

**In This Life Itself**  
**Practical Teachings on Insight Meditation**  
**by**  
**Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva Thero**

Sabbadānam dhammadānam jināti.  
The gift of Dhamma surpasses all other gifts.

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## **Foreword**

Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva is a rare and dexterous teacher who teaches us that final liberation is attainable in this life itself. His teachings offer a simple, yet precise guide to the Satipaṭṭhāna practice and show us that insight into final liberation could unravel in this very moment, in one breath or in one touch of a foot step.

In This Life Itself is a compilation of discourses given on the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta at the Dharmasārana Buddhist Temple, Melbourne, Australia, during a visit between October 2006 and January 2007. It begins with the benefits of the Satipaṭṭhāna practice and then introduces the yogi to establishing mindfulness in the sitting posture, during walking meditation or in day to day affairs. It then goes on to discuss the Buddha's teachings on contemplating the body (kāyānupassanā) and gives detailed instructions on the stages of ānāpānasati meditation and how the Buddha offers insight into the nature of the body in one's own breath. Moment-to-moment examination of the in-breath and the out-breath is linked to the Buddha's teachings contained in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta.

A separate chapter is devoted to the contemplation of the body during walking meditation. Emphasis is then placed on the Buddha's teachings on the anatomical constitution of the body and its composition by the four elements. Finally, In This Life Itself offers insight into the contemplation of feelings (vedanānupassanā) and introduces the yogi to the three types of feelings discussed by the Buddha.

Throughout the teachings, Venerable Dhammajīva draws on his own personal experience and offers direct and practical instructions to overcome problems that the yogi may encounter as insight progressively develops in practice.

When Venerable Dhammajīva visited Victoria, the lay community had only known of his reputation as a meditation master with direct knowledge of the Buddha's teachings. It was in the most unexpected circumstances that the Victorian lay community was informed of his visit.

In ways that could not have been imagined nor anticipated, during Venerable Dhammajīva's visit, his teachings, instructions and his presence opened many doors and yogis were able to traverse through unknown territories and encounter unexpected meditative experiences. He gave us instructions to deepen our insight and finesse the subtleties of the practice, and translated the timeless words of the Buddha in a way that gave us confidence that the desired results can be attained in

this life itself.

This book has been compiled by a lay disciple who visited the Dhammasarana Buddhist Temple during Venerable Dhammajīva's visit to Australia. It is a rare moment in samsāra that one meets a teacher who can insightfully summarize the intricacies of the Dhamma in a span of just three-months. In This Life Itself has been compiled to celebrate the wisdom of a skilled and experienced meditation master and his sincerity, dedication and respect in teaching the Dhamma to his disciples.

The reader will note that Pāli terms appear throughout the text. The Pāli terms have been included to introduce a precision of meaning that is not available in English and is only possible in the Buddha's teachings. The Pāli words have been incorporated as they are necessary for an understanding of the meditative practice. The richness of the discourses as given by Venerable Dhammajīva has, however, been lost to some extent as a result of the editing process.

*The Editor (a disciple from Melbourne)*

### **About Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva**

Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva has practised as a meditation master for over ten years and is presently the meditation teacher and Deputy Abbot of the Mitirigala Nissarana Vanaya, a monastery in the strict forest tradition in Sri Lanka. It is one of Sri Lanka's most respected meditation monasteries. It was found in 1968 and was led under the guidance of the great Venerable Mātara Sri Gnānārāma Mahathera.

Venerable Dhammajīva also spent several years of training under Ovadacariya Sayadaw U. Panditābhivamsa, a leading Burmese meditation master who follows the lineage of the great Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw.

Venerable Dhammajīva is fluent in Sinhalese, English and Burmese and has translated many meditation guide books from Burmese to English and to Sinhalese.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa  
(Homage to the blessed one, worthy and fully enlightened)

Ekāyano ayan bikkhave maggo Sattānam visuddhiyā  
Soka Pariddavānam Samathikkamāya Dukkhadomanassānam  
Atthangamāya Ñyāyassa Adhigamāya  
Nibbānassa Sachikiriya Yaddidam Cattāro Satipaṭṭhāna  
Kathame Cattāro Idha bikkhave bikkhu  
Kaye kayānupassi viharati, Atapi sampajāno sati  
Vinneya loke abhijjhā domanassam Vedandsu  
vedandnupassi viharati, Ātāpi sampajāno satimā  
Vinneya loke abhijjhā domanassam, Cितte cittānupassi viharati  
Ātāpi sampajāno satimā  
Vinneya loke abhijjhā domanassam,  
Dhammesu dhammānupassi viharati, Ātāpi sampajāno satimā  
Vinneya loke abhijjhā domanassam

'Satipaṭṭhāna sutta' can be translated as the 'four foundations of mindfulness'. Its practice is commonly referred to as Insight meditation.

The Satipaṭṭhāna sutta was preached by the Buddha at a town named Kammāsadhamma, in the 'kuru' district. This area is presently located near New Delhi and is called 'Sant Town'. It has been preserved as an archaeological site. Kammāsadhamma was a wealthy area at that time. The monks and the laity living there were in very good physical and mental health. They were also of very good moral conduct. Accordingly they had the requisite conditions to learn the Dhamma expounded in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta.

#### ***Benefits of the Satipaṭṭhāna Practice***

As preached by the Buddha, seven benefits can be gained from the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna.

First, the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna leads to a purification of the being (sattānam

visuddhiyā). Proceeding along the path of purification does not demand a belief in the Buddha. Rather, the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta assumes a level of autonomy on the practitioner and prescribes that purification of oneself rests in one's own hands.

This autonomous path of purification prescribed by the Buddha was a revolutionary statement because at the time Indian philosophy was centred on a view based on a creator. There was a belief that the world was created by an omnipotent god. Although Indians believed in kamma and vipāka (action and its result or causality), their salvation was vested in a creator - the Brahma.

The Buddha preached that there is only one way (ekāyano maggo) to purify the mind. In this path of purification, establishing mindfulness is of fundamental importance. Until recently, Buddhist practice centred on rituals and the perfection of merits or on an aspiration for a future Buddha to liberate them. It is only as of late that the importance of mindfulness in Buddhist practice has gained prominence.

By purifying the mind, a person is able to overcome, sorrow and lamentation (soka pariddavānaṃ samatikkamāya). These are the second and third benefits. The world is inundated with grief, suffering and lamentation and society presents us with many methods and alternatives to cope with these states of mind. But, the results are temporary and superficial. On the other hand, the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna leads to a complete eradication of grief, sorrow and lamentation. The fourth and fifth benefits are overcoming of physical and mental pain (dukkha domanassānaṃ atthangamāya).

By practising Satipaṭṭhāna, a yogi gradually enters the correct path to liberation (ñyāyassa adhigamāya). This is the sixth benefit. At a theoretical level, the Buddha has prescribed the noble eightfold path as a means to attain final liberation. But in practice, the yogi must assimilate his or her own path. This is a trial and error process. By maintaining moral conduct and developing mindfulness, a yogi develops the most conducive method for his or her own liberation. Interviews with advanced yogis are important in assimilating this path. All mistakes, experiences and advancements should be noted by the yogi and discussed with an experienced meditation teacher.

By listening to the Satipaṭṭhāna teachings, logically reasoning its content and practicing it, the yogi will be led towards a purification of the mind. By becoming acquainted with the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta and its practice, yogis will see the results of their own purification - an internal transformation within their own personality traits, background and environment will take place.

Our capacity to practice is always challenged. We get old, our faculties fade, we get sick and die. It is difficult to practice when we are sick or disabled because we need our physical strength to meet the challenges faced in the practice. But, if we practice when we are mentally and physically sound, we will be able to meet the challenges encountered in the Satipaṭṭhāna practice quite comfortably.

Regular and consistent practice will increase our confidence in the Satipaṭṭhāna practice and its results. Gradually, we will gain an understanding of final liberation (nibānnaṇassa sacchikiriyāya). This is the final and seventh benefit. There is no magical formula for this attainment. One must simply strive towards one's own purification.

### ***Preconditions to be met before Commencing the Practice***

A yogi must have purified virtues and a view that is direct and straight (ādimeva visodhehi kusalesu dhammesu) to practice Satipaṭṭhāna. Having a direct view means that the yogi does not believe in a creator or a god, but instead in kamma and vipāka (causality). Thus, the yogi must become responsible for his or her actions. Through an understanding of kamma and vipāka a deeper moral conscience and confidence in physical, mental and verbal conduct will develop.

Without purified morality (sīla visuddhi), a yogi should not undertake the Satipaṭṭhāna practice. Lay people should aim to have a basic level of sīla, which consists of maintaining the five precepts: refraining from taking life, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from sexual misconduct, refraining from verbal misdeeds, and refraining from taking intoxicants. These human qualities must be mastered before commencing the Satipaṭṭhāna practice.

Sīla is not a set of commandments handed down by the Buddha. Rather, it derives from a basic sense of humanity. The Buddha preached to criminals and murderers and in spite of their past behaviour they were able to purify themselves and attain enlightenment. We can purify our moral conduct at any moment. As humans we are able to distinguish good from bad. This mental state is unique to humans. Animals simply react and act on instinct.

Once morality is well established, the yogi must practice with diligence, exert ardent energy (ātāpi) and strive in the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna. The yogi must have faith in the benefits of the practice. Striving is an essential characteristic of the Satipaṭṭhāna yogi.



By applying mindfulness (sati), one is able to have clear comprehension (sampajañña). Mindfulness is the core element to attain clear comprehension and gain a direct knowledge of the natural characteristics of phenomena. When contemplating on the breath and its movement, the changing of postures, the anatomical constitution of the body or the four elements comprising the body, mindfulness is the key element that should be mastered.

### ***What is Mindfulness (Sati)?***

In the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna, mindfulness is applied to four objects:

- i. the body (kāya)
- ii. feelings and sensations (vedanā)
- iii. states of consciousness (citta); and
- iv. mental objects (dhamma).

Mindfulness is a process of bringing one's mind to the present moment. When we try to bring our mind to the present moment, we observe its true nature - how it habitually wanders around, day-dreams and fantasizes. We are always preoccupied with the past and the future. The mind is rarely in the present. It is like a mad monkey that jumps from one branch to another. It is swift and jumps around. It is always in a state of flux. It is impossible to observe the mind's true nature, unless we pause with mindfulness.

By focusing our attention on one object at a particular moment, we are able to really observe its wandering nature. For example, when we read a book, the mind wanders off. Although our eyes are focused on the contents of the book, the mind will remain immersed in thoughts, past memories or future plans. The mind is circumstantial and unpredictable. This aspect of the mind can be clearly observed when an object of meditation is introduced. It simply becomes unruly and obstinate.

It is therefore important that a yogi should take particular care and diligently practice at the very early stages of the meditation. The yogi must be patient and be aware of the mind's nature. Because the mind jumps from one object to another, it never has the opportunity to understand the characteristics of one particular object when it arises. The Buddha has described this mind as superficial. It is like a cork that is put into water simply wobbling around. It never penetrates. But if you put a piece of stone exactly at the point it touches the water, it will sink to the

bottom. Similarly, when mindfulness is effective, whatever the object may be, it will penetrate into its characteristics. This is why the yogi must repeatedly apply the mind to the object of meditation.

The yogi's mindfulness on the in-breath and the out-breath during sitting mediation will be somewhat superficial at the beginning. But with repeated application, the mind will gradually focus on the object of meditation. With well established mindfulness, a yogi will have sustained attention on the in-breath and the out-breath. Throughout the period of meditation, the noting and observing mind will be directly focused on the object. In each sitting, with strong determination, a yogi must strive to bring the mind directly in line with the object. When mindfulness is aligned with the object, a yogi has a certain level of security and hindrances such as sensual desire (kāmacchanda), anger (vyāpāda), sloth and torpor (thīna middha), doubts (vicikicchā) and restlessness and worry (uddhacca kukkuccha), will no longer be present, because the mind is now occupied with the object of meditation.

To strengthen the perception (tirasaññā padaṭṭhāna), the yogi must note the movement and touch of each and every in-breath and out-breath. By noting the phase of the process mindfulness is retained and awareness is not impinged by external distractions such as thoughts. As the strength of the perception increases, the yogi will have the security of a strong and continuous mindfulness.

A yogi with perfected moral conduct and a direct view to practice diligently will see the results of his or her own purification in this life itself. This is not a religious, but a technical exercise. It is a process through which one goes against the grain.

## Chapter 2

### Establishing Mindfulness

Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu  
Kāye kāyānupassī viharati  
Ātāpi sampajāno satimā  
Vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassānam

Essentially, the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta can be characterised as a discourse on 'mindfulness'.

Mindfulness can be established in three ways:

- i. During sitting meditation - being mindful of the breath (ānāpānasati bhāvanā) this is an intensive method
- ii. During walking meditation - being mindful of the movement and the touch of the feet (cankamana) this is a semi-intensive method; and
- iii. Being mindful in day to day affairs; this is an extensive method.

Sitting meditation is relatively rapid to establish, but at the beginning, many yogis find that thoughts, sound or pain interfere with their mindfulness of the breath. With repeated practice, a yogi may be able to establish the desired level of mindfulness and concentration. Maintaining mindfulness after a session of sitting meditation is however difficult.

During walking meditation your eyes are open, your body is active and you are mindful of the movement of the feet. The mindfulness gained during walking meditation is therefore much more durable because it is developed amidst activity.

Paying attention to daily affairs will be comparatively difficult at the beginning and it will take a long time to cultivate mindfulness from one moment to the other. In spite of these perceived difficulties, a yogi must strive to practice all three methods of establishing mindfulness.

So how does one become mindful of one's own body (katañca bhikkhave bhikkhu, kāye kāyānupassī viharati)? According to the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, a bhikkhu contemplates the body in its totality. In our daily lives, we look at the body through various perspectives. We see it as an object of beautification, a sexual object, a lever or an object of strength. We rarely see the body as it is. To see the body and its true

nature, we must exert ardent effort and mindfully see its activities in totality.

As stated in the Karaniya metta sutta, one must be mindful when one is standing (titīam), walking (caram), sitting (nissinnovā) and lying down (sayānovā) (titīam caram nissinnovā sayānovā yāvaṭṭhassa vigatamiddho etam satim adhiheyya). A yogi becomes mindful of the body by being in the present moment and contemplating the body as it is.

Without mindfulness, we will forever go on through samsāra, the cycle of repeated birth and death. The samsāric cycle can be stopped only if we pause with mindfulness. We are caught up in our personal preferences, perceived through a conditioning process. It is only by being mindful from one moment to the next that we can de-condition this process.

### ***Exertion of Effort***

The most proximate cause for establishing mindfulness is the exertion of ardent energy (ātāpi). Viriya (effort) is the energy aspect of the mind. Ātāpi or padhāna viriya is the exertion of ardent energy in the practice. Without energy, the yogi will be in a dull state of mind experiencing sloth and torpor. To establish mindfulness, the yogi must exert ardent energy and diligently strive in the practice.

When establishing mindfulness, energy must be exerted in three ways:

- i. by way of initial application;
- ii. sustained application; and
- iii. fulfilling application.

The initial application involves restraining of the faculties, the purification of virtues, keeping precepts and being morally responsible for our conduct. By having control of the senses and sensual pleasures, we develop a moral conscience. Otherwise, we simply harm ourselves and others.

