

# SOURCEBOOK

**Committed Practitioners' Programme**

**2025-2026**



*Please do not share this sourcebook outside the CPP.*

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### *Acknowledgement:*

*Many people have contributed to this sourcebook. In alphabetical order: Christina Feldman, Christoph Köck, Yuka Nakamura, John Peacock, Jaya Rudgard, Akincano M. Weber*

## INTRODUCTION

### PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

The Buddha envisaged a path that led directly to its culmination in a deeply ‘embodied’ understanding of the Four Ennobling Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) and the freedom entailed in such a realisation. Such a path addressed every dimension of a human being’s existence by pulling together the various facets of their personality – emotions, intellect, reason, passion and energy – and directed them at the consummation of the goal.

The “Committed Practitioners’ Programme” is an integrated approach to the study and practice of the Dharma that is rooted in the Buddha’s teaching of the path to liberation. It offers you an opportunity to 1) study the texts (*pariyatti*), 2) develop and cultivate your experiential understanding of the teaching (*paṭipatti*) and investigate how they apply to your meditation practice and daily life and 3) understand what is meant by realisation (*paṭivedha*).

Within its framework the CPP includes a number of different, yet interwoven strands – teaching, study, discussion, community, reflection and investigations applied in daily life. It is an opportunity for participants to learn and practice together in community and to cultivate spiritual friendship.

### MODULES AND RETREATS

The modules and retreats will offer an in-depth exploration of the teachings of the Buddha. The modules will include sustained blocks of teachings and discussion. Each day there will be times for questions and sittings as well as periods of silence. The modules offer plenty of opportunity for the participants to interact and are intended to foster community as well as peer relationships.

The retreats will have a study-cum-practice format. They are held in silence apart from the teaching sessions.

### CONTINUING INVESTIGATIONS

This sourcebook contains assignments of dharma themes to investigate and apply continuously over the entire programme. We encourage you to read and reflect on the texts. The most significant step is to apply your understanding and learning in your own life.

### MENTORING

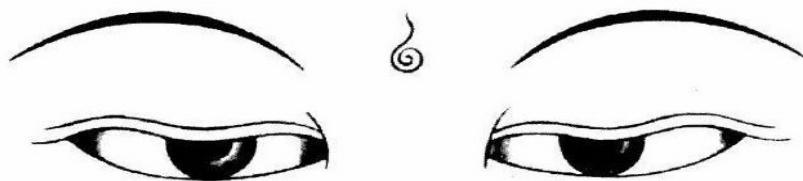
Throughout the CPP each participant will be assigned to a teacher as their mentor and meet by video calls, focussing on the current course material and its practical application. We anticipate

these check-ins to be around half an hour in length; it is important to keep the arranged dates. The purpose of the mentoring is to support you in your own reflection and application of the course's current 'Continuing Investigation', both in your formal practice and your life's specific setting or to discuss anything relating to the previous module or retreat. The mentoring sessions and continuing investigations are intended to provide continuity throughout the programme. Prior to your session it may be useful to reflect on any questions or reflections you would wish to raise. Discussions in the mentoring sessions are to be held in confidentiality by all parties unless there is a need or agreement to share the discussion with others. All mentors will have access to the course book and probably suggest a particular mode in which they can be connected, likely phone, or video conferencing. The mentoring relationship is a dana relationship; your mentor does not receive any payment and may well be living on dana.

### **COMMITMENT**

Each participant will find their own ways of learning within the framework of the programme, but it is important to bring to these one and a half years a clear sense of commitment. The greatest benefits are gained through engaging with the reading material and exploring the continuing investigation themes in your life. Joining the mentoring sessions will enable you to explore questions and reflections that arise.

*May this programme support you on your path!*



## CURRICULUM: Dates – Teachers – Topics

### 2025

|                                                                                             |                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CPP – 3-hour Online Meeting</b> March 15<br>15.00-18.00 GMT                              | Welcome, Introduction                                                                                                         |
| <b>CPP-Module 1</b> Mar 28–Apr 2<br>Martine Batchelor, Jaya Rudgard                         | Overview of practice, Four Noble Truths,<br>Eightfold Path – <i>Sīla</i> – <i>Samādhi</i> – <i>Pannā</i><br>Practice lineages |
| <b>CPP-Module 2</b> June 3-8<br><br>Christina Feldman, Yuka Nakamura                        | Three Characteristics<br><br><i>Brahmavihāra</i> – The Four Immeasurables<br>Refinement of ethics                             |
| <b>CPP-Retreat 1</b> September 5 -12<br>Christina Feldman, Christoph Köck,<br>Yuka Nakamura | Establishment of Mindfulness:<br>The teachings of <i>Satipaṭṭhāna</i><br>The Seven Factors of Awakening                       |
| <b>CPP-Module 3</b> December 2-7<br>John Peacock, Akincano Weber                            | Indian Background & Civilization<br>The Life of the Buddha, Vinaya and its origins<br>Text and Transmission                   |

### 2026

|                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CPP-Module 4</b> February 13-18<br>Christoph Köck, Yuka Nakamura                  | Karma: Intention, Action and their Ripening<br><i>Pāramī</i> , Seven Treasures                                                                         |
| <b>CPP-Module 5</b> April 9-14<br>Martine Batchelor, Jaya Rudgard                    | Right Understanding - Wisdom & Not-Knowing,<br><i>Vipallāsa</i> , <i>Indriya</i><br>Making of the Self, <i>Khandha</i> : Five aspects of<br>experience |
| <b>CPP-Retreat 2</b> June 5-12<br>Christina Feldman, Christoph Köck,<br>Jaya Rudgard | Dependent Arising<br>Emptiness                                                                                                                         |
| <b>CPP-Module 6</b> September 11-16<br>Martine Batchelor, Christina Feldman          | <i>Yoniso Manasikāra</i> , <i>Nibbāna</i> – Unbinding<br>Bodhicitta, Stages of Awakening                                                               |

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATIONS

One of the primary intentions of this programme is to make direct bridges between your formal meditation practice, the teaching and the embodiment of the path in every area of life. The different components of the programme – modules, retreats and continuing investigations and mentoring – are all designed to work together. The greatest benefit is derived from this programme by undertaking the continuing investigations as they are assigned between modules.

The continuing investigations provide the central themes for investigation, reflection and application. There will often be references to specific Suttas. These can be purchased in book form (see *Suggested Reading below*) or else be accessed through the websites of [www.suttacentral.net](http://www.suttacentral.net) (*the most multilingual site, with continually added new translations*); [www.accesstoinight.com](http://www.accesstoinight.com) (*English*) and [www.palikanon.com](http://www.palikanon.com) (*German*). If you wish to consult the Pali texts directly, the Digital Pali Reader or Suttacentral (*Latin, Indic or SE-Asian Scripts*) will allow you easy access to the source texts of the translations. Suttas ask for careful reading; generally, a text needs to be read several times. The language of the discourses is translated and may at times sound archaic and use concepts unfamiliar to the reader; it is important to translate the central theme of the Sutta for oneself into one's own contemporary language and vocabulary; this includes acknowledging what is *not* understood. Some participants have found it helpful to create ways to read the Suttas together with others. Please consider using the guidance in the attached document "On Reading the Suttas" in the appendix.

The continuing investigations will provide questions for reflection. You might take one question at a time and consider it in the light of your own experience. Take note of anything in the question or Sutta you do not understand or disagree with. These might be areas to discuss with your mentor.

Each of the continuing investigations will offer a range of practice themes to take into your life. These are encouragements to truly take the teaching to heart, to see what is valuable and what is not. Through sustaining attention on the reflective themes, we create the ways in which the teaching can be incorporated into our formal meditation practice and our overall way of seeing, understanding and relating. This is not intended to be just an academic exercise, but a process of cultivating a meditative life.

### **Abbreviated References to the Pali Canon:**

- AN: Anguttara Nikāya. The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha.
- DN: Dīgha Nikāya. The Long Discourses of the Buddha.
- Dhp: Dhammapāda.
- MN: Majjhīma Nikāya. The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha.
- SN: Samyutta Nikāya. The Connected Discourses of the Buddha.
- Sn: Sutta-Nipāta.

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – April 2025

### Theme: The Eightfold Path – wise view and intention; ethics and wise speech

#### Reading

Abhisandasutta - Sutta on the Five great gifts (AN 8.39)

Book: The Noble Eightfold Path. The Way to the End of Suffering - Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Link: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/waytoend.html>

#### **Further suggested reading:**

Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness - Bhante Gunaratana

A Whole Life Path – Gregory Kramer

*(in both, especially the sections on the first five factors of the path, wise view, wise intention, wise speech and wise action and wise livelihood)*

#### Reflection, Inquiry and Practice

##### **View:**

1. Why do you think wise (right) view is the first of the eight path factors?

##### **Intention:**

2. The training guidelines speak to what we are doing with our attention and our intention. What does non-harming look like in the context of our thinking and attitudes?
3. Experiment with pausing numerous times in a day to ask yourself: “What is the state of my mind right now?”
4. Try to become aware of the ways in which your thoughts, speech and actions are patterned by the mental state of the moment.
5. In your experience, how do wise view and wise intention support each other?

##### **Ethics:**

6. Reflect on the five ethical training precepts. How do you transform the five precepts into a commitment in your life rather than seeing them as a set of rules?

7. You might experiment with taking just one of the ethical guidelines as a commitment in a day. Explore not only what it means to practice restraint in that guideline but equally what it means to cultivate the positive aspect of the training guideline.

### **Speech:**

8. Experiment with bringing into your day the intention to speak wisely: What impact does this have?
9. Notice the difference between impulsive and intentional speech.
10. The Buddha defined four unwise modes of speech: lying, slander, abusive/harsh speech and gossip/chatter. What are the moments you find yourself engaging in unwise speech? What are your triggers? What is the effect on your mind?
11. What are the inner conditions that lead to wise or unwise speech? What does our speech reveal about the state of our minds?
12. Endeavour to be aware of how you are speaking to yourself in thought.
13. Explore what it is to take as a commitment the practice of only speaking with lovingkindness. What does this look like not only with friends but with people we struggle with?

### **Listening:**

14. What do you think wise listening might be?
15. Be aware of your own responses to praise and blame.

### **Livelihood:**

16. What could wise livelihood mean in contemporary society?

## **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – May 2025**

### **Themes: Dukkha and craving; Relating to the senses**

#### **Reading**

Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta – Turning the wheel of the Dhamma (SN 56.11)

Books: The Four Noble Truths - Ajahn Sumedho. Link:

<https://forestsangha.org/teachings/books/the-four-noble-truths?language=English>



### **Further suggested reading:**

Turning the Wheel of Truth - Ajahn Sucitto (Shambala)

### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

#### ***Dukkha* and craving:**

1. How do you experience *dukkha* in your life?
2. What are some of your usual responses to it? Are there any patterns you notice?
3. How does craving lead to *dukkha* or *dukkha* to craving, in your experience?
4. Do you notice moments of freedom from craving? What are they like?
5. Explore the arising of craving in your mind: Can you notice the conditions leading to the arising of craving and the effect of craving on your mindstate?
6. Explore ways of responding to craving skilfully. Is it possible to bring mindfulness and interest to the experience of craving, to investigate it rather than to act on it blindly, and perhaps to abandon it?

