Karunakarma Series: Volume I

Satipaṭṭhāna

Foundations of Mindfulness

A Manual for Meditators

compiled and annotated
by
Tarchin Hearn

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Foundations of Mindfulness: A Manual for Meditators

Karunakarma means compassionate activity, the work of compassion, or compassion at work.

The Karunakarma Series is a collection of coil bound notes and articles that can be used for study or as teaching aids. Some of the series is available in e-book form from the Wangapeka website. May these writings water the seeds of wisdom and compassion for the benefit of all beings.

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With Gratitude To

Ven. Namgyal Rinpoché

These notes were initially compiled while teaching a one month Satipaṭṭhāna retreat at the Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre in New Zealand in the year 2000. At that time, I wanted to enter some of the essential definitions, lists of categories, correct spellings and references into my laptop in order to have them on hand as I travelled and taught. Gradually, with the encouragement of people studying with me, I have added some comments and fleshed out the grammar.

The notes were never intended to be a thorough presentation of the subject. Nor are they aimed towards people brand new to meditation. Rather, they comprise a working manual for meditators who have come to the point in their investigations where a more detailed study of this essential path of awakening could enrich their practice. The following pages gather together a few key aspects of Satipaṭṭhāna along with some references that will allow a student to consult original sources, should that be of interest.

My grateful appreciation goes to Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi for their translation of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and to Maurice Walshe for his translation of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Both of these suttas have been published by Wisdom Publications. May these efforts towards making available the Buddha Dharma, continue to flourish.

May your explorations bear fruit
for the benefit of all beings.

Abbreviations

MN – Majjhima Nikāya, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha
PTS – Pali Text Society, Pali-English Dictionary
T-Abd notes – Tarchin's hand written abhidhamma notes compiled at The Dharma Centre of Canada in 1976 after a three month study with Namgyal Rinpoché (unpublished)
Vis – The Visuddhimagga - The Path of Purification (A greatly revered compilation of the Buddha's teachings, originally written by the Venerable Buddhaghosa. It is one of the oldest and most complete 'manual for meditators' arising from the Theravadin tradition.)

Introduction

Two thousand five hundred years ago, a man, who eventually became known to us as the Buddha, was driven to grapple with some of the great conundrums of life. How can one live well in a world that is constantly changing, unpredictable, and impossible for any single being to control? How can one live with impermanence and death, with unsatisfactoriness and suffering, without shutting down, or escaping into fantasy, or grasping after facile philosophical explanations, or simply burying oneself in never ending reactivity and busyness?

The Buddha's life demonstrated what I have come to think of as the path of the mystic scientist. He looked deeply into the moment by moment experience of living. This was intimate and direct exploration. His own body, speech, mind and activities became a laboratory for experimentation and observation. Here, with tremendous clarity and attentiveness, he investigated the processes of body and mind in minute detail, trying to understand the roots of dissatisfaction and suffering, and, in the process, discovering profound and essential keys for living well. Abandoning religious and philosophical preconceptions, he explored in a very pragmatic and factual way, letting his immediate actual experience guide the search. Eventually he came to understand what he later referred to as The Four Noble Truths.

The Buddha saw that wherever there are formations, be they physical or mental, there will be unavoidable unsatisfactoriness or suffering *(dukkha)*. Everything lives by eating. Everything is eaten. All things wear out. Collision produces friction. This is the First Noble Truth. He came to see the fundamental causes of dukkha, namely, clinging or grasping, coupled with partial views. This is the Second Noble Truth. Through the very act of bringing a profound degree of friendly enquiry to every moment of experience, he came to realise the cessation of suffering. This is the Third Noble Truth. On reflection, he then clearly understood the path to the cessation of suffering. He described this as the Eight Fold Noble Path. This is the Fourth Noble Truth.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta sketches out this very practical path of awakening. It is not a philosophical text but more a map with a few hints at the general landscapes we might encounter on the way. Of course, even if you had the best map in the world, you still would have to do the journeying yourself.

The text begins with where to meditate and how to sit. It then directs us to an exploration of the physical body through *Ānāpānasati* or mindfulness of breathing. Here we investigate and make friends with the entire phenomena of breathing. These contemplations and enquiries eventually lead to a place of deep stillness and calm. The next step is to learn to carry this clear, responsive, awareness into the midst of activity. Gradually we come to experience directly the interbeingness of the physical body, the fact that the body is a co-operative endeavour of many parts and processes. These studies can lead to the dropping of unhelpful attitudes and assumptions that we may have about the body. Eventually, all physical bodies reveal themselves to be beginningless, endless arisings, embedded in a vast interconnected, interdependent universe. This is the birth of a deep ecological understanding of the physical world and the gateway to realising what is referred to in Buddhist texts as *Śūnyatā* or emptiness.

Having investigated the miracle of form, the meditator then begins to explore the mystery of mind. The sutra directs us to examine the feeling or evaluation function; the process whereby likes and dislikes emerge. With a deepening wonder for the body and an increasing equanimity in the area of evaluation we are invited to meet the play of mind-states, the huge array of emotions and qualities of mind that so colour and sometimes dictate human experience. Finally, equipped with a functional ongoing awareness of body, feelings and mindstates, one then, begins to investigate the unimaginable vastness of dharmas, the complex phenomena of Nature unfolding.

Jesus once said that the truth alone shall set you free. Simply by deepening one's under-standing, and learning to rest easefully and alertly with whatever is arising, leads to realisation.

In the realm of what might be called sectarian Buddhism, the Satipaṭṭhāna is often seen as belonging to the *Theravādin*[1] tradition. Unfortunately, many so called *Vajrayāna*[2] students have little, or no time for this teaching of bare insight which, to some, seems devoid of devotion and compassion! But is this really the case? Actually, these views won't stand up to close scrutiny.

The realisation of the unity of compassion and emptiness, the very heart of Vajrayāna, is implicit in this sutra. Any person with an open heart and passion for enquiry, who is wrestling with what it means to live meaningfully in a world that is being shaped by blind grasping and widespread ignorance, will surely find useful guidance and inspiration in this text. By bringing an unshakeable friendliness and a gentle but probing curiosity and interest to what is happening in and around you, by doing this again and again and acclimatising to this way of being, you will come to see the very ordinary things in life as extraordinary miracles. At the same time, the extraordinary will reveal itself to be absolutely ordinary.

This is the way of the mystic scientist, the lover and explorer of life. It is not particularly a religious path, nor is it necessarily divorced from the awe and wonder that arise when we meet with vast unfathomable mystery. Blending the pragmatic analysis of the scientist with the ecstatic union of the mystic, it is a way that is as vital and precious today as it was back at the time of the Buddha.

I feel extremely fortunate that my root teacher/lama the Ven. Namgyal Rinpoché underwent his early monastic training in Burma. Consequently, he taught us Satipaṭṭhāna as well as the classical Vajrayāna systems. Over the many years of studying and practising these two great treasuries of awakening, it has become ever more apparent that the seeds of all the *Mahāyāna*[3] traditions are contained in this short sutra and the essence of Satipaṭṭhāna is carried within all Mahāyāna practice. The spirit of Mahayana rests in seed form within the Satipaṭṭhāna.

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[1] Theravādin => 'The way of the Elders'. This is the name commonly given to the forms of Buddhism found in Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Sri Lanka. It is considered to be the most ancient Buddhist tradition and has preserved the Pali sutras.

[2] Vajrayāna => 'The diamond vehicle'. This is the name of the form of Buddhism that was found in Tibet, Mongolia and in the Shingon tradition of Japan.

[3] Mahāyāna => The Great Vehicle This is the form of Buddhism that is practised outside the Theravādin countries. It contains within it the Vajrayāna traditions.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

In Buddhism the *suttas* or *sutras* generally refer to the collection of discourses given by the Buddha. They were originally memorised and passed down from teacher to student in an unbroken flow of oral transmission. It was hundreds of years before any of them were written down. Pali is the language that the Buddhist Sutras were preserved in. It was probably very close to the actual language that the Buddha spoke.

Sutta => Pali Text Society Dictionary (PTS), 1. a thread or string 2. the (discursive, narrational) part of the Buddhist Scriptures containing the suttas or dialogues, later called the Sutta-piṭaka. In Sanskrit, the word for sutta is *sutra* and in this text, I will use both terms interchangeably.

Suta => PTS, heard; in special sense "received through inspiration or revelation"; learned; taught; sacred lore, inspired tradition, revelation; learning; religious knowledge

Sati => PTS, memory, recognition, consciousness; intentness of mind, wakefulness of mind, mindfulness, alertness, lucidity of mind; self possession, conscience, self-consciousness. Bhikkhu Bodhi defines it as 'attentiveness directed to the present'.

Paṭṭhāna => PTS, setting forth, putting forward. In combination with sati, 'setting up of mindfulness'. In later meaning, "origin", starting point, cause; the title of the 7th book of the Abhidhamma.

Setting forth could indicate setting forth on a journey. It could also indicate setting forth in the sense of "laying out for examination". In the Abhidhamma, the seventh book, 'Paṭṭhāna' is a study of causal or conditional relations. It's a contemplation of all the causal factors, both physical and mental, that support or contribute to the arising of any particular thing.

Considering a more literal interpretation of Satipaṭṭhāna we might get ; 'a lucid, alertness in the presence of the interdependent, interrelatedness of things' or another possibility, 'an alert, wakeful, recognition of how a complex weaving of factors is comprising this present moment'. Try rearranging the various definitions and see what different flavours of meaning you can come up with. Though often rendered *"The Four Foundations of Mindfulness"* it would be misleading to think of Satipaṭṭhāna as merely four separate objects that must be meditatively explored. The experiential essence of Satipaṭṭhāna involves the process of knowingly entering, again and again (*anusati* – remembering), the rich interdependent weaving that is this present arising moment.

In order to bring increasing clarity and discrimination to this investigation of what is actually happening right now, one is encouraged to thoroughly explore, in an unbiased, lucid and intimate way, four basic areas of human experience; body, feeling/evaluation, states of mind, and objects of mind. As one one's experience with each of these four deepens, it will be clear that they are continuously shaping and affecting each other. Gradually a rich sense of how they weave together and support each other in an unbroken, flowing, creative, continuum will come to the fore. At this point the practice moves from being an effortful meditation to effortless contemplation arising in the midst of whatever is occurring.

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Kuru country at a town of the Kurus named Kammāsadhamma. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "bhikkhus." – "Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed one said this:

Kammāsadhamma literally - the activity of good dharma; said to have been a town in the vicinity north of present day Delhi.

Bhikkhu => PTS, almsman, mendicant, a Buddhist monk or priest. Bhikkhu is often translated as 'homeless one' or wanderer.

At the time of the Buddha, entry into the Order of monks was marked by a very simple ceremony compared to how it's done today. Then, the Buddha, would say; 'Ehi Bhikkhu' and snap his fingers. 'Come, wander forth for the benefit of the many folk.' And that was it! In English the word wander is very close to wonder. Wonder forth for the benefit of the many folk. Question, explore the universe for the benefit of the many folk. The Tibetan word for bhikkhu is *gelong* and stretching the derivation a bit, you do get this sense of wondering. *Dge*, the d is silent, means virtuous, good or excellent. *Slong*, with silent s, means to want, wish, ask for; one who asks for something. Namgyal Rinpoché once paraphrased *gelong* as "one who is free to ask question".

This teaching was and still is, addressed to ones who are free to ask question, ones who are moved to investigate the universe, however they find it. Most people are quite constrained in their questioning. It's as if the curiosity, that is naturally present in any well loved child, has been distorted if not largely obliterated through the process of growing up and learning to survive in the family myth and the general social delusion/confusion. When it comes to question, most people are often more concerned about finding an answer; avoiding discomfort, or achieving a 'correct' result, or pleasing the teacher or whoever is seen as the authority. When we are unconscious or unaware of areas that shape our lives, we are not capable of investigating them as they simply don't exist for us. In this unconscious, unawareness, there is little or no freedom. Are you actually free to ask question? Are you genuinely interested in life, wanting to understand and experience more deeply and profoundly? Or is your motivation to primarily get by with the least amount of pain?

