

Mindfulness - Sati

excerpt from
Mindfulness in Plain English
by
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Mindfulness is the English translation of the Pali word 'Sati.' Sati is an activity. What exactly is that? Well, this is one of those questions without a precise answer, at least not in words. Words are devised by the symbolic levels of the mind and they describe those realities with which symbolic thinking deals. Mindfulness (Sati) is pre-symbolic. It is not shackled to logic. Nevertheless, Mindfulness can be experienced - rather easily - and it can be described, as long as you keep in mind that the words are only fingers pointing at the moon. They are not the thing itself. The actual experience lies beyond the words and above the symbols. Mindfulness could be described in completely different terms than will be used here and each description could still be correct.

Mindfulness (Sati) is a subtle process that you are using at this very moment. The fact that this process lies above and beyond words does not make it unreal - quite the reverse. Mindfulness is the reality which gives rise to words - the words that follow are simply pale shadows of reality. So, it is important to understand that everything that follows here is an analogy. It is not going to make perfect sense. Please don't sit around scratching your head and trying to figure it all out. In fact, the meditational technique called Vipassana (insight) that was introduced by the Buddha about twenty-five centuries ago is a set of mental activities specifically aimed at experiencing a state of uninterrupted Mindfulness or Sati.

When you first become aware of something there is a fleeting instant of pure awareness just before you conceptualize the thing, before you identify it. That is a stage of Mindfulness (Sati). Ordinarily, this stage is very short. It is that flashing split second just before you focus your eyes on the thing, just before you focus your mind on the thing, just before you objectify it, clamp down on it mentally and segregate it from the rest of existence. It takes place just before you start thinking about it - before that little 'yak, yak' machine inside your skull says, "Oh, it's a dog." That flowing, soft-focused moment of pure awareness is Mindfulness (Sati). In that brief flashing mind-moment you experience a thing as an un-thing. You experience a softly flowing moment of pure experience that is interlocked with the rest of reality, not separate from it. Mindfulness is very much like what you see with your peripheral vision as opposed to the hard focus of normal or central vision. Yet this moment of soft, unfocused, awareness contains a very deep sort of knowing that is lost as soon as you focus your mind and objectify the object into a thing. In the process of ordinary perception, the Mindfulness (Sati) step is so fleeting as to be unobservable. We have developed the habit of squandering our attention on all the remaining steps, focusing on the perception, cognizing the perception, labeling it, and most of all, getting involved in a long string of symbolic thought about it. That original moment of Mindfulness just gets lost in the shuffle. It is the purpose of the above mentioned Vipassana (or insight) meditation to train us to prolong that moment of awareness.

When this Mindfulness (Sati) is prolonged by using proper techniques, you find that this experience is profound and it changes your whole view of the universe. This state of perception has to be learned, however, and it takes regular practice. Once you learn the technique, you will find that Mindfulness has a number of interesting characteristics.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MINDFULNESS (SATI)

Mindfulness (Sati) is mirror-thought. It reflects only what is presently happening and in exactly the way it is happening. There are no biases.

Mindfulness (Sati) is non-judgmental observation. It is that ability of the mind to observe without criticism. With this ability, one sees things without condemnation or judgment. One is surprised by nothing. One simply takes a balanced interest in things exactly as they are in their natural states. One does not decide and does not judge. One just observes.

It is psychologically impossible for us to objectively observe what is going on within us if we do not at the same time accept the occurrence of our various states of mind. This is especially true with unpleasant states of mind. In order to observe our own fear, we must accept the fact that we are afraid. We can't examine our own depression without accepting it fully. The same is true for irritation and agitation, frustration and all those other uncomfortable emotional states. You can't examine something fully if you are busy rejecting the existence of it. Whatever experience we may be having, Mindfulness just accepts it. It is simply another of life's occurrences, just another thing to be aware of. No pride, no shame, nothing personal at stake - what is there, is there.

Mindfulness (Sati) is an impartial watchfulness. It does not take sides. It does not get hung up in what is perceived. It just perceives. Mindfulness does not get infatuated with the good stuff. It does not try to sidestep the bad stuff. There is no clinging to the pleasant, no fleeing from the unpleasant. Mindfulness sees all experiences as equal, all thoughts as equal, all feelings as equal. Nothing is suppressed. Nothing is repressed. Mindfulness does not play favorites.