By establishing mindfulness, we stop the arising of defilements which have not yet arisen in our stream of consciousness (anuppanānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ anuppādāya). This is an important turning point of the samsāric journey, because we make a conscious effort and a determination to restrain defilements from arising with an understanding of the vicious nature of the samsāric journey. When we are not morally responsible, we attribute all mishaps to others, the past or the future. Gradually, with mindfulness, we begin to see

causality, that all actions and their results are our own responsibility (kamma and vipāka). With an understanding of causality, moral shame and fear (hiri ottappa) will set in.

### ***Exerting Effort to Establish Mindfulness of the Breath***

Once seated in an erect, symmetrical and balanced posture, with the alignment of a pyramid in Cairo, the yogi will come to the present moment and become aware of the posture and the body. Gradually, you will note the natural in-breath and the out-breath and silently and choicelessly, observe the most prominent point where the breath manifests. It may be around the tip of the nose or towards the top of the lips, the throat, solar plexus etc. As the breathing continues in an involuntary and natural manner, you must aim to retain your focus on the breath and exert a certain level of energy. Otherwise, thoughts will arise and your attention will be taken away towards external objects.

To retain mindfulness, the yogi must patiently observe the in-breath and the out-breath, understand and experience the difference between the in-breath and the out-breath and carefully observe the phase of the process by maintaining a steady attention on the breath, from the beginning, through the middle, and to the very end. Gradually, the meditative mind will be drawn to the breath and the yogi will no longer be disturbed by sounds, thoughts or bodily pains that arise during sitting meditation. Clarity will set in. To achieve this precise alignment, the yogi must see the in-breath and the out-breath in their entirety. By remaining alert, being attentive, vigilant, diligent and exerting ardent energy, the yogi will have continuous attention on the phase of the in-breath and the out-breath. Continuous attention on the breath is only possible with the application of sustained energy. By exerting sustained energy, you will have continuous attention on the primary object (the breath) without interferences from thoughts, sounds and bodily pain.

### ***Labelling, Noting and Knowing***

During sitting meditation, if an external object impinges strongly on the awareness so as to draw it away from the primary object, it must be promptly and clearly noted. If you hear a sound, direct your attention towards the sound as soon as it arises and become aware of it as a direct experience. You must identify and label it as "hearing, hearing, hearing". When the sound fades away and is no longer predominant, you can bring your attention back to the primary object.

By labelling, naming or noting, it is possible to maintain continuous mindfulness on the primary object. With every in-breath, you note it as "in". When an out-breath occurs, you note it as "out". When a thought arises, you note it as "thinking, thinking, thinking", "wandering, wandering, wandering" or "day-dreaming, day-dreaming, day-dreaming". When pain arises, your focus will shift to the place of pain and you will note it as "pain, pain, pain".

By noting, all transactions taking place in your consciousness will be recorded. By recording all transactions during a session of meditation, you can assess its profitability - whether you spent your time being distracted by external disturbances, or by being mindful of the primary object.

By noting you can recollect and report the meditation experience to a teacher. For example, you will report that at the beginning, the attention was on the tip of the nose and an in-breath occurred. Noted as 'in' and it appeared as an inward rubbing sensation. When the out-breath occurred, you noted as 'out' and that it appeared warmer and longer than the in-breath. Then you wandered off and started thinking. You noted it as "thinking, thinking". When the thought ceased, your attention went back to the breath etc.

Further, by noting, you will be able to discern your personality traits during meditation and seek the appropriate remedies from your teacher by accurately reporting your experiences.

Maintaining consistency during meditation demands sustained energy. By noting and labelling, you are able to exert sustained effort and have control of the process. The technique of labelling and noting is particularly useful for yogis who are frequently distracted by thoughts, sounds and pain during sitting meditation. By noting the object, you will become attentive and see the natural characteristics of the in-breath and the out-breath. As you observe the in-breath and the out-breath in a discrete manner, you will have continuous attention on the primary object during sitting meditation. In spite of any sounds or pain arising, you will continue with mindfulness on the breath if possible.

Noting, labelling or naming is called vitakka. The knowledge or knowing gained is called vicāra (the analytical mind). Knowing is the result of noting. Noting the object is your investment and your effort. By exerting sustained energy and noting the objects that arise in the stream of consciousness, knowing will take place. With mindfulness and noting, all defilements entering the stream of consciousness will be noted and neutralised.

With mindfulness, defilements that have arisen in the stream of consciousness will be erased off (uppanānan pāpakānan akusalānan dhammānan pahānāya). As stated by the Buddha, the first benefit of the Satipaṭṭhāna practice is the purification of the being (sattānam visuddhiyā). As the momentum of the purification increases in the practice, the yogi overcomes grief, sorrow and lamentation (soka pariddavānam samathikkamāya) and eradicates mental and physical pain (dukkhadomanassānam atthagamāya).

Whether the yogi establishes mindfulness in day to day activities, walking meditation or the rising and falling of the abdomen during sitting meditation, he or she must strive to be with the object of meditation. Simply remain choicelessly and silently aware of the object and note it.

Continuous mindfulness will lead to concentration. Concentration will calm the mind and enable the yogi to see all natural phenomena unfold as they are. With well established concentration, the yogi will focus his or her attention from one object to another, undisturbed, and see the beginning, the middle and the end of each event clearly.

### ***Developing Confidence in the Practice***

A purified stream of consciousness will enable wholesome states of mind to arise (anuppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānan uppādāya, chandaṃ janeti vāyamati viriyaṃ ārabhati cittaṃ paggaṇhāti padahati). With increased mindfulness, your consciousness will become free from defilements. This purification process will increase the faith in the practice and the yogi will gain confidence that with continuous effort, the desired results can be attained in this life itself or in this very moment. This confidence will give way to an increased faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

Through the purification of virtues and the results of your practice, a penetrative form of faith will arise. Generally, we increase or restore faith as we sit in front of an image of the Buddha or go to a spiritual place. But this faith is superficial. The faith gained from our experience in the practice and its result is not superficial. It will be a penetrative form of faith (okkappana saddhā).

By effectively noting every in-breath and out-breath, a yogi experiences less and less defilements and develops continuous mindfulness and concentration. Faith in the practice will develop. With increased faith, you will exert more energy and this

in turn will lead to continuous mindfulness. This process will develop as a chain reaction.

### ***Benefits of Mindfulness***

When the mind is directly facing the object of meditation, lust (rāga), hatred (dosa) or ignorance (moha) will not arise. To clearly note the benefits of mindfulness, the momentum of the practice must come to the correct proportion to enable the yogi to see things as they are. By developing mindfulness in sitting meditation, the yogi can extend it to day to day affairs too. Further, with continuous mindfulness during sitting meditation, the yogi can cleanse the stream of consciousness from potential defilements. This will lead to concentration, which in turn will give way to wisdom. With continuous mindfulness, the yogi will become aware of the present moment.

By being in the present moment we experience "living". Generally, we are imagining, caught up with past disappointments and the excitements of the future. This robs us from being in the present moment. In the same way that a child engages with a toy, an artist with a painting or a butterfly with a flower, with continuous and sustained attention on the primary object, the yogi's meditation experience becomes more vivid. By establishing mindfulness and clearing the consciousness from defilements, we are able to remain in the present moment and see things as they are.

If we are mindful, we can deal with all mishaps in life with skill and confidence. We will make instead of reactions, lasting decisions which are based on facts arising out of our observations.

We ourselves must attain our own liberation. The Buddha has expounded the Dhamma and has mapped the path, but each one of us must practice and attain final liberation. With diligence, we must exert ardent energy and regularise the practice. Once the meditation gathers in momentum, concentration will set in. With developed concentration, wisdom will arise and the wheel of Dhamma will be set in motion. If we practice in this manner, we will see irreversible changes in this life itself.



## Chapter 3

### Sitting Meditation (Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā)

Katañca bhikkhave bhikkhu, kāye kāyānupassī viharati  
 Idha bhikkahve bhikkhu,  
 Āraññgovā, rukkhamūla gatovā, suññāgāra gatovā,  
 nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā, ujunkāyaṃ panidhāya  
 parimukhaṃ, satim uppatthapetvā.  
 So satovā assa sati, satovā passa sati.  
 Dīgamvā assasanto, dīgam assasāmīti pajānāti,  
 dīgamvā passasanto, dīgam passasām 'ti pajānāti.  
 Rassamvā assasanto, rassam assasām īti pajānāti,  
 rassamvā passasanto, rassam passasām īti pajānāti.  
 Sabbakāya patisamvedhi, assasissām īti sikkhati,  
 sabbakāya patisamvedhi, passasissām īti sikkhati.  
 Passambhayam kāyasankhāram, assasissāmīti sikkhati,  
 passambhayam kāyasankhāram, passasissāmīti sikkhati.

In the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, the Buddha asks a rhetorical question: How does a bhikkhu contemplate the body as body? (katañca bhikkhave bhikkhu, kāye kāyānupassī viharati?)

The human body is seen as complicated and mysterious. Scientists and researchers are still continuing with their pursuit of a complete understanding of the human body. However, more than 2550 years ago, the Buddha instructed yogis on how to contemplate the body and understand its true nature.

To contemplate the body as body, a yogi must contemplate it in its totality. This does not suggest an analytical process or a separation of the body into elementary parts. Rather, the invitation is to see the body in its totality. We generally perceive our body through its features and the different perspectives that they offer. The body is viewed as a sexual object, something beautiful and an operating machine or as a source of power. These perspectives only offer a limited understanding. When we understand the body in its totality and its natural characteristics are revealed, there will no longer be any hatred, desire or ignorance, resulting from it.

This chapter will discuss how a yogi contemplates the body in one's own breath.

## ***Preparing for Sitting Meditation***

The Buddha has suggested that either a forest place (arañña gatovā), under a tree (rukkhamūla gatovā) or any other vacant place (suññāgāra gatovā) is best for meditation (idha bhikkhave bhikkhu, aranñagatovā, rukkhamūlagatovā, suññāgāra gatovā). The yogi must be in an environment where there is a minimum of external distractions.

This is a practical suggestion because if the yogi is in a busy or crowded place, the focus of the mind will be taken away by external distractions.

Meditating in an isolated place is a new experience for most people. Often when new yogis arrive at the Meetirigala forest hermitage in Sri Lanka, sitting on the floor and walking with bare feet itself is a novelty for them.

By going to an isolated place, we are creating a spiritual atmosphere.

The sitting posture (nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ) is the most conducive for developing concentration. Lying down will give way to sloth and torpor and interfere with the development of concentration. Standing may be difficult for the beginner. Walking meditation may also be a challenge because the yogi is intentionally moving the body while noting the same to arouse the energy aspect of the body. Focusing on the activity and noting the movement of the feet may be distracting in the sense of concentration, for the beginner. Nevertheless, the concentration developed during walking meditation is more durable as it is developed amidst activity. Further, because we walk to so many places in our daily lives, we can extend that mindfulness already established during walking meditation in to our day to day activities.

During sitting meditation, the yogi must try to sit in the full lotus posture. Alternatively, you can go for the half or quarter lotus posture. When you sit like this, your whole body will be held in a triangular shape, as if you are a pyramid in Cairo. Nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ means being seated in a cross-legged position. If sitting with your legs crossed proves to be difficult, you can consider sitting on a straight back chair or on a meditation bench. The benefits of sitting straight are not difficult to see because an arched back will result in pain and will also hinder the passage of the air draught. Further, sitting in an upright position without external support will energise your meditation practice.

As you sit in a suitable environment with your upper body erect, you will have the appropriate alignment to establish mindfulness on the object in front of you (arañña gatovā rukkhamaṅga gatovā suññagāra gatovā, nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ, ābhujitvā, ujunkāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ, satimuppaṭṭhapetvā).

Focus and scan through the whole body to ensure that you are seated comfortably. Simply be with the totality of the body. Do not analyse it. To be in the present 'here, now I am' moment. Gradually, the processes of the body and the mind will calm down and the breathing will become prominent.

Breathe naturally, without forcing your breath to ascertain a prominent point of the breath. When breathing continues in its consistency, it is natural.

As you observe your stream of consciousness, you can see whether it is completely taken away by wandering thoughts, and day-dreaming or fantasizing. The mind may think or wander off. Just note these distractions as they arise in your stream of consciousness. But, do not react to them. Just be choicelessly aware. Or else, when distracting sounds or bodily pains arise, you will become irritated. If you do not react, thoughts, sounds and pain will just come and go. They will arise and pass away casually. If you react however, they will persist in your consciousness and disturb you.

To establish continuous mindfulness, you must be attentive. You must also be patient.

### ***Observing the Breath***

Mindfully, you must notice the in-breath and the out-breath as they occur (so satova assa sati, sato passu sati). The air draught will touch many places as the breath moves in and out. You must have a detached observation on the object and see how the mind discriminately differentiates between the in-breath and out-breath. Allow breathing to take place naturally under the light of mindfulness.

Note the in-breath as "in" and the out-breath as "out". Noting does not mean verbalising, but simply aligning the mind with the in-breath and the out-breath. Discriminately experience the difference between the two phases.

Although the breathing process stimulates many points, you must discern the most prominent point and focus on it. Once you distinguish the most prominent touching point, your focus will gradually converge into it. It may be the tip of the

nose, top of the lip or the rising and falling of the abdomen or elsewhere. Two alignments must be established during sitting meditation. Firstly, you must observe the discriminative experience of the in-breath and out-breath or the rising or falling of the abdomen. Secondly, as this happens, you must locate the most prominent point at which stimulation occurs as the breath moves in and out. Sharpen your aim and make sure that the mind is attentive to the entirety of each process. Be aware of the sensations from the very beginning and follow the in-breath and the out-breath, from the beginning, through the middle to the end. The attention must be continuous. The stronger the attention and the focus, the more information about the experience you will gather. You must have a precise aim to directly meet the experience and the sensations of the air draught.

The journey has now started! Thoughts, sounds and pain will arise from time to time and may impinge on your awareness of the in and out breaths. If mindfulness is not strongly established, the distractions will take the attention away from the primary object. When this happens, a helpful aid to precision and continued mindfulness is to make a mental note of the distraction and naming the sensation, by silently repeating the word in the mind such as "thinking, thinking, thinking". As you adopt this method, you will observe that thoughts and sounds arise, but you will not think or hear. You will continue to remain with the in-breath and the out-breath and your mindfulness will not waver. Whenever there is no distraction go back to the primary object and note it continuously.

### ***Noting the length of the in-breath and the out-breath***

With continuous mindfulness, you will observe the length of the breath. For example, the in-breath may appear longer than the out-breath or vice versa. When the in-breath and the out-breath are long, you observe them as such (dighaṃ vā assasanto, dighaṃ assasāmīti pajānāti, dighaṃ vā passasanto, dighaṃ passasāmīti pajānāti). Similarly, when the in-breath and the out-breath are short, you observe them as such (rassaṃ vā assasanto, rassaṃ assasāmīti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto, rassaṃ passasāmīti pajānāti). You must try to experience the touch and the rubbing sensation of the two phases - the in-breath and the out-breath separately.

During ānāpānasati bhāvanā, by observing the length of the in-breath and the out-breath, you can diagnose your character traits. For example, a yogi that takes a slow in-breath and breathes out in a sigh is an emotional type of character. A yogi with a quick and rushing in-breath is a restless type of character.