#### **Relating to the senses:**

7. What could it mean to refrain from misusing sensual pleasure?
8. Is there a connection of this personal guideline to global social and environmental issues?
9. What are the benefits of the sensually lovely – music, art, nature?
10. What is the difference between appreciation and craving in your experience?
11. How do we incorporate the lovely into a path of skilfulness and liberation?
12. What is the difference between restraint and denial or rejection?

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – June 2025

**Themes: Metta (loving kindness); Taking care of thoughts**

### Reading

Karaniya Mettā Sutta - The Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness (Snp 1.8)

Dvedhāvitakka Sutta – Two kinds of thought (MN 19)

Book: Christina Feldman – 'Boundless Heart' Shambala.

### **Further suggested reading:**

Sharon Salzberg – 'Loving Kindness'

Bhikkhu Nyānamoli 'The practice of loving kindness'

(<https://www.accesstinsight.org/lib/authors/nanamoli/wheel007.html>)

### Reflection, Inquiry and Practice

#### **Kindness:**

Reflect on the following:

1. Do you notice when kindness informs your actions, speech and words, and when it doesn't?
2. What is it in your mind that obstructs your capacity for kindness?
3. How does right view support the intention of kindness?
4. How does a commitment to kindness support the development of insight?
5. How is kindness a liberating cultivation?
6. In formal practice you might experiment with beginning each sitting with some time dedicated to formal *mettā* practice. Does it have any effect upon your sitting period?
7. See if you can find ways to practice *mettā* off the cushion. Notice the moments of impatience, frustration or dislike that arise in your contact with people during the day. What happens when you intentionally bring the *mettā* phrases into those moments?
8. **With yourself** notice when the mind falls into habitual patterns of self-judgment, blame or comparison. Can you remember to bring *mettā* practice into those moments? Does it make a difference?

9. In the times when you are in contact with **a friend**, in person or through telephone or email, take a few moments to reflect on the nature of friendship.
10. Experiment with going into your day to notice all the **people you would normally ignore** or not see because you feel more neutral or indifferent toward them. What happens to the sense of neutrality when you do pay attention?
11. Notice what happens in your mind when you endeavour to offer *mettā* or meet with friendliness the **people you struggle with or find difficult**. Can you discern the two layers of difficulty – the other person and the extra difficulty created through your reaction to them?
12. It is not only fortunate to be able to offer *mettā* but also to receive it. What are the obstructions to receiving *mettā* offered by others?

### Thoughts:

13. Can you notice the underlying intentions driving your thoughts?
14. How can we interpret ‘the thought of renunciation’ mentioned in the Dvedhāvitakka Sutta?
15. What happens when you consciously bring the three wholesome intentions to your thoughts?
16. In the Dvedhāvitakka Sutta, do thoughts necessarily lead to pain? If so, how?
17. Is effort required to rid oneself of the negative thought processes that the Buddha describes in the Dvedhāvitakka Sutta? How would you describe this kind of effort?
18. In your formal practice make the intention to be mindful of your mind and thought processes. What happens to a thought when you bring a wholehearted attention and mindfulness to it?
19. Can you notice different kinds of thinking that your mind engages in? What are they?
20. What is the place of reflective, investigative thinking? How and when do you undertake this?
21. How do you understand the statement: ‘Whatever one thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of one’s mind’? What is meant by the inclination of the mind?
22. Do you notice repetitive inclinations in your mind – pessimism, optimism, aversion, fantasy, planning? Are these helpful to you? What is it that sustains the un-helpful?

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – July 2025

### Theme: Advice for living in the world

#### Reading

Mahā Rāhulovāda sutta (MN 62)

Sīgālovāda Sutta (also known as the Sigālaka Sutta) (DN 31)

#### Reflection, Inquiry and Practice

##### **Mahā Rāhulovāda Sutta:**

1. In this sutta the Buddha teaches Rahula a whole range of contemplations. What might be the reasons for this? Which contemplations resonate most with you?
2. What are the benefits of contemplating the elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space in your view?

##### **Sīgālovāda Sutta:**

3. Do you think that this text speaks to our lives in the modern world or is it just an historical curiosity?
4. ‘Evil action springs from greed, ill-will, confusion and fear’. Do you think this is true? If so, why?
5. Can you think of any other causes of unskillful action in your own life?
6. The Buddha talks about six dangers attached to frequenting fairs. What do you think a modern equivalent would be?
7. Why is it so important to discern between true and false friends?
8. Is ‘honouring the six directions’ about the quality of our relationships? Can you think of any modern additions to this list?
9. How can the different kinds of relationships in your life be a field of practice?
10. Which relationships do you feel truly nourish you?
11. Can you trace the moments in your days when the arising of fear or ill will moves you into unskillful action or speech?

12. Can you sense in your mind the consequences or residues that linger as a result of ill will and fear being expressed? Or not being expressed?
13. In your daily practice can you notice the flavouring of ill will or fear in the mental states or thoughts that pass through your attention – what happens when you bring a mindful curiosity to those moments?
14. What other paths can you cultivate in the midst of ill will or fear?

### **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – August 2025**

**Themes: Sensual pleasures; Speech and non-conflict**

#### **Reading**

Araṇavibhaṅga Sutta - The Exposition of Non-Conflict (MN 139)

Abhayarājakumāra Sutta -To Prince Abhaya - (MN 58)

#### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

1. The Buddha says that we should not pursue sensual pleasure “which is low, vulgar, coarse, ignoble and unbeneficial”. Think of some contemporary examples.
2. What kinds of sensual pleasure would not be “low, vulgar, coarse, ignoble and unbeneficial”?
3. “One should know what it is to extol and what it is to disparage”. What does the Buddha mean by extolling and disparaging? Are all forms of extolling and disparaging unskillful? Why?
4. Why should we speak unhurriedly? Could hurried speech lead to conflict? What about other forms of verbal communication (social media etc)?
5. “When one knows covert speech to be true, correct and beneficial....or when one knows overt sharp speech to be true, correct and beneficial, one may utter it, knowing the time to do so”. Is it possible to do this without engendering conflict? Think of some examples.
6. “One should not insist on local language and one should not override normal usage”. How do you understand this and what could be some examples for you?
7. In the Abhayarājakumāra Sutta the Buddha talks about three main criteria for speech: truthfulness/correctness, beneficial nature, and agreeableness. What is their relative importance?

8. Notice your own responses to being criticized. Can you receive valued criticism, or does it set off unskilful reactions?
9. Begin your day with your intention to be mindful of your speech. Notice how it affects the communications you do or do not engage in.
10. Does being aware of your speech make you more aware of your mental state and thoughts?
11. How do you respond to unskilful speech in others?

## **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – September 2025**

### **Theme: Satipaṭṭhāna – Establishing mindfulness**

#### **Reading**

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – the Discourse on the Establishments of Mindfulness (MN 10).

*We would suggest reading the copy we have appended to this sourcebook. There are many other translations available. Beyond this Sutta itself, an entire section of the Grouped Discourses (Samyutta Nikaya (SN) 47) is dedicated to teachings on Satipaṭṭhāna.*

#### **Further suggested reading:**

Satipaṭṭhāna – A Practice Guide – Bhikkhu Anālayo

Satipaṭṭhāna – Direct Path – Bhikkhu Anālayo

Mindfulness – Joseph Goldstein

Article (*in German*): Akincano: »Achtsamkeit – ein Begriff zwischen den Welten. Teil Eins/ Zur Psychologie buddhistischer Geistesgegenwart.«

Link: <https://akincano.net/PDF/Geistesgegenwart-01.pdf>

#### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

1. Why bother to be mindful? Why does mindfulness play such a central role in cultivating the mind?
2. How is the attitudinal sense of mindfulness described in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta?
3. How do you understand mindfulness? What are its characteristics?

4. How do you understand “internal and external mindfulness” and how is it relevant to your practice?
5. Practice being mindful of the feeling tone that comes with every physical and mental experience, being either pleasant, unpleasant or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant? Is it possible to be aware of a feeling tone without falling into reactivity?
6. Why do you think a whole *satipaṭṭhāna* is devoted to *vedanā* (feeling tone)?
7. What is the link between mindfulness and insight?
8. What are the insights that are pointed to in the discourse?
9. Why is the awareness of impermanence given such emphasis? How would this insight and awareness, deeply understood, affect our relationship to experience?
10. How do you understand the fourth establishment of mindfulness? In what way is it different from the third establishment of mindfulness?

## **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – October 2025**

### **Theme: The seven factors of awakening**

#### **Readings**

Bhojjaṅga Samyutta (connected discourses on the Factors of Awakening) SN 46:  
Read the first three suttas in this collection SN 46.1, 46.2 and 46.3 (the Himalaya, The Body, and on Virtue)

Chapter ‘The Seven Factors for Awakening (bojjhaṅga)’ (p226) from the book ‘Wings to Awakening’ by Thanissaro. A pdf is available here:

<https://www.dhammatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/wings210213.pdf>

1. In what way does mindfulness play a special role among the factors of awakening?
2. Why did the Buddha say that inappropriate attention prevents the arising of the factors of awakening?
3. Pay attention to the presence or absence of the factors of awakening and familiarize yourself with the feel of each of them.

4. Do you notice that some factors are easily accessible to you and others maybe less so?
5. SN 46.2 talks about nutriments for the awakening factors but doesn't give much detail. What do you think from your own experience helps support the arising of each of the awakening factors?
6. In the awakening factors there are both energizing and calming factors. In what circumstances do you find it useful to cultivate each of these sets of factors?

### **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – November 2025**

**Themes: Mindfulness of breathing; Cultivating the undistracted mind.**

#### **Reading**

Ānāpānasati Sutta – Discourse on Mindfulness of Breathing (MN 118)

Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta - Discourse on the Stilling of Thoughts (MN 20)

#### **Further suggested reading:**

Breathing like a Buddha – Ajahn Sucitto

Breath by Breath – Larry Rosenberg

Beyond Mindfulness in Plain English – Bhante Gunaratana

Mindfulness of Breathing. A Practice Guide and Translations. – Bhikkhu Anālayo

Mindfulness with breathing: a manual for serious beginners – Ajahn Buddhādāsa

#### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

##### **Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta:**

1. The Vitakkasaṇṭhānasutta discusses five ways of dealing with distracting thoughts. Why is it important to develop this skill?
2. How do you make sense of the similes and translate them into practical interventions?
3. How do you understand this statement: 'When, with one's teeth clenched and one's tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, one beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind, then any evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in one and subside.'  
What are the risks and benefits of such an approach?