If the spirit of contemplative inquiry is still alive in you, then you will be able to put this teaching to good use immediately. Whether you are male or female, whether you are ordained as a monk or nun, or not; if you are interested in realising the cessation of suffering for yourself and all beings, if you are courageous enough to question deeply, to investigate the universe, as it arises, with engaged passion, honesty and interest, then you are Bhikkhu in spirit and this sutra is addressed to you. Try to read it as if the Buddha was here in your presence speaking personally to you and your friends.

2. "Bhikkhus, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realisation of Nibbāna – namely, the four foundations of mindfulness

direct path *ekāyana magga* sometimes translated the one way, the only way, the sole way, the path that goes only one way i.e. to Nibbāna

purification of beings – Traditionally this means to free beings from greed, hatred and delu-

sion. In western cultures the understanding of purity is inevitably mixed up with ideas of impurity or defilement, and a huge amounts of value judgement. To take it right out of this realm, consider what it means to be pure in terms of the ingredients listed on a package of food. It might say, Peanut Butter 100% Pure – no additives. Pure in this sense means 100%. To be purified is to be 100% present with no additives of fantasy, hidden agendas, or active ignoring. To be pure is to be willing and able to be totally present for another being, whether a human being, a tree, a feeling, or a memory.

sorrow
soka; => PTS, from *suc,* to gleam; the flame of fire, later in the sense of burning grief; grief, sorrow, mourning

lamentation
parideva => PTS, lamentation, wailing
Walshe translates this as sorrow and distress.

pain and grief
dukkhadomanassa, => an unpleasant state of mind and body
Walshe => pain and sadness
dukkha => PTS, from *du* - bad and *kha* - space; unpleasant, painful, causing misery; discomfort, suffering, ill, trouble, unsatisfactoriness
domanassa => PTS, distress, dejectedness, melancholy, grief; mental pain as opposed to physical pain, dukkha

true way – also right path, right method

Nibbāna is the Pali for the more widely recognised Sanskrit word, *Nirvāna.*
=> PTS , 1. the going out of a lamp or fire. 2. health, the sense of bodily well-being 3. the dying out in the heart of the threefold fire of greed, hatred and delusion 4. the sense of spiritual well-being, of security, emancipation, victory, peace, salvation and bliss

Nibbāna or nirvāna is often spoken of as if it were a transcendent state. This paragraph hints at something much more immediate, by saying that the direct path for the realisation of "Peace" is to be found through bringing awareness into these four areas of; body, feelings, states of mind and objects of mind. The path is not about abandoning the body and mental processes in order to ascend into a place of the spirit which is an other worldly, transcendent elsewhere. One realises nibbāna, a sense of well-being and profound meaningfulness right here in the midst of life as one finds it. This path is very practical. It is also do-able by anyone willing to make the effort.

I'm reminded of Thich Nhat Hanh's statement; "If you want peace, peace is with you now." The key in this statement is not so much that peace is with you now but that first of all you have to want peace. Do you want peace? Have you become tired of the suffering, the madness of a human world that dedicates immense amounts of energy to making money from greed, hatred, fear and confusion?

> *3. "What are the four? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put*

away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

abides
viharati => PTS, to stay, abide, dwell, sojourn (in a certain place); in general: to be, to live; to behave, to lead a life
This term 'abide' is used throughout the text. It is not just referring to 'sitting' in one place but suggests that these meditations are to be explored in the midst of any and all activities; however we are abiding.

the body as a body
This phrase is sometimes rendered 'the body in the body' or 'the body within the body' or 'the body as body'. The same formula is applied to feelings, states of mind and phenomena. Essentially it is emphasising that one examines the body while dwelling in direct experience of the body rather than just thinking about it in a theoretical way as if one was a bystander. Thai teacher, Ajahn Chah would say 'contemplating the body within the body' In other words, one contemplates the body, from within the body experience, not as an armchair theoretician thinking about how the body has been or how it could be, but through experiencing, knowing, and understanding directly how the body is, right in this very moment of contemplating. In a similar fashion one contemplates the feelings from within the direct experience of feeling; and so too, states of mind and objects of mind.

One who is "free to ask question" abides or leads their life, contemplating these four themes; **ardent**, i.e. with a passionate interest and energy. **Fully aware** is a translation of *sampajāna* => PTS, thoughtful, mindful, attentive, deliberate. **Mindful** *sati* is sometimes translated as self-composed, in other words not distracted or dispersed but focussed and present. Having put away covetousness and grief for the world. Sometimes translated as "hankering and fretting for the world" or "hankering and dejection common in the world". Basically this is referring to the various expressions and flavours of desire along with the wide spectrum of ambiguity and worry that so often colour our interactions with others.

Rephrasing the passage: One who is free to ask question abides, energetically, fully aware, concentrated, in a state of easeful, engaged, attentive, responsive, presence; moment by moment by moment.

(CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY)
Kāyānupassanā

1. Mindfulness of Breathing

4. "And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating, the body as a body? Here a bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in long, he understands: 'I breathe in long'; or breathing out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or breathing out short, he understands: 'I breathe out short.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body [of breath]'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body [of breath].' He trains thus: 'I shall

breathe in tranquillising the bodily formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquillising the bodily formation.' Just as a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, understands: 'I make a long turn'; or when making a short turn, understands; 'I make a short turn'; so too, breathing in long, a bhikkhu understands: 'I breathe in long'…..he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquillising the bodily formation.'

First of all the Buddha tells us where to meditate; in a forest, or at the root of a tree or in an empty hut or space. None of these places will be very useful for the many beings living in urban areas. They are not readily available. However these three are not just pleasant places to sit. They also symbolise inner qualities and attitudes that can profoundly support the natural flow of awakening.

The forest symbolises the mind. Think of a dense jungle with huge trees, lianas, flowering plants, insects, birds, large creatures and micro organisms; things growing in and on other things; life forms eating other life forms, and being eaten by other life forms, and everyone ultimately energised by transformed sunlight; a vast interpenetration of bodies and consciousness -— a well functioning, healthy ecosystem. The ancient Buddhist texts often mention the "netted undergrowth" when referring to the intricate tangling of mental processes. Metaphorically, going to a forest is to enter the forest of knowing, a mode of being in which there is an appreciation for the profound interconnectedness of all arisings. This forest of knowing is a rich ecology of interdependent phenomena; myriad forms of experience continuously coming into being and passing away, all mutually shaping each other. Thoughts are influencing feelings, shaping physiology, promoting activity, moulding intentions, giving birth to emotions, and so forth. This is a 'place' where we can come to recognise the fundamental ground of being; the womb of becoming. It is a fruitful place in which to meditate. To live and practice in a real forest, can deeply enhance our explorations. However, in order to significantly awaken, whether we are in an actual forest or in a city jungle, we need to open to this forest of interbecoming, the great forest of heart/mind.

The root of a tree is another special place for insight. It is the point where the visible tree disappears into the earth or where the invisible tree emerges into the light. Earth and roots are feeding branches and leaves. Branches, leaves, light and air are feeding the roots. This parallels a place in our experience where the unconscious and the conscious meet and interact. When we are lost in the underground of our being, groping blindly in the dark, there is little or no insight. When we are high up in the branches, we may feel we can see a long way but the roots of our being are often out of sight and we lose connection with the ground of being that we are rooted in, that we are. Imagine a 'tree of life', like *Tāne Mahuta* the great kauri tree in northland New Zealand. It has a huge trunk that supports massive branches in which live numerous other forms of life. Its roots are anchored deep in the earth, the ground of becoming. The root of a tree is a very stable place, but also a very dynamic place as nutriment of different kinds are simultaneously flowing upward and downward, outward and inward. To sit here, at this place that borders both light and dark, knowing and not knowing; a place where the conscious and unconscious are both available, where they can be experienced as not two but as a single interacting process, this is another very fruitful physical place and metaphoric space in which to meditate.

An empty hut is the third place that the Buddha suggests. In some texts the phrase is translated as 'an empty space'. This is pointing to a mental space that is uncluttered with 'shoulds' and 'oughts'. A place that is spacious and empty in the sense of being a place that has room for new insights and understandings. It helps to meditate in a physical place that

is free from clutter; free from stuff that is repeatedly reminding us of things to do, obligations to fulfil and unfinished business to attend to. This third place is one that supports the arising of new possibilities.

There are other ways we could understand these 3 places. They could refer to three levels of psychological/spiritual maturity. *Hineyāna,* from *hina* — small and *yāna* — vehicle, refers to a mindset of being primarily concerned with one's own suffering and the possibility of getting free from it. In this sense it is a small or shrunken viewing of life. A person who has this as their predominant attitude will do best to meditate in the forest, in order to better understand and make peace with the myriad details and phenomena that comprise the forest of their experience.

Mahāyāna, from *mahā* — great, refers to a larger viewing of life. A being who is living the way of mahāyāna has already recognised something of the interconnectedness of the forest of life. They are beginning to realise that it is not really possible to find peace without bringing peace to others as well. The prime motivation of this mahā mindset is compassion. Understanding that greed, hatred and confusion are the roots of the tree of suffering, the mahāyāna meditator brings compassion and clear seeing to these roots of the tree. This is a very fruitful way of practising.

Vajrayāna is from *vajra* — diamond; unshakeable. The unshakeable diamond vehicle is an attitude to life that knows everything to be inherently pure. With this understanding, there is no negativity to escape and no dysfunction to fix. There is only a vast unshakeable space of lovingkindness/clarity/understanding. The meditator with this vajra view will best unfold by meditating in this 'spacious openness of interbeing'; creative awareness dancing in the vast space of infinite possibility.

In this context, hineyāna, mahāyāna and vajrayāna should be understood without value judgement. They simply refer to three common psychological attitudes found in the human experience. You may recognise you have moments of all of them. In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Buddha is teaching skilful means. When you are being a hineyāna meditator, then go to the forest. When you are a mahāyāna meditator, go to the root of a tree. When you are a vajrayāna meditator, meditate in the midst of spacious openness.[1]

So, having gone to the forest, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty space, you 'sit down and having folded your legs crosswise, set your body erect.' Here the text refers to your posture. There are many teachings on posture and meditation. In essence though, they all encourage us to take up a posture that supports a sense of alertness and ease in both mind and body. As we see in a later section, these explorations need to be done while sitting, standing, walking, and lying down, in fact, in whatever way our body is 'disposed'. With this in mind, you may find that the cross legged part isn't applicable for you and that you can be more easeful and alert sitting in a chair or lying flat on your back.

Having taken up a posture that supports a deep experiential investigation of the rich weaving of now, the text then recommends that we 'establish mindfulness in front'. This really

[1] Just to be absolutely clear; by hineyāna, I am not referring here to the Theravādin tradition. All three mindsets can be found in practitioners of Theravādin, Tibetan, Zen, Pureland, in fact, any school of Buddhism. This may be an unusual interpretation but I know Theravādin monks who are living expressions of vajrayāna and conversely, I have met 'vajrayāna practicioners' who, caught in continual self reference, are really living out a hineyāna view.

means that we are alert, "up front" in the sense of honest and not hiding anything, straight forward, not looking for a pre-conceived result.

The rest of the section introduces the meditation on the body through investigating the process of breathing, *Ānāpānasati.*[1] The text speaks of breathing in long and short. Here you begin to study and explore all the different rhythms and textures of breathing. Long and short are just examples. Without controlling the breathing in any way one simply experiences and notes the shape and quality of the in–breath and out–breath. For example, when breathing in smooth and short, one realises one is breathing in smooth and short. When breathing out rough and shakily, one realises one breathes out rough and shakily. At this initial stage, one simply notes all the different types of breaths that can occur. Noting the breath means to directly and intimately feel/sense the textures and sensations of rhythmic physical movements that altogether we call breathing.

Gradually you begin to notice that your entire body is involved with breathing. You also begin to notice the entire body of the breath, i.e. the beginning, middle and end of both the inhalation and the exhalation. At this point you might think, 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body'. Here, the whole body refers to the whole physical body and the whole body of the breath. The two are not separate. In other translations, this part says, 'Experiencing the bodily formations I shall breathe in. Experiencing the bodily formations I shall breathe out'. As you explore in this way, it becomes more and more apparent that the tensions of the body are shaping the breathing and *vice-versa*.

At this stage when you discover a blissful flow in the body and breath, you will probably just enjoy it and settle more deeply into it. However, when you find tension in the body and breath, you might think, 'Calming the body, breathing in. Calming the body, breathing out'. Or as it says in this translation, 'He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquillising the bodily formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquillising the bodily formation'. To calm or 'tranquillise the body doesn't mean to fix it or to change it in any way. To calm the body and breath means to make friends with the state of the body and breath just as you find them. When we cease rejecting difficult states that are present and cease wishing for states that aren't present, we begin to feel more easeful with what we have and what we are; this is the process of calming the body formations.