When the noting mind calms down, the air draught becomes shorter. This is a healthy improvement and it indicates progress. Gradually, the discrimination between the in-breath and the out-breath will become less apparent. The in-breath and the out-breath will be similar and there will be less distance between the breath and the noting mind. The phase of the in-breath and the out-breath will become less noticeable. Gradually, the breath becomes inconspicuous. As the prominence of the breath disappears, yogis may become doubtful and wonder whether their concentration has been disturbed or their mindfulness has lost its efficiency. On the contrary, this state demonstrates a healthy progression of your meditation.

### ***Observing the Totality of the in-Breath and the out-Breath***

When the breath becomes shorter and subtler, more energy needs to be exerted. The yogi will be challenged to maintain continuous mindfulness as the breath becomes finer and less discernible. So the mindfulness should be accurate and precise. You must be vigilant, diligent, mindful and concentrated. Gradually, the touch sensation of the breath will disappear. (*sabbakāya patisamvedi, assasissāmīti sikkhati, sabbakāya patisamvedi, passasissāmīti sikkhati*).

At this stage, you are instructed to see the breath as the whole body (*sabbakāya*). Your attention must be sharpened and you must observe the entirety of each process. Be aware of the very beginning of the in-breath and maintain a steady attention through the middle and the end. Then be aware of the out-breath from the beginning, through the middle, to the end. Such a detailed observation is necessary when the breath becomes subtle. The yogi must catch the breath immediately as it manifests and see its entire process. You will observe that the in-breath disappears exactly at the point before the out-breath starts. When you are able to continually observe this process and the gap between the two phases, you will know that your mind is fully aligned with the breath. When you observe the breath in its totality, you are engrossed in it and you will gradually observe that the beginning, the middle and the end of the in-breath and the out-breath are similar.

As the breath becomes subtle, retaining mindfulness demands energy. So you must be armed with sufficient energy for continuous attention on the breath. In Pāli this energy is called *virīya*. In order to undertake longer periods of sitting meditation, yogis are recommended to do about thirty to forty minutes of walking meditation beforehand. This is because walking meditation increases stamina and builds durable concentration.

The importance of discussing this progression in ānāpānasati meditation with an experienced teacher cannot be stressed. It will be a new experience for the yogi and all so called mistakes must be recorded and reported to a teacher, who can instruct the yogi to skilfully proceed along the path. Once mistakes are reported and rectified, and instructions for overcoming negative personality traits are received, the yogi will gain confidence and skilfully and independently progress with the practice.

### ***Calming Down of the Mind and Settling Down of the Breath***

As you continually observe the subtle phases of the in and out breaths, the movement of the breath will calm down and settle (*passambhayaṃ kāyasankhāraṃ, assasissāṃ ĩti sikkhati, passambhayaṃ kāyasaṃkhāraṃ, passasissāṃ ĩti sikkhati*). The meditation will become effortless. The meditation will gather its own momentum and you will penetrate deeper into the object of meditation. When your effort is balanced and your attention is precise and continuous, mindfulness will become strongly established and concentration will develop. The observing mind will be magnetically drawn into the breath and you will find your self in a deep state of concentration - in a state of one-pointedness.

If you are naturally inclined towards serenity meditation, then, as your mind calms down and becomes concentrated, the breath will also settle down without any steering or direction from the mind. The more you experience the settling down of the mind and the breath, the deeper will be the calmness. As concentration deepens, the observing mind will be left without any sensation of the breathing. To maintain consistency in your practice when signs of the breath disappear, you must have an alert mindfulness and firm concentration. The concentrated mind must be vigilant and remain in a state of one-pointedness for as long as possible. To retain this deep-seated concentration and firm mindfulness, the awareness should not shift to bodily pains, thoughts or sounds.

### ***Noting Personality Traits***

Your experiences during meditation must be reported to an experienced teacher. All mishaps along the path is a lesson to be learnt. They indicate your personality traits. By patiently noting all mishaps and personal characteristics during meditation, you will be able to discern whether you are mostly distracted by thoughts, sounds or pain. There is no criterion, other than your own investigation.

Therefore each moment is precious in meditation. The frequency of a particular disturbance will enable you to identify it as the most prominent disturbing factor during meditation. This is a useful self diagnosis. All your weaknesses, habits and traits will be revealed during this process. By reporting your personality traits to your teacher, you can receive the appropriate techniques to be used during meditation. You must discuss your experience only with an experienced teacher. Inexperienced teachers with only a theoretical knowledge will not be able to constructively interpret your experience. Theory is not as useful as experience during practice. Direct experience is what is most relevant.

Observe all sensations and experiences during meditation. Note the inner chatter. By collecting as much information as possible, you can clearly discern your personality traits, your strengths and weaknesses. As stated by the Buddha, the meditative experience is a mirror that reflects your personality traits. So, there is no mystery in meditation. The knowledge accumulated will be from your direct personal experience. Of course, you may not like what is revealed through this process because in life we are trained to only notice the good. But, by being choicelessly aware of the whole experience as it unfolds, you will identify your true nature and realise that such social conditioning only offers a limited perspective.

### ***Concentration Meditation and Insight Meditation***

Those who cannot proceed to sustained pure concentration during sitting meditation can still develop insight meditation.

All beings have six faculties: the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. These faculties have their own method of operation. For example, when the eye catches a visible object, the mind's attention is drawn to the eye, the eye consciousness and you experience "seeing". To experience "seeing", the visible object must impinge on the eye sensitivity and then seeing takes place.

Or else, a sound may arise and the ear drum will catch the sound and become agitated. If the focus of the mind shifts to the sound, hearing will take place. If the air draught strikes at the tip of the nose or at the top of the lip, and the mind shifts to the point of touch, it will focus on the in-breath and out-breath.

All six sense doors operate in the same manner. Three conditions must be met to

experience sense impressions that enter through the six sense doors:

- i. the striker element = Ārammana
- ii. the base element = Dvara
- iii. the ignition element = Tadupapanna

During ānāpānasati meditation, the striker element is the air draught. The base element is the point of touch - the tip of the nose or the top of the lip. The touch sensation or the experience of the coolness, the heat, shortness, the rubbing, the expansion or the contraction, is the ignition element. The in-breath comes and strikes on the skin and a touch sensation takes place. By way of analogy, if you take a matchstick and strike on the side of the matchbox, a spark ignites. But, for ignition to take place, a particular amount of energy needs to be applied at an appropriate angle. Otherwise, it is not possible for the spark to ignite.

A yogi that focuses his or her mind on the striker element is someone who is inclined towards concentration meditation. Insight meditators have heightened and discriminating observations during ānāpānasati meditation. They observe the whole phenomena, all the three elements: the experience of the touch, the coolness, the calmness, the rubbing sensation, the tension, the movement or the stiffness of the breath and its point of touch during ānāpānasati meditation.

Insight meditators find it difficult to observe only the air column; the length of the breath; and the beginning, the middle and the end of the air draught, because their experience is bent towards the ignition element. As a result, they may not benefit from the ānāpānasati general instructions prescribed by the Buddha in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta. The Buddha himself has stated that ānāpānasati bhāvanā can only be practised by yogis with clear mindfulness or clear discernment (nāham bhikkhave mutthassatissa asampajāññassa ānāpāna sati vadāmi).

Importantly, if you can proceed with undisturbed concentration meditation, then you should not change your approach. Those who cannot focus on the striker element (air draught) can specialise in insight mediation. To know your natural inclination, you will have to undertake a few sittings. You will find that your experience oscillates between the striker element and the ignition element. Sometimes, you may begin by focusing on the striker element, but later shift towards the ignition aspects of the breath and its movement. Alternatively, you may find that a focus on the hardness, the stiffness, warmth or coolness results in a calming down of the air draught. You must note which is most durable and consistent. For a large part, identifying the tendency of the yogi is the responsibility of the meditation teacher. It is therefore important to receive



instructions from an experienced meditation teacher with direct knowledge. Yogis must skilfully discern their experiences during meditation and precisely report to their teacher. Then it is the responsibility of the teacher to make an assessment of the yogi's natural inclination and give the appropriate instructions.

The patisambhidhā magga characterises yogis as practising three methods:

- i. yogis that begin with concentration meditation (focus on the striker element) and later convert to insight meditation, samatha yānika.
- ii. yogis who begin with insight meditation and later convert to concentration meditation, vipassanā yānika, and
- iii. yogis with mixed experiences of both concentration meditation and insight meditation, yuganadda.

You must have a detached observation and be aloof and independent when observing the breath. When the concentration or insight meditation gathers in its momentum, your focus will be dragged into the breath. An independent view of the world can then be observed, you will not grasp anything in the world as the mind will be closely occupied with the object of meditation (anissitoca viharati, na ca kiñci loke upādiyati).

Each day you must start as a beginner - as if you are observing the breath for the first time. As your practice is regularised, past meditation experiences will guide you through any stumbling blocks. Consistently and gradually, the concentration or the insight meditation will proceed uninterrupted.

Both insight meditators and concentration meditators at the beginning must develop concentration. It is only with concentration or purified consciousness, that we can penetrate into the true nature of what is happening, and become free from the deluded notion of a self and simply observe phenomena naturally arising and passing away.

Once you are grounded in establishing mindfulness and concentration you will ease through life. You will be able to extend the strong mindfulness and firm concentration established in sitting meditation to walking meditation and then to day to day affairs. The mindfulness and the resulting concentration will grow like a network. Whatever happens in life, you will remain in the present moment. As expounded in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, a yogi who regularly practices with a firm resolution and with diligence will progress along the path to insight and will attain the desired results in a maximum of seven years or seven days. If you practice with a precise aim and diligent effort, you will directly observe things in their true

nature and see the desired results in this life itself!

### **Questions & Answers**

*As you do ānāpānasati meditation, there comes a time when you have unbearable pain and your mindfulness shifts from the breath (primary object) to the pain (the secondary object). At this point, how does the yogi become choicelessly aware of the secondary object and then go back to the primary object?*

We live in an ocean of pain. But, we are not aware of it. At the beginning, when you focus your attention on the breath, you will note the breathing as coarse and you will observe the in-breath and out-breath very clearly. Subtle pains may exist, but the focus on the breath will be strong. Therefore the pain will not be an issue.

As you sit in the same posture for a while, the intensity of pain will gradually increase. It will increase in its force until it becomes the predominant observation. Your attention will then be dragged to the pain as it is unbearable and you will surrender to the pain.

When this happens, you must mentally note it as "pain, pain, pain" and be aware that it has impinged on your awareness and has taken the attention away to the point where the pain has arisen. First, you must note the place where the pain has arisen, whether it is on the right knee, left knee or the ankle etc. As you observe the pain, you will observe its characteristics. The pain will manifest as a stabbing, piercing, a conglomeration of dots, a heat patch, or as something which moves up and down.

Generally, we react to pain as soon as it arises by changing the posture and fail to observe its natural characteristics. When pain arises, instead, you must note it as "pain" and spend as much time as you can with it and observe its natural characteristics. A theoretical knowledge of pain is useful, but unless you see it directly as it occurs, you will fail to observe its nature or its characteristics. Pain is an internal feeling. You must patiently be with the pain and observe one or more of its natural characteristics.

Sometimes, even if you observe the natural characteristics of pain, it continues in its intensity and becomes unbearable. The mind will then suggest that you get up or change the posture. But before making a decision to change the posture, you must recognise that the immediate cause for changing the posture is pain and consider the most practical shift. Change your posture mindfully with the idea that you will come back to the primary object. With a slight and slow shift, the pain will be

released.

Pain must be dealt with patience. In Burma, there is a saying that "patience leads to nibbāna". Pain is always challenging and suggests that we must change our posture. But, the truth of suffering manifests through pain. Our forbearance, resistance and stamina in dealing with pain will indicate how strong we are in our concentration. At the beginning, you may mindfully do some adjustments. You must know pain as pain and that you are foregoing the primary object and slowly adjusting the posture.

Alternatively, you can focus your attention at the particular place where the pain has arisen and continuously note it as "pain, pain, pain". You must keep the noting mind with the pain and see its natural characteristics. When pain becomes intensified, your noting must also follow at the same consistency and in the same frequency. To understand the nature of pain you should not rush and change the posture. Instead, you should try to be with the pain for a little longer and see its characteristics. This will demonstrate your resilience and indifference to the pain that has arisen. Pain is a useful test for the vipassanā yogi as the noting mind can be used to see the natural characteristics of pain.

You can also do some walking meditation to postpone the pain that arises during sitting meditation. If you do walking meditation beforehand, your mindfulness and concentration will be consistent during sitting meditation and you will be able to sit for longer.

*Is it useful to sit on a chair or on something more comfortable, if you find that pain arises?*

During my first sitting meditation with Munindra-ji, he said that even if I am sitting on a cushion of air, pain will arise. He said, "the day you experience the pain of death, the next day you will be enlightened". So you cannot avoid pain. You must gradually get used to it. Sayadaw U. Panditā once noticed foreign yogis bringing cushions on their way to Burma commented that in spite of their best efforts to make their sittings more comfortable with cushions, pain will still arise. There is a monastery in Burma where the teacher prohibits yogis from using cushions on the basis that venerable Sariputta and Moggallāna never had used them.

So, you must confront the pain. This may seem difficult. But, the day you overcome pain, you will realise its value. Pain keeps the yogi awake during sitting meditation. Some yogis spread sand on the ground where they sit to feel the pain - because pain keeps you awake. When pain is absent, you feel a sense of paralysis. But, for beginners it may be too difficult to endure pain. Therefore, it is recommended that

they use a chair or something comfortable at the beginning and gradually get accustomed to pain.

*Sometimes, the pain you endure in sitting meditation results in feelings of aversion and anger. Could you please explain how to deal with this situation?*

There are many designs of cushions and chairs to experience a greater level of comfort. Manufacturers make a lot of money out of pain. Go to meditation centres, and you will see cushions with many designs. But even then, pain arises. You have to acquaint yourself with it. Gradually you will become accustomed to pain and you will no longer see it as something bad, resulting in negative states of mind.

As time passes, you will see the early stages of pain and how it can take your attention away from the primary object. Pain operates universally. Be ready for pain to arise. When beginners note pain, it is too late and they react to it. This is the difference between diligent attention (appamāda) and delayed attention (pamāda). With diligent attention, you will see the characteristics of pain as soon as they arise. If you are late in noting pain, then the body will simply react to it. With mindfulness and concentration, you will realise that it is due to your delay in noticing the pain that it becomes unbearable and you hence react to it with aversion and anger.

*As pain arises, do you reflect on the reasons for the pain?*

No, instead you must observe the natural characteristics of pain. It is a very vivid and enlightening experience.

Usually, you react at the beginning. But later you will realise how to deal with it.

You must maximise your attention on the primary object. Then you will have continuous energy to observe intense forms of pain as and when they arise.

Pain is an awakening experience. If you can awaken to the pain and live with it, when ever you have a disease, you won't react. Generally, as soon as the symptoms surface, we start taking medicine. Pain is identified as something bad. It is never observed as a feeling, that it is neither good nor bad.

The Satipaṭṭhāna sutta prescribes an observation of the painful and the pleasurable as feelings and sensations. With established mindfulness and firm concentration, endurance in the face of severe and unbearable pain is possible.

