been to the Naropa Institute, I've been up on the land, and I had a fantastic time. It was great! I feel like a new person!" Sure, but why do we have to keep thinking about those things again and again. Why? If it's there already, if it's real enough there's no reason that one has to say those things and reflect again and again about reassurance. That is precisely the point: there' s some kind of a hole somewhere that we actually know intuitively, and we feel that something is fundamentally leaking. But we don't really want to acknowledge it as such. And that has been the problem all along. So according to the Buddhist way of looking at the whole thing, actually you don't exist. Such a problem is the mark or sign that you are just about to realize that you don't exist, that you have no substance anymore. We keep trying to survive ourselves in those areas.

In terms of the practice of meditation or meditational disciplines that might be involved, the important thing is to realize at the beginning who we are and what we are. That our basic setup doesn't hold truth. There are lots of areas where weakness takes place constantly, namely trying to survive and struggle. We pray to God to help us to strengthen ourselves: "Please let me exist. If I don't exist, tell me that I do exist. I pray to you so that you can tell me that I exist. Grant your blessing, or send your Holy Spirit on me so that I can confirm to myself that I do exist. And I'm a true believer of blah blah."

The question here is not particularly of religion: we're talking purely in terms of some kind of wholesomeness that we can experience within ourselves. Obviously, there is

some kind of goal. You might criticize by saying, "Isn't this duality? Isn't this split?" Sure it's split and duality, but still, there's no other language left for us. We've got to talk in some kind of primitive language. And that's what we're doing in the (?) practice of meditation is part of that, is to try to speak basic primitive logic, to try to think in such a way. So that eventually we begin to find ourselves humorous, that what we're doing is constantly non-existent – trying to build a sandcastle.

From that point of view, the word "mind" is very important to look into -- the panic that we involve ourselves in constantly; that we try to reassure constantly; that we try to make ourselves feel better, feel improved, uplifted, and meditate when we feel good. And all the rest of it are the problems that exist. And such problems could take the form of spirituality by thinking "I have that sense of *search* as we call it (which is a euphemism for panic.) I feel I'm searching for something; I feel I have a purpose in life, a spiritual endeavor." This is regarded as spiritual materialism at this point. Your search is built on deception. Once you begin to search you begin to find that you can exist: you don't have to give up everything after all. You get something out of it; you sneak out the backdoor slowly in spirituality; you regain your individuality and can be on the top of the world again. You can become a demonic dictator in the name of spirituality, discipline. That can become an enormous problem.

So we have to look very closely, very precisely at this point into what is actually mind's function. All kinds of holes after holes are involved. And at some point even acknowledging those holes can become a patchwork. You think you have exposed yourself, become completely purified and clean, a reasonable person. You've cleared out all the deceptions and you have seen the holes in your logic. But then at the same time you begin to build patches because of that. It's an endless game that goes on, which seems to be absolutely hopeless. There's no way out, and there's no way in. The only thing that one can do is that one can at least attempt to do something about it – acknowledging what's happening; exposing oneself. That seems to be the basic point. That's what's known as the working ground in traditional language. It is also known as the motive. Once you begin to embark on the spiritual path one has to have a clear motivation for what you are doing, what kind of style you are going to conduct yourself, how you are going to work with yourself: motivation. And the motivation is to expose oneself completely, without the pretence of trying to create another patchwork. That seems to be the basic foundation work, which seems to be important for us to review and examine again. A lot of people might have heard such a concept already and might be familiar with it, but still it is much safer, purer, in a sense, to go over it again and think about it and make it into a definite source of study

If you'd like to take part in a discussion period, you're welcome to ask.

Q: Rinpoche, the description you just gave of mind sounds a lot like ego, and I was wondering what the distinction is here, or if it's relevant.

CTR: When we use the term ego, this morning we're talking about the exclusive ego, which is self-indulgence, the style of looking for security, survival of it's own existence. And then there could be the traditional western term "ego". The whole thing jumbles together by saying that the ego is also intelligent at the same time. But we're talking about ego from this point of view: the stupid part of ego; the confused, aggressive part

of ego that is completely blinded. I think when we talk about mind, we're not purely talking about that kind of negative ego, but just awareness that exists within your being that's capable of relating with a reference point. Very simply without any other trips involved, passion or aggression; just coherent experience. The basic notion that Guenther talks about is *noetic mind*, that certain mind has the capability of experiencing reference point without any big deal. It's just kind of a mechanical thing -- it's almost like having an antenna. The basic mechanism – you can't even call it a mechanism, that's diluting the whole thing -- a basic intelligence that exists constantly, all the time. And then we begin to color it by saying "That is the case" and "This is the case, I would like to change myself in this way, that way" and so forth. It begins to become a problem. You begin to change your mind after a second flash. You begin to make it into something else rather than what you have seen.

It's like a young lady buying a hat. You like it because you saw it in the window of a shop. You thought it was fantastic "I have to buy it!" Once you go into the shop, you ask the shop assistant to show you that hat. Once you hold it, and look at it you don't feel so good. You think that something is trying to con you. You begin to change your mind, and that has become some kind of problem in that way.

Q: When you speak of mind in that way -- of the pure relating without aggression and passion -- does that correspond to the first skandha of form -- the direct experience of otherness -- before the feeling of good, bad, and indifferent of the second skandha?

CTR: I think so, yeah. You're working with a no-man's land. There is a sense of area that is not particularly occupied by either this or that. There's a sense of openness.

Q: I wanted to ask you something else. You said the motive, the working basis, was to expose oneself without pretence. Does that mean a notion of stepping out, not in the sense of indulgence, but a fearlessness? Not being afraid to show what you are that might come after the initial feeling of self-degradation that you often get into when you start a spiritual trip.

CTR: I think very much so. Usually, somehow, on the way we've been trained to think in a certain way that the first thought that we come across is somehow suspicious, and we have to provide it with a second, reasoning thought. Which makes the second thought better that reviews the first thought. Then we feel much safer, more legitimate. We go out of the way, asking our parents, our teachers, "I have this thought but I can't tell whether it's good or not. Can you tell me?" There are layers and layers of security mechanisms that have been set up. We've been told to act that way, there are educational things -- the very idea of the professionalist is that kind of thing. If we feel sick, there's a professional called a doctor; if we feel freaked out, there's a professional called a psychiatrist; if we feel that our house is leaking or something's wrong with the plumbing system, we go to the professional called the plumber or builder. There are so many professionals that we have to deal with -- that's a rejection of the "first thought is best thought" area. That's a problem, particularly in the spiritual area: there is some kind of intuitive notion that could actually be picked up, but we don't do that. That has become a problem.