## **Ānāpānasati Sutta:**

You might experiment in your daily practice with giving some dedicated time to working with mindfulness of breathing.

4. Does it help to use a mental note for your breath in some way? (long - short, in - out etc)?
5. Can you notice the specifics of a single breath, its beginning, middle or end or the rising and falling of the breath within your body? How is it to practice feeling and calming the whole body with every breath?
6. Explore the balance between clear intention and receptivity in mindfulness of breathing. When does intention turn into forcing or striving? What does it mean to be receptive to the breath, letting the breathing, breathe itself?
7. Notice what distractions typically take your attention away from your breath. Can you let them go and return to the next breath?
8. Notice what hindrance factor or factors may habitually arise in your practice: Dullness, agitation, craving, aversion or doubt - and the ways that they feed each other. Are they the same hindrance factors that most habitually arise in your life? What are the skilful antidotes?
9. Ajahn Sucitto translates step 9: “One trains: ‘Breathe in/out fully and completely sensitive to mind/heart’”. What could it mean to be sensitive to mind/heart (that which knows or receives experience)?
10. Off the cushion explore what it means to cultivate an undistracted mind. Be aware of the places where you habitually or intentionally divide your attention. Perhaps focus on one of these places and experiment with the cultivation of wholehearted attention.
11. In times of tension or busyness, experiment with pausing and coming back for a few moments to mindfulness of breathing. How far away or how near is tranquillity?
12. How much do you appreciate calmness and serenity? How do you prevent these from sliding into dullness and lethargy?

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – December 2025

**Theme: What are we really searching for in life? From habitual reactions to intentional action.**

### Reading

Salla Sutta – The Dart (SN 36.6)

Ariyapariyesanā Sutta - The Noble Search or the Noble Quest. (MN 26)

### Reflection, Inquiry and Practice

1. The Salla sutta describes the reactivity of the untrained mind to pleasant, unpleasant or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling tones. Bring awareness to these reactions in your own experience – noticing how often your choices and actions are governed by this reactivity, without judging yourself for it. Is it possible to pause in those moments and to act with more intentionality?
2. Unpleasant sensations, especially when they are intense, can trigger different forms of resistance or seeking the pleasant. What would be more wholesome ways of responding to pain, criticism, loss etc.?
3. At the beginning of the Ariyapariyesanā sutta the Buddha lists a number of things for which people strive in the 'ignoble search'. What would a modern list look like?
4. Reflect on the kinds of things that you search for in your life. Would these constitute aspects of a 'noble search' or an 'ignoble search'?
5. Why do you think the Buddha regards the items listed in the ignoble search as being subject to 'birth, ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement' and, therefore, ultimately of no use to us in our quest? In addition, why does he consider them a 'danger'?
6. Reflect on the reason why the Buddha turns away from his two early teachers to pursue his own path. Is this a rejection of the *jhānas* as a path leading to awakening?
7. Note that attachment in the Buddha's teaching has a different meaning than in contemporary psychology. The Buddha talks about relinquishing attachments in the search for liberation. What are the signs or symptoms of attachment that you notice in your own life? How can you respond to these?
8. Is there such a thing as a wholesome attachment or a wholesome desire? Can we consciously cultivate wholesome desires?

9. What could it mean to “still or calm” formations, experientially (M26.19)?
10. For a noble search to begin there needs to be intention. Explore what it might mean to live an intentional rather than an impulsive or reactive life. What are the noble intentions you might cultivate?
11. Do you have a sense of aspiration in your practice and path? Is it in the forefront of your mind when you practise? If your practice feels dry or habitual how would you enliven the sense of gladness and inspiration?

## **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – January 2026**

### **Theme: Not-self and the experience of self**

#### **Reading**

Anattalakkhaṇasutta Sutta - The Characteristic of Not-self (SN 22.59)

Alagaddūpama Sutta–The Simile of the Water snake (MN 22)

#### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

##### **Anattalakkhaṇasutta sutta:**

1. What argument does the Buddha make to show that form, feeling tone, perception, volitional formations and consciousness are not-self and cannot be appropriated as me, mine or my self?
2. How does such a view lead to growing disillusioned with form, feeling tone etc.?

##### **Alagaddūpama Sutta:**

3. ‘The raft is for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping.’ What are the implications of this statement?
4. Think about how ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’ is linked to craving, conceit and views.
5. Is it inevitable that the clinging to self will arouse ‘sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair’?
6. The Buddha is accused of being a nihilist. Why could the doctrine of not-self be construed as nihilistic? Why isn’t the Buddha teaching annihilationism?

7. Examine in both your daily life and your meditation practice how 'I am' insinuates itself into all our thoughts and actions. In addition, see how the possessive 'this is mine' attaches itself to objects. Does agitation arise when this occurs? What form does that agitation take?
8. Practice seeing your 'self' as a process/verb rather than a noun. What do you notice?
9. Can you see the arising and expression of personality view in thought, attitude or action? Notice in what situations the sense of 'self' appears most strongly. Notice the moments in your day when there is no predominant sense of 'self'. What is the difference between these moments?
10. Is there a difference between 'self' and clinging?
11. How is the sense of 'self' fed? Try to trace in your day and in your meditation the changing shape of 'self'. What determines those changes?
12. In moments when the sense of 'self' or clinging is most noticeable experiment with applying the phrases, "This is not me, this does not belong to me, this is not who I am." Does that application have any impact on those moments?

## **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – February 2026**

**Theme: Developing the wholesome, cultivating generosity.**

### **Reading**

Sevitābbāsevitabba sutta (MN 114)

Generosity: please read the sutta excerpts in the appendix 'On Generosity'

### **Further suggested reading:**

Book: 'Pāramī - Ways to Cross Life's Floods' by Ajahn Sucitto (available as pdf) – Chapters 1-2

### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

#### **Sevitāsevitabba Sutta:**

1. This sutta covers a wide range of subjects, but with a single message. How do you understand that message and what are some of its practical applications in your own life?

**Generosity:**

The accomplishment of generosity is described by the Buddha as: “a mind free from the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing”.

2. Why is so much attention given to generosity as the first foundation of practice?
3. Can happiness be the motivating force for generosity rather than ‘should’?
4. Notice in your days the moments when you are the recipient of another’s generosity – whether it is a small act of someone holding a door open for you or the offering to you of their wholehearted attention. What is the effect on your mind?
5. What does it mean to delight in relinquishing? The Buddha points to generosity as one of the primary means for overcoming a mind obsessed by greed, hatred and delusion. Is this true in your own experience?
6. Notice the moments in your day when generosity, in small or large ways is unhesitating and the moments when generosity is neglected. What happens in the mind when it is in a state of withholding rather than generosity? (It could be withholding of attention, kindness, love.) Is there aversion in that state? How much storytelling, justifying, rationalising goes on? Can that state be seen of suffering, deserving of generosity rather than judgment?
7. Is generosity that requires effort truly generosity? How much do you see generosity as a training like any other meditative training?
8. Notice the times in your day when your capacity for generosity is hindered by conditions: “Does this person deserve it? Will someone misuse my generosity?”
9. You might take a week when you commit to generosity without conditions as a practice. Be as generous as you are able with your attention, time, care and, when possible, with resources. What is the effect on your mind, your relationships?

**CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – March 2026****Theme: Cultivating the perfections (*pāramī*)****Reading**

Book: ‘Pāramī - Ways to Cross Life’s Floods’ by Ajahn Sucitto (available as pdf) – Chapters 3- end

## **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

1. Pick some of the practice suggestions from Ajahn Sucitto's book and practice them.
2. Can you find any examples of ways in which particular *pāramī*, awakening factors and treasures support and bring each other into balance?

## **CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – April 2026**

### **Theme: The gradual development of understanding**

## **Reading**

Kesamuttisutta Sutta (AN 3.65) (Kalama Sutta)  
Caṅki Sutta (MN 95)

## **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

1. What does faith/confidence (*saddhā*) mean to you?
2. How do you understand the arc that leads from faith to wisdom? How is this revealed through your personal experience?
3. Examine the relationship between right view, right effort and right mindfulness.
4. Try to notice what it is you put the most effort into during the day. Does it reflect what you value or is it a habit?
5. Can you find examples of each of the four right efforts throughout your day?
6. What is the result of applying wise effort in the midst of the unwholesome or unskillful? What is the consequence of not applying wise effort?
7. When it seems apparent that you need to apply effort – to sit, to practice wise speech or restraint – what is the difference between joyful effort and dutiful effort?
8. The Kesamuttisutta Sutta (Advice to the Kālāmas) is famous for encouraging free inquiry and countering dogmatism and blind faith. Does this mean that as a practitioner one can dispense with all teachings and faith and instead rely solely on one's own experience and thinking? How should we understand the Buddhas' words, taking into account that he gave this teaching to people who were not his followers.

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – May 2026

### Themes: Perception and proliferation

#### Reading

Phena Sutta – the Lump of Foam (SN 22.95)

Mādhupiṇḍika Sutta - The Honeyball (MN 18)

Vipallāsa Sutta (AN 4.49)

#### Reflection, Inquiry and Practice

1. Contemplate the five similes that the Buddha gave for the five aggregates (*khandhas*): Body as a lump of foam, feeling tone as water bubble, perception as shimmering mirage, volitional formations as the trunk of a plantain tree and consciousness as a magical illusion. What do these similes convey regarding the nature of each *khandha*?
2. How does the teaching on the five *khandhas* help with dispelling distortions of perception and view (*vipallāsa*)?
3. How does the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* counteract these distortions?
4. Can the *anusayas* (underlying tendencies) that the Buddha describes in MN 18 be modulated by intentional and behavioural changes?
5. ‘What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates’. What do you think the Buddha means when he says this?
6. What is so ‘unsatisfactory’ about *papañca* (conceptual proliferation)? What positive role can thought play in practice?
7. Can you notice a resistance to letting go of proliferation? What is behind this resistance?
8. Notice times in your day when proliferation diminishes. What do moments of non-proliferation feel like? How might you intentionally cultivate more of these moments?

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – June 2026

**Themes: Dependent Origination (dependent co-arising); the wholesome and the unwholesome.**

### **Reading**

Sammadiṭṭhi Sutta – Right View (MN 9)

### **Further suggested reading:**

Book: PA Payutto: Dependent Origination.

Link: <http://www.buddhistlibrary.org/en/displayimage.php?pid=2413>

### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

1. How do you discern what is wholesome and what is unwholesome? What does this mean for you?
2. In your formal and informal practice try to apply the discernment of wholesome and unwholesome to your thoughts, responses, speech and actions. Are you able to discern the roots?
3. Why would we choose to nourish the unwholesome?
4. The Sammaditṭhi sutta speaks of four kinds of fuels/nutriments that maintain beings: solid food, contact, mental intention, and consciousness. How do you understand the function of those four kinds of fuel? Why do you think that this passage is found near to the beginning of the Sutta?
5. How could the teaching on dependent origination inform your practice? Which links make sense to you and which links are more difficult to understand?
6. The Sammaditṭhi sutta contains many variations on the four noble truths (according to the Majjhima commentary they are expressed 32 times in this sutta). What might this tell us?
7. Read the section on ignorance. Are there ways we can practice ignorance and practice liberation? What would they be?
8. We would normally expect a description of dependent origination to start or end with ignorance (*avijjā*). Why do you think that this description ends with the taints (*āsavas*)?
9. Why is 'I am' (*asmi-māna*) a conceit?



## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – July 2026

**Themes: Simplicity, non-proliferation and emptiness**

### Reading

Bāhiya Sutta – With Bāhiya (Udāna 1.10)

Cūḷasuññatā Sutta - The Shorter Discourse on Voidness (MN 121)

### Reflection, Inquiry and Practice

1. The Bāhiya sutta contains a famous pith instruction given to Bāhiya by the Buddha. How do you understand this instruction?
2. What did the Buddha mean by ‘In the seen will be merely the seen’? What are the fruits that are to be expected from training in this way?
3. How is this different from our normal way of seeing/perceiving?
4. The Cūḷasuññatā Sutta describes a gradual simplification of perceptions by ignoring certain aspects of experience. What do you think is the intention behind this?
5. What might a comparable simplification look like in your practice, what steps could it include?
6. What is the meaning of emptiness (voidness) here?
7. Could voidness be interpreted as nihilism? If not, why not?

## CONTINUING INVESTIGATION – August/September 2026

**Themes: The Fruits of the Practice**

### Reading

Sabbāsava Sutta – All the Taints (MN 2)

Kosambiya-Sutta (MN 48)

Short Sutta Passages on Nibbāna:

<https://suttacentral.net/en/ud8.1>

<https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/ud/ud.8.03.irel.html>

<https://suttacentral.net/en/sn43.14>

<https://www.accesstoinight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca3/nibbana.html>

<https://suttacentral.net/en/ud8.4>

### **Further suggested reading on the topic of Nibbāna:**

Essay by De Silva: <https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/desilva/wheel407.html>

#### **Books:**

- Amaro, Ajahn and Ajahn Pasanno, 2009 The Island: an anthology of the Buddha's teachings on Nibbāna Abhayagiri Monastic Foundation
- Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1993 The Mind Like Fire Unbound, Dhamma Dana Publications
- Johansson, Rune E.A. 1969 The Psychology of Nirvana, London: Allen & Unwin
- Collins, Steven 2010 Nirvana: Concept, Imagery, Narrative, Cambridge University Press.

### **Reflection, Inquiry and Practice**

1. The Sabbāsava Sutta talks about seven ways by which taints should be abandoned. Contemplate what the Buddha could have meant by each of them and think about concrete ways of applying them to your own life and practice:
  - a. Abandoning by seeing
  - b. by restraining
  - c. by using
  - d. by enduring
  - e. by avoiding
  - f. by removing
  - g. by developing.
2. Does 'guarding the sense doors' mean turning away from the world? How would you guard your sense doors when you find yourself in environments of busyness or a multiplicity of sensory impressions?
3. The Kosambiya-Sutta talks about obsessions (*pariyuṭṭhāna*). What are the obsessions that engage our attention?
4. Why does the Buddha place so much emphasis on maintaining harmonious and cordial relationships with our spiritual companions?
5. In the Kosambiyasutta the Buddha emphasizes the view that is 'noble and emancipating'. How would you describe this view?

6. How does this view inform the choices and actions of a practitioner? Why do you think the Buddha said that this view ‘holds and binds everything together’?
7. In the Kosambiyasutta a person who – in spite of having many duties – has a ‘keen regard for the training in higher ethics, higher mind, and higher wisdom’ is compared to a cow watching her baby calf devotedly. How could this image inspire you in your own practice?
8. One of the themes in the last module is *Nibbāna* (Unbinding). After reading the short sutta excerpts above, reflect on your own understanding of Nibbana and its place in your practice.

Some Questions:

- a. Is *Nibbāna* a mystical experience?
  - b. Is it the cessation of experience that makes *Nibbāna*?
  - c. Is *Nibbāna* simply the cessation of craving?
  - d. Is *Nibbāna* a transcendent otherness?
  - e. Is *Nibbāna* best understood as continuous Unbinding?
  - f. How do you understand ‘*Nibbāna* here and now’?
9. Is *Nibbāna* worth aspiring to?
  10. Is it necessary to have a complete understanding of the final goal in order to make the journey?



Great Stupa of Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh, ca. 3rd c. BCE): Adoration of Buddha in the form of a fiery pillar

## Appendix

### Akincano: On reading the Suttas

*“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”  
Aristotle (disputed quote)*

What can meditators obtain by studying texts – an activity that inevitably involves the discursive mind – if meditation is the attempt to pacify that very thinking mind? Is it not, easily enticed to identify with its thoughts as self and to disown what it doesn't like or understand, the very obstacle to collectedness, clarity and intuitive wisdom? Some considerations in defence of cultivating “understanding based on reflective thinking” (*cintā-mayā paññā*) and the practice of self-aware reading.

Reading is a fascinating and at once delicate matter. That we prefer quick answers, look for easy clarity, struggle with ambiguities and contradictions and seek, above all, the comfort of finding our current beliefs and opinions validated while disregarding what speaks against them – all this is nothing new. Long before ‘algorithmic editing’ ushered us into the filter bubbles that haunt our social networks and online activities today, even long before cognitive psychology began to chart the facets of confirmation bias and its many siblings in the last century (more than 180 documented cognitive distortions and counting), already the Greek historian Thucydides (a contemporary of the Buddha) noted in his *Peloponnesian War* that the predicament of impaired reasoning is more than an individual problem:

“...and their judgment was based more upon blind wishing than upon any sound prevision; for it is a habit of mankind to entrust to careless hope what they long for, and to use sovereign reason to thrust aside what they do not fancy.”

The Pali Suttas, too, speak about the challenges to pragmatic understanding and sound judgement quite incisively. In a number of places (e.g. D 21, M 18, Sn 4.11) they map how embodied perception unfailingly leads to thinking, how such thinking moves from awareness via perception to conception and often on to what it calls ‘proliferation’ (*papañca*). It is *papañca* with its persuasive narratives and hypnotic loops that preoccupies the mind and obfuscates clear seeing and deep understanding.

Perception, the mental faculty by which we make sense of what we experience in our senses, discerns in terms of prior experiences and picks up patterns. Buddhist and Western psychology agree that such pattern-recognition involves cognitive stereotyping aimed at reducing complexity. Much of this is subconscious, prone to biases and, if unchecked and fuelled by emotionally charged *papañca*, risks solidifying into prejudice, conflict, quarrels and, as the Suttas put it, “the taking up of stick and sword”.

Reducing and counteracting unhelpful biases is an important part of “understanding based on reflective thinking”; it entails that such biases and preconceptions become conscious in the first place. Engaging in conscious ways with reading is one way to do so – creating spaces of deliberate allowance and exposure to ideas and perspectives from others. Reading texts and genuinely engaging in the understanding of others as a deliberate exercise is bound to unearth some cherished beliefs and opinions and to clarify our current understanding.

### **Inspiration**

My personal path began with an understanding that the practice of meditation was preferable to reading books about it. Taking this practice seriously meant I had to stop doing what I mostly did when interested in something: study and read about it. My doing was the transformative bit and entailed giving up the theory and other's accounts. Soon though, and quite contrary to my activist beliefs, I found a strength hitherto unacknowledged: as a reader I was touched by an inspiration for the teachings, felt as if I was sitting closer to the Buddha's feet. Reading the Suttas, I had quietly become what I only later understood to be a 'listener' of the Buddha's teaching: literally 'one who lends ear' (*sāvaka /sāvikā*) – the name by which the Buddha designated his students.

### **Self-knowledge**

In getting to know the thinking of others we learn about ourselves. We learn about the inner world of another human, perhaps in a different time than ours – only to recognize in greater clarity and depth what we may already believe and what preverbal notions we unconsciously cherish.

### **Mediation**

The text as a medium can give us something of value from the lives of others – what has been happening for them, what is or was important to them, what they thought and felt. This allows for our sharing their experience in more or less intimate ways. My horizon of experience is broadened by the text: in this way a text can “free” its message from the constraints of a particular space and time. It can deal with an *elsewhere* – and set me free from the constraints of a body whose usual workings require physical proximity. The text may come *from a different time* than my own – and thereby free me from the constraints of a temporal linearity in which my participation in the experience of others hinges on simultaneity and concurrence.

### **Education**

In my involvement with texts I can start to relate to things, *I don't yet know*, of which, as yet, *I have no experience*. Often, though, I may find out that indeed *I do* have some experience, already *have* knowledge of something – yet only take note and become conscious of both in encountering something similar in the thinking and writing of another. In meeting the narrative account of another my own experience and knowing is allowed to unfurl and to become conscious.

### **About the study of texts**

Discussions and feedback rounds after the reading of Buddhist (and other) texts show the recurrent challenge for readers to distinguish between and reliably keep apart different perspectives; the resulting jumble may be quite stimulating but rarely elucidates the actual text or its statements. In dealing with Suttas (and likely any serious reading) it's helpful to deliberately distinguish and apply a minimum number of different steps:

**i) Level of understanding** – Here the task of reading is my honest attempt to communicate with the literal statements of the text: its concepts, images, similes, its setting. What does the text literally state? Who is the narrator? Who are the interlocutors? What is the declared

purpose of their exchange? Do I *understand* their terms, idioms, similes, their statements? What do I not understand? Can I paraphrase what I have understood in my own terms?

**ii) Level of meaning** – Here I adopt for my reading the perspective of the characters *in* the text: What is the meaning of what is being said to them and in their situation? How do the participants of the situation understand the statements made? Which values are spoken of? Does the text engage with other statements of its time? Important: What do the people addressed in the text gain in their understanding? Can I get a sense of what this all means for the people in the discourse?

**iii) Level of personal perception** – What do the statements I have understood in the foregoing steps mean to me and in my time? What is the text's effect on me? What perceptions, feelings, impressions, what understanding and judgments are arising in me when reading this text? (Inspiration, outrage, boredom, astonishment, incomprehension, amusement, disgust, etc.) Where and in what way does the message of this discourse rub against my values? What is *my* gain of understanding?

**iv) Level of interpretation** – What does this discourse tell me? What does it make me conscious of? What practical effect has this text on my understanding, my actions and behaviour?

Without deliberate, methodical effort and training, the reader's focus usually jumps from a first reading straight to the third level. It requires a certain sobriety, skill and discipline to contain one's own perceptual, emotional and even moral impulses to ensure that the first two levels are not missed out. No matter how convincingly bored or violent my reactions may be: without having really understood what's going on at level (i) and (ii), my feelings and thoughts are not just an expression of my particular conditioning and set of values, they may actually be based on plain misunderstanding and knee-jerk responses.