*Which of the two methods of meditation, concentration meditation or insight meditation gives quicker results?*

No one can predetermine your personal characteristics and inclinations. It is not possible to learn swimming from ashore. You must get into the water. The first few in-breaths and out-breaths during sitting meditation will indicate your characteristics as a yogi. The best is to allow the natural process to unfold and note your personality traits. You must carefully start as a beginner everyday. You cannot predetermine what practice you will do. You cannot decide whether you are the concentration or insight meditation type. We must practice for a number of days and observe your inclinations and decide. Only then can you obtain the relevant information and support your tendency towards concentration meditation or insight meditation.

*What instructions can you give to a yogi who commences with the ignition element, which leads to concentration and then focuses on the striker element, and then proceeds to the ignition element towards a later stage of meditation?*

Any element such as earth, fire, water, air as it appears, will be a direct experience. You feel the numbness, the stiffness, the heat, coolness or the tensions. When this happens, you just keep on observing. You should not then change to the striker element and see the length of the breath or see the beginning, middle and the end of the in-breath and the out-breath. You are not asked to change the element. You must specialise and see what is happening and keep the contact with the element as long as you can. If you change, your trend will be broken and mindfulness will be shaken. You must promote observation of what happens. Meditation itself will take turns and when it happens, don't interfere with it. Just patiently observe it. Do not try to steer the situation.

But, if the change in focus happens naturally, you may continue with it and observe the changes as they happen.

*Do you need concentration to develop insight?*

Yes, there is pure concentration and insight concentration. Concentration based on the striker element which leads to jhānic experience is the pure type of Samatha samādhi. Concentration (samādhi) is necessary for both Samatha practice and Vipassanā practice. You can also develop Vipassanā samādhi after developing Samatha samādhi. First you must develop samādhi and know which samādhi you are dealing with. Then you can navigate towards insight. If you don't know which samādhi you have developed, you will simply be standing at a junction not knowing

which way to turn. As a result, you will never pass the junction.

## Chapter 4

### Walking Meditation (Cankamana)

Punaca param bhikkhave bhikkhu,  
gacchantovā gacchāmī ti pajānāti  
Thitovā thitomhī tipajānāti  
Nissinnovā nissinomhī ti pajānāti  
Sayānova sayānomhī ti pajānāti  
Yathā yathā vā panassa kāyo panihito hoti  
Tathā tathānam pajānāti

Meditation is generally considered to be limited to the sitting posture. In the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, the Buddha recommends the practice of establishing mindfulness in the four postures of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. As a yogi walks, the yogi must contemplate that he or she is walking (gacchantovā gacchām īti pajānāti). Similarly, the sitting posture could be used as the primary object of meditation. A yogi must be mindful when he or she is standing (thitovā thitomhīti pajānāti) and lying down (sayānova sayānomhīti pajānāti). Although the Buddha has prescribed all four postures to be used as meditation objects, this chapter will only discuss the benefits and the practice of walking meditation.

Walking meditation is unique to Buddhism. A yogi with a dynamic meditative life, undertaking long periods of sitting meditation may find walking meditation particularly useful. A period of formal walking meditation before sitting serves to focus the mind. Walking meditation develops accuracy of awareness and durability of concentration. To develop durable concentration (samādhi) during sitting meditation, a yogi requires energy (viriya). Just like an athlete warms up before the event in order to be armed with sufficient energy, a yogi engages in walking meditation before commencing sitting meditation. Otherwise you are like a car with a run down battery. Simply, the car will not sustain a long journey unless the battery is charged. Similarly, after a meal or a sleep, you must mobilize your energy by doing walking meditation. Then you will become diligent and mindful. On the other hand, if you do sitting meditation after a meal or a sleep sloth and torpor will overcome you.

## ***Benefits of Walking Meditation***

According to the Buddha, five benefits can be gained from walking meditation.

The first is that the yogi will develop stamina to endure long journeys. During the time of the Buddha, venerable Ananda knew the duration of the journey that the Buddha was to undertake by simply observing the amount of time he allocated for walking meditation. With longer periods of formal walking meditation, venerable Ananda knew that the Buddha was about to embark upon a long journey.

The second benefit is that walking meditation develops stamina for the yogi's meditation practice. By doing at least an hour of walking meditation beforehand, a yogi will be able to sit for a longer period, as concentration gradually develops during sitting meditation. The effort exerted during walking meditation is two-fold. As you walk, you intentionally move your limbs and note the same as 'right'-'left', 'right'-'left'. The yogi exerts mechanical effort to move the limbs as well as being mindful of the movement. By continually exerting this two-fold effort, a yogi strengthens the capacity for strong and consistent mental effort that is crucial for the development and maintenance of concentration during sitting meditation.

Thirdly, walking meditation contributes to improved health. In the earlier times, people did not travel by vehicles, but walked from one place to another. So, they were naturally healthy. My teacher, venerable Gnānārāma, once said that the origins of reflexology could be traced back to forest monks as they undertook long periods of walking meditation, knowing that it rejuvenated their nervous system and blood circulation. Today we travel by vehicles and often wear shoes when we walk. As a result, there is very little opportunity for our feet to touch the earth and experience the natural benefits of reflexology. Ironically, manufacturers have introduced ourselves to special types of footwear, designed to attract the benefits of reflexology massage which you simply get by walking barefoot.

The fourth benefit is that walking meditation assists digestion. Therefore, yogis are recommended to undertake walking meditation after a meal. Venerable Gnānārāma used to walk for at least thirty minutes after a meal. Even when he was sick and hospitalised, he walked along the hospital corridor simply to restore his health.

Finally, walking meditation helps to build durable concentration. A yogi who undertakes a period of walking meditation and develops concentration before sitting, will be able to restore and develop continuous mindfulness and concentration, which is crucial for wisdom to arise and penetrate into the true

nature of reality. A yogi who is diligent during walking meditation will carry strong mindfulness and firm concentration into the sitting meditation that follows.

### ***Preparing the Path for Walking Meditation***

Two kinds of walking meditation paths are available in traditional Theravada Buddhist monasteries. One has a roof and is called 'indoor *cankamana*.' The other, the more preferable one, is the open-air walking meditation path (ambulatory).

Importantly, the walking path must be levelled. It must be four to four and a half feet wide.

An open-air walking meditation path must have a layer of sand of about half an inch. Often, a garden chair is placed at the end of the path for the yogi to sit and rest if necessary. The length of the walking path should be about thirty steps in length. On average, it could be measured to be about forty five feet. Of course, these standards could be varied. Generally, fifteen steps or twenty feet would be sufficient. Naturally, a longer walking path will give way to stronger and continuous mindfulness, which is essential for developing concentration. The maximum length of a walking path should be ninety feet. Indoor meditation paths are four feet wide and thirty five feet long. Older monks often require support when walking along the path. As a result, some paths have rails fitted to a wall with a rope hanging from the top of the roof to assist them along the path.

Traditionally, walking paths have a peripheral border around them to obstruct crawling animals or ants from entering the path. It is preferable to have a water canal in between to prevent them. The walking path must be approximately eight inches higher than the ground.

Although walking along a grass field also is permissible, yogis must ensure that the grass is even. Further, when walking on an oval, it is preferable to walk along a straight path and not in circles.

### ***Preparing to Walk***

To commence walking meditation, you must stand at one end of the path; have your eyes open and pay attention to the standing posture. By observing your posture and establishing mindfulness on the body, you will be assured that no pains



or thoughts have arisen in your stream of consciousness. First, you just walk up and down the path at normal pace for about five minutes. When you are ready and the walking path is suitable, you can commence formal walking meditation.

### ***Practising Walking Meditation***

When the right foot moves and touches the ground, you observe the sensations and the movement and perceive what happens naturally. Do not look at the feet. Your eyes should be cast down and your focus should be at least five to five and a half feet in front of you. In walking meditation, you pay attention to the walking process, the movement of the limbs and the sensations as the feet touch the ground. When the right foot moves, you observe the feeling and the movement of the foot being lifted and placed on the ground. You observe the sensations of the foot touching the ground. Then the focus will shift to the left foot and you observe the sensations as the foot lifts and touches the ground.

The focus of the sensation will vary among yogis. Yogis inclined towards the ignition element will observe the sensations as the foot touches the ground. Yogis with attention on the striker element will observe the movement of the feet, the lifting and lowering of the feet. First, you note the movement as "right-left, right-left". If thoughts, pains or sounds impinge on your consciousness, you must pause and make a soft mental note of the distraction as "thinking, thinking, thinking", "pain, pain, pain" or "hearing, hearing, hearing", which ever is predominant at the time. When the distraction is no longer predominant, you recommence walking.

Try to keep your mind on the sensations of walking. Observe what happens when you stop at the end of the path, as you stand still and turn around and begin walking back. As you proceed back along the path, you once again focus on the sensations of walking and note the movement as "right-left, right-left".

Insight yogis will focus on the sensations as the feet touch the ground. They will have more detailed observations as the meditation progresses, uninterrupted. With attentive observation and diligent practice, they will observe how their heel touches the ground first and spreads towards the toes. But, this experience itself will vary amongst insight yogis. Some will find that the inner part of the foot touches the ground first and spreads outwards; some others will find that the outer part of the foot touches the ground first and spreads inwards. With attentive awareness, you will observe other characteristics as the feet move and touch the ground. You will observe a heaviness of the right foot as it is placed on the ground and that its sensations are more prominent than the left or vice versa. Sometimes

the touch of the feet may feel as if you are walking along a thick carpet, a spongy surface or a muddy path. It is only by establishing mindfulness on the process of walking that you are able to notice these basic characteristics.

Some yogis will focus on the ankle rather than the soles of their feet. Some others may focus on the knees or the joint at the hip. With continuous mindfulness, yogis may also experience how the movement of joints jerk up to their head. Some will also become aware of their skeleton.

### ***Advancing in the Practice of Walking Meditation***

With continuous awareness, you must aim to observe the sensation of each foot being lifted and placed on the ground. Earlier, you compared the touch and the movement of the left foot with the right foot. Now you must contrast two experiences of the same foot as it moves. As you lift, you observe the lifting process and note it as "lifting-lifting-lifting" and when you place the foot on the ground, you note it as "dropping-dropping-dropping". The lifting must be observed as an upward movement and the dropping as a downward movement independently. Lifting may appear as a heavy action and placing the foot on the ground may be effortless. As you progress with attentive awareness, you are able to observe more and more detailed natural characteristics of each step.

As you advance further in your practice, you must divide the movement of each foot into three distinct movements: lifting, moving and placing the foot. To instil precise awareness, you must separate the movements clearly, noting each step as "lifting-moving-dropping, lifting-moving-dropping", ensuring that your awareness follows the process clearly through to the end. With well established mindfulness, you will note that the foot reaches its peak as the process of lifting ends, and how it moves forward and passes the other foot as it drops and touches the ground. You will observe the contrasting characteristics of the two processes of lifting and dropping and how each process involves many sensations. With diligent awareness and dynamic mindfulness, you will observe the sensations of the moving feet in detail.

Not every yogi will progress with meditation according to the instructions discussed in the preceding section. In practice, yogis will develop these stages according to their individual calibre and teachers will give instructions accordingly.

Interviews with teachers are important for this advancement. Yogis must precisely recollect their observations and report to their teachers. A yogi must report in

detail what he or she observed as the foot touched the ground; whether the heel touched the ground first and slowly spread to the toes etc. Any sensations felt through the process must also be reported. It is also useful to have a personal report of your observations. The more you observe and note, the more information will you have about the process involved in walking.

As you accurately look at the lifting process from the beginning to the end, the mental factors or the intention which precedes the physical actions can also be observed. You will observe the intention behind each lift, movement and placing of the foot and that the lifting process is composed of mental and material phenomena. You will observe how they operate as a pair throughout the process of walking. The lifting stops as soon as the intention to lift stops. As you observe that the physical sensation of movement is separate from the mental aspect, the interplay between mind and matter will be revealed.

Even amidst well established mindfulness and diligent practice, thoughts may arise and your attention will be taken to other parts of the body. You could also become distracted by sounds and pains. In the same way that you cross a busy road with many interfering pedestrians, by noting the thoughts, sounds and pains as they arise and letting them pass without interference, you proceed with the space you have and without expecting the street to be empty before you cross.

Unless we practice walking meditation or Satipaṭṭhāna, we will never see the chains of mental and physical causes and effects in our lives. The mental involvement of each and every physical action will not be revealed. Once we are able to see the mental aspect of the walking process, the awareness we develop can be extended to our day to day activities, in particular because our daily lives involve so much movement from one place to another.

The regular practice of walking meditation has many benefits. One can observe profound aspects of the Dhamma while walking and even become enlightened! A yogi that practices walking meditation with precise mental aim and diligence will have an improved and sustainable meditative life. By carefully noting the experience of the sensations as the feet move with accurate and precise mindfulness during walking meditation, you will observe the interplay of mental and material aspects of all processes in life and see the true nature of reality in this life itself.

## Chapter 5

### Clear Comprehension (Sampajañña)

Puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave bhikkhu  
 Abhikkhante pattikante sampajanakārī hoti  
 Ālokite vilokite sampajanakārī hoti  
 Sammiñjite pasārite sampajanakārī hoti  
 Sanghātipatta cīvara dhārane sampajanakārī hoti  
 Asite pīte khāyite sāyite sampajanakārī hoti  
 Uccārapassāvakamme sampajanakārī hoti  
 Gate thite nisinne sutte jāgarite bhāsithe tunhī bhāve  
 sampajānakārī hoti

The next contemplation introduced in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta is the development of investigative comprehension or clear comprehension (sampajañña) and direct mindfulness to bodily activities.

Sampajañña can be translated as 'clear comprehension', 'full awareness' or 'investigative comprehension.' In the above passage of the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, a bhikkhu is instructed to mindfully walk forward and backward (ahbbikkhante patikkante sampajānakārī hoti); look ahead or sideways (ālokite vilokite sampajānakārī hoti); bend and stretch arms or limbs (sammiñjite pasārite sampajānakārī hoti); wear robes and carry the outer robes and bowl (sanghātipatta cīvara dhārane sampajānakārī hoti).

This chapter introduces a yogi to mindfully observe the postural adjustments of the body and become aware of the process involved in each activity and adjustment. The yogi will be both the "doer" and the "observer" throughout this process. Or if we use the analogy of a video production, the yogi becomes both the actor and the person recording the image. By becoming aware of the process with a detached awareness, the yogi observes that the view of a 'self' is being replaced with a process, a lever machine or even a puppet, moving from one activity to another.

### ***The Four Aspects of Sampajañña***

A detailed analysis of clear comprehension as stated by the Buddha is introduced through four aspects:

- i. sātthaka sampajañña; clear comprehension of purpose
- ii. sappāya sampajañña; clear comprehension of suitability
- iii. gocara sampajañña; clear comprehension of resort
- iv. asammoha sampajañña; clear comprehension of nondelusion

The first two aspects are particularly relevant to the yogi. During a session of sitting meditation, it is natural for physical pain to arise. With a strong resolve, you will be able to bear the pain and remain with the primary object - the breath. Even when the pain intensifies, your focus will shift to the pain to observe its characteristics. But without the requisite amount of energy, you may become distracted. By considering alternatives to the sitting posture, you may attempt to get rid of the discomfort. At this stage, the meditative mind will be taken away from the primary object. Changing the posture by reacting to the pain is however a great loss to the mindfulness and the concentration developed during meditation.