As you practice this section on breathing, five qualities will show you that you are on the right track. 1. increasing calm 2. increasing clarity of mind 3. decreasing verbalisation. (Verbalisation is the tendency to create stories or to speculate about what is happening.) 4. increasing absorption, (less sense of separation between you the meditator and, in this case, the breathing, the object of meditation.) 5. the rate of breathing will gradually slow down and settle.

> *5. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the*

[1] A complete description of the path of *Ānāpānasati* meditation can be found in *The Breath of Awakening* by Namgyal Rinpoché, and in *Breathing; The Natural Way to Meditate* by Tarchin Hearn and in *The Path of Purification; The Vissudhi-magga*.

extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

This paragraph directs us towards insight or *vipassana* which essentially means looking deeply into what is presently arising. Insight meditation is often confused with looking for, or getting insights as if an 'insight' was a special object or knowledge, that we could possess and preserve. Insight, in terms of vipassana, really means the activity of 'sighting into'. It's a process, a verb. Looking/experiencing more deeply into any phenomena, will always reveal it to be an interdependent arising of many factors including the factors of our own perception and consciousness.

This is perhaps the most important paragraph in the Satipaṭṭhāna. In each section of the sutta we are given an area to explore in a one-pointed, focussed way. Then, this paragraph is repeated with virtually no changes, nudging us towards insight. It is not necessary to work with every aspect of the paragraph. The text suggest you do this, **or** do this, **or** do this, **or**..... It is assumed that at least one of the seven suggestions will engage our attention.

Internally and Externally:
Most of the commentaries explain that to contemplate the body internally is to contemplate one's own body. To contemplate the body externally is to contemplate someone else's body. 'Both internally and externally' is to contemplate both. Though there is much to be learned through practising in this way, this interpretation perhaps leaves out some of the more subtle levels of meditation experience, that are being pointed out here.

Ajjhatta is the word being translated as internally. => PTS, that which is personal, subjective, arises within (in contrast to anything outside, objective, or impersonal), interior, personal, inwardly.

To contemplate the body internally means to feel, experience, sense oneself as one's body, subjectively, in other words as if from the inside. One might have the experience of 'being' one's body rather than observing it, or 'being' the breathing rather than watching it.

To contemplate the body 'externally' is to experience it 'objectively', as if you were an observer or a bystander looking from the outside. To contemplate the body both internally and externally is to be simultaneously observing the body and being the body with no paradox or contradiction.

Internally and externally could be compared with Jung's concepts of introvert and extravert. The introvert type finds their reality or place of identity in their private and personal subjective experience. It has an interior feel. The extravert type finds their reality and sense of identity in the world of objective experience that can be shared and discussed with others. It has an 'out there' quality.

This understanding of internally and externally can be applied to all the other sections of the sutta. It solves a few problems such as how you would observe feelings or mental processes in another person without resorting to unverifiable 'psychic powers'. Internally and externally, is recognising the fact that a meditator can and will experience from different viewing points. For those who are familiar with the arising yoga practices in the Tibetan schools, this corresponds to 'front arising', and 'self arising' work and then experiencing them both, simultaneously without conflict.

Arising and Vanishing Factors

> *Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors*

Rhys Davids translates this section: "He keeps on considering how the body is something that comes to be, or again he keeps on considering how the body is something that passes away; or again he keeps on considering the coming into being with the passing away."

Here the meditator contemplates the many factors that together support the arising of a body and or the factors that support its dissolving. Or, recognising that every state of 'being' is a coming into being of something and a simultaneous passing away of something else, the meditator contemplates these two processes as one inseparable whole.

In this section one contemplates the interdependent nature of the physical body. In the Abhidhamma system the main causal factors in its arising are listed as ignorance, craving, karma (activity) and food. In a modern scientific view one might see it as a co-dependent arising along the following lines:

This body of mine is composed of atoms born in stars
molecules, cells tissues and organs.
It is a union of uncountable viruses, bacteria, fungi, plants and animals.
It is conditioned by families, by societies, by thoughts and dreams.
It is moulded by sun and gravity and the whole of the ecosphere.
It is an interbeing of all these processes from micro to macro,
Wondrous, transient
May it teach me wisdom.
(from *Daily Puja* – Wangapeka Books)

Bare Attention

> *Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness*

If the attention is not sufficiently engaged by the preceding themes of internal and external or the arising and passing away factors, then one can simply focus on the fact that: "There is a body" or 'This is a body', to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness; in other words just holding the awareness without speculating or wandering.

The paragraph finishes by saying that the bhikkhu abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. To abide independent doesn't contradict the earlier contemplation of interdependent. Here it means independent of states of greed, hatred and delusion; not involved with them. Not clinging to anything in the world particularly means not identifying as "self" any of the five aggregates or *skandhas* (see p 29)

2. The Four Postures

> *6. "Again, bhikkhus, when walking, a bhikkhu understands: 'I am walking'; when standing, he understands: 'I am standing'; when sitting, he understands: 'I am sitting'; when lying down, he understands: 'I am lying down'; or he understands accordingly however his body is disposed.*

Here one continues the exploration of breathing but now taking the practice into whatever posture you happen to be in. To "understand" you are sitting means to have a rich interior awareness of the physical sensations of sitting. The word translated as understanding is *pajānati* => PTS, to know, find out, come to know, understand, distinguish.

The body is never static. All sorts of muscular movements and adjustments are needed to rest in any particular position. Even when lying down if you give your attention to the detail of what is happening, you will notice all kinds of shifts and changes. The breathing shifts in response to the posture. The posture shifts in response to the breathing. The body is an interbeing of innumerable factors.

Kum Nye, a Tibetan form of body awareness work or Feldenkrais 'Awareness Through Movement' or any other body awareness practice can help to augment this section. You need to be able to see the ordinary, i.e. walking, standing etc., as extraordinary. Because the ordinary is so habitual and familiar, a lot of awake, sensitive, attention to detail, is needed in order to experience these familiar postures in fresh, new, revealing ways.

> *7. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.*

3. All Activities

> *8. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.*

With this section the meditator brings awareness into all the activities of daily life. This paragraph touches on aspects of a monk's life but you can get the idea and apply it to the various activities of your own life. To deepen this work it helps if you can remember to do one thing at a time and give it all of your attention. One breath at a time. One activity at a time. When drinking tea, really drink tea. When washing dishes, give all your attention to washing dishes. It seems like such a simple thing but giving attention to the little activities will hugely enrich the pleasure and meaningfulness of each day. This is an area in which many people find *gathas* or short memory verses to be useful. Thich Nhat Hanh's book *"The Miracle of Mindfulness"* gives many excellent hints for supporting this section's explorations.

> *9. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing*

factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

4. Foulness or Repulsiveness: The Parts of the Body

10. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, bounded by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: 'In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, liver, diaphragm, spleen, bones, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine,' Just as though there were a bag with an opening at both ends full of many sorts of grain, such as hill rice, red rice, beans, peas, millet, and white rice, and a man with good eyes were to open it and review it thus; 'This is hill rice, this is red rice, these are beans, these are peas, this is millet, this is white rice'; so too, a bhikkhu reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, bounded by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: 'In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, liver, diaphragm, spleen, bones, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine,'

This section is traditionally referred to as the meditation on the foulness or repulsiveness of the body. Originally it was for counteracting lust and excessive infatuation for the "body-beautiful". It encourages the meditator to investigate the reality of a body made of parts; many of them smelly, slimy and unmentionable in polite company! I have noticed that even well educated, modern people often relate to their body in a very superficial way, as if it were only what appears to them in a mirror. The reality of the insides and the fact that all the parts of the body are themselves in a state of responsive change and transformation is something that many people don't know about and, often don't want to know about. While lavishing attention on the outer skin and the various adornments that clothe it, they are squeamish about what's inside.

The classical method of practising this meditation is described in detail in *'The Visuddhimagga'* The Path of Purification, section VIII 42 - 144 and in *'The Vimuttimagg*a' The Path of Freedom. p170 - 177. Here, the description of this meditation is very extensive. The essential method involves reciting the names of the 32 parts of the body again and again to help the mind become one-pointedly focused in awareness of these parts. One begins with the **'skin pentad'**; head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, reciting it forward and back. When the mind stabilises in observing this pentad, then one begins to include the **'kidney pentad';** flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys. One goes forward to kidneys and then all the way back to head-hairs. Then one adds the **'lights or lungs pentad'**; heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, again going forward and then all the way back. Then add the **'brain pentad'**; large intestine, small intestines, contents of stomach, faeces, brain. Then the **'fat sestad'**; bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat. Lastly the **'urine sestad'**; tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine.

The text says: "The recitation should be done verbally in this way a hundred times, a thousand times, even a hundred thousand times. For it is through verbal recitation that the

meditation subject becomes familiar and, the mind being thus prevented from running here and there, the parts become evident."

Once the verbal recitation has been well established, it may then become internalised as a mental recitation. At this point, the meditator looks more carefully into each part, discerning it clearly as to colour, shape, direction, location and delimitation (distinguishing it from other similar parts.) All this detailed attention to and investigation of grease, spittle, snot, blood etc. gradually establishes the body as something that is *asubha* "not-beautiful" and one experiences great detachment from it.

Many people today have a lot of aversion, anger, hatred, and fear energy, shaping their lives. They are frequently quite out of contact with their bodies and seem to spend much of their time in their 'heads'. This meditation in its classical form, emphasising foulness and repulsiveness, often doesn't help people who are coming from these backgrounds. For deep healing, people need to get into wholesome contact with the wondrous miracle which is their body. They need to cultivate lovingkindness, not a sense of foulness and repulsion. There is already too much of that in their being. With modern medical knowledge and tools, this meditation could go in a very different direction:

The ancients said, look at that body.
Foul, corrupt, full of filth,
A bag of faeces, urine and blood,
of vomit, gases, fats and oils.
And so they did, those monks of old,
And came to release all lustful selfish clinging
to this walking breathing corpse.

Today the teachers say, look at that body.
And looking in, I find the out,
Miraculous voyagings of stardust atoms,
Water cycles, chemical cycles, symbiotic
dancing of plants and animals, molecules,
cells and organs.
My breath is the breath of the rainforest.
My excretions the banquet of others.
My muscles and tissues, blood and bone are
the temporary arrangement of carrots,
fish and herbs on the way to being worms,
insects, birds and trees. How vast and wondrous!
And so they do, those mystic-scientists of today
And come to release all selfish clinging to
a separated "me"
And take a few more steps
on the way to home we never left.
(from *Daily Puja* Wangapeka Books)

If the classical form of this meditation doesn't engage you in a positive way, though I should say that it is potentially a very wonderful and rich practice, then you could begin with the 32 parts of the body and extend it into any of the many body-scan meditations that are common today. Body-scan in four parts and the Inner Smile, both described in *Natural Awakening* can be very fruitful ways of working. Also, Feldenkrais, 'Awareness Through Movement' work

can greatly augment this meditation as can Kum Nye, a Tibetan system of body awareness work. Ironically it's often only after we have an intimate and appreciative knowing of the body that we can practice the classical form of this meditation in a wholesome way.

> *11. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.*

5. Elements

> *12. "Again bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, as consisting of elements thus: 'In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element,' Just as though a skilled butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at the crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, a bhikkhu reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, as consisting of elements thus: 'In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element,'*

This meditation is outlined in detail in the Visuddhimagga XI, 27 – 117 One begins by recognising the attributes of the four elements and then applying this way of viewing to each of the 32 parts of the body. Eventually the meditator comes to experience their body not as his or her body in the conventional sense of "having a body" but as a dance of the four elements which arise dependent on many causes and conditions.

Earth element *paṭhavī-dhātu,*
dhātu => element,
paṭhāvi => PTS from *puthu* or *prath* – to expand; paṭhāvi => the earth, the broad one, breadth, expansion, extension, solid, firm
T-Abd notes – Paṭhāvi => the degree to which space is occupied
a – extension ie. dimension, thickness etc.
b – density ie. hardness, softness
These are the two relative conditions of this element.