### Epilogue

The famous *Kālāma* Sutta asks us on the one hand, that we are "to rely on our own experience", on the other hand that we should pay attention "to what is praised by the wise". If I sense that the statements of a Sutta's text do not agree with my own experience, then I'm likely to experience conflict – no doubt a number of the 'wise' have studied this text before me and appear to deem it at least worthy of transmission. How to deal with the disparity? What is my response to the manifest contradiction?

As readers we often fall into two camps: Those who agree readily with a text, looking for a hurried alignment with its statement; and those who easily disagree and distance themselves from statements felt to be incongruent. The former are inclined to downplay their own experience – enabling them to endorse the statements made, take the text as believers and at face value; the latter readily drop the text and its statements to assert the supremacy of their own perceptions and understanding.

Both approaches are, at best, of limited use. Taking the text seriously means that I at least allow for the possibility that in my current understanding I may be deficient, off the mark, may have grasped something incompletely. Taking my own experience seriously means that the text could be wrong, deficient, off the mark or incomplete in its statement. Is it possible

to value and reflect on both of these positions, bear the discomfort and hold the tension – without escaping it by a blanket invalidation of either the text or my own experience?

Engaging honestly with a text means allowing ourselves to be challenged by it and be willing to hold the dissonance its statements create within our own perceptions – and taking up its possibly unnerving call to change our current understanding. The key questions are not “Does this support or contradict what I already believe?” but “What can I learn here?” Even better: “How does debating with ancient (or modern) texts invigorate my current understanding?”

Buddhist contemplative inquiry doesn’t stop at the edge of our meditation mats: one of the tasks of mindfulness and ‘listening’ to teachings – nowadays, this also means reading – is the continuous updating and readjusting of one’s perceptions (SN 35.95 / S iv 72) and, as the Suttas have it, the “straightening out of one’s views” (*diṭṭhiṃ ujum karoti* – AN 5.205 / A iii 248).

An unexpected encouragement to this sort of mindfulness may come from the poet John Keats; in a letter to his two brothers he admiringly remarks on one of Shakespeare’s great qualities: “I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” (Keats, 1817) | 

Akincano | 2016-21

## Karaniya Metta Sutta - The Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness

*(Sutta Nipāta i, 8 / Khuddakapāṭha 9)*

This is what should be done  
By one who is skilled in goodness,  
And who knows the path of peace:  
Let them be able and upright,  
Straightforward and gentle in speech,  
Humble and not conceited,  
Contented and easily satisfied,  
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.  
Peaceful and calm and wise and skillful,  
Not proud or demanding in nature.  
Let them not do the slightest thing  
That the wise would later reprove.  
Wishing: In gladness and in safety,  
May all beings be at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be;  
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,  
The seen and the unseen,  
Those living near and far away,  
Those born and to-be-born --  
May all beings be at ease!  
Let none deceive another,  
Or despise any being in any state.  
Let none through anger or ill-will  
Wish harm upon another.  
Even as a mother protects with her life  
Her child, her only child,  
So with a boundless heart  
Should one cherish all living beings;  
Radiating kindness over the entire world:  
Spreading upwards to the skies,  
And downwards to the depths;  
Outwards and unbounded,  
Freed from hatred and ill-will.  
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down  
Free from drowsiness,  
One should sustain this recollection.  
This is said to be the sublime abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views,  
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,  
Being freed from all sense desires,  
Is not born again into this world.



## Karaṇīya-mettā-sutta (Snip i 8 / Khp 9)

Karaṇīya m-attha-kusalena,  
Yan-taṃ santaṃ padaṃ abhisamecca;  
Sakko ujū ca suhujū ca,  
Suvaco c'assa mudu anatimānī,  
Santussako ca subhara ca,  
Appakicco ca sallahuka-vutti;  
Sant'indriyo ca nipako ca,  
Appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho.  
Na ca khuddaṃ samācare kiñci,  
Yena viññū pare upavadeyyuṃ;  
Sukhino vā khemino hontu,  
Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhit'attā:  
Ye keci pāṇa-bhūt'atthi,  
Tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā;  
Dīghā vā ye mahantā vā,  
Majjhimā rassakā aṇuka-thūlā.  
Diṭṭhā vā ye ca adiṭṭhā,  
Ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre;  
Bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā,  
Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhit'attā.  
Na paro paraṃ nikubbetha,  
Nātimaññetha katthaci naṃ kiñci;  
Byārosanā paṭigha-saññā,  
Nāññam-aññassa dukkham-iccheyya.  
Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttaṃ,  
āyusā eka-puttaṃ-anurakkhe;  
Evam pi sabba-bhūtesu,  
Mānasam-bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ.  
• Mettañ-ca sabba-lokasmim,  
Mānasam-bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ;  
Uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyañ-ca,  
Asambādhaṃ averaṃ asapattaṃ.  
Tiṭṭhañ-caraṃ nisinno vā,  
Sayāno vā yāvat'assa vigata-middho;  
Etaṃ satim adhiṭṭheyya,  
Brahmaṃ-etaṃ vihāraṃ idham-āhu.  
Diṭṭhiñ-ca anupagamma,  
Sīlavā dassanena sampanno;  
Kāmesu vineyya gedhaṃ  
Na hi jātu gabbha-seyyaṃ punar-etī-ti.

## Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Fourfold Way of Establishing Mindfulness (MN 10)<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was living among the Kurus, at Kammāsa damma, a market town of the Kuru people. There the Blessed One addressed the Bhikkhus: “Mendicants,” – “Venerable Sir,” they replied. The Blessed One spoke as follows:

### [THE DIRECT PATH]

This is the direct way, practitioners,<sup>(2)</sup> for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of *Nibbāna*, namely, the four ways of establishing of mindfulness. What are the four?

### [THE SUMMARY]

Here a practitioner abides contemplating the body in regard to the body, ardent, situationally aware, mindful, having overcome covetousness and grief in regard to this world; one abides contemplating feeling-tones in regard to feeling-tones, ardent, situationally aware and mindful, having overcome covetousness and grief in regard to this world; one abides contemplating mind-states<sup>(3)</sup> in regard to mind-states, ardent, situationally aware and mindful, having overcome covetousness and grief in regard to this world; one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects, ardent, situationally aware and mindful, having overcome covetousness and grief in regard to this world.

### [CONTEMPLATION OF BODY (KĀYĀNUPASSANĀ)]

#### [- I -MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING]

And how does a practitioner abide contemplating the body in regard to the body?

Herein, practitioners, a practitioner, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree or to an empty place, sits down with legs crossed, body erect and one’s mindfulness alert.<sup>(4)</sup>

Mindful one breathes in, mindful one breathes out. Breathing in a long breath, one knows, “I am breathing in a long breath”; breathing out a long breath, one knows, “I am breathing out a long breath”; breathing in a short breath, one knows, “I am breathing in a short breath”; breathing out a short breath, one knows, “I am breathing out a short breath.”

“Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe in,” thus one trains oneself. “Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe out,” thus one trains oneself. “Calming bodily activities, I shall breathe in,” thus one trains oneself. “Calming bodily activities, I shall breathe out,” thus one trains oneself.

#### [ANALOGY OF THE TURNER]

Just as a skilful turner or turner’s apprentice, making a long turn, knows, “I am making a long turn,” or making a short turn, knows, “I am making a short turn,” just so the practitioner breathing in a long breath, knows, “I am breathing in a long breath;” breathing out a

long breath, one knows, "I am breathing out a long breath;" breathing in a short breath, one knows, "I am breathing in a short breath;" breathing out a short breath, one knows, "I am breathing out a short breath." "Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe in," thus one trains oneself. "Experiencing the whole body, I shall breathe out," thus one trains oneself. "Calming the bodily activities, I shall breathe in," thus one trains oneself. "Calming bodily activities, I shall breathe out," thus one trains oneself.

#### [REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body externally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising-and-passing away in the body. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion: "The body exists," to the extent necessary just for knowing and for maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating the body in regard to the body.

#### [- II - THE POSTURES OF THE BODY]

And further, practitioners, a practitioner knows, when one is walking, "I am walking;" one knows, when one is standing, "I am standing;" one knows, when one is sitting, "I am sitting;" one knows, when one is lying down, "I am lying down;" Or: just as one's body is disposed so one knows it.

#### [REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body externally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising-and-passing away in the body. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion: "The body exists," to the extent necessary just for knowing and for maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating the body in regard to the body.

#### [- III - SITUATIONAL AWARENESS]

And further, practitioners, a practitioner, in going forward and back, acts with situational awareness; in looking straight on and looking away acts with situational awareness; in bending and in stretching acts with situational awareness; in wearing robes and carrying the bowl acts with situational awareness; in eating, drinking, chewing and savouring, acts with situational awareness; in walking, in standing, in sitting, in falling asleep, in waking, in speaking and in keeping silence, acts with situational awareness.

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body...

[ - IV - REFLECTION ON THE UNATTRACTIVENESS OF THE BODY]

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

[ANALOGY WITH THE GRAIN BAG]

Just as if there were a double-mouthed grain bag<sup>(5)</sup> full of various kinds of grain such as hill paddy, paddy, green gram, cow-peas, sesame, and husked rice, and a man with sound eyes, having opened that bag, were to take stock of the contents thus: "This is hill paddy, this is paddy, this is green gram, this is cow-pea, this is sesame, this is husked rice." Just so, practitioners, a practitioner reflects on this very body enveloped by the skin and full of manifold impurities, from the soles up, and from the top of the head-hairs down, thinking thus: "There are in this body hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, gorge, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid, urine."

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body...

[ - V - REFLECTION ON THE ELEMENTS]

And further, practitioners, a practitioner reflects on this body, however it be placed or disposed, by way of the material elements: "There are in this body the element of earth, the element of water, the element of fire, the element of wind."<sup>(6)</sup>

[ANALOGY WITH THE BUTCHER]

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

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body...

[ - VI - THE NINE CHARNEL GROUND CONTEMPLATIONS]

(1) And further, practitioners, as if a practitioner sees a body dead for one, two, or three days; swollen, blue and festering, thrown in the charnel ground: so one applies this

perception to one's own body: "This body, too, is of the same nature; of the same kind and it will not escape the same course."

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body externally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising-and-passing away in the body. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion: "The body exists," to the extent necessary just for knowing and for maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating the body in regard to the body.

(2) And further, practitioners, as if a practitioner sees a body thrown in the charnel ground, being eaten by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals or by different kinds of worms, he then applies this perception to his own body thus: "This body, too, is of the same nature; of the same kind and it will not escape the same course."

Thus one abides contemplating the body in the body...

*[Each of the nine stages is followed by the entire refrain as in (1).]*

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

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

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

(6) And further, practitioners, as if a practitioner sees a body thrown in the charnel ground and reduced to disconnected bones, scattered in all directions here a bone of the hand, there a bone of the foot, a shin bone, a thigh bone, the pelvis, vertebrae, here rib and there a sternum, an arm, a shoulder, the neck, a jaw, teeth and a skull...