Mindfulness (Sati) is nonconceptual awareness. Another English term for Sati is 'bare attention.' It is not thinking. It does not get involved with thought or concepts. It does not get hung up on ideas or opinions or memories. It just looks. Mindfulness registers experiences, but it does not compare them. It just observes everything as if they were occurring for the first time. It is not analysis which is based on reflection and memory. It is, rather, the direct and immediate experience of whatever is happening, without the medium of thought. It comes BEFORE thought in the perceptual process.

Mindfulness (Sati) is present-time awareness. It takes place in the here and now. It is the observance of what is happening right now, in the present moment. It stays forever in the present, surging perpetually on the crest of the ongoing wave of passing time. If you are remembering your second-grade teacher, that is memory. When you then become aware that you are remembering your second-grade teacher, that is Mindfulness. If you then conceptualize the process and say to yourself, "Oh, I am remembering", that is thinking.

Mindfulness (Sati) is non-egoistic alertness. It takes place without reference to self. With Mindfulness one sees all phenomena without references to concepts like "me", "my" or "mine". For example, suppose there is a pain in your left leg. Ordinary consciousness would say, "I have a pain." Using Mindfulness, one would simply note the sensation as a sensation. One would not tack on that extra concept "I". Mindfulness stops one from adding anything to perception, or subtracting anything from it. One does not enhance anything. One does not emphasize anything. One just observes what is there - without distortion.

Mindfulness (Sati) is goal-less awareness. In Mindfulness, one does not strain for results. One does not try to accomplish anything. When one is mindful, one experiences reality in the present moment in whatever form it takes. There is nothing to be achieved. There is only observation.

Mindfulness (Sati) is awareness of change. It is observing the passing flow of experience. It is watching things as they are changing. It is seeing the birth, growth, and maturity of all phenomena. It is watching phenomena decay and die. Mindfulness is watching things moment by moment, continuously. It is observing all phenomena - physical, mental or emotional - whatever is presently taking place in the mind. One just sits back and watches the show. Mindfulness is the observance of the basic nature of each passing phenomena. It is watching the thing arising and passing away. It is seeing how the thing makes us feel and how we react to it. It is observing how it affects others. In Mindfulness, one is an unbiased observer whose sole job is to keep track of the constantly passing show of the universe within. Please note that last point. In Mindfulness, one watches the universe within. The meditator who is developing Mindfulness (Sati) is not concerned with the external universe. It is there, but in meditation, one's field of study is one's own experience, one's thoughts, one's feelings, and one's perceptions. In meditation, one is one's own laboratory. The universe within has an enormous fund of information containing the reflection of the external world and much more. An examination of this material leads to total freedom.

Mindfulness (Sati) is participatory observation. The meditator is both participant and observer at one and the same time. If one watches one's emotions or physical sensations, one is feeling them at that very same moment. Mindfulness is not an intellectual awareness. It is just awareness. The Mirror- thought metaphor breaks down here. Mindfulness is objective, but it is not cold or unfeeling. It is the wakeful experience of life, an alert participation in the ongoing process of living.

Mindfulness is an extremely difficult concept to define in words - not because it is complex, but because it is too simple and open. The same problem crops up in every area of human experience. The most basic concept is always the most difficult to pin down. Look at a dictionary and you will see a clear example. Long words generally have concise definitions, but for short basic words like "the", "is" or "but", definitions can be a page long. And in physics, the most difficult functions to describe are the most basic - those that deal with the most fundamental realities of quantum mechanics. Mindfulness is a pre- symbolic function. You can play with word symbols all day long and you will never pin it down completely. We can never fully express what it is. However, we can say what it does.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL ACTIVITIES

There are three fundamental activities of Mindfulness (Sati). We can use these activities as functional definitions of the term: (1) Mindfulness reminds us what we are supposed to be doing; (2) it sees things as they really are; and (3) it sees the deep nature of all phenomena. Let's examine these definitions in greater detail.