Water element *āpo-dhātu*
āpo,=> PTS from *ap*, to arrive, to come in, attraction, gravitational pull
T-Abd notes – water element is the intangible cohesive or binding tendency which gives rise to the body of something. It's attributes are fluidity and contraction.

Fire element *tejo-dhātu*
tejo => PTS from *tij*. to be sharp, to pierce, tejo => "sharpness" heat, flame, fire, light, radiance
T-Abd notes – Tejo is the heat element and applies to all temperature ranges. These control the maturing and progression of the body, i.e. metabolic processes of catabolism and anabolism. It is the vitalising energy and determines the life span and degeneration of matter.

Air element *vāyo-dhātu*

vāyo => PTS from *vāy,* to vibrate, move and oscillate; and from vā. to weave;
This is the vibratory aspect. It is seen in the body as movement.

Vis; XI 39; "What has the characteristic of stiffness is the earth element, what has the characteristic of cohesion is the water element, what has the characteristic of ripening (maturing) is the fire element, what has the characteristic of distending (supporting) is the air element."

In the traditional meditation you could think of the elements as being inner qualities that together give shape and form to anything. These explorations require a very focussed and subtly discerning attentiveness otherwise they can drift into the realm of philosophical thinking and speculation.

Although it was not really the traditional approach, it can be very valuable to contemplate the four elements in an outer way. To do this one contemplates how one's body is literally made of earth through the medium of plants which were eaten as food. The liquids in one's body were once a cloud, a snow field, the tears in another being's eyes, a river flowing to the sea. The heat of the sun is the ultimate source of energy, powering photosynthesis, which creates sugars which are released as heat and energy in our bodies through metabolism. Air is composed of chemical elements and compounds which themselves are interbeing with other systems and processes. All these elements are continuously flowing through the ecosphere, dancing together in complex ways giving rise to the temporary appearance of bodies. Meditating in this way, we understand the body to be a dynamic process of transformation, interdependent with everything else in the world.

Eating and drinking is an obvious time for exploring this meditation. Before bringing the food to your mouth, consciously breathe in and out a few times while contemplating how this food or drink has come to be here. Allow yourself to open into an appreciation of the journey of the water in your tea as it comes to you and leaves from you. The story of potato. We are literally a weaving of sunlight, earth, water and air and the elements of these have all been born in stars!

> *13. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.*

6 - 14. The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations

> *14. "Again, bhikkhus, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.'*
> *15. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in*

the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

16. "Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.'

17. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

18.-24."Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews...a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, held together with sinews...a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews...disconnected bones scattered in all directions – here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, here a hip-bone, there a back-bone, here a rib-bone, there a breast-bone, here an arm-bone, there a shoulder-bone, here a neck-bone, there a jaw-bone, here a tooth, there a skull – a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.'

25. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

26-30 "Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, bones bleached white, the colour of shells...bones heaped up, more than a year old...bones rotted and crumpled to dust, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt form that fate.'

The Charnel Ground Contemplations known as *asubha* (not beautiful) study the body as it disintegrates after death. In ancient days the meditator would go to a charnel ground where there were human bodies in various stages of decay and decomposition. Today one has to practise in one's imagination. If you see the corpse of an animal you can use it as a stimulus for developing this meditation. I remember many years ago when emerging from the train station in Calcutta, the first thing I saw was a beggar's corpse being thrown into the back of a garbage truck. This stimulated much contemplation. There, but for the grace of God, go I.

31. "In this way he abides, contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

(CONTEMPLATION OF FEELING)
Vedanānupassanā

32. "And how bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating feelings as feelings? Here, when feeling a pleasant feeling, a bhikkhu understands: 'I feel a pleasant feeling'; when feeling a painful feeling, he understands: 'I feel a painful feeling'; when feeling a neither-painful-nor pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.' When feeling a worldly pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel a worldly pleasant feeling'; when feeling an unworldly pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel an unworldly pleasant feeling'; when feeling a worldly painful feeling, he understands: 'I feel a worldly painful feeling'; when feeling an unworldly painful feeling, he understands: 'I feel an unworldly painful feeling'; when feeling a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling'; when feeling an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.'

Vedanā => PTS, from *ved* or *vid*; to know, to feel, to sense, to experience
i.e. "to weigh it up"
T–Abd notes – Vedanā is a conscious subjective impression prior to recognising or identifying an object. It can modify the stream of consciousness either positively or negatively i.e. Pleasure furthers life. Pain shortens it.

The text refers to three types of vedanā. Pleasurable, unpleasurable and neither pleasurable nor unpleasurable. A moment of vedanā emerges from the collective response, of all the parts and systems making up the organism, to any stimulus whether internally or externally arising. This response leads to the creature moving towards or away from the stimulus. The automatic moving towards something is experienced as pleasurable. Moving away is unpleasurable and neither moving towards or away as neutral or indifferent.

You might think of it as an organism preservation mechanism. It's what allows us to jerk our hand away from a hot stove element before it burns us. Experientially, the moment of vedanā seems to come before one is even consciously aware of the object. Vedanā can be so fleeting and subtle that what we commonly perceive as vedanā is usually a stream of many similar vedanā moments. In the action of responding we belatedly recognise the vedanā.

People often confuse feelings with emotions. As one can see by the PTS derivations above, vedanā is feeling but in the sense of evaluation. When you have a feeling it is going to rain

you don't usually mean you are having an emotion that it will rain. An organism is constantly monitoring the inner and outer environment. It's as if it were asking: Is this situation or object life enhancing? Is it supportive? Is it dangerous to life? Is it neutral? Throughout life there is a constant stream of vedanā taking place. Confusion and suffering can occur if the vedanā function becomes 'hijacked' by the ego. Situations are then 'evaluated' on the basis of what will augment a relatively static and more or less defensive ego image, rather than on the basis of what is good for the overall creative functioning of the organism. When this happens we can begin to make bad 'decisions'. We can identify as unpleasant, something that is actually good for the organism and then back away from it. Similarly, we can identify as pleasant, something that is essentially bad for the organism and hence move towards it. Addictions to alcohol or to chronic activity or to junk food are examples of this. A poorly functioning vedanā can cause no end of suffering.

The Buddha once said that he knew the pleasant for the pleasant and the unpleasant for the unpleasant. It sounds very straight forward but in practice, especially in this day of powerful advertising and media manipulation, many beings don't know. They have lost touch with this basic life support function. Their wrong reading of vedanā leads to all sorts of unskilful actions. In *vedanānupassanā* one simply notes the process of vedanā, experiencing it arise and pass without necessarily acting on it.

worldly and unworldly feelings

Traditionally, worldly feelings are described as feeling/evaluations arising in the life of a householder. Unworldly feelings are feeling/evaluations arising in the life of a renunciate. They are described in (MN 137, 9 - 15) under the 'six kinds of joy', the 'six kinds of grief', and the 'six kinds of equanimity'. The six refer to the six sense doors.

The three types of vedanā of a householder refer to the common responses to sensory experience (liking, disliking, and neutrality) arising through any of the six doors, without any accompanying insight or understanding.

According to the MN text, the three types of vedanā for a person living the life of renunciation, are the feeling/evaluations that arise in response to insight into the nature of any of the six sense objects and the situations supporting their arising. For example, the renunciate will experience joy in discovering the truth of impermanence *anicca*, suffering *dukkha,* and non-abidingness *anattā*, arising through any of the six sense doors. There is grief when experiencing the anicca, dukkha and anattā through any of the six sense doors and then longing for liberation. The grief is actually in the longing. There is equanimity on seeing that all sense objects are impermanent; subject to change, fading away and cessation.

> *33. "In this way he abides, contemplating the feelings as feelings internally, or he abides contemplating the feelings as feelings externally, or he abides contemplating the feelings as feelings both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in feelings their arising factors, or he abides contemplating in feelings their vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in feelings both their arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is feeling' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings.*

CONTEMPLATION OF MIND
Cittānupassanā

> *34. " And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind as mind? Here a bhikkhu understands mind affected by lust as mind affected by lust, and mind unaffected by lust as mind unaffected by lust. He understands mind affected by hate as mind affected by hate, and mind unaffected by hate as mind unaffected by hate. He understands mind affected by delusion as mind affected by delusion, and mind unaffected by delusion as mind unaffected by delusion. He understands contracted mind as contracted mind, and distracted mind as distracted mind. He understands exalted mind as exalted mind, and unexalted mind as unexalted mind. He understands surpassed mind as surpassed mind, and unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed mind. He understands concentrated mind as concentrated mind, and unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated mind. He understands liberated mind as liberated mind, and unliberated mind as unliberated mind.*

Citta => PTS, from *cit, cinteti,* to think, perceive, appear.

=> PTS, the heart (psychologically) i.e. the centre and focus of man's emotional nature as well as that intellectual element which inheres in and accompanies its manifestations i.e. thought. In this way, citta denotes both the agent and that which is enacted.

=> PTS, The meaning of citta is best understood when explaining it by expressions familiar to us such as: with all my heart; heart and soul; I have not the heart to do it; blessed are the pure at heart; all of which emphasise the emotional and cognitive side of "thought" more than its mental and rational side. Citta may therefore be rendered by intention, impulse, design, mood, disposition, state of mind, reaction to impressions.

The translation we have here uses 'mind' for citta. Other translations use 'consciousness' or 'thought'. Citta is difficult to translate in one word while preserving its full meaning. Namgyal Rinpoché referred to citta in the context of Satipaṭṭhāna as 'state of mind'. The state of mind roughly corresponds to what people consider their emotional state. Research into brain damaged people has shown that intellect without emotional content often loses its moral or value component. That's why the PTS dictionary speaks of "man's emotional nature as well as that intellectual element which inheres in and accompanies its manifestations." Citta, the 'state of mind', could be thought of as the overall flavour or texture of mind.

Imagine that you had a collection of different colour tinted sunglasses. If you wear a pair of pink ones the whole world appears to be tinted pink. If you have green ones the world is tinted green and grey ones tint the world grey. If you wear a pair of glasses for a long time you often forget that you have them on and don't realise that the glasses are affecting the way you see and experience the world. States of mind are like this. It's as if you were wearing anger glasses or happiness glasses or glasses of any other emotional texture. This mode or way of experiencing, colours our perception and helps shape the sense of meaning arising in any given situation.

The text gives only a very limited range of examples of possible states of mind. "The bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind." In other words, in the very presence of the mind state, without departing from it, you the meditator understand that this particular 'state of mind' is present. In the direct experience of meditation you may not be able to precisely name the citta, however, you may feel an overall texture of knowing or experiencing. It may be something rough or bouncy or bubbly or bright or smooth or still. It may be focussed or diffused, open or closed. It may be a more commonly named emotion. With the familiar

emotions it is valuable to notice the texture rather than simply rubber stamping them with a label. This will encourage you to examine the state more closely.

A **contracted** mind is referring to states of sloth and torpor. A **distracted** mind refers to states of restlessness and worry. An **exalted** mind refers to states of absorption on fine material form *rūpāvacara*. An **unexalted** mind and a **surpassed** mind refer to the level of sense sphere consciousness *kāmavacara.* The **unsurpassed** mind is referring to the levels of absorption on immaterial form *ārūpāvacara.* The **liberated** mind is referring to a degree of freedom from defilements either through jhāna or through insight.

> *35. "In this way he abides, contemplating mind as mind internally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind externally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there is mind' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind.*

When you are exploring *cittānupassanā,* you begin to note the arising of mental states, or emotional states. You explore what factors contribute to their arising and what factors contribute to their passing. You investigate the entire interbeingness of arising mind states; seeing and knowing that they are transient, and that they arise dependent on many different factors. Your body and feeling function are some of these factors, along with outer circumstances and situations. Through dwelling in a continuum of awareness of the arising and passing of states of mind, you will experience a greater and greater freedom from being blindly caught up in reaction, and unconsciously projecting onto the object you are involved with.

CONTEMPLATION OF MIND-OBJECTS
Dhammānupassanā

1. The Five Hindrances

> *36. "And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects? Here a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances. And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances?*
>
> *"Here, there being sensual desire in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is sensual desire in me'; or, there being no sensual desire in him, he understands; 'There is no sensual desire in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen sensual desire, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen sensual desire, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned sensual desire.'*
>
> *"Here, there being ill will in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is ill will in me'; or, there being no ill will in him, he understands; 'There is no ill will in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen ill will, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen ill will, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned ill will.'*

"Here, there being both sloth and torpor in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is both sloth and torpor in me'; or, there being no sloth and torpor in him, he understands; 'There is no sloth and torpor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen sloth and torpor, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen sloth and torpor, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned sloth and torpor.'