At this juncture the Buddha cautions the yogi to pause for a moment, give priority to the meditation and consider the most appropriate shift before changing the posture. With clear comprehension, you must consider the purpose of changing the posture (sātthaka sampajañña). Next, you must consider what posture is most conducive for meditation (sappāya sampajañña) - whether the shift is suitable for developing mindfulness and concentration. As such, clear comprehension must be directed to the purpose of the activity intended and to its suitability.

You are also instructed to maintain clear comprehension which ensures continuous mindfulness on the object of meditation (gocara sampajañña). The change of posture must relate to the meditative practice, whether the alternative posture is conducive for maintaining and establishing continuous mindfulness. Importantly, the Satipaṭṭhāna practice itself is your field of application for maintaining continuous mindfulness from one object to another.

The fourth aspect requires you to have clear comprehension by developing 'non-delusion' i.e. to clearly understand the true nature of reality. You must attend to routine activities with an undeluded mind (asammoha sampajañña). For example, when walking, you should not think, "I am walking" and introduce a 'self' or an "I" to the process. Rather, with a detached observation, you must be mindful of the process.

### ***Maintaining Clear Comprehension from one Activity to the Next***

We make many postural adjustments in our daily lives. But they interrupt our mindfulness and concentration. Changing from one posture to the next involves many adjustments to our body. Importantly, as we make these shifts, our mindfulness must be galvanised with clear comprehension. Without mindfulness and full awareness of the shift from one posture to the next, it is impossible to implement clear comprehension. Generally we change our postures mechanically, without mindfulness. Because mindfulness and comprehension are closely related to each other, it is imperative that continuous mindfulness is maintained from one activity to the next.

Take the breath as an example. During ānāpānasati bhāvanā, we mindfully observe the in-breath and the out-breath from the beginning, through the middle to the end. As we observe the breath in this manner we observe a gap (or a junction) between the end of the in-breath and the beginning of the out-breath. Often this change over happens mechanically, without our perception or control. We perceive the out-breath only after it has passed a certain threshold. With the in-breath it is the same. With continuous mindfulness from one breath to the next however, an experienced yogi will perceive the gap between the in-breath and the out-breath.

At the end of a session of sitting meditation, we get up in order to commence walking meditation. But we rarely contemplate the purpose of changing the posture. Our daily routine encounters an incalculable number of postures and we mechanically shift from one posture to another. We never pause with mindfulness. Slowly and mindfully, we must get up from a session of sitting meditation by considering the most conducive posture for the continuation of mindfulness, by giving priority to the meditation.

On a more subtle level, we need to become mindful of sense impingements that cross our consciousness. We have six faculties, but only one consciousness. Each faculty competes for the attention of our consciousness. Without mindfulness and clear comprehension, the strength of the sense impingement and the priority given to each faculty becomes a random selection. Becoming mindful of this shift, however, is difficult because the mind's focus from one sense object to the next is so swift. But mindfully we must observe how our mind moves to the different faculties and sense impressions.

Imagine you are watching a movie or a film. A film cannot be seen on the screen unless there is darkness. Similarly, it is impossible to focus on the breath unless the other faculties have been shut out. As our focus shifts from the eye to the ear, priority will be given to the hearing that is occurring in the ear consciousness and the eye consciousness will be shut out. Without continuous mindfulness however,

we will not observe how the focus shifted from the eye to the ear.

With one stream of consciousness among six sense faculties, we experience only one-sixth of the phenomena presented to us in each moment. The rest remain as projections and past perceptions - what we saw, touched, heard or tasted etc. As we watch a movie and become immersed in it, we feel as if our focus remained on the entire movie as it unfolded from the beginning to the end. But throughout, our attention shifted from the visual to the music, from smelling the cigarette smoke to chewing the gum or nibbling on some food and thoughts from the physical comforts or discomforts of being seated for a long time. Our attention from one sense impression to the next had shifted so swiftly and without our notice. So our perception is that we have watched the movie as a continual process. We think that all activities have occurred simultaneously throughout the entire movie.

But with one consciousness, we are able to give priority only to one sense impingement at a time. It is therefore impossible that we could have entertained all the activities at once. We remember the movie as one single experience because we were not mindful when our attention shifted to the music after tasting the pop corn or to the main actor after listening to the music. Had we studied the projector, we would have known that for fifty per cent of the time, we were in darkness. If not, the film could not have been projected onto the screen. But, we did not see the darkness because our focus was on the film.

Similarly, we fail to pause with mindfulness to observe the postural adjustments during our life. So we see an apparent continuation in all our activities. As discussed in the following chapters, the elements that constitute our body continually arise and pass away. They are momentary, but our perception of a "self" or a "being" precludes us from seeing their impermanence (aniccatā). Rather, our perception is always glossed over with a notion of permanence and continuity (nicca sañña).

### ***Progressive Unfolding of Clear Comprehension***

The term sampajañña can be dissected into three parts. "Jañña" or "ñña" indicates knowledge or awareness. This awareness is supported by the prefix of "sam", translated as "by one-self or "in totality". Sometimes it is referred to as "direct". "pa" in Pāli means "specially, particularly". When sampajañña is present, one can directly experience an independent understanding of phenomena under one's very nose. For example, during ānāpānasati bhāvanā, we note the in-breath as "in", and observe its movement and its touch. This is our own understanding - "sam" To have

clear comprehension, we must observe the breath immediately and in its totality. With established mindfulness, we observe the beginning, the middle and the end of the in-breath and the out-breath. As the breath is observed immediately and in its totality, a notion of a being will be replaced with an experience of mechanical process. At this point, we experience clear comprehension.

By changing our posture, mindfully, slowly and with clear comprehension during sitting meditation, we observe the process underlying it. As this process unfolds, it is impossible for us to identify with any aspect of self in it. Do we identify with the intention to change the posture; the shift or the movement; or the cause of the shift as self? Logically, we find that a notion of a "self is impractical. So with clear comprehension, backed by mindfulness, we see the component parts of each process rather than a self.

Establishing mindfulness to a level where clear comprehension (sampajañña) sets in is a rare stage of meditation that a yogi may encounter. Because our deluded minds are taken away by beautiful sights, good sounds and tastes we rarely observe the underlying processes. We see continuity and fail to observe the impermanence.

During sitting meditation we are recommended to remain in the same posture for as long as possible. This serves to maintain mindfulness and concentration for clear comprehension to set in. At this juncture we begin to see things ourselves, in totality and immediacy. Without the requisite alignment of mindfulness and concentration, we are interrupted with thoughts. Rational or deductive knowledge will overpower our direct experience. So we must note the same object as many times as possible. As we strive to do this, we see how much of our past knowledge, memories, perceptions, rationalizations and inferential knowledge seeps into our direct experience.

Every object must be observed immediately and in its totality. This gives rise to direct experience. Mindfulness and clear comprehension lead to wisdom. Wisdom has the quality of brightness. With wisdom, you will see the aspects of any activity you are involved in, be it seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, feeling through the body or thinking. The behavioural aspect of wisdom is clarity. But wisdom should not be tarnished with rationalization, inferential knowledge or concepts. Too many options and ideas bewilder our minds and we begin to make decisions based on faith (saddha), preference (ruci), advice received by our teachers and parents (anussāvana), rationalisation or deductive knowledge (ākāra parivitaḥa), or our views (dhiṭṭi nijjhānakhanti). Without mindfulness, we resort to these methods, based on pre-programmed considerations. But a yogi with clear comprehension will remain in the present moment and implement free-will when faced with decisions



in life.

We must carefully observe each episode in our life as it unfolds. However mundane they are, whether it is changing postures or noting the mind's movement from one sense faculty to the other, to observe the true nature of phenomena, we must observe the whole process and the change-over from one activity to the next. We must mindfully observe the gaps, the changing-over from one process to another. Establishing continuous mindfulness towards an object is like viewing an object with a magnifying glass. We begin to see the intricacies of all phenomena. In this way, when mindfulness is galvanised with clear comprehension, we develop wisdom to see things as they really are.

### **Questions and Answers**

*You said that we can be conscious of an object through only one sense faculty at a time. But in our daily lives we are aware of many happenings and we perceive objects through more than one sense door at a given time. Please explain.*

Without momentary concentration, we only have a theoretical understanding of the mind and the sense impingements. To experience momentary concentration, our mindfulness and concentration must accelerate to a certain momentum. Until we reach that stage, we feel as if everything is happening at once. This leads to a false perception of conglomeration - that we are able to do many things at once.

As stated by the Buddha, a piece of thread that consists of six individual strands put together appears strong and unbreakable. But if we disintegrate it into individual parts, our perception of it will change. It will no longer be unbreakable or strong. By carefully noting, we see that only one thing can occur at a time. It is impossible to both "see" and "listen" at the same time. The mind is so swift when it moves from one sense object to another. Unless we understand the momentariness of a being or an existence, we perceive a process of continuity in everything that we experience. So we believe that there is a "self", a male or a female, and we develop pet ideas and perceptions or preferences and resort to conventional reality. But with momentary concentration, we begin to see the individual components of all phenomena.

When we experience momentary concentration, we observe a preliminary or primordial form of consciousness - one that cannot be experienced through the sense faculties. In Pāli this consciousness is called *anindriya paṭibaddha viññāna*, consciousness that is unrelated to the sense faculties. It is only when this preliminary consciousness connects to the senses that we perceive and experience

sense impingements. Our sensual world is connected to and perceived through the senses. Just like a turtle that tucks its limbs under its shell for security, the Buddha recommends the yogi to backtrack from the senses. When a yogi experiences anindriya paṭibaddha viññāna, he or she will not experience seeing, hearing, or thinking. It is a state of just being, simply being alive.

During ānāpānasati bhāvanā, we retreat from the senses and develop concentration. With continuous mindfulness, we experience how the in-breath and the out-breath gradually phase out and become less perceivable. The sensations of the breath also become less obvious. Although perception of the breath is lost, we know that we are alive. We experience a primordial form of consciousness - one that is not connected to the eye, the ear, nose or the tongue etc. When the consciousness is in the primordial form, it is pure and energetic. But this pure and bright consciousness is glossed over by sense impingements. As it connects to the senses, we fall into their trap and become sensual beings (pabhassara midhā bikkhave cittaṃ taṃca kho agantukehi upakkilittēhi upakkiliṭṭān). This change occurs within a split second. But, with continuous thought moments, a yogi can reverse this process.

With continuous mindfulness, a yogi will note seeing as just "seeing"; hearing as just "hearing"; breathing as just "breathing". In this manner, we come back home.

We remain at home as long as we are mindful of each moment and become detached from the senses.

*During ānāpānasati bhāvanā, when the in-breath occurs, you note it as "in" and observe the sensation and the movement. You said that by observing the breath in its totality, clear comprehension sets in. So can sampajañña be summarised as the knowledge gained by establishing mindfulness on an object at any given time?*

By progressing deeper into ānāpānasati bhāvanā, concentration and clear comprehension sets in. Each moment we are dying, but we are not aware of it. Yet if we see a dead body we react. We are programmed not to think about death. But it is happening from one moment to the next. We grow old, become sick and die. When we mindfully note the in-breath and the out-breath as they occur, we see a gap. Similarly, as we stand up after sitting, there is a gap. But we are not mindful of it.

With clear comprehension, yogis steeped in insight meditation will see that there are thousands of breaths within one in-breath and out-breath. Even lifting of our hands involves many processes and episodes. Between each episode, there is a gap. But it happens mechanically, in darkness, without our mindfulness. Unless we

become aware of the gaps between each and every process, we cannot comprehend momentary death or experience momentary concentration. So we impose a notion of a being or a 'self'. Unless we are mindful from one moment to the next, we will not be able to dissect or analyse the underlying processes of our lives. To develop this insight, we must continue meditating in the same posture. An understanding of clear comprehension at a gross level is nevertheless possible if we carefully observe the postural adjustments in our daily lives.

Within each in-breath there are many actions - there is a beginning, middle and an end. The change-over from one episode to the next involves a gap. Although the breath appears as a smooth flow, from an in-breath to the out-breath, in reality, each perception of a breath involves many small breaths. Take the example of a line of ants. From a distance all we see is a rod. But as we move closer, we see the individual ants comprising the line. The process is the same with a river - there is not a single existence called river, but an ever changing flow with its width changing from one moment to the next. As one western philosopher claimed, no one can cross the same river twice, because the river is a changing process of flowing. In Buddhism we say that the same person too cannot cross the river twice. It is not only the river, but the person crossing the river also changes from one moment to the next!

## Chapter 6

### Contemplating the Anatomical Parts of the Body (Patikkula manasikāra)

Punaca paraṃ bhikkhave bhikkhu  
 Ima meva kāyaṃ uddhaṃ pādhatālā  
 Adho kessamattakā taca pariyantaṃ  
 Puram nanappakārassa asucino paccavekkhati  
 Atthi imasmim kāye  
 Kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco  
 Maṃsaṃ naharu aṭṭhi aṭṭimiñjā vakkam  
 Hadayaṃ yakanam kilomakam pihakam papphasam  
 Antam anantagunam udariyam karisam Pittam  
 semmam pubbo lohitaṃ sedo medo  
 assu vasā khelo  
 Siṅgānikā lasikā muttam

The Satipaṭṭhāna sutta invites the yogi to contemplate on the anatomical composition of the body. Commonly referred to as Asubha bhāvanā, this contemplation requires the yogi to observe the body's repulsive aspects. Yogis steeped in serenity meditation engage in this contemplation. Insight yogis will contemplate on the body in terms of the four elements. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

By directing mindfulness to analyse the anatomical constitution of the body a yogi is introduced to the anatomical parts, organs and fluids contained in it. The anatomical parts listed in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta follow a natural sequence - from the solid outer parts, through the internal organs to the organic liquids. As instructed by the Buddha, a yogi must review the body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair and contemplate the various repulsive organs and liquids that are enclosed by the skin.

The first five parts of this contemplation are related to aspects of beautification: hair on the head (kesā), body hair (lomā), nails (nakha), teeth (dantā) and skin (taco). Through a detached observation of the anatomical parts, one must comprehend one's true nature - that there is nothing inherently beautiful in any aspect of the body. When applied externally, to other people, this contemplation can be a powerful countermeasure for sensual desire. In Buddhist ordination

ceremonies, novice monks and nuns are instructed to contemplate on the first five anatomical parts stated above. This serves to temper any sensual desires that may be difficult to overcome during the early stages of the practice.

### ***Three Types of Body Contemplations***

A contemplation of the anatomical composition of the body invariably leads to a contemplation of its repulsive nature. This has attracted much criticism as it is often perceived as negative. Those with a strong inclination towards sensual pleasures are quick to reject its benefits. Although this chapter is limited to a discussion of the anatomical composition of the body, it is imperative that yogis are aware of all three methods of contemplating the body and its component parts. A yogi must contemplate the:

- i. anatomical composition of the body;
- ii. body in terms of the four elements: the earth element, the water element, the fire element and the air element;
- iii. colour of body parts.

### ***Contemplating the Anatomical Composition of the Body***

Buddhist literature recollects many stories that relate to contemplating the anatomical composition of the body. Many of these events are reported by Buddhist nuns (bhikkhunis). In the Therigāthā, one nun vividly illustrates her insight into the repulsive aspects of the body by pointing out that if we were to turn our bodies inside out, even our mothers would be disgusted and not be able to bear its smell. When painted with cosmetics and covered by the skin, our bodies can be charming. But this beauty is only skin deep. By penetrating beyond the skin with wisdom, we see its true nature. We see that our bodies are composed of repulsive elements.