Mindfulness (Sati) reminds you what you are supposed to be doing. In meditation, you put your attention on one item. When your mind wanders from this focus, it is Mindfulness that reminds you that your mind is wandering and what you are supposed to be doing. It is Mindfulness that brings your mind back to the object of meditation. All of this occurs instantaneously and without internal dialogue. Meditation is not thinking. Repeated practice in meditation establishes this function as a mental habit which then carries over into the rest of your life. You should be paying bare attention to occurrences all the time, day in, day out, whether formally sitting in meditation or not. This is a very lofty ideal towards which those who meditate may be working for a period of years or even decades. Our habit of getting stuck in thought is years old, and that habit will hang on in the most tenacious manner. The only way out is to be equally persistent in the cultivation of constant Mindfulness (Sati). When Mindfulness is present, you will notice when you become stuck in your thought patterns. It is that very noticing which allows you to back out of the thought process and free yourself from it. Mindfulness then returns your attention to its proper focus. If you are meditating at that moment, then your focus will be the formal object of meditation. If you are not in formal meditation, it will be just a pure application of bare attention itself, just a pure noticing of whatever comes up without getting involved - "Ah, this comes up... and now this, and now this... and now this."

Mindfulness (Sati) is at one and the same time both bare attention itself and the function of reminding us to pay bare attention if we have ceased to do so. Bare attention is noticing. It re-establishes itself simply by noticing that it has not been present. As soon as you are noticing that you have not been noticing, then by definition you are noticing and then again you are back to paying bare attention. Well, that all sounds very involved, but there is nothing complex about it. It is just the words. It is just a thing you will learn to do by feel, the way you play baseball. Mindfulness creates its own distinct feeling in consciousness. It has a flavor - a light, clear, energetic flavor. Conscious thought is heavy by comparison, ponderous and picky. But here again, these are just words. Your own practice will show you the difference. Then you will probably come up with your own words and the words used here will become superfluous. Remember, practice is the thing.

Mindfulness (Sati) sees things as they really are. It adds nothing to perception and it subtracts nothing. It distorts nothing. It is bare attention and just looks at whatever comes up. Conscious thought loves to paste things over our experience, to load us down with concepts and ideas, to immerse us in a churning vortex of plans and worries, fears and fantasies. When mindful, you don't play that game. You just notice exactly what arises in the mind, then you notice the next thing. "Ah, this... and this... and now this." It is really very simple.

Mindfulness (Sati) sees the true nature of all phenomena. Mindfulness and only Mindfulness can perceive the three prime characteristics that Buddhism teaches are

the deepest truth of existence. In Pali these three are called Annica (impermanence), Dukkha (unsatisfactoriness), and Anatta (selflessness - the absence of a permanent, unchanging, entity that we call soul or self). These truths, by the way, are not presented in Buddhist teaching as dogmas subject to blind faith. The Buddhists feel that these truths are universal and self-evident to anyone who cares to investigate in a proper way. Mindfulness is that method of investigation. Mindfulness alone has the power to reveal the deepest level of reality available to human observation. At this level of inspection, one sees the following: (a) All conditioned things are inherently transitory; (b) every worldly thing is, in the end, unsatisfying; and (c) there are really no entities that are unchanging or permanent, only processes.

Mindfulness works like an electron microscope. That is, it operates on so fine a level that one can actually see directly those realities which are at best theoretical constructs to the conscious thought process. Mindfulness actually sees the impermanent character of every perception. It sees the transitory and passing nature of everything that is perceived. It also sees the inherently unsatisfactory nature of all conditioned things. It sees that there is no sense grabbing onto any of these passing shows. Peace and happiness just cannot be found that way. And finally, Mindfulness sees the inherent selflessness of all phenomena. It sees the way we have arbitrarily selected a certain bundle of perceptions, chopped them off from the rest of the surging flow of experience and then conceptualized them as separate, enduring, entities. Mindfulness actually sees these things. It does not think about them, it sees them directly.

When it is fully developed, Mindfulness sees these three attributes of existence directly, instantaneously, and without the intervening medium of conscious thought. In fact, even the attributes which we just covered are inherently arbitrary. They don't really exist as separate items. They are purely the result of our struggle to take this fundamentally simple process called Mindfulness and express it in the cumbersome and inherently unsuitable thought symbols of the conscious level. Mindfulness is a PROCESS, but it does not take place in steps. It is a wholistic process that occurs as a unit: you notice your own lack of Mindfulness; and that noticing itself is a result of Mindfulness; and Mindfulness is bare attention; and bare attention is noticing things exactly as they are without distortion; and the way they are is Anicca, Dukkha, and Anatta (impermanent, unsatisfactory, and self-less). It all takes place in a flash-bang. This does not mean, however, that you will instantly attain liberation (freedom from all human weaknesses) as a result of your first moment of Mindfulness. Learning to integrate this material into your conscious life is another whole process. And learning to prolong this state of Mindfulness is still another. They are joyous processes, however, and they are well worth the effort.

