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Giri-m-ānanda Sutta

The Giri-m-ānanda Discourse | **A 10.60**
 or, (**Dasaka**) **Giri Sutta**, the (Tens) Giri Discourse
 Theme: The 10 meditations for the sick
 Translated by Piya Tan ©2005, rev 2024

1 Giri-m-ānanda

We only know of Giri-m-ānanda (“Ānanda of the hills”) from **the Apadāna**, its Commentary, **the Thera,gāthā Commentary**,¹ and from **the Giri-mānanda Sutta**. It is said that in Sumedha Buddha’s time, Giri-m-ānanda was a householder, who, when his wife and children died, retired to the forest in grief. There, he met the Buddha who consoled him, and in return he offered flowers to the Buddha and sang his praises.²

According to the Thera,gāthā Commentary, in his last life, he was the son of king Bimbisāra’s chaplain. Seeing the greatness of the Buddha’s teaching when the Buddha visited Rājagaha, he joined the sangha. He lived in a village studying, but one day, when he was at Rājagaha to visit the Buddha, the king asked him to remain there, promising to look after him.

The king, however, forgot his promise, and Giri-m-ānanda had to live in the open. The devas, fearing that he would be wet from rain, stopped it from falling. The king, observing the drought, and learning its reason, built a hermitage for him where he continued his practise until he became an arhat (ThaA 2:138). This event is reflected in elder’s verses, **the Giri-mānanda Thera,gāthā**:

SD 19.16(1)

Giri-m-ānanda Thera,gāthā

The Verses of the Elder Giri-m-ānanda | **Tha 325-329**

- 325** The rains fall like a sweet song;
 My little hut is roofed, pleasant, draught-free;
 Calm (*vūpasanta*), I dwell within—
 So rain, therefore, rain if you wish.³
- 326** The rains fall like a sweet song;
 My little hut is roofed, pleasant, draught-free;
 With peaceful mind (*santa,citta*), I dwell within—
 So rain, therefore, rain if you wish.
- 327** The rains fall like a sweet song;
 My little hut is roofed, pleasant, draught-free;
 Rid of desire (*vīta,lobha*), I dwell within—
 So rain, therefore, rain if you wish.
- 328** The rains fall like a sweet song;
 My little hut is roofed, pleasant, draught-free;
 Rid of hate (*vīta,dosa*), I dwell within—

¹ Ap 1:331 f; ApA 483; ThaA 2:138 f. Cf AA 5:42 f; Nm 2:268.

² ApA 483; ThaA 2:138.

³ This refrain is also found in **Dhaniya S** (Sn 1.2/18-34/3-6).

So rain, therefore, rain if you wish.

- 329** The rains fall like a sweet song;
 My little hut is roofed, pleasant, draught-free;
 Rid of delusion (*vīta,moha*), I dwell within—
 So rain, therefore, rain if you wish. (Tha 325-329)

2 Ancient Indian medicine

This Sutta, in its section on **the perception of danger** (*ādīnava,saññā*) [§7], makes one of the earliest historical references to ancient Indian medicine. According to Kenneth Zysk, early Buddhism was a key factor in the rise of Indian medicine, and a close study of Indian sources from the 9th century BCE to the beginning of the Common Era, shows that:

medical practitioners were denigrated by the brāhmanic hierarchy and excluded from orthodox ritual cults because of their pollution from contact with impure peoples. Finding acceptance among the communities of heterodox ascetic renunciants and mendicants who did not censure their philosophies, practices, and associations, these healers, like the knowledge-seeking ascetics wandered the countryside performing cures and acquiring new medicines, treatments, and medical information, and eventually became indistinguishable from the ascetics with whom they were in close contact...

Fitting into the Buddha's key teaching of the Middle Way between the extremes of world indulgence and self-denial, healing became a part of Buddhism by providing the means to maintain a healthy bodily state characterized by an equilibrium both within the organism and its environment. Portions of the repository of medical lore were codified in the early monastic rules, thereby giving rise to a Buddhist monastic medical tradition.⁴ The symbiotic relationship between Buddhism and medicine facilitated the spread of Buddhism in India, lead to the teaching of medicine in the large Indian conglomerate monasteries and assisted the acceptance of Buddhism in other parts of Asia ...