"Here, there being restlessness and worry in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is restlessness and worry in me'; or, there being no restlessness and worry in him, he understands; 'There is no restlessness and worry in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen restlessness and worry, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen restlessness and worry, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned restlessness and worry.'

"Here, there being sceptical doubt in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is sceptical doubt in me'; or, there being no sceptical doubt in him, he understands; 'There is no sceptical doubt in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen sceptical doubt, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen sceptical doubt, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned sceptical doubt.'

dhamma => PTS, from *dhṛ* (*dhāreti*) to hold, support: that which forms a foundation and upholds.

=> PTS, *psychologically;* "mentality" as the constitutive element of cognition which is presented as "object" to the imagination and as such has an effect of its own: – a presentation or idea, or purely mental phenomenon as distinguished from a psycho-physical phenomenon or sensation.

=> PTS, *subjective;* mental attitude, thought, idea, philosophy, truth and its recognition by the Buddha, i.e. the Dhamma or world wisdom/philosophy of the Buddha as contained in the Sutras. That which the Buddha preached, the Dhamma was the order of law of the universe, immanent, eternal, uncreated, not as interpreted by him only, much less invented or decreed by him, but intelligible to a mind of his range, and by him made intelligible to mankind as bodhi: revelation, awakening. The Buddha (like every great philosopher) is a discoverer of this order of the Dhamma, this universal logic, philosophy or righteousness in which the rational and the ethical elements are fused into one. Thus by recognition of the truth, the knower becomes the incorporation of the knowable.

=> PTS, *objective;* "rationality" any thing that is as it should be according to its reason and logicality i.e. natural law.

Dhamma in Pali is the same as Skt. *dharma.* This fourth foundation of mindfulness which has been translated here as awareness of 'mind-objects' could be thought of as awareness of phenomena. In a sense, anything that is not covered by *kāya, vedanā* and *citta* would come in this category. In this sutta however, *Dhammānupassanā* particularly refers to the dharmas of awakening, *Buddhadhamma.* Because for most beings, at the beginning, the difficulties or negativities are more obvious and more demanding, more in-your-face than the positive dharmas, the section on *dhammānupassanā* begins with an exploration of the five gross hindrances. Once there is a lessening of these tendencies, one moves on to investigate the five aggregates of clinging to a sense of self. This is a more hidden source of suffering. Then the meditator investigates the realm of sensing and the reactions of greed, hatred and delusion that commonly arise along with sensory experience. As this area becomes less of a problem the investigation turns to the positive, looking into the Seven Factors of Enlightenment; a study of the qualities of being that are inseparable from the experience of

dwelling in freedom. In the last section, one comes to know directly the Four Noble Truths, the culmination of the path.

Five Hindrances *Pañca Nīvaraṇa*
One begins to explore the realm of Dharma by investigating the five hindrances. Although these five are usually taught in the context of meditation, they also arise in the general activity of one's daily life. With each of these five, one is directed to know when they are present and to know when they are not present; to understand clearly how they come into being, in other words, what triggers them, how they manifest in the body and what are the accompanying mental attitudes, memories, associations and so forth. One understands how to let go of and abandon a hindrance, – essentially through friendly non-clinging awareness. Finally one "understands how there comes to be the future non-arising of an abandoned hindrance." This last section refers to realisation of various stages of Path in which specific hindrances cease to arise again. (see p 33)

The five hindrances are often taught as if they were five completely separate types of experience. It can be very useful however to think of them as five common divisions of a single cycle of energy. In brief, the cycle begins with desire for something other than what is happening. A yearning or reaching out takes place through one or more of the six sense doors. We want to see, or taste or touch or know. This yearning is not just mental but is also expressed physically in the body as a matrix of tensions. If the desire is not fulfilled, a degree of frustration will augment the tension until it becomes physically unpleasant. If we are unaware of this happening, it's not uncommon to look outside the body for the cause or source of tension with the idea of getting rid of it. It's someone else's fault! This is the birth of the second hindrance; ill-will.

It's hard work to maintain the tensions of anger and ill-will. If this goes on for too long it sucks up so much vital energy that we fall into the third hindrance; a tired, lethargic, exhaustion. At this point in the cycle it's as if the creative life energy has almost stopped flowing. If there is still a spark of health in us, it pushes against the dam of tension–frustration and everything begins to tremble. Now we experience the fourth hindrance; restlessness and worry. At this point, if we can't let go and relax into what is actually present, we will find ourselves sinking towards the fifth hindrance; closed minded scepticism which is often accompanied by varying degrees of depression. Most people linger in this fifth state until another desire for sensing picks them up and they begin the cycle all over again. For a much more detailed description of the cycle of the five hindrances along with some hints at how to dissolve them; see *Breathing: The Natural Way to Meditate* – p 56

1. ***kāmacchanda*** => desire for sensing
kāma => sensing or sensual. *chanda* => moon, aspiration, desire. This first hindrance is desire for experience at any one of the six sense doors. It is a hindrance in that it is inevitably desire for something that is not currently present. Verbalisation i.e. plotting, planning, story making, general chatter and so forth is usually a sure sign of kāmacchanda. The present moment isn't sufficiently engaging or satisfactory enough so one starts hankering or fantasising over things or activities that might make it better.

2. ***vyāpāda*** => ill will
=> PTS, making bad, doing harm, desire to injure, malevolence, ill-will, anger, hatred. *Pāda* which means foot or base is symbolically referring to energy fields, like a lotus *padme*. The *vya* is associated with the idea of gone astray. Hence the sense that ill-will is an expression of energy fields gone astray.

3. ***ṭhīna-middha*** => sloth and torpor; essentially a state of tiredness, dullness, sleepiness.
T- Abd notes – *Thīna* => PTS, to become hard, to congeal; from *the*, to shrink; the shrinking mind. Thīna is the opposite of *viriya* energy. It is called *citta gellañña*ṁ, sickness of mind, depression and is the opposite of *cittakammaññatā* adaptability of mind. Thīna is very much an energy reference; a stickiness of mind; unwieldy.

Middha from *middh* => to be inactive, inert, incapable of function. Thīna and middha are always in conjunction – a weak, sticky mind, rigidity; an energyless unwieldyness resulting in a limp, defensive state of mind; middha is a sleeping of the senses i.e. weak saññā, vedanā, and saṅkharā.

4. ***uddhacca-kukkucca*** => restlessness and worry
T - Abd notes – *Uddhacca* => from *U* => up, above, over + *dhu*=> to waver, shake off, tremble; a state of throwing up; an unsettled state of mind, agitated, trembly; mania. This is the opposite of *sukha*; like a flurry of grey snowflakes. *Kukkucca* => worry, sorrow, remorse, a grieving kind of worry; fidgeting, overly scrupulous, mental self-sacrificing; the psychic masochist; the psychic picker.

5. ***vicikicchā*** => sceptical doubt
=> PTS, perplexity, uncertainty. *Vicikicchati* => to dis-reflect; to be distracted in thought. *Kicca* => PTS, that which should be done; function. Vi expresses negation and ambivalence towards 'that which should be done'. Hence doubt, uncertainty, perplexity. Vicikicchā is the state of being incapable of deciding this is this and that is that. It is an ambivalence that leads to mental paralysis 'can't do this....can't do that..... what's the point?' It is the fundamental life doubt i.e. doubt in existence or the possibility of awakening, or the validity of the teaching or the integrity or value of the teacher, or the point in continuing with the practice.

> *37. "In this way he abides, contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects externally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind-objects their arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects both their arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there are mind-objects' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects.*

2. The Five Aggregates

> *38. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging. And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging? Here a bhikkhu understands; 'Such is material form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance; such are the formations, such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.'*

The Five Aggregates of Clinging *Pañc'upāddānakkhandha*
Khandha (Pali) or *skandha* (Skt) => aggregate, collection, gathering, conglomeration, heap

Pañca => five
Upāddāna => grasping, clinging, attatchment

In the Heart Sutra, a central text of Mahayana Buddhism, Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, looks with profound understanding, into the fullness of the present moment, and "beheld but five heaps", five skandhas. According to legend, when the Buddha first taught the five skandhas, in order to more clearly illustrate what he was talking about, he placed five piles of rice on the ground in front of him, hence 'five heaps'. Each pile, represented one of the skandhas and also indicated that the heap itself is comprised of a multitude of sub-factors, all the grains of rice. Contemplating the five aggregates, is a way of deepening our understanding of how each moment of life experience is dependent on uncountable other situations and circumstances.

Together, the five categories hint at the myriad factors that weave together the human experience. They are called 'aggregates of clinging' because each one can be a focus for clinging to the sense of a separate, independent, autonomous self or ego. Some people identify more with their body, some with their feelings, some with perceptions, some with habit patterns and some with consciousness.

Rūpa => form, material form This includes the physical body with its sense faculties as well as external material objects. *Rūpa* => PTS, from *rup*, to break, destroy, perish. Rūpa is that which breaks up or changes. It moulds to various changes of environment. Abhidhamma describes 28 species of rūpa dealt with in terms of how they arise, persist and perish. Rūpa is also derived from *rūppakāsane* => PTS, to shine forth, to be visible, to become known. *Pakāsane* => explaining, making known, information, evidence, explanation, publicity. So rūpapakāsane => a shining, an announcement, a declaration, a manifestation, a statement. In the texts there is no universally applicable one meaning for rūpa. Some renderings are form, body, matter, corporeality. Rūpa means both the fundamentals of matter and the laws and changes and processes of matter.

T-Abd notes – *Rūpa* actually means, that which changes its colour due to elemental shifts. All form perceived by mind has 28 textures. Rūpa is that which manifests itself through different colours *vaṇṇā,* wavelengths, pigmentation. In a sense you don't actually see the object but rather the wavelengths of light that are not absorbed and are excluded by the object. Rūpa is a living force, a field or sphere of colour *vaṇṇāyatana.* Rūpa perception springs from four sources, *kamma; citta; utu* seasonal phenomena i.e. cycles and undulations; and *āhāra* nutriment. For example if the organism has a low fuel energy, it will not perceive as wide a range of rūpa.

Vedanā => feeling/evaluation (see p 22)

Saññā => perception, PTS, from *saṁ* (together, with, containing) + *jñā* (knowing, recognising, having insight)
saññā =>PTS, 1. sense, consciousness, perception, being the third khandha 2. sense, perception, discernment, recognition, assimilation of sensations, awareness 3. consciousness of diversity 4. conception, idea, notion.

The chief characteristic of saññā is identification or recognition. It notes the qualities or characteristics of things.

Sankhāra => PTS, from saṁ (together) + kṛ (to work); a related word is *sankhata* => put to-

gether, compound; conditioned, produced by a combination of causes, created, brought about as effect of actions in former births. Sankāra => habitual formations, dispositions. This includes all volitional, emotional and intellectual aspects of one's mental life.

Saṅkhāra has a feeling of bits and pieces being put together to make a particular formation. In abhidhamma, saṅkhāra refers to the 50 mental factors or *cetasika*s. In Tantrayana this is represented by the fifty freshly severed human heads around Vajra Yogini's neck.

50 Mental Factors or *Cetasika* that are classified as sankharas in the abhidhamma system. They are listed here to give you a sense of the one approach to exploring saṅkhāra. When contemplating saṅkhāra as one of the five *khandha* you will likely find your reflections extending beyond these 50 factors to consider things like subliminal memories, habit patterns and so forth.

Common to all states of consciousness - Sabbacittasādhāranā

Contact	- phassa
Volition	- cetanā
One-pointedness	- ekaggatā
Vital energy	- jīvitindriyaṁ
Attention	- manasikāra

(There are two more cetasika usually listed in this section; vedanā and saññā which would make the total number of cetasika come to 52. However when considering the five Skandhas, these two stand on their own so there are only 50 cetasika listed in the category of sankhāra.)