Buddhist commentary draws an analogy between separating the body into component parts and the dismantling of a royal carriage. The royal carriage was the most expensive vehicle during the time of the Buddha. When the carriage is dismantled, removing its parts, one by one, only the separate parts, the wheel, the pole and axle etc... will be left. Once dismantled, its aesthetic value will be lost. Similarly, we could consider the dismantling of an expensive and modern car in contemporary society. If we dismantle its parts at a garage its appeal would soon be lost. On a more personal note, we can turn to our much valued teeth. We pay

copious amounts of money at the dentist to look after our precious teeth. But if the dentist takes a tooth out and places it on our hand, our perception will be different. We will simply react to its repulsiveness.

A Sri Lankan Buddhist commentary recollects a story of a monk travelling through a thick forest towards the city in the early hours of the day. On the way, he passed a woman who flirtatiously smiled at him. As the monk saw the woman, his eye caught a glimpse of her teeth and instantly his focus shifted to a contemplation of the anatomical parts of the body. He became deeply concentrated. His concentration changed in to insight concentration (the contemplation of the four elements) and he attained final liberation at that very moment. A man passing by the forest stopped and asked the monk whether he had seen the woman. The monk's response was: "I do not know whether it was a man or a woman, but I saw only some teeth". According to the commentary, this monk did not contemplate on the repulsive nature of all, namely teeth, the anatomical parts, but became concentrated by seeing the structure of the woman's bones, which then led him towards an insight into the elements.

A Buddhist commentary similarly recollects the meditation experiences of three nuns who attained final liberation by contemplating the anatomical parts of the body. Unlike the monk in the previous story, the three nuns attained final liberation by contemplating on the colour aspect of the bodily parts and progressing towards insight meditation to contemplate on the four elements.

Similarly, in your practice, during a session of ānāpānasati bhāvanā, with continuous mindfulness, you will gradually develop concentration to an appropriate level. As you progress deeper into concentration, you will simply become aware of the body and be conscious of it (*atti kāyoti vā panassa sati paccupaṭṭitā hoti*). As your concentration deepens, you will become aware of the anatomical parts of the body, their colour or the four elements. If you are inclined towards concentration meditation, you will become aware of your hair or the bones as the prominent object of meditation, or observe that the body is composed of many parts. Alternatively, as an insight yogi, you may observe the hardness of the bones, the fluidity of the blood or the bile and contemplate on the elements. The elements may also manifest as a tickling sensation, as the dripping of water or as a mosquito bite. This is yet another natural unfolding of your awareness of the body. Or else, you may become aware of the colour aspect of the bodily parts - the grey colour of the hair, the bones as white, the urine or bile as yellow or the blood as red.

When we see the body in this manner and analyse it into component parts, we begin to challenge our perceptions and desires for sensual pleasure. We see that our

desires in life and sensual indulgences are premised on a faulty foundation: a body that is simply composed of constituent parts, elements and colours.

It must be noted that the contemplation of the repulsive aspects of the body has possible dangers. An overemphasis on repulsiveness could lead to loathing, which could manifest as an expression of frustrated desire. The discourses recollect an example of excessive contemplation of the anatomical parts of the body. After the Buddha had instructed a group of monks on this practice and retired into solitude, the monks contemplated the anatomical parts and their repulsiveness within their bodies with such fervour that they became disgusted by it, resulting in a number of them committing suicide. When the Buddha was informed of this, he gathered the monks and instructed them to undertake this contemplation with sufficient precaution and develop the appropriate attitude to nurture a wise and balanced contemplation of the unattractive aspects of the body. The monks were recommended to gradually progress towards a contemplation of repulsiveness only after developing ānāpānasati bhāvanā, and allowing insight to naturally unfold with mindfulness of the breath.

### ***Dismantling the Notion of a Self***

One of my student monks at Meetirigala once attended an autopsy. Upon his return, he recollected his observations and reported how it was simply impossible to identify which anatomical part belonged to the person that was cut open when each part was taken out, one by one and placed on a table. Observations such as these challenge our false perception of a "self". The Buddha provides a similar example of a butcher cutting a cow. Once the cow is cut open and the separate pieces are displayed at the butcher's shop, the customers attending the shop to purchase the meat will not have any perception of the cow, but of its component parts. The concept of a cow as an entity would no longer be apparent.

By observing the anatomical parts of the body or the composition of the body as elements and being aware of its hardness, softness, liquidity, coolness, heat, expansion, contraction etc. the concept of a "self" or an entity will be challenged and can no longer be sustained. Rather the perception of the body will be that of component parts or elements. When the body is insightfully observed in this manner, conceit, desire and self-indulgence will no longer be present.

During ānāpānasati bhāvanā, you gradually penetrate into a contemplation of the anatomical parts of the body or its composition as elements. This is an awakening experience. But it is difficult for a yogi to remain unshaken when insight unfolds in

this manner, especially when it occurs for the first time. With a theoretical understanding of the process however, a yogi can remain unshaken and continue with sustained mindfulness and concentration as insight progressively develops in practice. In the Dasa sañña sutta or Gīrīmānanda sutta, the Buddha instructs that notions of non-self, impermanence, repulsiveness, unpredictable and disadvantageous aspects of the body will be revealed once concentration and insight are progressively developed in practice. But yogis must exert effort and establish continuous mindfulness and concentration with the appropriate alignment in order to see things as they are (yāvadeva ñānamattāya paṭissatimattāya). With repeated practice, a yogi must develop continuous mindfulness during sitting meditation, walking meditation and in day to day activities. Gradually, the component parts of the body will become apparent. When a yogi encounters this awakening, he or she becomes free from the deluded perception of a "self", an entity or a being.

The Satipaṭṭhāna sutta prescribes an internal (ajjhatta) and external (bahiddhā) approach to contemplation throughout the discourse. As prescribed by the Buddha, one must first see the anatomical constitution and its repulsiveness in one's own body. With this understanding, one is able to infer the nature of the bodies of others and their composition (ajjhattaṃ vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, ajjhatabhiddhā va kāye kāyānupassī viharati). With deeper insights into the true nature of our being, our mystic attraction towards others will diminish. This progression will happen naturally as Dhamma gradually unfolds during our practice.

In the following chapter we discuss how yogis inclined towards insight meditation will penetrate further into a contemplation of the composition of the body as elements. Once our mindfulness and concentration are aligned to the appropriate level, we see the body as component parts or elements. We begin to observe how humanity is all the same. We appreciate the true nature of all phenomena - how all matter: trees, rocks, rivers, etc... are composed of the same four elements. With such a penetrative insight, we appreciate a true harmonization with the universe. By insightfully understanding our true nature that we are simply constituted with component parts and a composition of energies, we realise that we are nothing better than individual grains of sand, lying in a bed of sand alongside a river!

By insightfully developing wisdom in this manner, you will not grasp at opinions, ideas or preferences based on a sense of self, but have a choiceless approach to life. Mindfully, you will remain in the present moment and observe the true nature of internal and external phenomena as it unfolds (atthi kāyoti vā pana'ssa sati paccupatthitā hoti, yāvadeva ñānamattāya paṭissatimattāya, anissito ca viharati, na



ca kiñci loke upādiyati).

### **Questions and Answers**

*In our daily lives, if we operate with a notion of "non-self", we will find that our peers will destroy or crush us. So what approach should we adopt?*

You must apply common sense. Although we meditate, the rest of the world does not do so. It is unrealistic to imagine that there is a world view that everyone should meditate and that those who practice meditation should be treated separately. When you speak to a baby, you must speak in the baby's language. In Australia, you speak Australian. When you go to Sri Lanka, you speak in the local language. Likewise, when we talk with yogis, we can discuss how enlightening it is to see the world and its properties as elements. But you must know whom you are speaking to. Someone who does not meditate will see the body as an object of beauty or strength. But, you see the body in its totality. It is useless to tell that person about the deeper insights into the true nature of the body, because it would be incomprehensible.

Parents use kids' language when playing with their children. But they don't use that language when communicating with their employer, do they? When we practice together with a group of yogis, we feel encouraged because we share similar views and can relate to each others' experiences. Once you mature in your practice, you will find the right balance and learn how to relate to people who are not practising meditation. So do not talk about this subject with those who do not practice. When you are in Rome, behave like the Romans! Maintaining the practice in the conventional world is a matter of common sense. The Buddha is not going to teach you this. Of course, finding the balance in our daily lives is difficult, but with maturity in the practice, you will learn how to operate with ease amongst those that are not inclined towards meditation.

## Chapter 7

### Contemplating the Body as Elements (Dhātu manasikāra)

Puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave bhikkhū  
 Imameva kāyaṃ yatāthitaṃ yathā panīhitaṃ dhātuso paccavekkhati  
 Atthi immasmim̐ kāye paṭhavi dhātu, āpo dhātu,  
 tejo dhātu, vāyo dhātū ti  
 Seyyathā 'pi bhikkhave dakkho goghātako  
 vā goghātaka 'ntevāsī vā gāvim̐  
 vadhitvā cātummahāpathe bilaso paṭṭivibhajitvā nissinno assa  
 Evameva kho bhikkhave bhikkhū  
 Imameva kāyaṃ yathātitaṃ yathā panīhitaṃ dhātuso paccavekkhati

Contemplating the body as four elements involves an awareness of the four basic characteristics of matter: the earth element (solidity) (pathavi dhātu), the water element (liquidity) (āpo dhātu), the fire element (temperature) (tejo dhātu), and the air element (motion) (vāyo dhātu). This contemplation is bent towards insight meditation and develops an analysis of the body on a more refined level. Although a contemplation of the anatomical constitution of the body covers the solid and liquid elements, this analysis takes a more comprehensive approach and extends awareness to aspects of the body that manifest the characteristic of temperature (heat/cold) as well as motion (expansions/contractions).

Every being consists of corporeal (rūpa dhamma) and mental attributes (nāma dhamma). In the Rāhulovāda sutta, the Buddha describes a being as composed of six elements, including the space element and consciousness in addition to the four elements stated above. This description takes into account aspects of mentality. Corporeality (rūpa dhamma) includes the earth, water, fire, air and space element. The mental aspects include feelings, perceptions, volition and consciousness. The Buddha's instructions for contemplating the body (kāyānupassanā) as outlined in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta are limited to seeing the body as four elements, representing solidity, liquidity, temperature and motion (imameva kāyaṃ yathā panīhitaṃ dhātuso paccavekkhati).

The instruction for insight (vipassanā) meditation is to begin with whatever is the prominent object. The yogi is then gradually encouraged to progress towards the more subtle aspects of Dhamma. The Satipaṭṭhāna sutta also follows this sequence. So we start with the body (kāya). This is the first foundation of mindfulness. With

the four elements also we follow this sequence. We start with the breath because it is the most prominent of the four elements. The quality of motion in the breath makes it perceivable, more discernible. Elements however do not exist in isolation. In each in-breath and out-breath, all four elements are present. However, the air element is the most discernible. In practice we feel heat as we breathe in or coolness as we breathe out. So we know that the fire element, representing the quality of temperature is also present in the breath.

### ***Observing the Four Elements in the Breath***

During ānāpānasati bhāvanā, a yogi can become aware of the elements, by observing the in-breath and the out-breath (vāyo phoṭṭahba dhātu), moving in and out. An insight yogi will observe the rubbing sensation of the air-draught; the heat, coolness, stiffness, tension of the breath, or a tingling sensation as the breath touches the skin. These features are the manifestations of the four elements.

A yogi must observe the two phases of the in-breath and the out-breath comparatively with clear comprehension. Precision of awareness is also necessary to discriminately observe the difference of the in-breath and the out-breath. Discernment is an important attribute of a yogi. With sharp and precise mindfulness, you must closely and continually observe the in-breath and the out-breath by keeping the noting mind at one particular place. With the appropriate alignment, you are bound to see all the prominent attributes of the in-breath and the out-breath as they manifest. With continuous awareness of the two phases, you will see that each in-breath has its own different characteristics. Because the breath appears coarse at the beginning, you can clearly observe and discern the difference between each in-breath and out-breath.

With each in-breath and out-breath, you are able to see the attributes of the breath and how they are constituted by the four elements. Gradually, you will note that the in-breath is different from the out-breath. You will also note that each in-breath is different from the other. The out-breath will also be of the same nature. As you progress further, it will be possible to observe how the beginning of the in-breath is different from its middle and the end of the same. As the noting mind continually remains with the breath, the body will become calmer, the breath will become subtle and the noting mind and the object will come closer to each other. This marks progress. Throughout this process, a yogi will observe numerous attributes of the breath, which in turn can be interpreted as manifestations of the four elements.

As concentration sets in, your mindfulness will become steadfast. Although the breath is not perceivable, you must remain engaged in the immediacy of phenomena. As you penetrate deeper with concentration, you will see how the mind gathers momentum. The mind will no longer be noting the in-breath and the out-breath at this stage. Just observe what is present before you. You are no longer an observer who notes the phase of the breath, but a spectator of what unfolds before you.

When mindfulness and concentration is appropriately aligned, insight will set in. You may suddenly experience wetness in various parts of the body, or as if everything is melting. You may feel a heat, heat patches in your ear lobes or coolness, titillation etc. These are all manifestations of the elements and their depicting qualities. Now the elements are speaking to you through the experiences that you are feeling. This is simply the language of the elements. Do not be alarmed. Simply observe these manifestations as they unfold. Your body has become a platform for the elements to manifest. Just sit still in awareness and observe the elements manifesting themselves. With changing sensations of the body, the elements and their manifestations will also change. If you feel heat or burning in various parts of the body, you will know that the fire element has taken centre stage. But remember that the other three elements are also co-actors of the performance troupe and are in the background. In turn they will return to the centre stage to perform their role in the script.

Your role throughout this performance is to be a passive observer. Do not interpret or interfere. Endure any painful sensations that may arise in your body with patience. Be attentive to the actor that has taken centre stage with each new experience. Experience how the earth element has taken over from the fire element in producing a new experience. Do not force a particular element to give a prominent experience. Each will take its turn with each new experience that you encounter. With each manifestation, you must clearly discern the various qualities of the elements. Identify and know their defining attributes.

Each element has its own intrinsic characteristics. The earth element will appear as hard or soft, rough or smooth, heavy or light. These are simply attributes of the elements. They do not belong to a soul or a being. When your mindfulness is directly aligned with the object, everything becomes transparent. But what you observe is verifiable. Seeing your body as elements is a life changing experience. So you must be brave. This is an important point of transition in your life as a yogi. Although the sitting posture is the most conducive for developing concentration, which progressively leads a yogi towards these insights, it is possible for a yogi to progress towards this stage of awareness in the other postures as well. As you gain

insights into the elements through their defining attributes, at that moment, you will share the hardness, the softness, the roughness and the smoothness, heat and cold etc. within the universe. You will simply become a part of it.

As you progress deeper into the meditation, you will see that there is no trace of a soul, a being, a man or a woman, but just elements. As insight matures and penetrates into the elements, disillusionment of an "ego" or a "self" will set in. This is a confronting experience as we are often deluded by a sense of self. As you penetrate in to the true nature of your being and see it as a constitution of the four elements, you will begin to see all matter in your external surroundings also as being constituted by the four elements. Suddenly, in a most ego crushing experience, you will realise that you are part and parcel of the universe - just a grain of sand in a huge bed of sand alongside a river bank, nothing special. In the world of elements, your name and other conventional attributes lose their significance.