You might say" What is the proof? Are we okay if we did that? Can you guarantee that

Talk 2
August 19, 1974

CTR: We discussed yesterday developing basic mind to relate with oneself and one's world. The next question is a sense of appreciation. According to the text, appreciation is expressed in the form of joy. You engage yourself in a certain particular project, which is very definite, very concrete and personal. That particular notion of appreciation obviously comes from the realization of oneself in the metaphor "First thought is best thought" which we discussed yesterday – knowing who you are and what you are. The question of appreciation here is not necessarily – or not at all, in fact – some kind of comic relief, that you feel better because you've gone through the worst. For that matter, this notion of appreciation is not so much trying to jazz up something; that you feel low-down and you feel not in a good state of mind, not in a good spirit, so you'd like to build up as much as you can. That also entails the question of telling yourself that this is a very sensible thing to do – practicing meditation is a very sensible thing to do, therefore you should suppress all the other conflicting questions. So the basic question here, is not so much trying to build oneself up to any particular situation but just simply appreciating it.

And the next question is appreciating what? What is there to appreciate? Appreciation at this point is somewhat acknowledging oneself as a person who is committed to the sitting practice of meditation and a basic awareness that continues for the rest of your life. And also appreciation is a sense of being, in some sense; that you have taken a certain attitude to commit yourself to this particular sitting practice; that you are here. Physically you are sitting on your meditation cushion, a sense of being; a certain sense of existence. When you talk about a sense of existence, we are talking in terms of a very simple situation, that you exist at that very moment, at that very level: that you are sitting down on the floor and meditating – or just about to meditate. And no mystical, exaggerated metaphysical connotations apply here. It's just a simple existence: that you are there. As much as what we are doing right now, I am here, and you are there.

You sit on your earth, quite rightly so, and you are partially listening, and partially wondering. And that is a sense of being; you are being here, in fact, whether you are miles away from here. Your thoughts may be wandering around about all over the country – Alaska, San Francisco, New Mexico, New York City, Boulder, Red Feather Lakes, whatever. But nevertheless, you are here, in fact you are here. That's kind of a physical awareness that you are sitting, that you are aware of what you are, including your mental states of a daydreaming world. Physically, you are here. You are simply here. Psychologically, it is questionable. But somehow when we try to make that a defined situation – that psychologically you are here at the same time – it's very hard work. In fact, we could go as far as to say unless you attain enlightenment, you are not psychologically here. So that's a big project that we try to work on. But we have something to work with: that is to say that you are physically here. That's psychosomatic body anyway. That's something to begin with, something to work on.

The disciplines that have been handed down from generations to generations from both lineages of Kagyü tradition and Nyingma tradition at this point boil down to the same thing: it's a question of learning how to be here. There are a lot of cheap philosophical attitudes that one can take by saying "Be here now, everything's okay." Or "You're

being here, that's great." But we're not talking in terms of "Be here now, because everything's a rose garden, and everything's smooth and pleasurable", particularly. Often the notion of meditation traditions has been misrepresented by saying that people who meditate are trying to get into a blissful state of mind. It is positive thinking: those who have lost a meaningful life should go and meditate so they find the purpose of life. The purpose of life is to be happy. At that point somehow we are missing the point. A meditator who would like to begin their practice should sit without planning, should sit meaningfully without it being a big deal. You could sit on your floor properly, as opposed to your perching on your floor. You can do that very simply. Whereas if you begin to question whether you are sitting properly or not, then you begin to perch. One just sits very simply, directly.

And then there's a sense of being, obviously, a sense of existence -- that you are there; you are breathing; you are sitting. You feel your head; you feel your arms; you feel your shoulders. One doesn't have to go through the process of trying to build up a sensory awareness program here, particularly, which is quite a different approach than this one. But once you sit, obviously you feel that you are sitting, which is extremely simple. And then, there is the tradition of practice of what's known as the Four Foundation of Mindfulness practices, which maybe comes to you simultaneously, or maybe comes to you gradually, whatever. The basic point of the sitting practice of meditation is to sit --actually sit properly. The complications of thought patterns and confusing [with religion?] with the techniques of all kinds, however they come up, however they go away, those are just mental creations, just thought process rather than meditative insight as such.

You can take two types of attitudes: one is "just do it" and one is "just wait." You can wait: you sit down properly and then you wait. Even with the practice, even with the discipline, the technique, you still try to wait for something to happen. Or maybe you wait for nothing to happen, and you're thinking, "This is it!" But still you are waiting for something or other. The other attitude is just to be, which is the correct one. Just to sit and to be. Marpa once said, "Meditating is trying to look at your own eyes without using a mirror." That seems to be the point: we're trying to look at our own eyes without using a mirror. The only way to do it is just to be there.

It is absolutely necessary for a meditator, or if anybody is seriously interested, that they should not get any feedback of promises from the teachings. Maybe they could experience some landmark guidance, as to what particular starting point engaging yourself in. This first portion of the practice of meditation is known as *śamatha*, which literally means "the development of peace." But in this case, the development of peace in the sense of simplicity rather than pleasure as such, which is one of the biggest misunderstandings when we talk about "peace on earth." "May the lofty forces bring peace on earth." We are talking about happiness: plenty of food, plenty of clothes, plenty of money, which is a big misunderstanding of the mystical meaning of peace of any schools. When we talk about the state of peace, even the state of tranquility, we are talking purely in terms of simplicity; uncomplicated -- just a state of being which has no extra attachment; detachment around it, so it's seemingly peaceful. A simple rock, sitting on the ground. There's a sense of directness involved when we talk of the idea of a state of peace. Feel one's body: that body exists. Not in the sense of sensorial practices: "Now I'm feeling my toes. Now I'm feeling my ears, my temple and my

shoulder, my heart and everything. Blah, blah." We just simply feel our body. The body sits there on the ground, and *you are that*. Body.

And metaphysically it has been said that such an attitude of your body is the psychosomatic body, but it doesn't really matter what the book says. It is your mind's body sitting there. It doesn't matter which part is your mind and which part is your body, really. What difference does it make, anyway? Everything we experience in our life is experiential, needless to say. If we don't have experience of life, we don't have life; we are reduced to a corpse. As long as we are not a corpse, we experience our life. One can't go beyond that: when you experience your life, you experience your life. It's experience; facts or figures don't really matter. You are *experiencing* life. Maybe there is a certain level of facts and figures: whether you're experiencing your life as pleasurable 75% and painful 25%, or the other way around, whatever. Even those facts and figures are also experiential. You experience that you have a logical conclusion that things exist independent of imagination. We feel better, we feel more scientific. But even scientific discovery is also experience at the same time.

So that body that we have, we might have blonde, dark, reddish hair, we might have a light complexion or a dark complexion, wearing red clothes, a yellow shirt, blue jeans, whatever we wear, whatever we have on our body, whatever we possess in our basic state of being -- that is experience. When you wear clothes, you experience that you are wearing clothes. You don't really wear them as such, really. If you try to find [something?] out, you try to find out through the channel of experience. So the only conclusions come after experientially: I said I am so-on-and-so-on because I had the experience that somebody took my photograph and I happened to find myself wearing a necktie. It's a photograph of an experience, in fact, rather than that you are actually wearing a necktie.

When your body sits, it is experience: it is body sitting. So let us not complicate that beyond the necessary. It's not practical to go into details like that. You can waste lots of time, but still conclusions become experience. So that is why the world is known as world of mind, obviously, quite rightly so. This experience of ours -- sitting on a meditation cushion, trying to feel body, experience body, experience breathing -- is something that we should work on. That's what's known as the development of peace, simply saying that the development of unnecessary complications of pain, potential pain, but simplifying into one-pointedness which is the development of peace. And that seems to be the basic point of the foundation of mind[fullness] of body: that is the beginning, starting point of śamatha experience is the development of mindfulness of body.