Variables - Pakiṇṇakā

Focus	- vitakka
Scanning	- vicāra
Decision	- adhimokkha
Enthusiastic perseverance	- viriya
Interest-joy-ecstasy	- pīti
Aspiration	- chando

Unwholsome - Akusala

Delusion	- moha
Shamelessness	- ahirikaṁ
Fearlessness	- anottappaṁ
Restlessness	- uddhaccaṁ
Desire-clinging	- lobha
View	- diṭṭhi
Conceit	- māna
Hatred	- dosa
Envy	- issā
Avarice	- macchariyaṁ
Worry	- kukkuccaṁ
Energyless-mind	- thīnaṁ
Energyless-body	- middhaṁ
Sceptical doubt	- vicikicchā

Common to the Beautiful - Sobhanasādhāranā

Confidence	- saddhā
Mindfulness	- sati
Moral shame	- hiri
Moral caution	- ottappaṁ
Generosity	- alobha
Lovingkindness	- adosa
Equanimity	- tatramajjhattatā

Tranquillity of mental body (cetasikā)- kāyapassaddhi
Tranquillity of citta - cittapassadhi

Lightness of mental body- kāyalahutā,
Lightness of citta - cittalahutā

Pliancy	- kāya and cittamudutā
Adaptability	- kāya and cittakammaññatā
Proficiency	- kāya and cittapāguññatā
Straightforwardness	- kāya and cittajjukatā

Abstinences - Viratiyo

Right Speech	- sammāvāca
Right Action	- sammākammanto
Right Livelihood	- sammā-ājīvo

Illimitable - Appamañña

1 Compassion	- karuṇā
2 Sympathetic Joy	- muditā

Wisdom Faculty - paññindriya

PTS says of *sankāra*: 'One of the most difficult terms in Buddhist metaphysics, in which the blending of the subjective-objective view of the world and of happening, peculiar to the East, is so complete, that it is almost impossible for Occidental terminology to get at the root of its meaning in a translation. Various meanings: 1. aggregate of the conditions or essential properties for a given process or result e.g. (i) the sum of the conditions or properties making up or resulting in life or existence; (ii) Essential conditions, antecedents or synergy (co-ordinated activity), mental coefficients, requisite for action, speech and thought. 2. One of the five *khandhas*, or constitutional elements of physical life, comprising all *cetasikas*, the mental concomitants, or adjuncts which come, or tend to come, into consciousness at the uprising of a citta or unit of cognition. Sankhārā tend to take on the implication of synergies, of purposive intellection; a purposive aspiring state of mind to induce a specific rebirth.

In a simple way, sankāra could be thought of as the habitual patterns, attitudes, tendencies and concepts resonating from past experience that help shape and give meaning to the present moment.

Viññāna => consciousness, PTS from *vi* + *jñā* (to produce, think), There are many words for consciousness. Here the *vi* means to divide hence it is a knowing that divides into subject and object. 'I' am conscious of 'that'. The existence of the object is helping to establish the sense of being a subject and simultaneously, the state of the subject is shaping the perception

of the object. This co-dependent process of knowing is Viññāna.

Kalu Rinpoché defined *Viññāna* as 'discursive consciousness'; the ability of mind to recognise something other than itself as an object – to decide this is this and that is that.

> *39. "In this way he abides, contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects externally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind-objects their arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects both their arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there are mind-objects' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging.*

As part of contemplating the arising factors and the vanishing factors, you will find it useful to consider how each skandha is, in a sense, composed of the other four. For example, if you enquire deeply into the nature of form or material and try to describe it, you might say it arises when there is a particular configuration of perception, evaluation, habitual patterns and consciousness. Perception arises when there is a particular coming together of form, evaluation, habitual formations and consciousness. Evaluation is a combination of form, perception, habitual formations and consciousness. In a similar way you can explore habitual formations and consciousness.

3. The Six Bases

> *40. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases. And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases? Here a bhikkhu understands the eye, he understands forms, and he understands the fetter that arises dependent on both; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the arisen fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter.*
>
> *"He understands the ear, he understands sounds... He understands the nose, he understands odours... He understands the tongue, he understands flavours... He understands the body, he understands tangibles... He understands the mind, he understands mind-objects, and he understands the fetter that arises dependent on both; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the arisen fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter.*

The six bases or *āyatanā* are sometimes referred to as the twelve sense spheres *dvādasāyatanā*.

āyatanā => PTS, sphere of perception or sense in general, object of thought, sense organ and object.

The six bases refer to the six senses and their six objects hence 'twelve'. The mind is consid-

ered the sixth sense which has concepts, feelings, memories and so forth as its objects.

The fetters are basically greed, hatred and delusion. Sometimes they are extended out as the ten *saṁyojana* or ten fetters.

kāmarāga	attachment to sensuality *kāmavacara*
rūparāga	attachment to the realm of form *rūpavacara*
arūparāga	attachment to the formless realms *ārūpavacara*
paṭigha	hatred
māna	conceit
diṭṭhi	partial view
silabbatapārāmāssa	blind belief in rule and ritual
vicikicchā	sceptical doubt
uddhacca	restlessness
avijjā	ignorance

rāga => PTS, excitement, passion, lust, craving.
Kāmavacara is the realm of the five senses.
Rūpavacara is the realm of 'fine material form'. This refers to the subtle levels of absorption on form.
Ārūpavacara is the formless realm and refers to the very subtle meditative absorptions of: boundless space, boundless consciousness, nothingness, and 'neither perception nor non-perception'.

The future non-arising of a fetter refers to a stage of path attainment. In the Abhidhamma system these ten fetters fall away permanently at specific stages of the path.

Stage of Path	**Fetters Dropping Away**
Sotāpanna 'Stream entry'	1. *diṭṭhi,* specifically belief in a permanent or independent self or ego. *2. vicikicchā,* especially doubt about the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, about the necessity of moral conduct and about the fact of cause and effect. *3. silabbatapārāmāssa,* the belief that blind adherence to rule and ritual and to mere good works will be sufficient to bring awakening.
Sakadāgāmi 'Once returner'	halving the fetters of *kāmarāga* (attachment to the realm of sensing) and *paṭigha* (hatred)
Anāgāmi 'Non returner'	elimination of *kāmarāga* and *paṭigha*
Arahat 'Fully purified'	elimination of *rūparāga, arūparāga, māna, uddhacca* and *avijjā*

41. "In this way he abides, contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects externally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind-objects their arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects both their arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there are mind-objects' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases.

4. The Seven Enlightenment Factors

42. "Again bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors. And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors? Here, there being the mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is the mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen mindfulness enlightenment factor, and how the arisen mindfulness enlightenment factor comes to fulfilment by development.

"There being the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor in him... There being the energy enlightenment factor in him... There being the rapture enlightenment factor in him... There being the tranquillity enlightenment factor in him... There being the concentration enlightenment factor in him... There being the equanimity enlightenment factor in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is the equanimity enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no equanimity enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no equanimity enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen equanimity enlightenment factor, and how the arisen equanimity enlightenment factor comes to fulfilment by development.

The Seven Enlightenment Factors

Sattasambojjhaṅga; *satta* seven + *sam* good, complete + *bodhi* enlightenment + *anga* factors

These seven factors will all be present and harmoniously functioning together in a well rounded, mature human being. They reach their fullest flowering of expression in what is called the state of liberation or 'enlightenment'. Number one is considered to be neutral. Numbers two, three and four are considered to be active. Five, six and seven are considered to be passive.

1. **Mindfulness** *satisambojjhaṅgo* (see p 7)

2. **Investigation of dhamma** *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo*

vicaya => PTS, (from vi + ci to think) search, investigation, examination:

dhammavicaya => investigation of dhamma insight, direct seeing of reality

This is the factor of question, interest, curiosity. It's what carries us into new territory. In Zen, it is said; "The greater the question, the greater the awakening — no question, no awakening." There needs to be curiosity, investigation, active enquiry or question present in your being.

This factor is often the weakest in meditators who see meditation primarily as a technique for establishing calm or tranquillity. For awakening one needs more than just calm, one must have a tremendous degree of interest and curiosity about all arisings of life and particularly about what is currently taking place. Eventually, dhammavicaya must go beyond mere verbal question. It needs to sink into the bones of your being so that your very existence is an expression of question in action. It is really a factor of open, responsive, receptive, probing; an alert readiness to experience and know more broadly and profoundly. I am reminded of the following quote by the biologist Alexander Skutch.

> *"An outstanding attribute of an awakened spirit is its expansiveness, its insatiable hunger to experience more widely, to know more broadly and profoundly, to cultivate friendly intercourse with the whole of Being. The noblest mind is that which understands, appreciates and loves the largest segment of the Universe."*
> (from Daily Puja Wangapeka Books)

3. **Energy** *viriyasambojjhaṅgo* is also referred to as diligence and enthusiastic perseverance
viriyaṁ => PTS, (from *vi + īr) iriyati* => to set in motion, to move, to wander about, to stir, to show a certain way of deportment i.e. methodical.
vi => is a prefix denoting expansion, intensification or thorough i.e. completely
vīra => manly, mighty heroic
viriya => moving in an invincible way; uninterrupted strenuousness in conquering obstacles; that which is carried out methodically.

This factor is often allied with the what are called in Buddhist teaching the Four Great Efforts. 1. The effort to recognise the unwholesome when it is present. 2. To take steps to bring it to an end and to prevent the arising of such unwholesome states in the future. 3. To recognise the wholesome when it is present. 4. To take steps to encourage an arisen wholesome to flourish and continue, and to encourage unarisen wholesomes to arise in the future.

4. **Rapture** *pitisambojjhaṅgo*
Pīti => This word is difficult to translate accurately with one English word. 'Rapture' doesn't really do it justice. PTS, (from *piya* dear, beloved, pleasant, liked) => uplifting joy, delight, zest, exuberance.

Pīti is the experiential knowing of the thrill and pleasure of aliveness of the organism; the coursing of the energy of the body. It's very much a thrill or excitation felt in or throughout the body when it is functioning well.
Abhidhamma texts describe five major categories of pīti ranging from interest to ecstasy.
1. *Kuddaka Pīti* – joy causing the flesh to creep
2. *Khaṇika Pīti* – instantaneous joy, like a flash of lightning
3. *Okkantika Pīti* – flood of joy, like waves on a beach
4. *Ubbega Pīti* – transporting joy, floating like a dandelion seed in space.
5. *Pharaṇa Pīti* – Overflowing joy, like a flood

5. **Tranquillity** *passadhisambojjhaṅgo*
Passadhi => PTS, tranquillity, calm, quietude, serenity, repose; it suppresses feverishness and calms hysteria, like the cool shade of a tree.

6. **Concentration** *samādhisambojjhaṅgo*
Samādhi => PTS, (from *sam* complete + *dhi* which has a sense of firmness) => concentration; a concentrated, self-collected, intent state of mind and meditation.

To many people, it seems odd that concentration is considered a passive factor. A better understanding might be had if you pronounced it with the accent on the second syllable; con-*CEN*-tration in other words con (with) centrate (centre). We are concentrated when we are effortlessly centred in whatever we are doing or experiencing; not dispersed, not scattered, not having our attention darting all over the lot.

7. **Equanimity** *upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo*
Upekkha => PTS, *upa* impartially, just + *ikkhati* to see, view, look. Usually translated as equanimity, or serenity. It means to see justly, correctly or 'as it really is'. Equanimity or true seeing is a balanced state of mind that embraces all opposite pairs. It is the 'middle-way' between subject and object; a completely balanced state of mind, not grasping after this or that. While not taking sides there is a continuum of calm clear seeing discernment. U*pa* also carries the meaning of 'on top' or 'over' so upekkha hints at an equanimity that arises from having an overview or a complete viewing of all aspects of a situation.

> *43. "In this way he abides, contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects externally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind-objects their arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects both their arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there are mind-objects' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors.*

5. The Four Noble Truths

> *44. "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths. And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths? Here a bhikkhu understands as it actually is: 'This is suffering'; he understands as it actually is; ' This is the origin of suffering'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; he understands as it actually is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'*

The Four Noble Truths *Ariyasaccāni* => *ariya* noble + *saccāni* truth
1. *Dukkhaṁ aryasaccaṁ* – the noble truth of suffering
2. *Dukkhasamudayo aryasaccaṁ* – the noble truth of the origin of suffering
3. *Dukkhanirodho aryasaccaṁ* – the noble truth of the cessation of suffering
4. *Dukkhanirodhagāminipaṭipadā aryasaccaṁ* – the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering

In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (the longer version of the Satipaṭṭhāna found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* – The Long Discourses of the Buddha) the text is identical to the one we have used thus far, except for this section on the Four Noble Truths which is greatly expanded.