Medicine in the Buddhist monastery receives special attention because, like the Christian monasteries and nunneries of the European Middle Ages, communities of Buddhist monks and nuns played a significant role in the institutionalization of medicine. Indeed, an understanding of the social history of Buddhism is incomplete without a full elucidation of Buddhism's involvement in the healing arts. The codification of medical practices within the monastic rules accomplished perhaps the first systematization of Indian medical knowledge and probably provided the model for later handbooks of medical practice; the monk-healers' extension of medical care to the populace and the appearance of specialized monastic structures serving as hospices and infirmaries increased the popularity of Buddhism and ensured ongoing support of the monasteries by the laity; and the integration of medicine into the curricula of major monastic universities made it a scholastic discipline. (Zysk 1998:5 f)

⁴ Zysk's fn: In a recent article, Richard Gombrich persuasively argues that the Buddhist monastery had the required organizational structure from its inception to carry out the function of systematizing and preserving Buddhist scripture. This structure then facilitated the codification and transmission of the Indian medical knowledge as part of Buddhist religious literature ("How the Mahāyāna Began," *Journal of Pāli and Buddhist Studies* 1, 1988:29-46).

The causes of how one feels (such as pain and sickness) are also briefly mentioned in **the Sīvaka Sutta** (S 36.21), which states that karma is only one of the causes.⁵

3 Cognitive training

3.1 TRAINING THE MIND

A very important part of early Buddhist spiritual cultivation consists in cognitive training, that is, understanding and skillfully guiding one's conscious behaviour. This training is clearly evident from the wealth of terms relating to observation and minding (mind-training). **Analayo's** makes this observation:

The method through which cognition is trained can be conveniently exemplified with a set of terms occurring in the Girimānanda Sutta, where reflection (*paṭisañcikkhati*) and contemplation (*anupassanā*) are mentioned alongside cognition (*saññā*) [Table 3.3]. Although this is not spelled out in the discourse, this passage lists those two activities that are related to training cognition: a preliminary degree of wise reflection as a basis for the sustained practice of contemplation (*anupassanā*). Skillfully combined, these two can gradually transform the way the world is cognized.

To give a practical example: if, on the basis of an intellectual appreciation of impermanence, one regularly contemplates the arising and passing away of phenomena, the result will be the arising of *aniccasaññā*, of cognitions apprehending phenomena from the viewpoint of impermanence. With continued practice, awareness of impermanence will become increasingly spontaneous and have an increasing influence on one's daily experiences, outside of actual contemplation. In this way, sustained contemplation can lead to a gradual change in the operational mechanics of cognition, and in one's outlook on the world. (Analayo 2003:228)

The Giri-m-ānanda Sutta contains more verbs related to cognitive training than those mentioned by Analayo. We shall here list all in the order of usage and prominence:

3.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

We will now examine the key words (especially verbs) used in connection with the mind-training described in the Giri-m-ānanda Sutta. These four key words are here arranged according to prominence by way of occurrence, are briefly discussed as follows:

3.2.1 saññā, "perception" [§§3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12]

The term *saññā* occurs throughout 9 of the 10 mindfulness exercises, that is, except in the case of the mindfulness of the breath. **Saññā**, usually translated as "perception" (as one of the five aggregates), is used in a different sense here, that is, meaning a "theme,"⁶ "idea,"⁷ or "perceptual object." The Visuddhi, magga Commentary, Paramattha Mañjūsā (by Dhammapāla), says that perception exercises may be used as preliminary work for calmness (*samatha*) or for access concentration.⁸

The (Vitthāra) Satta Saññā Sutta (A 7.46), however, states that

⁵ S 36.21/4:230 f @ SD 5.6, esp (1).

⁶ Nyanaponika & Bodhi 1999:303 VII n1.

⁷ BDict: *saññā* (3).

⁸ VismṬ 334 f.

These 7 perceptions, bhikshus, when cultivated and continuously developed, are of great fruit, of great benefit, grounded in the deathless, ending up in the deathless. (A 7.46,1/4:46)⁹

3.2.2 *paṭisañcikkhati*, “he reflects” [§§4, 5, 7, 9, 10]

“He reflects,” *paṭisañcikkhati*, “he thinks over, discriminates, considers, reflects”¹⁰ is derived from *paṭi*, “back (to)” + *saṃ*, “together, nearby” + *cikkhati*, “he tells” (from √KHYĀ, “to tell”).¹¹ Apparently here, “to reflect” entails some subverbalization, that is, we are telling ourselves; hence, the root √KHYĀ, “to tell.”

The BHS¹² *pratisamśikṣati*, literally means “he studies carefully,” “becomes well aware that (followed by the subject’s thought)” (BHSD),¹³ and is apparently synonymous with *prativipaśyati*, “he perceives distinctly.”¹⁴

The verb *cikkhati* (frequentative of √KHYĀ, Dhṭp 19), however, means “he tells, announces,” and is found in the forms *ācikkhati* (he tells, relates, designates, describes) and *paṭisañcikkhati*. Here again we see the allusion to some kind of “mind talk” or verbalization, as already noted above.