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

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

(9) And further, practitioners, as if a practitioner sees a body thrown in the charnel ground, reduced to bones gone rotten and become dust, he then applies this perception to his own body thus: "This body, too, is of the same nature; of the same kind and it will not escape the same course."

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body externally, or one abides contemplating the body in regard to the body internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in the body, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising-and-passing away in the body. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion: "The body exists," to the extent necessary just for knowing and for maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating the body in regard to the body.

[CONTEMPLATION OF FEELING-TONE<sup>(7)</sup> (VEDANĀNUPASSANĀ)]

And how, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating feeling-tones in regard to feeling-tone?

Here, practitioners, a practitioner when experiencing a pleasant feeling-tone knows, "I experience a pleasant feeling-tone"; when experiencing a painful feeling-tone, one knows, "I experience a painful feeling-tone"; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful<sup>(8)</sup> feeling-tone," one knows, "I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling-tone." When experiencing a pleasant sensory<sup>(9)</sup> feeling-tone, one knows, "I experience a pleasant sensory feeling-tone"; when experiencing a pleasant non-sensory feeling-tone, one knows, "I experience a pleasant non-sensory feeling-tone"; when experiencing a painful sensory feeling-tone, one knows, "I experience a painful sensory feeling-tone"; when experiencing a painful non-sensory feeling-tone, one knows, "I experience a painful non-sensory feeling-tone"; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful sensory feeling-tone, one knows, "I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful sensory feeling-tone"; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor painful non-sensory feeling-tone, one knows, "I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful non-sensory feeling-tone."

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating feeling-tones in regard to feeling-tone internally, or one abides contemplating feeling-tones in regard to feeling-tone externally, or one abides contemplating feeling-tones in regard to feeling-tone internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in to feeling-tone, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in feeling-tone, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in feeling-tone. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion, "Feeling-tones exists," to the extent necessary just for knowing and maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent, and clings to nothing in the world. Thus, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating feeling-tones in regard to feeling-tone.

## [CONTEMPLATION OF MIND-STATES (CITTĀNUPASSANĀ)]

And how, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating mind-states in regard to mind-states?

Here, practitioners, a practitioner knows a mind-state with desire, as “with desire;” a mind-state without desire, as “without desire;” a mind-state with hate, as “with hate;” a mind-state without hate, as “without hate;” a mind-state with delusion, as “with delusion;” a mind-state without delusion, as “without delusion;” a contracted state of mind, as “contracted;” a distracted state of mind, as “distracted;” an expansive state of mind as “expansive;” an narrow state of mind as “narrow;” a surpassable state of mind as “surpassable,” an unsurpassable state of mind as “unsurpassable,” a collected state of mind, as “collected;” an uncollected state of mind, as “uncollected;” a freed state of mind, as “freed;” an unfreed state of mind as “unfreed”.

### [REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating mind-states in regard to mind-states internally, or one abides contemplating mind-states in regard to mind-states externally, or one abides contemplating mind-states in regard to mind-states internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in mind-states, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in mind-states, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in mind-states. Or one’s mindfulness is established with the notion, “Mind-states exist,” to the extent necessary just for knowing and the maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent, and clings to nothing in the world. Thus, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-states in regard to mind-states.

## [THE CONTEMPLATION OF MIND-OBJECTS<sup>(10)</sup> (DHAMMĀNUPASSANĀ)]

### [- I - THE FIVE HINDRANCES]

And how, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects?

Here, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances.

How, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances?

Here, practitioners, when sensual desire is present, a practitioner knows, “There is sensual desire in me,” or when sensual desire is not present, one knows, “There is no sensual desire in me.” One knows how sensual desire arises; when sensual desire has arisen, one knows how to give it up; when sensual desire has been given up, one knows how to avoid its future arising.<sup>(11)</sup>

When ill-will is present, one knows, "There is ill-will in me," or when ill-will is not present, one knows, "There is no ill-will in me." One knows how ill-will arises; when ill-will has arisen, one knows how to give it up; when ill-will has been given up, one knows how to avoid its future arising.

When drowsiness and lethargy are present, one knows, "There is drowsiness and lethargy in me," or when drowsiness and lethargy are not present, one knows, "There is no drowsiness and lethargy in me." One knows how drowsiness and lethargy arise; when drowsiness and lethargy have arisen, one knows how to give them up; when drowsiness and lethargy have been given up, one knows how to avoid their future arising.

When restlessness and agitation are present, one knows, "There are restlessness and agitation in me," or when restlessness and agitation are not present, one knows, "There are no restlessness and agitation in me." One knows how restlessness and agitation arise; when restlessness and agitation have arisen, one knows how to give them up; when restlessness and agitation have been given up, one knows how to avoid their future arising.

When doubt is present, one knows, "There is doubt in me," or when doubt is not present, one knows, "There is no doubt in me." One knows how doubt arises; when doubt has arisen, one knows how to give it up; when doubt has been given up, one knows how to avoid its future arising.

#### [REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects externally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in mind-objects. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion, "Mind-objects exist," to the extent necessary just for knowing and the maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent, and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner lives contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances.

#### [- II - THE FIVE AGGREGATES AS OBJECTS OF CLINGING<sup>(12)</sup>]

And further, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates of clinging.

How, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates of clinging?

Here a practitioner thinks, "Such is form; such is the arising of form; and such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling-tone; such is the arising of feeling-tone; and such is the disappearance of feeling-tone. Such is perception; such is the arising of perception; and such is the disappearance of perception. Such are formations; such is the arising of forma-



tions; and such is the disappearance of formations. Such is sense-consciousness; such is the arising of sense-consciousness; and such is the disappearance of sense-consciousness."

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects externally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in regard to mind-objects. Or one's mindfulness is established with the thought, "Mind-objects exist," to the extent necessary just for knowing and the maintaining of awareness, and one abides independent, and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates of clinging.

[- III - THE SIX INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SENSE BASES]

And further, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the six internal and the six external sense-bases.<sup>(13)</sup>

How, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the six internal and the six external sense-bases?

Here, practitioners, a practitioner knows the eye and visual forms and the fetter that arises dependent on both;<sup>(14)</sup> one knows how a currently unarisen fetter arises; when the fetter has arisen, one knows how to abandon it; when the fetter has been abandoned, one knows how to avoid its future arising.

One knows the ear and sounds... the nose and smells... the tongue and flavours... the body and tactile objects... the mind and mind-objects, and the fetter that arises dependent on both; one knows how a currently unarisen fetter arises; when the fetter has arisen, one knows how to abandon it; when the fetter has been abandoned, one knows how to avoid its future arising.

[REFRAIN]

Thus one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects externally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in regard to mind-objects. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion, "Mind-objects exist," to the extent necessary just for knowing and the maintaining of awareness, and one abides independent, and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also,

practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external sense-bases.

#### **[- IV - THE SEVEN FACTORS OF AWAKENING]**

And further, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the seven factors of awakening.

How, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating mental objects in terms of the seven factors of awakening?

Here, practitioners, when the awakening-factor of mindfulness is present, the practitioner knows, "The awakening-factor of mindfulness is present," or when the awakening-factor of mindfulness is absent, one knows, "The awakening-factor of mindfulness is absent"; and one knows how to make the currently unarisen awakening-factor of mindfulness arise; and how to perfect and develop the arisen awakening-factor of mindfulness.<sup>(15)</sup>

When the awakening-factor of the investigation of states<sup>(16)</sup> is present, the practitioner knows, "The awakening-factor of the investigation of states is present"; when the awakening-factor of the investigation of states is absent, one knows, "The awakening-factor of investigation of states is absent"; and one knows how to make the currently unarisen awakening-factor of the investigation of states arise; and how to perfect and develop the arisen awakening-factor of investigation of states.

When the awakening-factor of energy is present, one knows, "The awakening-factor of energy is present"; when the awakening-factor of energy is absent, one knows, "The awakening-factor of energy is absent"; and one knows how to make the currently unarisen awakening-factor of energy arise; and how to perfect and develop the arisen awakening-factor of energy.

When the awakening-factor of rapture is present, one knows, "The awakening-factor of rapture is present"; when the awakening-factor of rapture is absent, one knows, "The awakening-factor of rapture is absent"; and one knows how to make the currently unarisen awakening-factor of rapture arise; and how to perfect and develop the arisen awakening-factor of rapture.

When the awakening-factor of tranquillity is present, one knows, "The awakening-factor of tranquillity is present"; when the awakening-factor of tranquillity is absent, one knows, "The awakening-factor of tranquillity is absent"; and one knows how to make the currently unarisen awakening-factor of tranquillity arise; and how to perfect and develop the arisen awakening-factor of tranquillity.

When the awakening-factor of unification of mind is present, one knows, "The awakening-factor of unification of mind is present"; when the awakening-factor of unification of mind is absent, one knows, "The awakening-factor of unification of mind is absent"; and one

knows how to make the currently unarisen awakening-factor of unification of mind arise; and how to perfect and develop the arisen awakening-factor of unification of mind.

When the awakening-factor of equanimity is present, one knows, "The awakening-factor of equanimity is in me"; when the awakening-factor of equanimity is absent, one knows, "The awakening-factor of equanimity is not in me"; and one knows how to make the currently unarisen awakening-factor of equanimity arise; and how to perfect and develop the arisen awakening-factor of equanimity.

Thus one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects externally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in regard to mind-objects. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion, "Mind-objects exist," to the extent necessary just for knowing and the maintaining of awareness, and one abides independent, and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the seven factors of awakening.

#### **[- V - FOUR ENNOBLING TRUTHS]**

And further, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the four ennobling truths.

How, practitioners, does a practitioner abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the four ennobling truths?

Here, practitioners, a practitioner really understands, "This is suffering"; one really understands, "This is the arising of suffering"; one really understands, "This is the cessation of suffering"; one really understands, "This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering".

#### **[REFRAIN]**

Thus one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects externally, or one abides contemplating mind-objects in regard to mind-objects internally and externally. One abides contemplating the nature of arising in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of passing away in mind-objects, or one abides contemplating the nature of arising-and-passing-away in mind-objects. Or one's mindfulness is established with the notion: "Mind-objects exists," to the extent necessary just for knowing and for maintaining of awareness; and so one abides independent and clings to nothing in the world. Thus also, practitioners, a practitioner abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the four ennobling truths.

### [PROMISE]

Indeed, practitioners, whosoever practices these four ways of establishing mindfulness in this manner for seven years, then one of two fruits may be expected: highest knowledge here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of non-returning. Practitioners, let alone seven years. Should any person practice these four ways of establishing mindfulness in this manner for six years... five years... four years... three years... two years, one year, then one of two fruits may be expected: highest knowledge here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of non-returning.