Below is a translation from the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta by Maurice Walshe.

5. The Four Noble Truths

'Again, monks, a monk abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in respect of the Four Noble Truths. How does he do so? Here, a monk knows as it really is: "This is suffering"; he knows as it really is; "This is the origin of suffering"; he knows as it really is; "This is the cessation of suffering"; he knows as it really is; "This is the way of practice leading to the cessation of suffering."

First Noble Truth

'And what, monks is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness and distress are suffering. Being attached to the unloved is suffering, being separated from the loved is suffering, not getting what one wants is suffering. In short the five aggregates of grasping are suffering.

'And what, monks is birth? In whatever beings, of whatever group of beings, there is birth, coming-to-be, coming forth, the appearance of the aggregate, the acquisition of the sense-bases, that monks is called birth.

'And what is ageing? In whatever beings, of whatever group of beings, there is ageing, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkled skin, shrinking with age, decay of the sense faculties, that, monks, is called ageing.

'And what is death? In whatever beings, of whatever group of beings, there is a passing-away, a removal, a cutting off, a disappearance, a death, a dying, an ending, a cutting off of the aggregates, a discarding of the body, that, monks, is called death.

'And what is sorrow? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature, sorrow, mourning, distress, inward grief, inward woe, that, monks, is called sorrow.

'And what is lamentation? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature and there is crying out, lamenting, making much noise for grief, making great lamentation, that, monks is called lamentation.

"And what is pain? Whatever bodily painful feeling, bodily unpleasant feeling, painful or unpleasant feeling results from bodily contact, that, monks is called pain.

'And what is sadness? Whatever mental painful feeling, mental unpleasant feeling, painful or unpleasant sensation results from mental contact, that, monks, is called sadness.

'And what is distress? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature, distress, great distress, affliction with distress, with great distress, that, monks, is called distress.

'And what, monks, is being attached to the unloved? Here, whoever has un-

wanted, disliked, unpleasant, sight-objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles or mind-objects, or whoever encounters ill-wishers, wishers of harm, of discomfort, of insecurity, with whom they have concourse, intercourse, connection, union, that, monks, is called being attached to the unloved.

'And what is being separated from the loved? Here, whoever has what is wanted, liked, pleasant, sight-objects, or whoever encounters well-wishers, wishers of good, of comfort, of security, mother or father or brother or sister or younger kinsmen or friends or colleagues or blood-relations, and then is deprived of such concourse, intercourse, connection or union, that, monks, is called being separated from the loved.

'And what is not getting what one wants? In beings subject to birth, monks, this wish arises: "Oh that we were not subject to birth, that we might not come to birth!" But this cannot be gained by wishing. That is not getting what one wants. In beings subject to ageing, to disease, to death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress, that wish arises: "Oh that we were not subject to ageing...distress, that we might not come to these things!" But this cannot be gained by wishing. That is not getting what one wants.

'And how, monks, in short, are the five aggregates of grasping suffering? They are as follows: the aggregate of grasping that is form, the aggregate of grasping that is feeling, the aggregate of grasping that is perception, the aggregate of grasping that is mental formations, the aggregate of grasping that is consciousness, these are in short, the five aggregates of grasping that are suffering. And that, monks, is called the Noble Truth of Suffering.

Second Noble Truth

'And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering? It is that craving which gives rise to rebirth, bound up with pleasure and lust, finding fresh delight now here, now there: that is to say sensual craving, craving for existence and craving for non-existence.

craving *taṇhā* **=>** PTS. (from *tarśna,* thirst and *ters,* to be or to make dry) =>drought, thirst, craving, hunger for, 'the fever of unsatisfied longing'

Taṇhā is driven by trying to make permanent, that which is impermanent.

sensual craving *kāmataṇhā* => craving for sensual experience

craving for existence *bhāvataṇhā* => T-Abd-notes; craving for being, for form *rūpa;* craving that which one thinks will extend the being, extend life. Essentially, this is craving for more.

craving for non-existence *vibhāvataṇhā* => T-Abd-notes; craving for not being, for arūpa. This is security oriented, a craving for walling off. It is narcissism, conceit (belief that one has something) and defence (wanting to protect the wealth one thinks one can lose.)

Bhāva and vibhāvataṇhā can be caricatured in common types of behaviour or attitudes to life. The *bhāvataṇhā* type is the person who likes certainty. They want to know exactly when something is going to happen and when it will end. They feel more secure with written

contracts. They like to own their house, have a well filled appointment diary. Commitment and responsibility are important to them. They like definition and walls. In extremis they can be a bit obsessive.

The *vibhāvataṇhā* type, on the other hand, likes to hang loose. They want to be spontaneous. They feel uncomfortable when constrained by timetables or formal contracts. They prefer to rent. They don't like to be saddled with commitments. They like space and value their freedom. In extreme cases they can be very narcissistic.

> *'And where does this craving arise and establish itself? Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Sense organs:** *'And what is there in the world that is agreeable and pleasurable? The eye in the world is agreeable and pleasurable, the ear..., the nose..., the tongue..., the body..., the mind in the world is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Sense objects:** *'Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world are agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Sense consciousness:** *'Eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Contact *phassa***: *'Eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, mind-contact in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Feeling *vedanā:*** *'Feeling born of eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, mind-contact in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Perception *saññā***:*'The perception of sights, of sounds, of smells, of tastes, of tangibles, of mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Volition *cetanā:*** *'Volition in regards to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Craving *tanha:*** *'The craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*
>
> **Thinking *vitakka:*** *'Thinking of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself.*

Vitakka is often translated as initial application. A more useful translation might be 'focus'.

When one focuses one's attention on a meditation object and does not wander to any other object, this is the initial application of mind. It is not really 'thinking" in the sense of verbalising or conceptualising about the object. It is more the application of attention or interest to an object. One can remember the meaning by thinking of 'tacking' the mind to an object.

> **Pondering *vicāra:*** *'Pondering on sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving arises and establishes itself. And that, monks, is called the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.*

Vicāra is frequently translated as sustained application. A perhaps more useful term would be scanning. Having 'tacked' vitakka-ed the mind onto the meditation object, one then scans the details of the object without departing from the object. In this way it is sustained application and perhaps pondering, though it would be a pondering without verbalising.

> **Third Noble Truth**
> *'And what, monks is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering? It is the complete fading-away and extinction of this craving, its forsaking and abandonment, liberation from it, detachment from it. And how does this craving come to be abandoned, how does its cessation come about?*

The 'cessation of suffering' is synonymous with realisation of *nibbāna* – peace, and *vis-versa*. Peace or *nibbāna* comes with the deep knowing of completeness, the experiential knowing that this moment is not lacking in any way, that it is an dynamic interbeing of everything. Peace is the fading away of craving, *taṇhā.* Taṇhā is rooted in ignorance, *avijja*. *'A'* at the beginning of a Pali or Sanskrit word indicates negation. *Vijja* denotes seeing so ***a****vijja* means not seeing or not understanding. Ignorance of, or not seeing/understanding the interdependent nature of everything, supports the sense of an autonomous 'craver' that can crave a desired thing. Where there are no separate cravers and craven objects, there is no craving.

The great philosopher Nāgārjuna wrote in his famous treatise *Mūlamadhyamakakārika:* "Whatever that comes to be dependently, that is inherently peaceful."[1] In other words, in the experiential knowing of interdependence, there is no single separate part that can be isolated out to praise or blame or be held responsible. All arisings are mutually shaping. Each moment is inherently complete. It's not going anywhere. It rests in itself. With this understanding, the cessation of suffering becomes realizable in any situation without necessarily changing a thing. It is closer than hands and feet. All that's needed is a profound degree of clear seeing.

> *'Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there its cessation comes about, And what is there in the world that is agreeable and pleasurable?*

To illustrate the spontaneous naturalness of cessation, a simple metaphor is used in many of the Mahamudra/Dzogchen texts. Imagine using your finger to draw a picture on the surface of a calm pool of water. The image that you draw vanishes as fast as you draw it. In a sense, it self-liberates. No one else needs to liberate it. This cessation or self-liberation is automatic and instantaneous. *"Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there its ces-*

[1] Mūlamadhyamakakārika of Nāgārjuna translated by David Kalupahana p 168

sation comes about." Each of the following pleasurable or agreeable dharmas are like pictures drawn in water. If you look into them with careful discernment, you will see that they spontaneously vanish as soon as they appear.

> *The eye in the world is agreeable and pleasurable, the ear..., the nose..., the tongue..., the body..., the mind in the world is agreeable and pleasurable, and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.*
>
> *'Eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.*
>
> *'Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.*
>
> *'Eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, mind-contact in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.*
>
> *'The perception of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.*
>
> *'Volition in regard to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.*
>
> *Craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.*
>
> *'Thinking of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about..*
>
> *'Pondering on sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, mind-objects in the world is agreeable and pleasurable and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about. And that, monks, is called the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.*

Fourth Noble Truth

> *'And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Way of Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path, namely: – Right View; Right Thought; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; Right Concentration.*

Noble Eightfold Path *ariya-aṭṭhangika-magga*
magga => avenue, path, way
aṭṭhangika => eight

1 Right View *sammā-diṭṭi*
2 Right Thought *sammā-sankappa*
3 Right Speech *sammā-vācā*
4 Right Action *sammā-kammant*a
5 Right Livelihood *sammā-ājīv*a
6 Right Effort *sammā-vāyāma*
7 Right Mindfulness *sammā-sati*
8 Right Concentration *sammā-samādhi*

1. Right View *sammā-diṭṭi*

'And what, monks, is Right View? It is, monks, the knowledge of suffering, the knowledge of the origin of suffering, the knowledge of the cessation of suffering, and the knowledge of the way of practice leading to the cessation of suffering. This is called Right View.

Translating *sammā* as 'right' in the context of the Eightfold Noble Path doesn't really do it justice. Sammā => PTS, "connected in one", thoroughly, properly, rightly, in the right way, as it ought to be, best, perfectly.

As Namgyal Rinpoché often pointed out, sammā derives from *sam* which has the sense of 'complete' or 'total' as in the English phrases, 'doing your sums', or 'summing up'. (see *Body, Speech and Mind* p29) *Diṭṭi* means view, though when used alone it usually implies partial view. As part of the eight fold noble path, it would be more helpful to think of ditti as a verb, the activity of viewing, rather than as a noun, a static view. Instead of 'right view' as opposed to 'wrong view', sammā-diṭṭI points to complete or total or thorough viewing; seeing/understanding all contributing aspects of an arising rather than falling into bias based on conditioned hopes, fears and fantasies. The positive expression of this would be total lovingkindness; completely engaged, responsive, presence in the midst of whatever is occurring.

Another way of contemplating sammā that can be applied to each section of the Eightfold Noble Path is suggested by the following question. What is it that is doing the viewing, doing the understanding or doing the knowing? Since everything is interdependent with everything else, (ultimately everything else in the universe) then the totality of being which makes up this present moment of one's unique knowing, is what is doing the viewing. Totality is thinking. Totality is speaking. Totality is acting, and so forth. Every moment of experience reveals itself to be spacious, open and fundamentally un-pin-downable. Contemplating *'samma'* in these many ways, reveals the Eightfold Noble Path as a means for directly realising *śūnyatā*; the heart understanding of Mahamudra.

śūnyatā => It is difficult to accurately translate śūnyatā with a single word. Emptiness is the usual attempt. Unfortunately, for many people today, using emptiness as an equivalent for śūnyatā is quite misleading as it can conjure a nihilistic view of things, as if we should try to convince ourselves that nothing exists. Psychologically, emptiness is often associated with feelings of meaninglessness and isolation. This is so far away from the intention of teachings on śūnyatā that it might be better to think of fullness rather than emptiness. A more useful and descriptive phrase might be 'the spacious openness of interbeing'. If you look deeply and discerningly into anything you will see that it is composed of a vast array of transient factors. Everything reveals itself to be spacious and open. On one hand it is there, it appears; on the other hand when we examine it analytically, it vanishes into a matrix of

contributing factors.