As noted above [3.2.2], the verb, *paṭisañcikkhati*, “he reflects,” shows that this reflection is done *after* one has emerged from the dhyana or mental concentration (during which time the joyful mental focus is otherwise devoid of thoughts). To “reflect” means—to use the mirror analogy—that one simply notes the phenomena without comment and without projecting any other ideas onto it: one examines the object just as it is.

3.2.3 *anupassī*, “who contemplates” [§§4, 5, 7]

This term occurs in three of the perception exercises: those of (1) impermanence, (2) of nonself, and (4) of danger. *Anupassī* has the sense of “a continued effort in watching”: *anu* (a prefix meaning “after,” in the sense of sustained effort, as in “again and again”) and *passī* (from *passati*, “he sees”), “one who sees.”¹⁵ **Sujato** explains *anupassanā* (the noun form of *anupassati*) thus:

The prefix *anu-* suggests “following, conforming, after,” and lacks the analytical implication of *vi-*. It could be interpreted here as implying a mode of contemplation that “conforms” to the relevant context; thus *anupassanā* is normally the second member of a compound where the first member defines the specific subject of meditation: “contemplation of...”

In psychological contexts[,] *anu-* commonly carries the nuance of “continuing.” Thus *vitakketi* means “to think”; *anuvitakketi* means “to keep on thinking.”

The same usage occurs in the definition of *sati* as “memory” that we have encountered above. There two terms are used: *sara* and *anussara*, which we should understand as “remembers, keeps in memory.”

A similar nuance is evident in two of the terms used in the Abhidhamma gloss for the jhana factor *vicāra*—*anusandhanatā* and *anupekkhanatā*—which should be translated “sustained application, sustained observation.”

⁹ See SD 15.4.

¹⁰ V 1:5; D 1:63; M 1:267, 499, 3:33; S 1:137; A 1:205; Pug 25; Vism 283.

¹¹ Not in Whitney, where we only find √KHYĀ, “to see.”

¹² Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

¹³ Mvst 2:314,15. PED has BHS wr *pratisañcikkṣati*.

¹⁴ Here it is clearly related to the Skt √KHYĀ, “to see” (Whitney 33). See BHSD sv.

¹⁵ For a detailed discussion on *anupassanā*, see **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1(3.5).

Anupassanā is semantically cognate with *anupekkhanatā*, and so also suggests “sustained observation.” This sustained, continuous aspect of *anupassanā* is clearly emphasized in the verses we examined above. The commentary on the Visuddhimagga comments on this word in just this way: “he keeps re-seeing (*anu anu passati*) with jhana knowledge and insight knowledge.”¹⁶

(Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness*, 2004:119 f)

3.2.4 paccavekkhati, “he reviews” [§6]

The verb *paccavekkhati* (“he reviews”) is derived from *paṭi* (a directional prefix, here meaning “back to”) and *avekkhati* [from *ava*, “down” + √IKṢ, to see], “looks down on (from above), considers, regards.” Hence, the word *paccavekkhati* has the sense of continually looking back upon, reflection upon, the object, that is, recalling its true purpose.¹⁷

The verb *paccavekkhati* (“he reviews”) is found used only once, that is, in the perception of foulness (*asubha,saññā*), which is “reviewed,” that is, one internally examines that one is made of “the 32 parts,” a meditation often combined with the analysis of the four elements.¹⁸ The verb, *paccavekkhati*, reflects the physical presence of these 32 body parts that are reviewed.

In the **Amba,laṭṭhika Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 61), for example, the young Rāhula is admonished by the Buddha with the well known analogy of a mirror (“for the purpose of reflection”), thus:

In the same way, Rāhula,
action with the body should be done only after repeated reflection,
action with speech should be done only after repeated reflection,
action with the mind should be done only after repeated reflection.¹⁹

*Evam eva kho Rāhula paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā kāyena kammaṃ kattabbaṃ,
paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā vācāya kammaṃ kattabbaṃ,
paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā manasā kammaṃ kattabbaṃ.* (M 61,8/1:415), SD 3.7

Monastics have to review their using of the four requisites (*paccaya*) (food, robes, lodging, and medicines). This constant reflection of proper use of the requisites is called “the purity of reflection” (*paccavekkhaṇa,suddhi*), and forms the fourth aspect of basic monastic training, that is, the fourfold “moral virtue of purification” (*pārisuddhi,sīla*), which, briefly stated, are:

- (1) restraint in accordance with the monastic code (*pāṭimokkha,samvara,sīla*);
- (2) restraint of the senses (*indriya,samvara,sīla*);

¹⁶ Vism:Ñ 68 n47.