Techniques may vary: working on your breathing experience. Or quite possibly, sometimes even breathing becomes irrelevant: you just sit there. But you are still experiencing. Experiencing our form, experiencing atmosphere, experiencing a sense of life, and experiencing even sense of some kind of purpose, and experiencing a sense of time, experiencing a sense of temperature. Also you can experience how solid is the ground you are sitting on. Maybe you are sitting on very solid earth, like where you are sitting on right now. But you can experience some kind of different levels. Maybe there could be a big hole underneath your body that could collapse any moment. You could find yourself in a dark pit. Or you're sitting on a crystal rock that can't be penetrated,

never been explored. So you can't bury yourself, create more of a hole if you're shy of the world, because the seat underneath you is made of solid crystal rock; you can't dig a hole and dive into it.

All kinds of experience take place, but all of those are relevant experience. We can't quite say such experiences are particularly neurotic – or for that matter we can't say that those experiences are particularly sanity expressions, as such, alone. But such experiences are just experience, a real and true and direct experience that we have. And maybe that's the best way to begin from this point – awareness of the form; mindfulness of the form. The four foundations of mindfulness which we discussed tonight is mindfulness of the form.

You're welcome to ask questions.

Q: I have questions from two different statements you made. The first one was: is the sense of joy and excitement that you talk about and the sense of appreciation indulging oneself in spiritual materialism?

CTR: That's very smart of you. It is always good to check that to begin with, whatever you hear. But I think actually, at this point within that kind of attitude of the possibility of spiritual materialism it might happen that you might have the attitude of "love-and-lighties," whatever. Having had some kind of warnings that such a kind of situation is possible, it might happen to you. And then you have a new discovery that you are not purely trying to secure yourself in an ego-oriented situation, which is what spiritual materialism actually is. That you find yourself in some sort of selfless joy, and that joy is not particularly glorifying anybody or anything – oneself or others. But there is something that clicked. Once you clicked something properly, you feel good, not because you did it or somebody else did it, but because there is something that is taking place; there is some kind of connection that has been made. Therefore you feel more wholesome, rather than spiritually materialistically joyful, which is regarded as very hollow, and has the orientation towards trying to build oneself up, rather than that you have experienced anything at all.

Q: Thank you. Okay, and a second question actually arose at the time that Muktananda was speaking to us, but it seemed to apply to your comment on meditation as trying to get into a blissful state of mind as a sort of a pitfall. Because I distinctly felt that when he talked about…on the experience of the guru's grace that only the guru could give you which would lead to a stilling of all thoughts and an experience of love immediately. There was a bit of sensationalism that I couldn't quite connect with -- that he would say something like that to a naïve audience, so that a lot of people would think "Oh, I'm going to meditate now so I can have that blissful experience that he'll give me." And I wondered where you view that as coming from in his tradition.

CTR: It's coming from India somewhere. But India is a big country and all kinds of things could come out of India. I think we have this kind of problem: I heard that Muktananda was going to spend one year in America and then he's going to go back to home. There one big problem with that kind of a relationship with a teacher and a student: that it's enormously generous of Muktananda to spend one year in America. And then he's going back home. Americans can't take just one year's chuck of time, a

Talk 3
August 20, 1974

CTR: Yesterday, we discussed the question of form, and the question of how to relate with the practice physically, and the simplicity of being on earth. We could continue to discuss the further attitude that is required: not only purely sitting on earth, but a sense of survival; a sense of life force that is connected with a part of the breathing practice of meditation. Also, there's an attitude of a sense of being in the point of view of survival. You are not particularly reduced into a peaceful earth when you sit and meditate. But you have your pulse; your heartbeat; your body. You can listen to sounds; you can see vision; you can feel temperature throughout your body: a sense of survival. That seems to be one of the basic points of awareness, mindfulness in this case. You are completely, totally in touch with what happens in your system --as we discussed yesterday, not in the sense of sensory awareness style, particularly. But there is a sense of certainty that you are alive.

A strange coincidence actually happens with that: usually when you feel that you have a flu, a fever and you are sitting and meditating at the same time, obviously at the beginning there is a sense of wretchedness, but then you begin to realize the sense of having a body, possessing a body, a sense of aliveness, a sense of a living quality. Or for that matter, if you feel that there is pain in your joints, your legs, your knee, your back and your neck, there is a sense of survival. Because any pain that we experience ordinarily is related with a sense of death. Sickness is close to approaching your death. At the same time when you feel you experience a sense of panic or sickness, there is a feeling of life that is trying to push and force a sense of being -- a sense of well-being is trying to re-accumulate again. So there is a sense of being that actually takes place. So particularly in the sitting practice of meditation, whenever a sense of discomfort is involved, that brings an enormous sense of livelihood.

The second stage of the foundations of mindfulness is livelihood. There is a sense of survival notion, which brings also, obviously, a sense of threat at the same time. This approach has to be very direct and very simple -- extraordinarily simple, extraordinarily literal. We are not trying to bring out any mystical or religious experience in our practice of meditation. We are not trying to gain a pleasurable state or happiness of any kind in particular. Or for that matter, we are not seeking for pain deliberately, or trying to punish ourselves deliberately, either. So there is a sense of struggle that still goes on between the body and sensation of body and mind. [That] relationship takes place constantly.

Sometimes such physical discomfort in the sitting practice of meditation is generated from the earth or the floor that you are sitting on, as if there is enormous magical power that begins to transmit through your body; that the sickness of the earth is completely transmitted in[to] your system. You feel hurt in the base of your body, and this pain and irritation begins to come up your spine, your arms, your neck and your eyelids and your head. That is not particularly regarded as mystical experience or something that we should particularly cultivate. Those are the natural tendencies that we experience -- a sense of life. You see the point is that once we begin to ignore life as reality -- pain as reality; pleasure as reality – and we are seeking for something higher – a spiritual goal of anything – then the problem is that when we have those difficulties, we tend to panic

a great deal. We begin to find that we are maybe losing our track, context, connections, our logic, our faith, since we are not getting the ideal hospitality that is promised by – whoever they are.

Most of the problems that we face in our lives is not so much of being unable to bring ourselves into a higher level of spirituality (which actually doesn't exist.) There is a level of spirituality that exists, obviously but not a *higher* level of spirituality. The level of spirituality that we are talking about, that we are experiencing ourselves – in the true mystical experience that all traditions agree on simultaneously -- is the level of earthbound-ness. Being with the earth, being with the body, being with the trees, being with the rocks, being with the grasses, being with the water, being with the highway, being with the traffic lights. Being with your father, mother, policeman, your lawyer. Those experiences we have usually are regarded as too dirty by those who seek a supposedly snobby spiritual trip. They are too low for you too even associate with them; one should snare them and look down upon them, saying to yourself, "I am above all this." Somehow by doing so, one is cutting off one's tie with basic sanity, and one is developing a dreamworld of insanity.