Practitioners, let alone one year. Should any person practice these four ways of establishing mindfulness in this manner for seven months... six months... five months... four months... three months... two months... a month... half a month, then one of two fruits may be expected: highest knowledge here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of non-returning.

Practitioners, let alone half a month. Should any person practice these four ways of establishing mindfulness in this manner for even one week, then one of two fruits may be expected by him: highest knowledge here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of non-returning.

Because of this it was said:

### [THE DIRECT PATH]

“This is the direct path, practitioners, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of *nibbāna*, namely the four ways of establishing mindfulness.”

In this way spoke the Blessed One. Satisfied, the mendicants delighted in his words. | *cm*

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- 1 This translation is based on Majjhima Nikāya 10, *Satipaṭṭhānasuttaṃ* (M i 55-63, PTS and Thai-Editions). For a better overview subtitles in square brackets have been inserted into the paragraphs; these are not part of the old manuscript tradition. The translation has been made by John Peacock and Akincano Weber; this is a re-translation of a famous and often translated work; we here wish to acknowledge the efforts of our many predecessors in translating this text, the majority of whom were / are monastics.
  - 2 We replace from here on the recurrent monastic address *bhikkhus* (‘monks’) with the gender-neutral and more inclusive term ‘practitioners’ in line with our understanding, that this practice and instruction is not exclusive to male monastic contemplatives.
  - 3 Mind (Pali *citta*) in this connection refers to states of mind – the mind’s climate and affective tone. Mind objects (*dhammā*), are the mental contents or factors of consciousness making up the single states of mind.
  - 4 Literally, “setting up mindfulness in front.”
  - 5 *Mutoḷī* (Burmese ed. *putoḷī*) “bag”. A container with two openings, apparently used for sowing: the upper bigger one of the openings was used for filling the bag with seeds, the second, lower and smaller opening was used on the field in the actual process of sowing. See (Schlingloff et. al., 2006, p. 33 Fn 10) and (Anālayo, 2014, p. 27)

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- 6 The so-called ‘elements’ (*dhātu*) are not an account of ‘matter as substance’ but the primary qualities in which matter is sensorily experienced; they are explained by Buddhist tradition as solidity / extension (earth), cohesion / fluidity (water), heat / temperature (fire) and motion / vibration (wind or air).
- 7 *Vedanā*: This is neither the affective tone (e.g. “emotion”) nor the felt somatic quality (“sensation”); *vedanā* is specifically the pleasure and displeasure concurrent with any mental or bodily experience – i.e. the “taste” of an experience. In a technical sense it is the hedonic tone [greek. *hēdonē* “pleasure”] of any event that takes places in psychological experience. “Feeling”, albeit a lot less awkward than feeling-tone, completely misses the crucial meaning of *vedanā* as it covers neither the pleasure or displeasure aspect nor provides a clear distinction to the quality of emotion.
- 8 *Adukkhamasukham* – “neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant”: a hedonic tone of experience that is not the basis of a “neutral” response but rather one of indifference.
- 9 *Sāmisa* – “fleshly, raw, untreated”: used both literally and figuratively; *a) literally*: experiences on the basis of the five outer senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and tactile sensing) and the objects of the mind-base understood as the 6<sup>th</sup> sense-field, i.e. thought, image, concept, notion. This is then contrasted with “non-sensory” experiences (*nirāmisa*) of the meditative absorptions; *b) figuratively*: *Sāmisa* also means “enjoyment”, “bait”, “material gain”, again, contrary to *nirāmisa*, here understood as a non-material attitude focused on the Dharma. The pair of terms is often rendered as “worldly” and “unworldly” – in a somewhat confusing attempt to avoid the above distinction in literal and figurative usage.
- 10 The term *dhammā* (pl.) – “givens” (Frauwallner) is notoriously polysemic and correspondingly hard to translate: here the meaning is twofold: (a) *dhammā* as psychological qualities – the conditions, states and dynamics of the mind which when investigated are particularly salubrious to the process of awakening (e.g. hindrances and awakening factors) and (b) *dhammā* (pl.) as an – untranslatable – class of phenomena of actuality, according to how the latter is seen in terms of Buddhist Teaching (*Dhamma*, sg.) – e.g. aggregates, sense-bases, four realities.
- 11 With the repeated passage of merely recognizing the presence or absence of the respective hindrance in one’s mind here two other weighty factors are added that clearly go beyond a simple observation as act of knowing: firstly, a type of knowing that is combined with a readiness to intervene and bring about practical remedies for desire already arisen, and secondly, a prophylactic type of knowing capable of avoiding the arising of future desire.
- 12 The five *khandha*-s (lit. “groups, heaps”) are categories under which all phenomena and aspects of an individual’s experience can be subsumed. The teaching of the *khandha*-s aims to drive the third sign (*lakkhaṇa*) of not-self home; it’s geared to show the impersonality (*anattatā*) of all experience and makes the examination of processes possible that fuel forms of attachment: identification and the construction of personality. The *khandha*-s are *nominal* categories – their purpose is to serve as tools for reflection and practical investigation in contemplative exercises and self-inquiry; they are not constituent “elements” of human existence or to be reified in some similar form.
- 13 Here the objective conditions of the sense-base (*āyatana*) are meant: the sense of sight (*cakkhu*) and visual objects (*rūpa*). For the other five senses: The sense of hearing (*sota*) and auditive objects / sounds (*sadda*); for the sense of smell (*ghāṇa*) and its olfactory experiences / smells (*gandha*); for the sense of taste (*jivhā*) and its gustatory experiences / tastes (*rasa*); for the tactile and body-sense (*kāya*) and its kinesthetic, proprioceptive and interoceptive impressions (*poṭṭhabba*); for the mind / comprehension (*mano*) and his cognitive objects e.g. thoughts, images, concepts, notions (*dhammā*).
- 14 The usual enumeration of the ten fetters (*samyojana*) in the Sutta Piṭaka is as follows: (1) personality-view, (2) skeptical doubt (3) attachment to rules, rituals, techniques and methods (4) sensual desire, (5) ill-will, (6) craving for fine-material existence, (7) craving for immaterial existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness, (10) ignorance.
- 15 See also fn 10.
- 16 See also fn 9.

## A LIST OF LISTS (mainly from the *Dasuttara-Sutta* DN 34)

### Ones

- (1) Which one thing greatly helps? Diligence in wholesome states (*appamādo kusalesu dhammesu*).
- (2) Which one thing is to be cultivated? Mindfulness with regard to the body, accompanied by ease (*kāyagatasati sāta-sahagatā*).
- (3) Which one thing is to be thoroughly known? Contact as a condition of the corruptions and of grasping (*phasso sāsavo upādāniyo*).
- (4) Which one thing is to be abandoned? Self-conceit (*asmi-māna*).

### Twos

- (1) Which two things greatly help? Mindfulness and clear awareness (*sati-sampajaññā*).
- (2) Which two things are to be developed? Calm and insight (*samatha-vipassanā*).
- (3) Which two things are to be thoroughly known? Mentality and corporeality (*nāma-rūpa*).
- (4) Which two things are to be abandoned? Ignorance and craving for existence. (*avijjā and bhāva-rāga*)

### Threes

- (1) Three unwholesome roots: greed, aversion and delusion (*lobho akusala-mūlaṃ, doso akusala-mūlaṃ, moho akusala-mūlaṃ*).
- (2) Three wholesome roots: non-greed, non-aversion and non-delusion (*alobho...*).
- (3) Three kinds of wrong conduct: in body, speech and mind (*kāya-duccaritaṃ, vacī-duccaritaṃ, mano-duccaritaṃ*).
- (4) Three kinds of unwholesome thought (*akusala vitakkā*): of sensuality, of enmity, of cruelty (*kāma-vitakko, vyāpāda-vitakko, vihiṃsa-vitakko*).
- (5) Three kinds of wholesome thought: of renunciation (*nekkhamma-vitakko*), of non-enmity (*abyāpāda saṅkappa*), of non-cruelty (*avihiṃsa saṅkappa*).
- (6) Three kinds of craving: sensual craving, craving for becoming, craving for getting rid of (*kāma-taṇhā, bhava-taṇhā, vibhava-taṇhā*).
- (7) Three more kinds of craving: craving for [the realm] of sense-desires, craving for [the realm] of form, craving for the formless [realm] (*kāma-taṇhā, rūpa-taṇhā, arūpa-taṇhā*).

(8) Three fetters (*saṃyojanāni*): of personality belief, of doubt, of attachment to rites and rituals (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *vicikicchā*, *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*).

(9) Three corruptions (*āsavā*): of sense-desire, of becoming, of ignorance (*kāmāsavo*, *bhavāsavo*, *avijjāsavo*). [In some Abhidhamma lists a fourth is added: views (*diṭṭhāsavo*).]

(10) Three forms of conceit: ‘I am better than...’, ‘I am the same as...’, ‘I am worse than...’ (*‘seyyo ‘ham asmīti’ vidhā*, *‘sadiso ‘ham asmīti’ vidhā*, *hīno ‘ham asmīti vidha*).

(11) Three kinds of feeling-tone (hedonic tone): pleasant, painful, neither (*sukhā vedanā*, *dukkhā vedanā*, *adukkham-asukhā vedanā*).

(12) Three kinds of distress (*dukkha*): as ordinary pain (*dukkha-dukkhatā*), as due to change and transformation (*vipariṇāma-dukkhatā*), as inherent in conditioned formations (*sankhāra-dukkhatā*)

(13) Three fires: lust, hatred, delusion (*rāgaggi*, *dosaggi*, *mohaggi*).

(14) Three kinds of cultivation: of the body, of the mind, of understanding (*kāya-bhāvanā*, *citta-bhāvanā*, *paññā-bhāvanā*). [A fourth cultivation of ethics (*sīla-bhāvanā*) is mentioned in other places.]

(15) Three intoxications: with health, with youth, with life (*ārogya-mado*, *yobbana-mado*, *jīvita-mado*).

## Fours

(1) Four ways of establishing mindfulness: body, feeling-tone, mind-states, mind-objects.

(2) Four great efforts (*sammāppadhānā*): To prevent the arising of unwholesome mental states, to overcome unwholesome mental states that have already arisen, to produce wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen, to maintain wholesome mental states that have already arisen.

(3) Four roads of empowerment (*iddhipādā*): the empowerment won bei ardent perseverance and concentration of intention, the empowerment won bei ardent perseverance and concentration of energy, the empowerment won bei ardent perseverance and concentration of the mind, the empowerment won bei ardent perseverance and concentration of investigation.

(4) Four formless *jhānas*: the Sphere of Infinite Space, the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, the Sphere of No-Thing-ness, the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception.

(5) Four efforts (see also 2 as these are linked): restraint (*saṃvara-padhanam*), abandoning (*pahāna-padhanam*), cultivation (*bhāvanā-padhanam*), preservation (*anurakkhaṇa-padhanam*).