MINDFULNESS (SATI) AND INSIGHT (VIPASSANA) MEDITATION

Mindfulness is the center of Vipassana meditation and the key to the whole process. It is both the goal of this meditation and the means to that end. You reach Mindfulness by being ever more mindful. One other Pali word that is translated into English as Mindfulness is Appamada, which means non-negligence or an absence of madness. One who attends constantly to what is really going on in one's mind achieves the state of ultimate sanity.

The Pali term 'Sati' also bears the connotation of remembering. It is not memory in the sense of ideas and pictures from the past, but rather clear, direct, wordless knowing of what is and what is not, of what is correct and what is incorrect, of what we are doing and how we should go about it. Mindfulness (Sati) reminds the meditator to apply his attention to the proper object at the proper time and to exert precisely the amount of energy needed to do that job. When this energy is properly applied, the meditator stays constantly in a state of calmness and alertness. As long as this condition is maintained, those mind-states called 'hindrances' or 'psychic irritants' cannot arise - there is no greed, no hatred, no lust or laziness. But we are all human and we all goof. Most of us are very human and we goof repeatedly. Despite honest effort, the meditator lets his Mindfulness slip now and then and he finds himself stuck in some nasty, but normal, human failure. It is Mindfulness that notices that change. And it is Mindfulness that reminds him to apply the energy required to pull himself out of the soup. These slips happen over and over, but their frequency decreases with practice. Once Mindfulness has pushed these mental defilements aside, more wholesome states of mind can take their place. Hatred makes way for loving kindness, lust is replaced by detachment. It is Mindfulness which notices this change, too, and which reminds the Vipassana meditator to maintain that extra little mental sharpness needed to keep these more desirable states of mind. Mindfulness makes possible the growth of wisdom and compassion. Without Mindfulness they cannot develop to full maturity.

Deeply buried in the mind, there lies a mental mechanism which accepts what the mind perceives as beautiful and pleasant experiences and rejects those experiences which are perceived as ugly and painful. This mechanism gives rise to those states of mind which we are training ourselves to avoid - things like greed, lust, hatred, aversion, and jealousy. We choose to avoid these hindrances, not because they are evil in the normal sense of the word, but because they are compulsive; because they take the mind over and capture the attention completely; because they keep going round and round in tight little circles of thought; and because they seal us off from living reality.

These hamperings cannot arise when Mindfulness is present. Mindfulness is attention to present time reality, and therefore, directly antithetical to the dazed state of mind which characterizes the impediments. As meditators, it is only when we let our Mindfulness slip that the deep mechanisms of our minds take over - grasping, clinging and rejecting. Then resistance emerges and obscures our awareness. We do not notice that the change is taking place - we are too busy with a thought of revenge, or greed, whatever it may be. While an untrained person will continue in this state indefinitely, a trained meditator will soon realize what is happening. It is Mindfulness that notices the change. It is Mindfulness that remembers the training received and that focuses our attention so that the confusion fades away. And it is Mindfulness that then attempts to maintain itself indefinitely so that the resistance cannot arise again. Thus, Mindfulness is the specific antidote for hindrances. It is both the cure and the preventive measure.

Fully developed Mindfulness (Sati) is a state of total non-attachment and utter absence of clinging to anything in the world. If we can maintain this state, no other means or device is needed to keep ourselves free of obstructions, to achieve liberation from our human weaknesses. Mindfulness is non-superficial awareness. It sees things deeply, down below the level of concepts and opinions. This sort of deep observation

leads to total certainty, a complete absence of confusion. It manifests itself primarily as a constant and unwavering attention which never flags and which never turns away.

This pure and unstained investigative awareness not only holds the fetters at bay, it lays bare their very mechanism and destroys them. Mindfulness neutralizes defilements in the mind. The result is a mind which remains unstained and invulnerable, completely unaffected by the ups and downs of life.

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MEDITATION ON THE THIRTY-TWO PARTS OF THE BODY

by Dhamma Viro

This meditation has a special place in the Dharma. It is one of very few subjects of meditation which contain both a tranquillity aspect and an insight aspect. As well, it is a very useful practical meditation, providing a powerful antidote to the hindrance of lust.