So, we have problems with the usual thinking pattern: anything good is connected with heaven, anything bad is connected with the sewage system. That is just fiction. Somehow, such logic doesn't work. Particularly when you try to practice, such logic doesn't work. It doesn't happen that way. The basic point here is that the more sense of contacts, of connection with the earth in the sense of being alive. You have a pair of eyes, a pair of ears, a pair of nostrils, one mouth, two arms, two legs. You have this thing called "body", which some people refer to you as Jack or Jill or whatever – Michael, Judy – and it is you whether you like it or not. The more we try to drift away from this thing, we end up in enormous trouble, problems. We think we are confused, therefore we try to get away from it, but we are more confused trying to get away from the confusion itself. So there is endless...without reference point of sanity. You are running away from one confusion because another confusion occurred. That creates enormous chain reactions of an echo system. You find yourself finally nowhere and painfully nowhere. Completely trapped in the bottom pit of hell, if you'd like to put it that way; complete claustrophobia. In the nest of the Black Widow.

This morning, when I stepped out of my trailer, I sat up in a chair on the porch and looked around. I said to myself, "How beautiful this place is. So many beautiful clouds and beautiful trees and greenery and everything. In the distance, people are meditating in the tent. Everything is fantastic and ideal! It's a perfect world." But then, the first message has arrived that somebody's going to come up and talk to you about business. That particular world somehow didn't exist, or sort of shrunk into a concept of you feel a sense of being hassled. But still, the clouds are there and everything's there, but they don't exist; they're sort of shrunk into this timing and programming of your scheduling. I found myself smiling at myself at the time and also reflecting about what am I going to talk about tonight at the same time. So since we're going to raise the question of feeling – livelihood – that was the best message of all. Finally, those dreamy levels of appreciating the nature of whatever are brought down to the level that one has to relate to one's schedule. That is best of all. There is enormous sanity involved with that: finally, you can't hover around or gallivant around. You are brought down: your duty is to keep your schedule. There is no choice. People arrived already; you can't kick

them out.

Sometimes, a lot of truth of life is very confusing and very indignant to a lot of us. We feel we deserve more happiness, less hassle, and etc. But seeing that once we find ourselves in the situation of complaining, in the midst the complaining process you find yourself being sane, suddenly. In the midst of enormous bundles of insanity, there is the sudden realization of sanity. You have to face this fact directly and very simply -- precisely. That is something that we are talking about in this case: a sense of feeling; a sense of experiencing the experience of being alive. Such a thing could happen in the midst of chaos.

Whenever there is more chaos, there is some tendency to check back that usually happens. And the checking back process becomes reality; clear reality. All of those can be exemplified by the sitting practice of meditation. When you begin to sit and meditate, you find there is a lot of chaos, conflict, uncertainty, and also a sense of being a fool. But at the same time, you begin to hear more sound, you being to see more sight, you being to feel more body; a sense of being alive. We are slowly approaching towards the notion of sanity. Slowly, slowly we are approaching towards the notion of sanity. And sanity in this case is having contact with reality, as full, as much as possible, which is known as all kind of fancy names of it. It's called enlightenment, liberation, freedom, buddhahood.

Quite possibly you find, "Is it as simple as this?" And also you might say, "I have to learn the next trick." Well, it seems that is the next trick, and the first trick at the same time. Having a sense of being, life, which brings our mind into a one focused-pointed situation. When you finally sit, meditating, you actually do sit, properly. There's no question about that. Even though you are maybe miles away from your cushion, but still you sit. And strangely you can keep both contacts -- being a hundred miles away from your home, and you're sitting on your meditation cushion-- some communication's been kept, still. You might call it a kind of schizophreniac level of communication that's taking place. Being aware of the irritations of your body and being aware of your thoughts. There is a sense of life involved; some sort of reality; some sort of magic, if you'd like to put it that way; a sense of some kind of force that is taking place: that you are actually there. It doesn't matter whether you have an enormous pornographic show in your mind or you're watching a battlefield in your mind or you're having a delicious meal with your parents. You're still sitting on your meditation cushion. There is some connection; some sanity is taking place, actually. The physical tokenism of sitting on the cushion actually is more than tokenism: it's a commitment; it has life on its own, it has some kind of truth and honesty and genuineness involved. That seems to be the basic point of the idea of livelihood, the aspect of the second foundation of mindfulness practice.

Questions are welcome. The gentleman in the hat.

Q: Rinpoche, would you say that the general chaos and insanity we have in this country promotes the possibility of us actually finding our own sanity.

CTR. I think that's what brought you here. And further sanity? Let's see what happens.

Talk 4
August 22, 1974

CTR: ...Some questions about effort. Generally the question is...there is an emphasis on spontaneity and also emphasis on discipline at the same time. Often seemingly there's a contradiction between the two. The notion of spontaneity in this case is a question of directness and a question of fearlessness. The idea of being with the first thought seems to be the main point. Spontaneity is not particularly regarded as an abrupt thing or a sudden thing particularly. Spontaneity is a continual situation. There is freshness that takes place in every moment—all one's life experience or in the sitting practice of meditation, whatever -- some sense of delight in the situation; some sense of less concern with accuracy and being precise; a sense of clear seeing. The notion of spontaneity is also connected with that which doesn't bring tension to one's system, physically or psychologically.

Actual tension, irritation is based on a sense of [being] unable to be spontaneous. There are two conflicting energies fighting with each other --the energy of wanting to let go and the energy of wanting to hold still. Spontaneity, at this point, [it] could be said, is the essence of sense of humor, the essence of joy; delightful. Almost this has the element of naiveté in some sense. Spontaneity could be said to be the opener of the doors to freedom. At the same time, a true spontaneous approach can't take place unless there is at the same time a sense of discipline; they go together, constantly. Whenever there is a sense of joy, a sense of humor, the joy comes from being there properly, fully. Humor comes from being there fully. Even spontaneity itself is possible because you are there to experience the experience of spontaneity. And being there is also discipline at the same time. What we're discussing about is not actually the sitting practice of meditation alone, but we are talking in terms of a general life situation that is experienced throughout the day, throughout your life. Discipline is different from effort, but at the same time, discipline means exertion. The notion of effort is like dealing with a bureaucracy – one has to go through all kinds of channels, application forms, and all kinds of things until you get what you want. Effort is that you have to crank up your body, crank up your mind and finally you try to aim it at your particular goal. It's very loose and at the same time it is very clumsy, but there are possibilities of developing exertion, which is much more direct.

When you feel unresourceful, depressed, or you feel as if you're at the top of the world, there is a sense of indulgency that takes place. And after a sense of indulgency you can't go on – you are still being entertained either by a pleasurable or a painful situation, whatever it may be. So the question is very direct: exertion is kind of bringing yourself back to square one, to the "first thought" level. A sense of solidness begins to take place in the positive sense. But you might say, "This is very well, but how do I begin?" And there is a different perspective on how we begin the whole thing: right at the beginning we don't begin "properly". We begin as what we are, which is to say, maybe in a distorted way, a confused way. You have no idea of how to actually begin properly, but you begin somehow or other: one just does it. People often are bothered by this haphazard way of beginning and look for perfection of some kind. But somehow, if you look for perfection, there's no such thing at the time, on the spot. One has to start with the confusion and imperfection, which is absolutely necessary; definitely necessary.