(6) Four elements: earth, water, fire air (*paṭhavī-, āpo-, tejo-, vāyo-dhātu*).

(7) Four nutriments (*āhārā*): material (*kabalīṅkāra*), contact (*phassa*), mental volition (*manosañcetanā*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

(8) Four clingings (*upādānāni*): to sensuality (*kāma*), to views (*diṭṭhi*), to practices and rituals (*sīlabbata-pārāmāsa*), to the ideology of a substantial self (*attavāda*).

(9) Four Noble forms of speech: refraining from lying, slander, abuse, gossip.

(10) Four sublime abidings (*brahmavihārā*): boundless friendliness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), gentle joy (*mudita*), equanimity (*upekkhā*).

### Fives

(1) Five aggregates: body (*rūpa*), feeling-tone (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), mental formation (*sankhārā*), sense-consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

(2) Five aggregates of grasping (same as 1).

(3) Five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*): sensuality (*kāmacchanda*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).

(4) Five lower fetters: personality-belief (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), doubt, attachment to rites and rituals, sensuality, ill-will.

(5) Five higher fetters: craving for the world of form (*rūpa-rāga*), craving for the formless world (*arūpa-rāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), ignorance (*avijjā*).

(6) Five rules of training (*sikkhāpadāni*): refraining from harming living things, refraining from taking what is not offered, refraining from sensual and sexual misconduct, refraining from false speech, refraining from strong liquor and mind clouding drugs (*surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā*).

(7) Five faculties: confidence (*saddhā*), energy, mindfulness, unification, understanding.

### Sixes

(1) Six internal sense spheres (*ajjhātikāni āyatanāni*): eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, -body- (*kāyāyatana*), mind sense sphere (*manāyatana*).

(2) Six external sense spheres (*bahirāni āyatanāni*): sight object (*rūpāyatana*), sound-, smell-, taste-, tangible object (*phoṭṭabbāyatana*), mind-objects (*dharmāyatana*).

(3) Six groups of sense-consciousness (*viññāṇa-kāyā*): eye-consciousness, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind-consciousness.



- (4) Six groups of contact (*phassa-kāyā*): eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind contact (*mano-samphasso*).
- (5) Six groups of feeling-tone (*vedanā-kāyā*): feeling-tone based on eye-contact (*cakkhu-samphassajā vedanā*), on ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind-contact.
- (6) Six groups of perception (*saññā-kāyā*): perception of sights (*rūpa-saññā*), of sounds, of smells, of tastes, of touches, of mind-objects (*dhamma-saññā*).
- (7) Six groups of volition (*sañcetanā-kāyā*): volition based on sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, mind-objects.
- (8) Six groups of craving (*taṇhā-kāyā*): craving for sight, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, mind-objects.

## Sevens

- (1) Seven Noble treasures (*ariya-dhanāni*): confidence (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), self-respect (*hiri*), fear of wrongdoing (*ottappa*), learning (*suta*), generosity (*cāga*), understanding (*paññā*).
- (2) Seven factors of awakening (*sambojjhangā*): mindfulness (*sati*), investigation of phenomena (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy (*virīya*), zest/rapture (*pīti*), tranquility (*passaddhi*), unification (*samādhi*), equanimity (*upekkhā*).
- (3) Seven requisites of unification: appropriate understanding, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness.
- (4) Seven powers (*satta balāni*): confidence, energy, self-respect, fear of wrongdoing, mindfulness, unification, understanding.
- (5) Seven underlying tendencies (*anusayā*): sensuous greed (*kāma-rāga*), resentment/resistance/aversion (*paṭigha*), views, (*diṭṭhi*) doubt (*vicikicchā*), conceit (*māna*), craving for becoming (*bhava-rāga*), ignorance (*avijjā*).
- (6) Seven fetters: complaisance (literally ‘going along with’ *anunaya*), resentment – then as 5.

## Eights

- (1) Eight appropriate factors (*sammattā*): appropriate understanding, appropriate intention, appropriate speech, appropriate action, appropriate livelihood, appropriate effort, appropriate mindfulness, appropriate unification.
- (2) Eight worldly conditions (*loka-dhammā*): gain and loss, fame and ill-repute, blame and praise, happiness and misery (*lābho ca alābho ca yaso ca ayaso ca nindā ca pasamsā ca sukhañ ca dukkhañ ca*).

## Nines

(1) Nine causes of malice (*āghāta-vatthūni*) malice is stirred by the thought (i) ‘He has done me an injury’, (ii) ‘He is doing me an injury’, (iii) ‘He will do me an injury’, (iv) ‘He has injured someone who is dear to me’, (v) ‘He is injuring someone who is dear to me’, (vi) ‘He will injure someone who is dear to me’, (vii) ‘He has helped someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me’, (viii) ‘He is helping someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me’, (ix) ‘He will help someone who is hateful and unpleasant to me.’

## Tens

(1) Ten unwholesome courses of action (*dasa akusala-kammaṭṭhāna*): taking life, taking what is not given, sexual and sensual misconduct, false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, gossip, greed, ill-will, wrong view.

(2) Ten wholesome course of action: avoidance of taking life, of taking what is not given etc., of sexual and sensual misconduct (*kāya saṅkhāra*); avoidance of lying, slandering, harsh speech and gossip (*vacī saṅkhāra*); avoidance of entertaining covetousness and greed, ill-will, hatred and aversion, and wrong views (*mano saṅkhāra*).

*The Pali Suttas generally frame this list of “ten wholesome courses of action” as duty-ethics but there are many instances in the texts where these are described positively and in terms of virtue ethics.*

## Twelve

Twelve links of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*):

(i) ignorance (*avijjā*), (ii) mental formations (*saṅkhārā*), (iii) consciousness (*viññāṇa*), (iv) mind-body entity (*nāma-rūpa*), (v) six sense spheres (*saḷ-āyatana*), (vi) contact (*phassa*), (vii) feeling-tone (*vedanā*), (viii) craving (*taṇhā*), (ix) grasping (*upādāna*), (x) becoming (*bhava*), (xi) birth (*jāti*), (xii) old age and death (*jarā-maraṇa*).

## Thirty-Seven – (The “Vaiśali summary”)

Famous, often quoted and commented upon list in Indian Buddhist Traditions: Seven sets of a total of thirty-seven qualities that “contribute to awakening” (*bodhi pakkhiyā dhammā*). Each of the qualities is to be ‘aroused, cultivated and fulfilled’.

### **First Set: Four ways of establishing mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*)**

- 1) contemplating the body *in and as the body*
- 2) contemplating feeling-tone *in and as feeling-tone*
- 3) contemplating mind *in and as mind*
- 4) contemplating mental qualities and phenomena *in and as mental qualities and phenomena*

**Second set: Right effort (*sammappadhāna*)**

- 5) *prevent* harmful mental states from arising
- 6) *overcome* those harmful, unwholesome mental states that have arisen
- 7) *generate* beneficial mental states that have not arisen
- 8) *maintain and fully develop* beneficial, wholesome mental states that have arisen

**Third set: Bases of empowerment (*iddhipāda*)**

- 9) collectedness due to resolution accompanied by determined effort
- 10) collectedness due to energy accompanied by determined effort
- 11) collectedness due to mind accompanied by determined effort
- 12) collectedness due to examination accompanied by determined effort

**Fourth set: Natural strengths (*indriyāni*)**

- 13) confidence
- 14) energy
- 15) mindfulness
- 16) unification
- 17) penetrating insight

**Fifth set: Developed powers (*bala*)**

- 18) confidence
- 19) energy
- 20) mindfulness
- 21) unification
- 22) penetrating insight

**Sixth set: Factors of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*)**

- 23) mindfulness
- 24) investigation of qualities
- 25) energy
- 26) interest / rapture
- 27) tranquility
- 28) unification
- 29) equanimity

**Seventh set: The ennobling eightfold path**

- 30) appropriate understanding
- 31) appropriate intention
- 32) appropriate speech
- 33) appropriate action
- 34) appropriate livelihood
- 35) appropriate effort
- 36) appropriate mindfulness
- 37) appropriate unification

## On Generosity

### A 4.61 The accomplishment of generosity (*dāna*)

What is the accomplishment of generosity? Here, a noble disciple dwells at home:

- with a mind free from the stain of stinginess,
- freely generous,
- open-handed,
- delighting in relinquishment,
- devoted to charity,
- delighting in giving and sharing.

This is called accomplishment in generosity. (*Transl B. Bodhi*)

### To Mahānāma (On Generosity A 6.10 / A iii 287)

*Six recollections: The Tathāgatha, his teaching, the community, one's own ethics, one's own generosity and deities are listed; all six recollections use the same wording:*

[...]

“Sir, when a noble disciple has reached the fruit and understood the instructions, what kind of meditation do they frequently practice?”

[...]

A noble disciple recollects their own generosity: ‘I’m so fortunate, so very fortunate! Among people full of the stain of stinginess I live at home

- rid of stinginess,
- freely generous,
- open-handed,
- loving to let go,
- committed to charity,
- loving to give and to share.’

When a noble disciple recollects their own generosity their mind is not full of greed, hate, and delusion. At that time their mind is unswerving, based on their own generosity.

A noble disciple whose mind is unswerving finds joy in the meaning and the teaching, and finds joy connected with the teaching. When they’re joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when they’re blissful, the mind becomes immersed in *samādhi*. This is called a noble disciple who lives in balance among people who are unbalanced, and lives untroubled among people who are troubled. They’ve entered the stream of the teaching and develop the recollection of their own generosity.

[...]

When a noble disciple has reached the fruit and understood the instructions this is the kind of meditation they frequently practice.” (*Transl. B. Sujato*)

### **Eight ways of giving (*dāna*) A 8.31 / A iv 236**

There are, O monks, eight ways of giving. What eight?

1. One gives spontaneously;
2. or one gives out of fear;
3. or because of thinking, “He too has given me a gift”;
4. or because of thinking, “He will give me a present, too”;
5. or because of thinking that it is a good idea to give;
6. or because of thinking, “I cook, but they (being ascetics) do not; since I cook, it would not be proper for me to refuse giving a meal to those who do not cook”;
7. or because of thinking, “By giving such a gift, I shall earn a good reputation”;
8. or one gives because it ennobles the mind, adorns the mind.

### **Reasons for Giving (*dāna-vatthu*) A 8.33 / A iv 237**

There are, O monks, eight ways of giving. What eight?

1. People may give out of affection;
2. or in an angry mood;
3. or out of stupidity;
4. or out of fear;
5. or because of thinking: “Such gifts have been given before by my father and grandfather and it was done by them before; hence it would be unworthy of me to give up this old family tradition”;
6. or because of thinking, “By giving this gift, I shall be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world, after death”;
7. or because of thinking, “When giving this gift, my heart will be glad, and happiness and joy will arise in me”
8. or one gives because it ennobles and adorns the mind.