Taken as a tranquillity meditation, any one of the thirty-two parts that appear strongly to the meditator can be developed as an object of concentration, all the way to Jhana. The tale is told in the Visuddhimagga of a monk who developed Jhana thirty-two ways, taking each of the parts in turn as a meditation object. It may seem strange that something as mundane as "sweat" or "urine" can be the sign for exalted states of consciousness, but such is the power of meditation upon the thirty-two parts to transcend both attachment and aversion towards the body.

The detailed treatment of the tranquillity meditation leading to Jhana is not the subject of this article. The interested reader is referred to the "Path of Purification", (Visuddhimagga), VIII-42f. While we will have reason to return briefly to the insight aspect of this meditation, our main concern here is the practice of the thirty-two parts as a practical or "secondary" meditation for the specific purpose of counteracting sensual lust.

PRELIMINARIES: ATTITUDE, METHODS AND FRUITS

While an alternative name for this practice is "Meditation on Repulsiveness", the meditator should not cultivate an attitude of repulsion towards the body, which is merely exchanging attachment for aversion. Rather, by seeing clearly the repulsiveness inherent in objects (e.g.. skin, hair, flesh) that formerly were seen as desirable, the skillful yogin will develop an attitude of dispassion towards the body. Such an attitude is conducive to neither lust nor disgust, but fosters instead a balanced and mindful equanimity. If the aspect of repulsiveness is stressed at times in the texts, this is probably because our usual attitude towards the body (our own as well as those of others) is coloured by desire and to achieve the balance point of equanimity we must work to swing the pendulum in the opposite direction.

The practical development of this meditation can be approached in various ways. What follows here is a technique the present writer has found both effective and workable as a secondary meditation for one whose primary practice is Mindfulness of Breathing. The individual yogin may adapt the details to suit his or her own characteristics and requirements.

Seated comfortably, as for insight meditation, the yogin should direct his concentration to each of the thirty-two parts in succession. The order of the parts is considered important and should be adhered to. As each part is mentally named, direct your mindfulness towards that part and attempt to visualize it. Some parts will naturally appear more clearly, and the specific parts that "stand out" may not be the same every time you practice. Do not strain to visualize parts that don't naturally arise strongly. Instead, move on to the next part. When one does appear strongly, linger over it as long as mind can hold the object without wandering. Try to remain aware that each part is just that (i.e. heart is just heart etc.) and not a self, a real substantial entity or a component of one.

It is also important to be mindful of the repulsive nature of each part. This aspect may not be obvious for a few of the traditional thirty-two parts. The Visuddhimagga discusses a valuable technique for bringing out this aspect where it may not be apparent. The example used is hair. Many people find hair a desirable and decorative feature provocative of lust. And yet, considered by itself, as just hair, it is undoubtedly repulsive. As Buddhaghosa says, imagine a delicious meal served to you with a long black hair in the sauce. Would you not put the dish aside in disgust? I might add another consideration, one pertaining to skin. Wrapped around flesh and bone, skin is for most an object of lust. But considered by itself, as just skin, its repulsiveness is obvious. Imagine skinning a piece of chicken breast. Could you possibly see that shapeless, slimy stuff as an object of lust? And yet, that too is skin!

Repeating a caution mentioned earlier, don't allow this repulsiveness to develop into aversion, use it merely to counteract attachment. Those meditators who do tend towards aversion regarding the body should strive to see the parts as neutral. Bile is just bile, dung is just dung etc. Viewing the parts as composed of the four elements may be of aid for this type of person. When dung is seen as "solid earth element" its repugnant nature is eliminated. This particular practice is treated in detail in the Visuddhimagga, XI-47f.

Returning to the systematic practice: After completing the thirty-two parts, repeat in the reverse order, again visualizing each part. Continue for as long as the time set aside for this practice, alternating forward and reverse order for each repetition of the list.

A note on memorization: Some teachers recommend a preliminary exercise of simply memorizing the list, forwards and backwards. Personally, I did not find this necessary. The list follows a natural sequence, for the most part, and I think most people will find memorization comes quickly. Begin working with the list written out on a piece of paper, and refer to it as often as required. Very soon you will be able to dispense with the paper.