And again, there is a sense of spontaneity with starting with the clumsiness, as if one is playing games with oneself, making a fool of oneself at the beginning. Let us be fools; let us do it. And that is also spontaneity, in fact. The sense of a primitive way of beginning -- sitting practice or awareness practice in an everyday-life situation -- is the first glimpse of spontaneity, which comes with a sense of exertion at the same time. One has to continue; one has to commit oneself to what we are doing. The question of discipline always comes along with having begun something. One has begun already and then let us keep walking. The idea of egolessness and the idea of spiritual attainment – all those questions are, in fact, a nuisance in the beginning. The more one has higher goals, metaphysical ideas, that much [more] self-conscious we become. We can't even be a fool, which is absolutely disastrous. We are stuck halfway through, not being a wise person, and not being a fool; constantly constipated.

The question of exertion is an interesting point. In Sanskrit the word is *virya*, which literally means "hard-working." Or another word: "becoming acquaintance to working hard; becoming accustomed to working hard." There is a suggestion of some kind of routine that takes place all the time. Whenever there is the very high, thick doorstep in front of you, should you climb over it, or should you try to avoid it? There's always that thing to climb over, there's all kinds of possibilities to try to avoid. Maybe sometimes we'd rather [pay?] a hole through the wall rather than cross the doorway, but it is necessary to step over the doorstep and conduct oneself properly, so to speak.

In the life situation, often things are not particularly consciously involved with spiritual questions, but questions of life: communication, sense of honesty and a sense of skillfulness. A sense of demand of all kinds takes place in one's life. And there is a succession of seemingly dead ends. The thick walls begin to approach us and we can't go any longer beyond that. There is a constant challenge that takes place. At some point we become so accustomed to such challenges constantly happening. There are all kinds of irritations that take place every minute of our life -- sometimes even pleasurable situations become irritable. So there are constant reminders that blockage takes place all the time. When a person is willing to make acquaintance with that blockage that is exertion. Not so much to the fact that you should try to make things smooth -- try to create less blockage, or try to create a better situation, or any of those -- but simply just become acquainted with those blockages; problems after problems that come up. That is what's called a path, in fact.

Treading (?) on the path is taking a trip round obstacles after obstacles. The path is made out of obstacles, otherwise, there's no path -- it becomes a free ride. So it's important to think in terms of exertion, at this point, which is related to the third foundation of mindfulness, which is effort. In fact, one doesn't put that much effort; one [should] just be open. The reference point comes to you; so in other words effort comes to you. You acknowledge the effort and go with it, rather than that we should work out and crank up our gearshift, whatever.

The question of exertion is extremely important connected with mindfulness of effort. There is the primitive notion of overcoming obstacles and there is also the sophisticated notion of regarding obstacles as the path at the same time. Both those polarities take place at the same time; constantly works together. The question of nourishment,

feedback, seems to be meaningless, because there is constant feedback of the nature of struggle, rather than that you should be fed by healthy, good food particularly. So the question of right effort brings the definite notion that there is path, and one doesn't have to check with one's guru, or whatever, every ten seconds. But there is, actually, some experience taking place on your path. There is pattern; there is texture of the path. The style of energy begins to flow by itself. So there is constant, so to speak, feedbacks taking place. Unless one wants to be nursed by some parental figure very badly, everything is very obvious.

So from that point of view, this four foundations of mindfulness practice is designed [for] people who practice meditation in remote areas, in fact, where there is the least contact with the teacher, and maybe the least contact with fellow members of the sangha. And it is somewhat aimed at those people who are involved with maybe domestic life, economic pressure. So it is applicable, because there is constant things happening. Working in the factory, putting together nuts and bolts, or being a college professor. All the realms of occupations that might exist in the world are always applicable, because such teaching of meditation at this point is geared for lonely people --which doesn't mean to say that some are not lonely: everybody is lonely people. As soon as you cut your umbilical cord, you are lonely; you dissociate yourself from your mother and father. You begin to grow up into a lonely person. The more poetic way of saying it is "aloneness", I suppose, but actually it's saying the same thing. It is interesting that somebody thought...that somebody was kind to such lonely people, and decided to work on that particular project and came up with such ideas as practicing meditation. It's very kind and remarkable. And that's maybe what's called compassion.

It is necessary to realize those areas of exertion, areas of loneliness, areas of discipline, which brings the question of mindfulness of effort. In the sense of aloneness, loneliness, in the sense of need for exertion which could be a source of an enormous romantic trip – the yearning toward some kind of monasticism. But at the same time it could be a very real one, because it is connected with everyday-life situation at the same time.

Well, we could have a discussion.

Q: What you just said about...the last two things you just said about this discipline, about not relying on being able to check back with the guru every ten seconds or minutes, or whatever it was, and also the possibility of going two different ways. What you just said, getting into a sort of...well I'm not sure I remember what you just said – maybe it's my interpretation – but when you were talking about not checking back with the guru every ten seconds, was that to say that when you ask a question, and there is a...and you are somewhat aware of there being an answer also there, that you should, rather than check back with the guru, you should be willing to stick your neck way out, somewhat on your own impetus?

CTR: Well, you see, one does that anyway, all the time. One does stick one's neck out in any case. One pretends to be not doing it when you find such safe, reliable security such as a guru, or solid parents. You can communicate with them; you put your neck down and you pretend to be very helpless and wretched. But as soon as you're out of their sight, you usually stick your neck out anyway. So the question is, at this point, to

Talk 5
August 23, 1974

CTR: Mindfulness of mind is the fourth category of the four foundations of mindfulness. The question of mind is, in this case, both experiential as well as intuitive; experiential in the sense that it has the qualities of reflecting all kinds of emotions; intuitive because there's also possibilities of experiencing a glimpse of clarity at the same time. Such a glimpse of clarity can't be regarded as particularly insightful -- it is just the basic makeup. That seems to be generally how we operate ourselves in our life situations. The awareness practice that's connected with this particular mind is confusing in some sense. Whether you relate with the emotional aspect or intuitive aspect, the aspect of emotional upsurge, or the aspect of momentary clarity...that seems to be one of the sources of restlessness that occurs in the practice of meditation, basically. We are unable to decide, unable to rest or live with which one to be with. The emotional aspect is quite provocative and often entertaining; securing. And the clarity aspect is often refreshing, and a sense of relief occurs at the same time. So there is a conflict between those two, which is actually the basis of the restlessness that occurs in the sitting practice of meditation.