When the characteristics of elements unfold, you will see that there is no boundary between the internal and the external. Everything will be reduced to elements. Like a grain of salt dissolved into the sea, you become a part and parcel of the universe. You will see that the elements are in a constant state of flux, arising and passing away. You will also see their transient and impermanent nature. Gaining insights into the true nature of phenomena and witnessing the body as elements can be experienced by anyone dedicated to the practice. As stated by the Buddha, irrespective of one's sex, age or creed, everyone has the ability to see the elements.

### ***The Impermanent Nature of a Being***

The Buddha instructed novice Rāhula that when he sees himself as elements it would be impossible to develop any hatred or malice towards others. Elements do not have desire, hate or bewilderment. But we believe in a self wrongly. So we argue for our rights and get angry with people. Yet if we are reduced to elements, it is impossible to develop hatred or lust towards others. The Buddha instructs bhikkhus to attend to day to day activities such as wearing robes, consuming food or taking medicine etc., by contemplating on their utility value. For example, a bhikkhu must contemplate: "May I use this robe with the clear comprehension that I am just wearing this robe in order to avoid the heat, the coldness etc." On a deeper level, a bhikkhu must contemplate how the robe is made up of elements, just like the body, and therefore wearing a robe becomes simply a contact between elements. Both the robe and the one wearing the robe are without a soul (nissatto nijjīvo suñño) - free of a being, just emptiness. This is how the Buddha has

instructed us to see through the elements, to see beyond the boundary between the internal and the external to transcend our notion of permanence or of an entity.

When we see ourselves as elements, we see that we are only an arising and passing away of phenomena. We see all phenomena as equal. Everything is impermanent, when viewed as elements. When you see impermanence in everything, you realise suffering. Because elements are always in a state of flux and are impermanent, there is no opportunity for us to relax for even a split second. Everything is changing within and around us. The concept of a unit or entity will gradually be dismantled into elements. Within each element we will see its characteristics. We will observe that they are only energies, constantly arising and passing away.

When we see phenomena as elements, it is very monotonous and can even be fearful. Things appear as baseless. A theoretical knowledge of this unfolding is imperative before you encounter these experiences in practice. Although you may consider it to be a great achievement to develop your practice to a stage where elements can be observed, when you continuously see materiality as a composition of elements, it can become boring. All matter will appear to be in a flux. When viewed as elements, things lose their appeal.

Observing physical phenomena as elements is the maximum that a yogi can develop by way of penetrating into the nature of material phenomena. All matter appears so subtle at this stage. The impermanent flux of elements will be quite apparent and you will face it directly, through your own observation. For the first time in samsāra you will lose a notion of a fixed being. You will experience an impermanent flux. As a yogi observes the minutiae of the elements and their attributes and just observes the flux, in practice, the meditation practice will direct itself towards the mental aspects. You will be able to distinguish the material attributes from the mental attributes and the interplay between mind and matter. As you encounter the first vipassanā insight by noting each moment's experience with deep, accurate and precise mindfulness, you will penetrate into the true nature of reality. You will observe how mind and matter constitute all experiences, and know that they are interrelated by cause and effect.

### ***Instant Death***

When we see the elements and their impermanent nature, we experience instant death. The arising and passing away of the elements and the impermanent flux denotes this experience. Every passing moment we die. Arising and passing away is a universal characteristic of phenomena. There is no beginning or end to this

phenomena. The whole universe is just an arising and passing away of phenomena. We realise that there is no time for us to rest even for a split second, because every moment we die. With a detached observation, we simply observe this constant state of flux.

When we develop confidence in this practice, we will skilfully see all matter as elements. We will see the flux. We experience conventional death only once in our lives. But when we see the arising and passing away of elements, we see our death within every thought moment. It demands an enormous amount of bravery and self-confidence. To see this however, we must practice continuously. It is not possible to penetrate into this observation by resorting to a theoretical understanding or rationalizing. We must exert effort, practice with a clear resolve to see the true nature of all things.

### ***Contemplating Death***

The Satipaṭṭhāna sutta then introduces the yogi to contemplation on a dead body. At a conventional level, our death marks the end of our lives. But a yogi that sees the body as elements experiences instant death. The Buddha instructs us to contemplate on a corpse when we see one. We are asked to project this observation internally and contemplate how we also will die one day. When a body decays, its flesh and the liquid parts will disappear and only the bones will be left behind. The Buddha states that if we are brave enough to see a dead body and understand the concept of death, at that moment we are living in the present moment. We are not taken away by day-dreaming or sense indulgences. If we are ready to maintain this moment to moment contemplation of death, we will not be distracted by sense impressions.

If we live in this manner, we will experience a calm and peaceful death. It is impossible to penetrate in to the deathlessness without contemplating upon death. We cannot predict when we will die. We are not guaranteed of the next breath as we breathe in and out. We are born with a death sentence - because birth conditions death. But we fail to contemplate on the inevitable because our minds are taken away by sense impressions and deluded perceptions of permanence. This contemplation is not a hypothesis, a rationalization or an inference. This is the truth! The Buddha instructs the wise to take this practice to heart. Develop this practice or rationally understand and listen to the Dhamma and absorb it into your memory. Then one day the truth will be realised. The Buddha invites all of us to look into death as we all experience it. The Dhamma is timeless. It is present and immediate.

## Questions and Answers

*As you gradually progress in ānāpānasati meditation, there comes a point when your breath is not perceivable, but you are breathing and you are alive. At that point, where does our mindfulness lie, where is our consciousness?*

When consciousness is connected to the six sense doors, we experience seeing, hearing, touching etc. We are able to discriminate between one sense impingement and another. Sounds come and strike at the ear drum, smells rub on the sensitivity of the nose etc. But with one consciousness we can entertain only one object at a time. So we discard five of the six impingements at a given time. Also we exercise choice as sense impingements strike our consciousness. With choice comes the manifestations, fabrications, volitions etc. Whenever consciousness is connected to the senses, choice is implemented.

So we go to a silent place, close our eyes and meditate. As we continually note the breath, coming in and out, we find that it becomes less perceivable. What happens when the breathing ceases to exist?

At this stage, there is no sensation connected to the sense doors. This is called consciousness unrelated to the senses. This experience can be fearful for those who know only the consciousness related to the senses (indriyapaṭibaddha viññāna). The consciousness that is not connected to the senses is a preliminary or primordial form of consciousness. We are at home when we experience this state of mind. When consciousness is connected to the senses, it is like mixing muddy water into pure stream.

We must train ourselves daily to arrive at this state of consciousness that is unrelated to the senses (anindriyapaṭibaddha viññāna). In terms of concentration this is the maximum stage that you can reach. Formations (sankhāra) have no part to play in this experience. If we entertain this state continuously, for example for about two to three hours, we will not experience a single thought moment of distraction. We become silently aware. We gain a clearer understanding of the true nature of phenomena.

When we experience this consciousness unrelated to the senses (anindriyapaṭibaddha viññāna), we clear our minds from volition, fabrication and any colouration. Even though this is a temporary state of mind, we are progressing towards insight by building a pure foundation - just like white paper upon which



you can draw. It is an immaterial form of experience. Some describe it as immaterial pleasure - nirāmisa sukha. In this very life, you can experience it. This results in vivekajaṃ pīti sukhaṃ "joy in the pleasurable form of seclusion". As it is free from visual objects, sound waves, smell, taste, touch and thoughts (viveka) - seclusion leads to pīti (joy) and endowment and awakening. Mindfulness on the in and out-breath is one of the methods the Buddha has recommended to experience this consciousness unrelated to the senses. As you experience this consciousness unrelated to the senses, you experience death, a creative death, a separation from sensual objects - the very basis that we describe as existence.

## Chapter 8

### Contemplation on Feelings (Vedanānupassana)

Katañca bhikkhave bhikkhū  
 Vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati  
 Idha bhikkhave bhikkhū  
 Sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno sukhaṃ vedanaṃ  
 vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ  
 vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Adukkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno adukkkhamasukhaṃ  
 vedanaṃ vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Sāmisam vā sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno sāmisam sukhaṃ  
 vedanaṃ vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Nirāmisam vā sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno nirāmisam sukhaṃ  
 vedanaṃ vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Sāmisam vā dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno sāmisam  
 dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Nirāmisam vā dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno nirāmisam  
 dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Sāmisam vā adukkkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno sāmisam  
 adukkkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Nirāmisam vā adukkkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyamāno nirāmisam  
 adukkkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyāmī ti pajānnāti  
 Iti ajjhattaṃ vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati  
 Bahiddhā vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati  
 Ajjhatabhiddhā vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati  
 Samudaya dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati  
 Vayadhammanupassī vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati  
 Samudaya vā dhammanupassī vā  
 vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati  
 Atti kāyoti vā panassa sati paccupaṭṭhitā hoti  
 Yāvadeva ñanamattāya patissatimattāya anissito ca  
 viharati na ca kiñci loke upādiyati  
 Evanpi ko bhikkhave bhikkhū vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati

The second foundation of mindfulness described in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta is the contemplation of feelings (vedanānupassanā). In this contemplation, the yogi is

instructed to become aware of feelings as feelings without forming ownership. Whether they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, the yogi must mindfully be aware of the experience.

In insight meditation, we start with prominent objects of contemplation and progress towards more subtle aspects of Dhamma. Therefore, we begin with the material aspects of the breath and see its composition by the four elements as discussed in the previous chapter. When the breath becomes subtle and we enter a state of deep concentration, our attention is diverted to feelings. Then we become aware of feelings - the pleasant feeling, painful feeling, neutral feeling etc. At this stage, a natural change-over from a contemplation of the body (kāyānupassanā) to a contemplation of feelings (vedanānupassanā) occurs. Then our attention is directed towards the mental aspects.

A yogi can experience feelings in many ways during a period of sitting meditation. When a yogi reaches a particular level of concentration, he or she will experience joy or rapture (pīti). This experience marks progress during meditation. At this stage, according to the Satipaṭṭhāna instructions, a yogi must become aware of the pleasurable sensation as a feeling and note it as such, instead of reacting or unmindfully indulging in it. Mindfully, you must become aware of the experience. This technique is the same when experiencing unpleasant feelings. For example, during a session of sitting meditation, a yogi can become disheartened when the meditation is not going well. Or else, the yogi may become disgusted and begin to experience unpleasantness when the breath's prominence gradually disappears. A yogi may experience bodily pains. Bodily pains however involve both material and mental aspects. Instead of reacting, the yogi must become aware of the pain and try to see its beginning, middle and the end.

We encounter many moments of pleasure and pain in our daily lives. But we are rarely aware of them. However, during meditation, when our minds are introduced to the primary object, we are able to note both pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Here the Buddha's instructions are for the yogi to remain neutral and be aware of the experience when pleasant or unpleasant feelings arise. Whether it is pleasure or pain, both are feelings. So yogis must contemplate feelings as feelings and should not introduce a qualitative measure based on their past experience.

### ***Neutral Feelings***

As we become aware of pleasure and pain with continuous momentum during meditation, we gradually observe feelings as episodes that arise and pass away. In

between each episode, we see a gap like. If you are breathing in, you experience the beginning, the middle and the end of the in-breath. Before the out-breath becomes perceivable, there is a gap. What is the feeling of the gap? It is subtle and you cannot perceive it. But when the movement of the breath commences, you can immediately catch it and perceive it. Similarly, with continuous mindfulness of feelings, we are able to observe the gaps or the pauses at the end of one feeling and the commencement of the next. Sometimes this gap is very long. But we are not aware of it. Because it is so subtle, mindfulness cannot beam upon it. For example, when we look at the sky at night, we only see the stars. We rarely see the space in-between. Our tendency is to aim at positive signs - the stars or the light. So we don't see the space, the darkness. But when we look at the sky, aiming at the stars, for much of the time we will begin observing the space knowingly or unknowingly. Because we do not value the space, we simply don't see it.

Similarly, with continuous mindfulness, if you observe the beginning, the middle and end of pain or pleasure, you will see that there is a gap between the end of one sensation and the beginning of the next. That is a neutral feeling (adukkhamasukha vedanā). Experiencing neutral feelings is a very subtle and deep observation. It does not have the quality of either pain or pleasure. Buddhist commentaries describe this as a darkness that our eyes cannot see. Our ordinary consciousness cannot touch it. It is very subtle. Generally we feel that pain gives rise to pleasure and pleasure gives rise to pain. So we see the continuity in feelings. But we miss the gaps in between consecutive sensations.

In the Culavedalla sutta, upāsaka Visākha questions Dhammadinnā, the arahant nun: "What is the pain and pleasure in the pleasurable feeling?" Dhammadinnā responds: "The arising of the pleasurable feeling is a pleasure; the disappearance of a pleasurable feeling is a pain". Then upāsaka Visākha asks: "What is the pain and pleasure of the painful feeling". Dhammadinnā responds: "The arising of pain is a painful feeling; the disappearance of the pain is pleasurable". Finally, upāsaka Visākha asks: "What is the pain and the pleasure of the indifferent feeling?" Dhammadinnā responds: "Being aware of an indifferent feeling is a pleasure, to not know an indifferent feeling is painful".

We are rarely aware of indifferent feelings. When we receive meditation instructions, we are asked to see the in-breath and out-breath, but not the indifferent feeling. We start with aspects of materiality as they are more prominent and we can feel them. Then the breath disappears gradually and we are left with an observation of feelings - pleasure and pain. As we continually exert mindfulness on the feelings that arise and see their beginning, the middle and the end, we see the gap in between them. Then we experience indifference. Being aware of indifference

is an immaterial pleasure. Just like the sky at night with an infinite span of space, for most of our daily lives we remain in a state of indifference. But we are not aware of it. We are too caught up in pursuing pleasure at the cost of pain, or perpetuating pleasure with positive sentiments that we are unable to see the indifference.

If you follow meditation instructions with precision and accuracy, progressing with mindfulness on materiality, which then leads to mentality, you will progress towards indifference. It is like observing the sea from afar. Our nature is to fix our attention on the thin layer of water, the ripples and the waves, when we first arrive at the beach. We watch the waves. We can even count how many come ashore and go back into the sea. If we observe beyond the waves, we see a glare. Then we don't see wave after wave any more, not a single wave, but only a straight line. We experience the same during meditation. When the meditation is immature, we observe the waves with greater force. But if we penetrate deeper, the difference between the waves will disappear. We see the water as if it is shaking. Sometimes there are frills and thrills. When we progress deeper into meditation, we reach a state of indifference, a state of deep calm, just like the stillness of the deep ocean horizon.

### ***Material and Immaterial Feelings***

In the *Salāyatana vibhanga sutta*, the Buddha explains how household pleasure, pain and indifference can lead to complete emancipation. Pleasure, pain and indifference can be separated into household life (*gehasita*) and to a life of renunciation (*nissaraṇa sita*). The Buddha's instructions are to skilfully replace household pleasure with the pleasure of renunciation.