The benefits of the practice should become apparent almost immediately. The body will be seen in a new way, as a collection of strange and undesirable parts. Where is there here a place for lust to arise? None of the thirty-two parts considered separately are conducive to lust, so how can a body composed of their collection into a "two-mouthed sack" be desirable? When we speak of lust in this context, we of course mean in particular sexual lust towards the human body, either the pleasing of our own or possession of another's. But that is not all that is meant by lust. The more general

fires of all kinds of sense-desire greed are weakened by meditating upon the body, root of all sense-desire, in its true nature as a collection of parts.

Further, fear of death and worry over bodily well-being is also counteracted by this meditation. In some cases this may be of more importance than in over-coming lust. By seeing the body as a compound entity without a substantial nature we are freed from fear rooted in attachment.

This last point leads into the consideration of thirty-two parts as an insight meditation. Practiced as described above, this meditation is really a type of insight meditation and has many benefits that will carry over to the methodical practice. To begin with, much of the often difficult and tedious work of "putting away the body" will be done here, making the preliminary stages of insight easier. As well there are benefits that carry through to the higher stages. In particular, seeing the body as composed of separate parts overcomes the illusion of "compactness" that is the principal obstruction to right understanding of the truth of anatta (no self).

To elaborate, the worldling sees his body as a compact "thing-in-itself", a substantial reality. This encourages him to believe in a "self", either as the body or as a "soul" residing in the body. In the clear light of right understanding, however, the body is seen as a compound thing, a collection of parts, subject to dissolution. No self or soul can anywhere be found. Not only anatta, but dukkha too, is seen clearly through this exercise. Often translated as "suffering", dukkha could perhaps often be better rendered by the admittedly awkward word; "unsatisfactoriness". It should be obvious by now that the repulsive aspect of the body will reveal this characteristic.

To conclude this section, note that the yogin who develops this meditation over a period of time will be able to use the fruit of it swiftly, should the need arise. What I mean, is that after the preliminary groundwork has been done by way of long practice the yogin need not repeat the entire list to combat lustful thought arisings. A selected group of parts, contemplated very briefly, will often serve to bring forward the mood of dispassion and detachment peculiar to the meditation upon the thirty-two parts.

THE THIRTY-TWO PARTS LISTED

There are several variations upon this list. The differences are small ones, and often amount to no more than differences of name. By and large the differences arise out of translation difficulties, no doubt compounded by modern scholars imperfect understanding of ancient concepts of physiology and anatomy. The list which follows borrows from several variations to make one suitable for a modern mind.

Also, in choosing the names for the parts I have generally preferred the earthier Anglo-Saxon to the sterile and medical sounding Latin or Greek (e.g.. "dung" rather than "feces" and "spittle" rather than "saliva" etc.). The fastidious may find fault here, but I would argue that the emotional impact of the words chosen are correct for the purposes intended.

The parts are arranged in (mostly) natural groupings, which makes memorization easier. Notes on a few of the more obscure parts follow the list.

Hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin
Flesh, sinews, bone, marrow, kidneys
Heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs
Bowels, intestines, gorge, dung, brain
Bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat
Tears, grease, snot, spittle, oil of the joints, urine

Notes:

- Skin - The Visuddhimagga details a specific method for visualizing this part. In brief, the meditator should "insert his knowledge" between skin and bone and follow a path beginning at the upper lip, around the back of the head, down the back, up and around the crotch, up the torso and head, returning to the lower lip, with detours for each limb when required. For the complete description see Visuddhimagga VIII-95.
- Teeth - toothless yogins can work either with memory of teeth, or perhaps substitute "gums" .
- Flesh - muscles.
- Sinews - tendons.
- Membranes - refer to all the tough connective tissues of the torso, such as diaphragm, mesentery, and the tissues binding the guts and organs in place.
- Bowels - large intestines including colon and rectum.
- Intestines - small intestines plus stomach.
- Gorge - the undigested food in the stomach.
- Brain - A note of interest. The canonical list, as expounded by the Buddha in the Satipatthana Sutta (M. Sutta #10) and elsewhere consisted of only thirty-one parts. The brain was added by the commentators.
- Grease - refers to the oils found on the skin, especially the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet etc.

"Just as if a sack with openings at both ends were full of various kinds of grain — wheat, rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame seeds, husked rice — and a man with good eyesight, pouring it out, were to reflect, 'This is wheat. This is rice. These are mung beans. These are kidney beans. These are sesame seeds. This is husked rice'; in the same way, the monk reflects on this very body from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin and full of various kinds of unclean things [as identified in the above enumeration of bodily organs and fluids]...."

Satipatthana Sutta