¹⁷ M 1:415; S 3:103, 151 f, 4:111, 236 f; J 5:302; Vbh 193, 194 (cf A 3:323). The abstract n *paccavekkhaṇa* is also used in the late sense of “retrospective,” as in *paccavekkhaṇa,ñāṇa*, “retrospective knowledge,” ie the recollected mental image obtained in mental concentration, or to any inner experience just passed, such as any dhyana, or supramundane path or path fruition. In this connection, the term *paccavekkhaṇa nimitta*, “reviewing sign,” is mentioned as the fifth of “the five things to be developed,” ie the fivefold perfect concentration, in **Das’uttara S** (D 34,1.6(2)). See BDict: sv

¹⁸ See **Mahā Hatthi,padōpama S** (M 28,5.2-23/1;185-189, SD 6.16.

¹⁹ “Repeated reflection,” *paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā* is an example of a reduplicative (a verb repeating itself to show repeated or continuous action). Although the verb *paccavekkhati* usually means “he reviews” in the sense of an examination of conscience after the fact, here it is used as a synonym for *yoniso manasikāroti*, “he considers mindfully”, that is, before the deed, during the deed and after the deed, as clearly evident from the three phases of each of the three doors of action: “when you want to do an action” [9, 12, 15], “while you are doing an action” [10, 13, 16] and “after you have done an action” [11,14,16].

- (3) purification of livelihood (*ājīva, pārisuddhi, sīla*); and
 (4) moral virtue as regards to the four requisites (*paccaya, sannissita, sīla*).²⁰

3.3 USAGE OF TERMS

Here we shall present a table showing the usages of the key terms related to cognitive training, an early aspect of mental cultivation:

| Table 3.3 Cognitive training terms | <i>saññā</i> (perception) | <i>paṭisañcikkhati</i> (he reflects) | <i>anupassati</i> (he contemplates) | <i>paccavekkhati</i> (he reviews) |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| (1) The perception of impermanence | [§4] | √ | √ | √— |
| (2) The perception of nonself | [§5] | √ | √ | — |
| (3) The perception of foulness | [§6] | √ | — | √ |
| (4) The perception of danger | [§7] | √ | √ | — |
| (5) The perception of abandoning | [§8] | √ | — | — |
| (6) The perception of fading away | [§9] | √ | √ | — |
| (7) The perception of cessation | [§10] | √ | √ | — |
| (8) The perception of not delighting in all the world | [§11] | √ | — | — |
| (9) The perception of the wishless- ness towards all formations | [§12] | √ | — | — |
| (10) The mindfulness of the breath | [§13] | [This exercise has its own verbs: <i>pajānāti</i> & <i>sikkhati</i> .] ²¹ | | |

Note that **the first 9 exercises** are called “perception” (*saññā*) [Table 3.3], and from the chart on “the 40 meditation methods,”²² the 6 recollections are for those who are faith-inclined, that is, those with a strong faith faculty (*saddh’indriya*),²³ but these exercise only lead to access concentration, that is, the mind is temporarily focused and joyful, but not fully concentrated.²⁴

The 10th exercise—**the mindfulness of the breath** (*ānāpāna, sati*)—is a class of its own, and its key verbs: *pajānāti* (“he knows”) and *sikkhati* (“he trains himself”).²⁵ The breath meditation is especially beneficial for those whose mental disposition is delusive or discursive (or the “intellectual type”), who are often inclined to thinking and argumentation. This key meditation can lead to any of the four form dhyanas.

The three exercises involving “contemplating” (*anupassanā*), also entails that “he reflects” (*paṭisañcikkhati*),²⁶ and they are all perception (*saññā*) exercises. These are exercises to note personal experiences of impermanence, the lack of abiding self, and the dangers of neglecting one’s spiritual practice. The perception of foulness (*asubha, saññā*) is in this category of exercises, too, but its key verb is “he reviews” (*paccavekkhati*), that is, he internally examines that he is made of “32 parts,” a meditation often combined with the analysis of the four elements.²⁷ The verb, *paccavekkhati*, reflects

²⁰ M 1:10, 2:75; Vbh 244-247; Vism 1.41-130/15-46; Abhs:SR 212; Abhs:BRS 347 f; Abhs:WG 348.

²¹ See here below.

²² SD 15.1 Diagram 2: meditations 23-28.

²³ On the spiritual faculties (*indriya*), see SD 10.3-4.