2. Right Thought *sammā-sankappa*
'And what, monks, is Right Thought? The thought of renunciation, the thought of non-ill-will, the thought of harmlessness. This is called Right Thought.

sankappa => PTS, thought, intention, purpose, plan. Here sankappa has more to do with intention than thinking. Total thinking/intending, complete thinking/intending. One might even consider 'total aspiration' or totality aspiring, the whole of one's mental processes going in the direction of awakening. This is the essence of Bodhicitta. I'm reminded of a prayer in the Meditation of Guru Rinpoché:

One's view of things is all embracing *(sammā-diṭṭhi)*
May the Dharmakaya bring blessings.
One's thoughts are in tune with every situation *(sammā-sanakappa)*
May the Sambhogakaya bring blessings.
All one's actions spring from this *(the rest of the Eightfold Path)*
May the Nirmanakaya bring blessings.
These three become one in the vision of the ground of being
May the union of these three bring blessings.

3. Right Speech *sammā-vācā*
'And what, monks, is Right Speech? Refraining from lying, refraining from slander, refraining from harsh speech, refraining from frivolous speech. This is called Right Speech.

Total or complete communication. Not just avoiding these unwholesome forms of expression but considering all aspects of communication so that one's body language, one's inner feelings, one's intention and one's expression are all in harmony and supporting the unfolding of the wholesome. Sammā-vācā also implies profound listening; hearing what is actually being said and empathically sensing the meaning and intent behind the words.

4. Right Action *sammā-kammant*a
'And what, monks, is called Right Action? Refraining from taking life, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from sexual misconduct. This is Right Action.

Total or complete activity in terms of bringing forth what is wholesome and what is supporting the awakening of beings. Beyond refraining from taking life, one should strive to support and nurture life. Beyond not taking that which is not given, one should practice generosity and give unstintingly to beings. Beyond refraining from sexual or sensual misconduct, one should skilfully use the senses to explore dharma. Right speech and action touch on the aspect of the path that is covered by studying and practising the precepts.

In *Daily Puja,* there is an expression of the precepts in a positive form that hints at a much broader practice than simply avoiding certain activities.

1. *I will train myself to support and appreciate the life of all living beings.*

I will live with a sensitive and responsible awareness for the whole ecology of life.

2. *I will train myself to dwell more and more*
in the mind of spontaneous generosity.
Daily I will give material support, emotional support,
and an example to others of awakening in action.

3. *I will train myself to use the senses to further awakening, explore Dharma,*
and to come to know the world more profoundly and more compassionately.

4. *I will train myself to communicate in a skilful and compassionate manner.*

5. *I will train myself to be ever more directly aware of*
how nutriment affects the mind and body.
I will eat and drink and nurture myself and others,
in a way that supports awakening.

> **5. Right Livelihood *sammā-ājīva***
> *'And what, monks, is called Right Livelihood? Here, monks, the Ariyan disciple, having given up wrong livelihood, keeps himself by right livelihood.*

Since this sutra was originally taught to fully ordained monks, it was understood that their livelihood was already one of living lightly on the earth; living with minimal needs and appetites and avoiding the harming of others. For a lay person living in the modern world, there probably needs to be a bit more guidance.

Complete or total livelihood: a livelihood or way of earning a living that supports all of life. It is complete or total in the sense that it is a way of earning your living while supporting the health and well being of your body, energies and mind. At the same time it also supports the well being of all the other beings whom your livelihood brings you into contact with, in ways that support their wholesome unfolding of body, energies and mind. This includes not just other people, but animals, plants and entire ecosystems. Essentially, complete livelihood involves living in a way that values and supports the living matrix that is this planet.

Wrong livelihood is any form of livelihood that disrupts life, causing harm to oneself or others. This section is a major challenge to how we humans today do business and how we relate to the non-human world.

> **6. Right Effort *sammā-vāyāma***
> *'And what, monks is called Right Effort? Here, monks, a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states. He rouses his will...and strives to overcome evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen. He rouses his will...and strives to produce unarisen wholesome mental states. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, not to let them fade away, to bring them to greater growth, to the full perfection of development. This is called Right Effort.*

This is explained quite clearly above and also in the section on *viriyasambojjhaṅga* in the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (p.34) It is often taught separately as a complete path of practice in itself. When it is, it is called 'The Four Great Efforts'.

7. Right Mindfulness *sammā-sati*

'And what, monks, is Right Mindfulness? Here, monks, a monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware, and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world; he abides contemplating feelings as feelings...; he abides contemplating states of mind as states of mind...; he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world. This is called Right Mindfulness.

Complete mindfulness. This section is a recapitulation of the entire Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

8. Right Concentration *sammā-samādhi*

'And what, monks, is Right Concentration? Here, a monk, detached from sense-desires, detached from unwholesome mental states, enters and remains in the first jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, born of detachment, filled with delight and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he enters and remains in the second jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, born of concentration, filled with delight and joy. And with the fading away of delight, remaining imperturbable, mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say: "Happy is he who dwells with equanimity and mindfulness", he enters the third jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the disappearance of former gladness and sadness, he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

This is called Right Concentration. And that, monks, is called the way of practice leading to the cessation of suffering.

This section speaks of total concentration in terms of the factors of absorption or *Jhāna*. => PTS , from *jāyati* and Skt *dhyāna*; jhāyati => to shine, perceive, to meditate, contemplate, think about, brood over; to burn, be on fire, dry up.

Jhāna burns up the hindrances. In it's widest sense jhāna means absorption including even very momentary experiences of one-pointedness.

Jhānas are often seen by inexperienced meditators as exotic states of concentration where there are no thoughts and no mental activity. This is a rather static view. It would probably be more helpful to think of jhānas in terms of increasing degrees of peace. When the mind is well concentrated, when it is completely, wholesomely absorbed to a point where there is no sense of separation between the subject and object, then the five hindrances, at that moment, will not be active. If you examine this peaceful mind, you will find five main positive factors: *vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha* and *ekaggatā* or *upekkha.*

The stages of jhāna are differentiated by the presence of these factors. In the first jhāna all five are present. The mind is focused and investigating or scanning the object. There is some degree of pīti. Sukha, the sense of mental well being is present and there is an overarching

presence of equanimity or oneness. As the meditator acclimatizes to this peaceful, yet engaged state, the vitakkha and vicāra can begin to feel a bit gross and unnecessary and they begin to drop away. Without needing to emphasise vitakkha or vicāra, the mind, goes quickly to a peaceful alive state where there is pīti, sukha and upekkha. Eventually, even the pīti seems to be crude and it dissolves in the increasing subtlety leaving just sukha and upekkha. Deepening further, the sukha drops away, like a rainbow vanishing, leaving just upekkha.

In the Abhidhamma traditions there seem to be very technical definitions as to what is jhāna and what is not. In the Mahayana traditions, the word *samādhi* is often used interchangeably with jhāna and there are uncountable numbers of samādhis. A very important state to develop in terms of Sammā–samādhi is called *upacāra samādhi* => PTS, upacāra; approach, access; habit, practice, conduct; way, means, use of, application; entrance, access, neighbourhood. This is a state where one has almost entered into a state of complete absorption but there is still a sense of being the meditator meditating on an object. However all the factors of jhāna are present and the five hindrances are not manifesting. This calm, clear, presence is the optimal state in which to deepen insight.

The Four Noble Truths could be thought of as four truths or aspects of life experience that can potentially ennoble us. There is nothing inherently noble about suffering. However, we might have the courage to explore the states of suffering that arise in the course of our lives rather than running from them. We might meet them with wide open curiosity and interest instead of being afraid of them, trying to ignore them, and generally becoming lost in all the other common reactions of irritation, anger, and avoidance coupled with feelings of victimization and helplessness. This gentle grappling with suffering will gradually lead to a flowering of many qualities such as patience, love, forgiveness, understanding, discrimination, compassion, and empathy. In this way the experience of suffering can ennoble us.

Looking into the causes of suffering will lead us to a deepening experience of the interconnectedness of everything. As this understanding flowers in our actual experience, qualities such as openness, presence, awakeness, and responsiveness — a sense of profound unavoidable engagement in the creative weaving that is the fabric of all life — will become more and more apparent. In this way, investigating the 'causes' of suffering, leads to a deepening sense of embeddedness in a beginingless, endless, living mystery. Here is the second great ennobling of our being.

Our very investigation of the first two noble truths supports a deepening sense of engagement and profound connectedness. Our faculties of empathy and appreciative understanding nourish a sense of well-being in the midst of an increasing range of situations and circumstances. This potential that is in each and every being to be utterly present and engaged is the heart of the 'cessation of suffering' and is the third great ennobling of our being.

Having tasted the nectar of letting go, or letting be, into life, just as it is, we might look back on how this process became stable and functional in our experience and discern various factors that a human being can consciously encourage in order to live their own life to the fullest. The Buddha enunciated this in eight steps calling it The Eightfold Noble Path. Clarity about what truly supports life gives us the confidence to continue to engage with what we need to do in order to deepen and enrich our own living experience and, it gives us

knowledge to be able to meaningfully help others. This is the fourth great enrichment or ennoblement of our being.

The Four Noble Truths are the heart teaching of Sakyamuni Buddha and are revered by every school of Buddhism. The expression of the Four Noble Truths given in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is probably very close to how the Buddha himself explained them. As his teachings flourished and evolved, moving to other countries and cultures, this rather bare-bones expression was elaborated into the vast, universal vision you find in Chapter 8 of the *Avatamsaka* or Flower Ornament Sutra. Here it is explained that there are many different world systems or modes of experience. The Four Noble Truths are taught in each of these realms but illustrated and explained in different ways depending of the understandings and experiences of sentient beings living there. In the Tibetan teaching it is said that one should focus not on the words but on the meaning behind the words. This section of the Avatamsaka hints at the meaning behind the words. It is well worth studying in order to open one's understanding of the Four Noble Truths in a vast and universal way.

(Continuing with the Majjhima Nikāya version)

45. "In this way he abides, contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects internally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects externally, or he abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind-objects their arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects their vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind-objects both their arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that 'there are mind-objects' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in terms of the four Noble Truths.

(Conclusion)

46. "Bhikkhus, if anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for seven years, one or two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.

"Let alone seven years, bhikkhus. If anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for seven months...for six months...for five months...for four months...for three months...for two months...for one month...for half a month, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.

"Let alone half a month, bhikkhus. If anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for seven days, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.

47. "So it was with reference to this that it was said: 'Bhikkhus, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realisation of Nibbāna – namely, the four foundations of mindfulness."

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed Ones words.

The Pali Cannon, the collected teachings of the Buddha is quite vast occupying thousands of pages of print. Some people, monks and nuns in particular, spend significant amounts of their adult lives studying these texts yet if we were to lose all of them but one, the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, if we then put the teachings of this sutta into practice in a thorough and ongoing way, we would eventually come to experience what the Buddha was trying to point to throughout his forty years of teaching.

The text concludes with what today might be considered as a product guarantee. The Buddha states that if anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness for seven years, seven months … seven days, they would realise *either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.*

Seven years is a long time and hints at the degree of thoroughness and dedication that is necessary to realize the intent of these teachings. The seven days is a short time and indicates how realisation is to be experienced in the here and now. It is fresh and available to any who are free to ask question.

Final knowledge here and now indicates that there is no higher teaching. Full realisation of this practice will enable one to live well in the midst of a world that is constantly changing, unpredictable, and impossible for any single being to control. One can live with impermanence and death, with unsatisfactoriness and suffering, without shutting down, or escaping into fantasy, or grasping after facile philosophical explanations, or simply burying oneself in never ending reactivity and busyness. In Buddhist terms, this is referring to the state of *nibbāna* or the state of *Arahat.*

If there is a trace of clinging left, then full realisation will come at the moment of dying. This is referring to the state of *Anāgāmi.*

Afterthought

Reading through these notes, I am struck, yet again, by the clarity, richness and pragmatic straightforwardness of the Buddha's teaching. I pray that this manual will be a support to your ongoing study and meditations. If you are just beginning your explorations of Buddha Dharma, I do hope they will encourage you to investigate further. If you already have a background of meditative experience, I hope these notes will enrich your contemplations.

with best wishes
Tarchin

May any merit arising through writing, reading and putting into practice
these notes on the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, support the flowering
of wisdom and compassion in all beings.

SARVAMANGALAM

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