Skilfully, a yogi must replace household pleasure with the pleasure of a renunciate. Thus, materialistic pleasure is replaced with an immaterial form of pleasure. Unless you practice meditation and experience the benefits of a renunciative form of pleasure, you will not see its value. In the household life, you experience grief or sorrow when you hear that your relatives or friends are unwell. When your properties are destroyed you become hurt. On the immaterial level, monks or yogis that diligently practice also endure pain and suffering. Because they have not yet become a stream entrant, a *sotāpanna*, they become disheartened. According to the Buddha, however, experiencing this form of pain is better than household pain because it does not arise out of desire. It is immaterial. The Buddha instructs the yogi to replace ignorance of indifference with an awareness of indifference, thus penetrating the myriad tensions that exist unknown to the yogi.

A yogi must replace the pain of being ignorant of indifference with the pleasure of knowing indifference. Not all meditation sessions are successful. During a session of meditation, you may find that your mind is scattered and that you are moving away from the primary object. So you become disappointed. Instead of becoming disheartened, you must become aware that you are experiencing an unpleasant state of mind. When you become mindful of your experience, you will immediately experience contentment and pleasure. Thus you replace renunciative pain with renunciative pleasure. That is what the arahant, Dhammadinnā meant when she said that seeing the end of an unpleasant feeling is pleasure. You must be patient to endure pain and see its end.

All dark clouds have a silver lining. But we can see it only if we see the cloud in its totality. Pain can be recycled to give way to pleasure. It is inevitable that yogis endure pain during meditation, in particular when vipassanā insights unfold in practice. Experiences of insight are not without pain.

But the pleasure experienced at the end of pain is still insubstantial. Indifference however is more consistent and natural than the vibrations of pain and pleasure. So the Buddha recommends that renunciative pleasure must be replaced with renunciative indifference. When you experience indifference, you are like a turtle that takes all its limbs under its shell. Whatever distractions may occur, both internally and externally, whether they are sounds, pains or thoughts, with continuous mindfulness and well developed concentration you can remain with the primary object.

Indifference experienced during meditation is two-fold. One is the yogi's indifference to internal and external distractions when establishing continuous mindfulness on the primary object - *nānatta sita upekkhā*. The second is the indifference experienced in deep undisturbed concentration - *ekagga sita upekkhā*. To maintain the latter during meditation is very difficult. A yogi must have perfected morality and exerted energy to maintain continuity of concentration. As you progress with meditation, you replace household feelings with those of the renunciative life, renunciative pain with renunciative pleasure, renunciative pleasure with renunciative indifference. At this stage, you enter into deep concentration, a stream of consciousness unrelated to the senses. You experience just being. You reach a state of mind that is incommunicable in words. Because language is based on expression of feelings, it is difficult to communicate a neutral state of mind. Your experience is so subtle that it is indescribable.

A yogi must experience all the feelings, without leaving anything out (*iti ajjhataṃ vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati*). Then, by inference, he or she understands

that others experience the same feelings (bahiddhā vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati). In the conventional world, we import a gender or a sex to what we experience and we differentiate what we feel. Or else, we differentiate feelings according to pain and pleasure. Instead, we must observe the universality of feelings. Then we will be able to see the whole of humanity through the sensations we encounter.

Whenever a feeling arises, you are prepared to experience it as such (samudaya dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati). When a feeling disappears, you are not disheartened. You know that is its nature (vaya dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati). When you observe the arising and passing away of feelings, the difference between pleasure and pain disappears (samudaya dhammānupassī vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati). Then you are only experiencing the indifference. You simply see that this is an ocean of feelings (atti vedanāti vā panassa sati paccupattitā hoti). You mindfully experience feelings. You awaken to wisdom and strengthen your mindfulness (yāvadeva ñānamattāya patissatimattāya anissito ca viharati naca kiñci loke upādiyati). Then you will not grasp either feeling as pleasure or pain. You will neither recognize yourself with the flux of pain nor identify yourself with the pleasure. With a healthy detachment to the sensation, you will neither personalize the feeling, nor will you make the slightest attempt to maximize or minimize the pleasure and pain experienced in life.

The world around us is in a continuous pursuit of pleasure. To appreciate the profound Dhamma preached by the Buddha, we must mindfully retract from this pursuit. Mindfully, we must become aware of pain and pleasure as mere feelings.

May you all experience indifferent feelings in your meditative practice!

### **Questions and Answers**

*In our day to day lives as the sense impingements enter our consciousness, the transition between corporeality and mentality happens very swiftly. So, is it your recommendation to become aware of the sense impingement as soon as it arises?*

Eye consciousness is very swift and therefore being aware of "seeing" is very difficult. So we are instructed to start with the most prominent of the five aggregates - the body. Of the body and the four elements, especially the air element is the most prominent. Therefore, the Buddha instructs us to focus on the in-breath and the out-breath During ānāpānasati bhāvanā we focus on the air element. Then

we proceed towards the four mental aspects. Of this, the most prominent are the feelings. Then we proceed towards the other mental aspects. Theoretically, we can say that one must become aware as soon as the sense object impinges on the consciousness. But in practice, we must follow the gradual sequence - moving from what is prominent and perceivable to the subtle.

*How does a Yogi retain mindfulness when the mind experiences unpleasantness during meditation?*

First, become aware that you are now experiencing unpleasantness. With this awareness, you come to the present moment - exert mindfulness. It is easy for us to be mindful of pleasant feelings. But unpleasantness is something that we wish to get rid of. Leave aside the unsatisfactoriness or unpleasantness, entertain the mindfulness. Whenever an experience is unpleasant, the mind reacts. We want our pleasant feelings back! Under the light of mindfulness however, we see the difference between action and reaction. When we are mindful of the feeling, pleasantness and unpleasantness has the same taste. They become two sides of the same coin.

Take the example of a burglar that is regularly breaking into houses. One day the State hires a private investigator. Assume you are the private investigator. If you are keeping a keen eye on the burglar, he or she would be breaking into the house under your surveillance. If you are doing your job properly, the burglar is likely to get caught isn't he? Even though you are following the burglar, you don't have the right to catch the burglar do you? Your job is simply to keep a keen eye on what is happening, what time the burglar becomes active, what he does etc. In a similar vein, mindfulness lacks the jurisdictional rights like the private investigator. Its task is to be mindful of the object - be mindful of the burglar. Once the police are tipped off, then the police will catch the burglar. So you must appreciate the true function of mindfulness and its quality. Whether you are experiencing a pleasant or unpleasant state of mind, it does not matter, you just become choicelessly aware. Do not choose or discriminate between feelings and try to maintain one form of feeling and discard the other - be choicelessly aware of the pleasantness and unpleasantness under the light of mindfulness. Pain will no doubt lose its vigour under the power of mindfulness.



## Appendix

### ***Instructions for sitting meditation, walking meditation and establishing mindfulness in daily affairs***

#### ***Sitting meditation***

A yogi can practice both insight meditation and concentration meditation (vipassanā and samatha bhāvanā) during ānāpānasati bhāvanā. In the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, Ānāpānasati sutta and the Girimānanda sutta, the Buddha discussed the suitable environment and the appropriate posture for the ānāpānasati practice.

Ānāpānasati bhāvanā must be practised in a relaxed environment, with a little breeze and a medium amount of light. The yogi must be in solitude and consider a comfortable and conducive posture. It is recommended that the yogi sit firmly on the ground in the full lotus posture. Alternatively, the yogis can sit in a half-lotus or quarter-lotus posture. Yogis with disabilities or weak health conditions, precluding them selves from sitting on the ground, can use a meditation bench or a straight back chair. It is important that the yogi sits in a symmetrical and relaxed manner, keeping the upper part of the body erect. An erect posture facilitates the movement of air through the body and energizes the meditation practice.

Close your eyes and sit in a comfortable, relaxed, symmetrical and erect manner. Then become mindful of the sitting posture. Scan through the posture and bring your mind to the present. Do not think about the past or the future, the person sitting in front of you or those around you. It is preferable if you are in a solitary place with the least amount of distractions.

If you customarily sit in a particular place, you will become accustomed to it and it will be conducive for your practice. Early sittings of course will be a trial and error process. Through experience, you will identify the most conducive posture for you. Once you know your alignment and the posture that works best, you can commence ānāpānasati bhāvanā. Bring your attention to the present, to the "here and now". Sitting in this manner in itself is a meditative experience. Remain in the present to avoid chain thoughts, irritating sounds or bodily pains from disturbing you.

Focus your attention on the primary object. Then your attention will converge to one part of the body - your nostrils, the top of the lip, the throat or the diaphragm. Do not do forced breathing to locate the in-breath and the out-breath, or to gain a

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prominent experience. Let the breath become prominent at its own pace.

Gradually, the in-breath and the out-breath will become prominent. The breathing must be natural and not forced. Just be aware of the in-breath and the out-breath occurring. As you continually focus on the in-breath and the out-breath, the breathing process will become prominent at a particular point. Then, your attention should be refined to this point.

According to the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, you should focus on the object in front of you (parimukhaṃ satim uppatthapetvā). Classically, the attention of the in-breath and the out-breath is referred to as being at the tip of the nose or at the top of the lip (as an object in front of you). But some may find the most prominent point of touch to be in the middle of the skull, the throat, the chest or in the naval. Wherever it may be, your attention should be confined to one place and you should not allow the mind to move from one place to another. Your focus will become refined as you progress with the meditation. With a refined focus, calmness will set in.

You must observe the in-breath as a separate unit from the out-breath. Observe the in-breath and its touch. Be fully aware of the out-breath as it occurs. Gradually the noting mind will move closer to the breath and you will experience the in-breath and the out-breath in a contrasting and different manner. For example, you will observe that the air draught of the in-breath is cooler and that the out-breath is warmer. Or else, you will observe that the in-breath is longer than the out-breath or vice versa. Do not manipulate what is occurring. Just observe the transaction of air.

Owing to continuous mindfulness, you will not be distracted by irritating sounds, bodily pains, day dreaming or fantasizing. But external distractions will interfere. If distractions come and go without any interference, you can continue to observe the in-breath and the out-breath. By making a mental note of the in-breath as "in" and the out-breath as "out", you can keep casual thinking, bodily sensations or sounds at bay.

With continuous mindfulness, the breathing will become subtle. The mind will have a refined observation and the body will calm down. The breath will become less prominent. Mindfully, you must observe the difference between continuing in-breaths and continuing out-breaths. Earlier you observed the difference between the in-breath and the out-breath. At this stage, you must observe the in-breaths and the out-breaths in the totality, from the beginning, through the middle to the end. Observe the difference between one in-breath to the next and one out-breath to the next.

Distractions such as thoughts, sounds or bodily pains will occur. Do not react to them. If you are a habitual thinker and day-dreaming occurs, make a mental note that you are "thinking" and bring your attention back to the breath. Or else, you should note it as "thinking-thinking-thinking", "day-dreaming - day-dreaming - day-dreaming" or "fantasizing-fantasizing-fantasizing".

Whenever thinking is noted as "thinking", you are able to detach yourself from digesting the contents of the thought. Simply become aware that "thinking" has occurred and not be concerned about the content of the thought. Similarly, if a sound irritates you, just note it as "hearing-hearing-hearing". When pain arises, note it as "pain-pain-pain". When they recede, come back to the breath and note the in-breath as "in" and the out-breath as "out". The line between the noting mind and the object of meditation must be straightened. That is the purpose of meditation.

Your observations during meditation must be discussed with an advanced yogi every two to three days. By doing this, you can receive guidance on how to advance in your practice. The distractions encountered in the practice will be specific to your personality traits. Accordingly, it is important to report them to an advanced yogi who can give the appropriate instructions. With practice, you can determine whether your natural inclination is towards concentration or insight meditation. It is very difficult to predict this beforehand. Both the meditation and the reporting will lead to the proper path. Your observations must be clear and your reporting should be to the point.

Generally, a beginner yogi must do at least an hour of sitting meditation daily

### ***Walking Meditation***

After a meal or a sleep, it is recommended that you do walking meditation before sitting meditation. Further, a period of walking meditation before sitting serves to focus the mind.

In traditional meditation centres there are open-air and internal walking meditation paths. Internal meditation paths are covered to avoid adverse weather conditions.

Before commencing walking meditation, stand at the end of the walking meditation path and contemplate the body. Then you bring your attention to the present

moment. During walking meditation, you establish mindfulness amidst activity as your eyes are open and you will hear the sounds of birds and the external environment. Thus, any mindfulness established can be carried forward to day to day activities.

The yogi must first walk up and down the path to activate blood circulation (especially after a long session of sitting meditation). You must walk at a normal pace to ensure that the path is suitable and that there are no obstructions. As you walk, be aware of the movement of the feet. Your arms must be as if tied in front of you or behind you. Your attention must be on the movement of the feet. When the right foot moves, you must observe the experience of the movement and the sensations of the foot. Experience and note the sensation of the sole touching the ground. Observe whether it is a coarse or soft sensation. Then shift your focus to the left foot, its movement and the sensation as it touches the ground. Your attention could also be kept on the movement of the joints, the ankle and so forth.

Your eyes should be cast down and you must look about five feet ahead of you. The eyes should be focused on the walking path. Just as during sitting meditation, your attention may be carried away by thoughts and sounds. However, your attention should remain with the right foot and the left foot as much as possible. With continuous attention on the right foot and the left foot, you can keep distractions at bay and proceed without any interference.

During walking meditation, you exert energy to maintain the focus on the steps and to note the movement of the feet. Accordingly, the energy that is exerted must be double. Warming up in this manner is conducive for sitting meditation. During intensive retreats it is usual to alternate periods of sitting meditation with periods of walking meditation, one after another throughout the day.

In your daily life, you must have at least one session of walking and sitting meditation in the morning and in the evening. If you meditate in the evening after work, doing some walking before sitting focuses the mind and arouses energy for the sitting that follows. Do not commence sitting meditation straight after your daily activities. The energy aroused during walking meditation, develops accuracy of awareness as well as durability of concentration.

### ***Establishing Mindfulness in Daily Activities***

Doing a task simply for the purpose of establishing mindfulness is difficult in our daily activities. Generally we do things for a purpose or to fulfil responsibilities. But

to control the speed of our daily activities, we must find some time to establish mindfulness. We must try to bring our attention to the present moment as much as we can. Then we become accountable for your experiences and actions. We will no longer do our daily activities mechanically, like a puppet or a robot. With mindfulness, our experiences will be live and vivid.

Practically, it is difficult to be mindful when you are socializing, unless you are experienced in maintaining continuous mindfulness. To establish mindfulness in our daily activities, you can start with your personal activities such as washing, showering or going to the toilet, mindfully. You can start doing things Silently, Mindfully and Slowly. This is the "SMS" that you should apply when establishing mindfulness in daily affairs. In this way, you can extend the mindfulness established during sitting meditation to day to day activities.

Establishing mindfulness during sitting meditation is an intensive method of meditation. Walking meditation is a semi-intensive method and establishing mindfulness in day to day affairs is an extensive method. If you can master establishing mindfulness in day to day activities, you will become more organized and you will experience an appealing change in your life.

Mindfulness cultivated during sitting meditation can diminish after you get up. But, the mindfulness established in day to day activities is durable. Both sitting meditation and wakefulness to day to day activities must compliment each other to ensure continuous application of mindfulness.

Although instructions for sitting meditation (being the intensive method) are given first, you should not underestimate the benefits of walking meditation or establishing mindfulness in day to day activities. One can observe very profound aspects of the Dhamma during walking meditation, and even become enlightened.

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