In order to apply the fourth foundation of mindfulness, it does seem to be necessary for us to be clear. So the student doesn't particularly decide on either of those two situations, and try to decide on either of those purely random[ly] or maybe [via] logical conclusions. But at the same time, the student should be able to relate with both those situations. The sense of relief and the changing of the reference point takes place; changing of gearshift, so to speak, takes place from one mood to another mood. There's occasional clarity [that] takes place between one mood to another mood. But at the same time, there is also enormous demand in terms of emotions. Particularly in sitting practice, it comes in the form of memories, habitual thought patterns, fantasies, expectations of the future. And the question is generally asked whether we should try to pull back on those preoccupations and try to be a good boy -- clean, pure. Or else, sometimes boredom demands that one might as well get into these little entertainments. There's a short relief of tension; one can get into fantasies of this and that, memories of this and that. [One] feels hypnotized, so therefore, you could kill time. And maybe ten minutes [are] gone; five minutes gone; three minutes gone. And a sense of relief and a sense of guilt takes place at the same time.

The mindfulness of mind, in this case, is largely focusing on those two types of situations: the clarity and emotional cloudiness. So a person could start on, [to] take an example, the confusion and emotional cloudiness. And that is...often hesitating. There is uncertainty whether the student should come back to the breathing awareness practice or whether the student should remain exploring or finding out the emotional cloudiness. So the mindfulness of mind technique offers this particular approach, which is being with whatever happens. The movement of breath and pulsation of body and fickleness of thoughts all takes place at the same time, simultaneously. Obviously, you don't stop breathing when you think. And one goes on constantly, and there is a larger notion of covering both areas – that of the breath and that of the thought patterns. Usually we're demanding ones, maybe.

The question of concentration usually means that we can't split our awareness' focal

point to more than one object. Whenever we talk in ordinary terms of concentration, we're talking in terms of paying attention to one thing at a time. But in this case of mindfulness of mind level, the awareness or concentration could develop panoramically. It's like shining a beam that becomes expanded as it is reflected off an object. There is the touch of the highlights of the emotions, touch of the highlights of the breath both being seen simultaneously. It becomes very much a mind activity at that point -- that it is why it is called the foundation of mindfulness of mind. The cognitive mind is actually functioning in its utter precision. You may hear sounds, you might see vision, sight of all kinds, you might have thought patterns of all kinds, but all of those are somewhat related. Therefore, there is a binding factor, which is the mind, and therefore whenever there is mind, there is the possibility of being aware of what's happening, rather than reducing your focus of concentration to one particular level alone.

With regard to the other subject, the gaps that happen, or the sense of clarity, is concerned that's also very simple. When the focus of mind begins to change to different themes (?), which involves personally you (which literally means emotions here -- it's something that involves you personally, therefore you make a big deal out of those) there's a gap that doesn't involve a big deal about you but just a change of shift like taking rest between the right and left legs, putting weight on each other; transferring weight on each other. When the shift takes place, there is also a kind of gap which is not particularly mystical or anything special: there is just a change of shift or a change of emphasis that takes place. And that gap also could be covered by the sense of presence of awareness. It's like sunlight reflecting on both the precipices of mountains as well as in the valleys simultaneously. So, such awareness probably can't be actually experienced as such and referred back to oneself by saying, "I'm being aware. I'm now being fully mindful." But there's a sense of being there that takes place; a sense of being takes place. A sense of touching takes place. One is experiencing a sense of touch on the level of emotions; one is experiencing a sense of touch on the level of gap; one is experiencing a sense of touch on the other side of the shore, the other shore as well. So there is an even distribution of mindfulness that takes place.

So this brings another question -- "What do we mean by mindful?" -- if you're not particularly talking in terms of fully committing yourself into that very moment. Mindful, at this point is that you are experiencing a sense of gentle touch all over the place, all your state of mind. It's like stroking a kitty-cat. You feel each hair as your finger moves down. There's some continuity as well as some individuality at the same time. The question is -- the object, so to speak, here -- is to be total, rather than to be selective. Of course, if you try to be selective, and try to find the famous mindfulness experience, and if you look harder, you begin to lose it – there's no such thing as really mindfulness at all, and the whole thing becomes illusion. You find yourself in an onionskin peeling off: you think that you're being mindful, but then you're watching yourself being mindful, and then you're watching yourself doing that, and then you're watching yourself doing that. There's a constant, constant, constant reflection back and forth, and finally one gets completely bewildered. So from that point of view one has to give up the idea of developing or cultivating true mindfulness as such, but just to accept what's going on, and make the best of it, so to speak. And leave the world undisturbed, rather than trying to disentangle too efficiently (?).

The question of mindfulness is, from that point of view, not at all demanding. It's not particularly hard work, but at the same time, it is extremely demanding. Because if you have something to put your effort and energy into to deal with the demand, you have an occupation; you feel better. But once you're suspended in the middle of nowhere, touching and experiencing, but not being there at the same time either, that's very dubious. The best experience that a person who takes the practice of mindfulness would feel is that [he] feels that there's more to go; more to develop. That you have done something completely [at the] half-hearted level, not fully, but you are there constantly at the same time.

So that seems to be the basic point. And that is connected with the notion of the definition of *Dharma*, which is "aggressionlessness." "Aggressionlessness" is the definition of Dharma; "without aggression." So meditation practice – particularly at the first level – is the true introduction to the Dharma, to actually experiencing Dharma, the living Dharma. And therefore it is regarded as non-aggression action. Whereas there could be a strong possibility that if we push ourselves to an enormous concentration level, and try to push ourselves and painfully exert ourselves more than necessary, then it becomes aggression at the same time.

And the reason why this gliding through the different landscapes of mind landscape [sic] is possible, and at the same time the person doesn't become wooly-minded is because there is a sense of actual experience takes place at each moment. In order to be dreamy, vague, one has to pay less attention to what's happening. In this case, because there is actual contact, actual touch, the touching of the surface of the mind actually takes place very gently, so therefore it is not particularly heavy dosage in the beginning but in the long run, as we go on as we continue our practice it becomes impressionable to our mind.

I suppose if talk too much of it, we would get more clouded. We could have a discussion.

Q: I get confused by sitting meditation and, say, doing some kind of activity. And I wonder what the difference is between sitting and being aware of your breathing – what goes on in the situation in a meditation hall – and working a job or doing some other work. In other words, what's the difference between sitting and being aware of your work?

CTR: Well, the question seems to be that, in sitting practice, there is continual awareness or continual mindfulness being developed throughout the whole thing. In the case of awareness that develops during post-meditation experiences, like work situations and such like, there is a sense of checking rather than trying to cover the whole area. That seems to be the suggestion of mindfulness in everyday life situations is not so much that you should watch yourself constantly. That tends to be at the schizophreniac level: you try to be aware and you try to accomplish the job at the same time. The idea there is the sense of [a] short spell of taking a look at yourself, which then brings the notion of spontaneity in your daily activities, and becomes accurate at the same time whatever you are doing. That seems to be the differences. It's a question of flashing your awareness while you are doing your job, and sitting practice is concentrated notion of that: you don't even flash, but you try to carry it out all the time.

Talk 6
August 24, 1974

CTR: Most of the part of the seminar we discussed the basic attitude and means of relating with sitting practice of meditation. Some suggestions were made in terms of taking an attitude from the sitting practice-type attitude that should extend to everyday life situations. But there is never mentioned yet the post-meditation practice. So I would like to raise that point which is experiencing...which is on the way to experiencing vipaśyanā from śamatha practice. Śamatha practice is what we've been discussing in the four foundations of mindfulness and so on.

Vipaśyanā literally means "clear seeing." The general translation of the term used is "insight meditation." It is an attempt to develop or prepare the bodhisattva's path, the bodhisattva's way of practicing paramitas or whatever you have -- bodhisattva's activities: working with other people. So in order to do that, one has to slowly expand one's meditative state of concentration or clarity. Śamatha experience is sort of the kindergarten level at the beginning. It is very important: one has to begin from somewhere, so it is beginning at the beginning and simply carrying out discipline and the medium whatever is available at a given time. Using body, breath and mind. Those seem to be the only available medium that we have in this particular world, planet.

From that simplicity, vipaśyanā begins to develop. The more simpler, the more literal at the beginning is much more workable. I wouldn't exactly say that it is successful as such, particularly, but it is workable.

[Big Pause. Student: I'm just putting out a fire.]

The student might find difficulties, all kinds of difficulties, throwing himself into the world. There might be a tendency of some kind on the part of the śamatha students to be reserved and be cold, rigid. Which is not regarded as particularly a problem: that seems to be the general purpose, in some sense. One has to develop some sense of stillness, solidity in order to bring the sense of openness -- something to open with. So in order to balance the extremes, it has been suggested that students should develop awareness or post-meditation practice throughout the whole day.

The reason why it is called post-meditation as opposed to just general awareness is because the notion of post-meditation is that you have something relate to. The sitting practice is just the starting point. You've begun some reference point as related to yourself and just general awareness. And from that basic awareness, general pattern, you step out and expand yourself into everyday life. So meditation is the beginning, it's the source, the basic inspiration. From that, slowly other things begin to emerge.

From that point of view, there is very little differences between sitting and not sitting. The idea is that the student would develop, eventually, a fuzzy boundary between sitting and not sitting. Some continuity takes place; a continuity with precision. The awareness that develops with the meditation-in-action approach is not so much to try to recreate an awareness state but to reflect back. You might ask, "How do you reflect?" and "where to reflect back?" but at this point, it's rather vague. One has to try it.

The awareness or the recollection that the person develops throughout the day is unconditional experience. It's a sudden glimpse of something which doesn't have a description or certain particular experience. It's just some sense of memory. That's why it's called "recollection." Memory in the sense that the concept of awareness does exist. So therefore that acts as a reminder. And from that memory, some kind of jerk takes place, which is a short glimpse, a very short glimpse; a microsecond short glimpse.

There is an attempt to possess that -- hold on to that and try to find out, very inquisitively -- but such an approach seems to be not advisable, because then there is the possibility that you might try to create an artificial awareness which is based on the watcher and self-consciousness and all the rest of it. So it is... that particular experience is...can't be captured. We can't even sustain it. And, in fact, the suggestion has been made that the person should, in fact, disown it. So there is recollection, disown it, and then just continue with the cooking or whatever, one doesn't have to be startled. Sometimes it is hardly noticeable; there is something [that] happens, but maybe one might think that it is just one's own imagination – probably nothing happened at all. But it doesn't really matter. One does not particularly try to keep a record of anything.

That seems to be a very insignificant thing to do. If that is the only awareness, the big deal that we're talking about, you might ask, "What happens? What does it do to you?" Well, we could talk about all kinds of virtues, and the importance of it, but actually I feel that we shouldn't get into that too much. But maybe just an appetizer – a few remarks on that.

The basic logic is the continuity of chain reaction of mental process and ego-clinging network is what's known as the samsaric whirlpool. In that there is...we are not only surviving, being in samsara, but we are manufacturing at the same time future samsara from the present moment. So the samsaric chain reaction could keep continuously grow[ing] and we have the security of our ego for the next minute, the next month, the next year. We make sure that we have enough ego left to hang onto. In a quite interesting way we manage to manufacture our own future from the present experience of hanging onto the neurosis. So that's what's known as karma, karmic debt. You have the subject of the present karma and then from there you create future karma. Because the present karma is inescapable, so then you don't want to change the shift. You feel somewhat settled down into it; therefore you create further security from that basis. So in other words, we feel quite satisfied in some sense, although we do complain and we feel [we] suffer. Nevertheless, people enjoy living in a samsaric world, because that's much more entertaining. Even suffering itself is entertaining, because we chose (?) one's own existence, self and ego and so forth.

So this kind of awareness is the main way to cut the present moment that plants a further seed of karmic chain reactions. In other words, it shortens the life of ego from that point of view. And that seems to be one of the basic points. And also, the present situation, which is the karma you created which you can't escape, but using that as a working basis, rather than trying to reject the present situation altogether, which is impossible. So therefore [the] awareness process is a way of sabotaging a continual attempt, a continual process that ego has managed to administrate its organization.

So I think that much suggestion is good enough. The post-meditation experiences sometimes will be clouded with all kinds of ups and downs. There is sense of enormous excitement, and [one] feels that one is actually making some progress, whatever that is. Sometimes, one is completely regressing and everything is going wrong. And then there is this kind of neutral period where nothing really happens and things are somewhat flat. But, however, any of those situations are good; they're not regarded as particularly signs of progress or signs of regression particularly at all. But there are what's known as the three types of temporary meditative experiences which also could occur in sitting practice as well as awareness practice as well. That is the temporary meditative experience of pleasure or joy, the temporary meditative experience of emptiness, and the temporary meditative experience of clarity, luminosity. And those experiences are not regarded as signs of progress particularly at all, so one must just maintain one's continual practice.

So that seems to be the preparation towards the bodhisattva's action; at this point that we are working, for a period, on ourselves to develop. And having developed oneself, then there will be possibilities of working with sentient beings, other people, and dealing with situations, which is largely based on how a person is able to accomplish sabotaging the background of ego. And when there is that much less neurosis, that much more wisdom and skillful means begin to appear.

Well, we can say a lot of other things, but I think maybe we could stop here and have a discussion.

Q: Yesterday, you talked about the gap that we experience in meditation, and how that is just another thing, just between two different emotions or thoughts. And today, you mentioned the experience of emptiness and clarity, and these are all sort of being regarded as not particularly desirable. They just sort of happen. And my understanding of meditation so far is that these are things we're supposed to cultivate -- seeing the gap as something we're supposed to...that's why we're doing it. I guess I'm just a little confused on that.

CTR: Well, we're talking about a lot of different kinds of gaps. There is the gap between one mood and another mood, which we discussed yesterday. And then there is the awareness, which could be said to be a gap, which will cut through the continuity of ego's struggle to survive. Another gap, which we haven't mentioned, is the notion of *shunyata* and that kind of experience of greater gap and so forth. But these three types of experience –emptiness, clarity, and joy – are not regarded as gaps. They are just a phase. You might feel the joy for several weeks or a few days, and the sense of emptiness a few days or few weeks. That happens, you know, as you go on meditating -- there is a change in meditative experience, which is just simply experience rather than a sense of being. The thing that we should cultivate -- or if you'd like to put it that way, work on -- is the awareness; the basic awareness of checking, if you'd like to call it, jerk, that kind of reviewing, unconditionally reviewing. That seems to be necessary.

Q: Rinpoche, after all of what you've said, I'm still a bit unclear about why one would come to a seminar, or one would study sutras. Why not just sit and practice awareness?

CTR: Well, precisely, why not? We have to know what is awareness to begin with, and

Techniques of Mindfulness
Talk 4: Mindfulness of Effort
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CTR: I thought today we'd discuss mindfulness of mind, which is, I think...What did we discuss? Effort? We discuss effort? Oh, I beg your pardon. Yeah, we're discussing effort, great!

The question of discipline and the question of patience, and the question of exertion, seems that there's some uncertainty. The ethical aspect of life, what one should be doing, and the instinctive aspect of what one would like to do, often we find that they're in conflict: the instinct is not properly met with the ethical attitude. And that brings a lot of tiredness, struggle and loss of heart through the practice, into the practice, with the practice. So I think [what] we are discussing at this point is the meeting point of the instinct and effort put together. Often when we talk about effort in the pejorative sense, we are talking in terms of going against, indulgency of natural flow, and trying to behave oneself, in a certain sense, which is source of alienating oneself with reality and also which brings a lot of non-mindfulness – a great deal. So the question is, if there is natural instinct which is right and appropriate, then there is no problem. But at the same time, it is not as simple as that. It is the realization of natural instinct first, rather than casual natural instinct taken as good gift and going along with it haphazardly.

The practice of mindfulness of effort is developing a clear-seeing vision to be able to relate with instinct that exists, so that exertion and patience can develop. We might talk about what you mean by instinct. What is that? That particular instinct we are talking about is [the] instinct of self-consciousness. Almost we could talk about unconditional self-consciousness. Quite similarly to what we discussed the other day: the question of livelihood, life, a sense of life. In this case, in fact, we go further then just a sense of survival, a sense of life alone. We go to the point of having a basic sense of consciousness, self-consciousness.

When we relate with things, the world, there is...one of the first flashes [that] takes place is a sense of duality, separateness. And from that, then we begin to evaluate or pick and choose; involve ourselves into decision-making; executing desire, will. So in this case, we are not particularly trying to be good and absolutely perfect. But we are trying to utilize these tendencies that does exist in our system, psychological system. The first one is being a sense of duality, the sense of separateness -- just a plain cognition, and at that level, the cognitive mind is somewhat unconditional, because we haven't made up our mind yet at the time. We just project it. Because [of] our projection, we get feedback that we are projecting -- we exist, we are here and that is

there. That is more or less just about it. There is no hope and fear or anything further things involved. It is just a simple recollection, a simple memory. That seems to be one of the basic patterns.

Without realizing or recognizing the sense of self-consciousness, it would be difficult to develop effort. Having developed that sense of somehow unconditional reference point of view, then it is possible to extend that, utilize that to living situations -- awareness, practice of awareness -- which brings the sense of effort. That effort is not based on a particular plan, aim, but just a simple unconditional effort to be, with the help of following the breath or whatever in the sitting practice or in an everyday-life situation, whatever. The process is developed already so there is possibilities of experiencing sort of a purpose of life, which is somewhat vague and dubious, but at the same time, the purpose of life is somehow to solidify some area in some way or other.

The whole thing becomes rather vague at this point, but even the vagueness itself may be the stepping -stone or solidity. In the right effort of applying the practice of meditation, usually it's the breaking the ice, so to speak, at the beginning. There is somehow an unknown force that is imposing power on us, that we don't want to do it, that we don't want to get into the practice of meditation. There is almost a kind of schoolboy mentality --- that you don't want to go to school. And that could be easily broken down, that problem could be easily broken down by being aware of ... of the awareness of resistance. And there you are already; you've started already. Your resistance is used as a doorstep to step over. And then beyond that there is no problem, except little hassles that are involved with the practice – irritating thoughts, bodily discomfort or whatever. There's no further problem.

At that level, the notion of patience comes. It's not so much patience as "put up with the problem; bear the pain" as such, but patience in the sense of the effort to maintain non-aggression. That's the definition of patience: remaining non-aggressively. And aggressiveness brings a sense of trying to find out the productivities that's developed through sitting practice or whatever; the evaluation of trying to gain something which would act as encouragement, landmark, achievement. So in fact the purpose of patience at this point is to overcome the achievement orientation, achievement orientation being aggression.

And then the question of exertion or *virya*, which is the unceasing interest to this particular approach of sitting practice and awareness practice in general...Usually the problems of sloppiness and things like that comes from the notion of discrimination. Discriminating in the sense of looking for some right way to do the whole thing, and thinking that what's happening and the problematic situation what's there is because you did [it in] the wrong way. And constantly right way. Having not found the way, that therefore you're having problems, and if you have found the right way, then everything's going to be okay: smooth meditation, smooth awareness, smooth life and so forth.

[But] That looking for an alternative is the problem that goes against the sense of exertion. Exertion is non-discrimination in the sense that you push everything into that area, [and then] you just go along with it, like driving on a wet (wide?) highway, disregarding all the signposts, all the remarks you might see on the road, or all the

different transport you might pass by. But still, you keep driving. It's the non-discriminatory approach [which] is the exertion.

Which doesn't mean to say that a person has to be somewhat dull or dumb, and transform the person into a tank, particularly. It's a question of continuity and steadiness that's very much necessary. So on the whole, everything brings us to the point here that the practice of awareness, mindfulness practice requires a lot of work, a lot of energy, effort, surrendering and a lot of recognition that there's a working base that does exist, and one doesn't have to look for another, better alternative. It's a question of regarding the whole thing as an ongoing journey. That journey has begun already, that little progress toward the goal is by no means a big deal. And it has to be an ongoing process, a constant ongoing process. And effort is not so much pushing, but bare attention to what's happening. Bare attention doesn't mean to say that you hold bare attention, but you keep going as your bare attention.

Well, we could discuss about that.

Q: Were you saying that it's good not to watch the signposts -- sort of not get stopped by them; not get interested them? You're just sort of passing them and acknowledging?

CTR: Well, that's usually the style. And obviously these signposts are the mark of a journey of some kind, the journey you're taking, but at the same time, not particularly a big deal.

Q: You said that the resistance was -- the resistance to meditation, to one's practice – was somehow broken down by just the awareness of the resistance. But I've been somewhat under the impression that there was always some form of resistance somewhere that was somehow always working. Is that true?

CTR: I think so. Otherwise, there wouldn't be any journey.

Q: Right. But there seems to be some sort of initial breakthrough that you do have to make to some kind of resistance.

CTR: Yeah. Which is realizing the resistor itself is journey. You have begun already by relating with your resistance.

Q: But if the resistance is too great, there can be a problem there, I suppose.

CTR: Well, I think that's a matter of how much you feed it. If you try to eliminate resistance, then you are feeding it. Whereas, if you just acknowledge that such a thing as resistance does exist, then I don't see any problems. The very idea of practice occurred in your mind, and that much resistance occurred in your mind at the same time. It depends on whether you want it make a big deal about the resistance, which makes the resistance greater by trying to eliminate it altogether and looking for a smooth practice without any resistance.

[gap]