²⁴ See SD 15.1 (9.6) on *bhāvanā, nimitta* and *pīti*.

²⁵ See §§12-13 below & **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118,17-21/3:82 f), SD 9.7.

²⁶ *Paṭisañcikkhati*, is of course a verb, but maintained so here after “reflection” for the sake of easy reference.

²⁷ See **Mahā Hatthi, padōpama S** (M 28,5.2-23/1;185-189), SD 6.16.

the physical presence of these 32 body parts that are reviewed. In the other cases here, the objects of meditation are *abstract*, and so are “reflected” on as a perception.

The 6th exercise, the perception of fading away (*virāga,saññā*), and the 7th, the perception of cessation (*nirodha,saññā*), both refer to the results of effective mindfulness practice, so that, in the case of (6), *the fading away of lust* (that is, the experience of dispassion), so that one rejoices thus:

“This is peaceful! This is sublime! That is, the stilling of all formations, the letting go of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, the fading away, nirvana.” [§9]

In (7), one notes *the cessation of suffering*, and rejoices thus:

“This is peaceful! This is sublime! That is, the stilling of all formations, the letting go of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, the cessation, nirvana.” [§10]

In both cases, the key verb is *paṭisañcikkhati*, “he reflects,” because this reflection is done *after* he has emerged from the dhyana or mental concentration (during which time the joyful mental focus is otherwise devoid of thoughts).²⁸

3.4 THE 10 PERCEPTIONS

The best known set of 10 perceptions, which follows a practical sequence is found in **the Bojjhaṅga Saṃyutta** (S 46), as follows:²⁹

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-------|
| (1) the perceptions of foulness, | <i>asubha,saññā</i> ³⁰ | [§6] |
| (2) the perceptions of death, | <i>maraṇa,satī</i> ³¹ | |
| (3) the perceptions of repulsiveness of food, | <i>āhāre paṭikkūla,saññā</i> | |
| (4) the perceptions of non-delight, | <i>sabba,loke anabhirata,saññā</i> | [§11] |
| (5) the perceptions of impermanence, | <i>anicca,saññā</i> ³² | [§4] |
| (6) the perceptions of suffering, | <i>dukkha,saññā</i> ³³ | |
| (7) the perceptions of nonself, | <i>anatta,saññā</i> | [§5] |
| (8) the perceptions of abandonment, | <i>pahāna,saññā</i> | [§8] |
| (9) the perceptions of dispassion, and | <i>virāga,saññā</i> | [§9] |
| (10) the perceptions of cessation. | <i>nirodha,saññā</i> | [§10] |

The last six perceptions form the constituents of true knowledge (*vijjā,bhāgiya dhamma*), which are mentioned in **the Dīgh’āvu Sutta** (S 55.3).³⁴

Seven of these 10 perceptions are found in **the Giri-m-ānanda Sutta** [§§4-13], where they seem to be listed rather randomly, even haphazardly, and includes the mindfulness of the breath (*ānāpāna,satī*) [§13]. In fact, the Giri-m-ānanda listing of the 10 perceptions [Table 3.3] is unique, and understandably

²⁸ Except of course in the 1st dhyana, where initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*) are used to refine the focus.

²⁹ S 46.71-76/5:132 f.

³⁰ This term, common in the suttas, refers to the 31 (or Comy, 32) parts of the body. The term *asubha,nimitta* (the sign of foulness) in Comys, refers to one or other of the 10 foul objects, ie bodily remains in one of the 10 stages of decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f). On details of the practice, see **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22,5/2:293 = M 10,10/**), SD 13.2-3; **Kāya,gatā,satī S** (M 119,7), SD 12.21 (5).

³¹ Also called “recollection of death” (*maraṇānussati*): see **Maraṇa,satī Ss 1-2** (A 8.73/4:316-319, 8.74/4:320-322); discussed in detail at Vism 8.1-41/229-239.

³² See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1) & SD 16.7 (5).

³³ See SD 2.23 (3.4.3).

³⁴ See **Dīgh’āvu S** (S 55.3/5:344-347), SD 23.16 (1).

so, as they form the teaching for the sick Giri-m-ānanda, who is probably already an arhat. Apparently, he only needs to listen to the teachings as a basis for mental focus to heal himself of his illness. Or, he could have gone into deep meditation and heal himself.

4 Note on noting

4.1 LABELLING

A modern innovation, inspired by such statements such as the Satipaṭṭhāna refrain regarding “maintaining the mindfulness of a ‘body’ merely for knowing and awareness,” is that of “labelling,” that is, a sub-verbal mental noting of distractions and any phenomenon arising during one’s meditation.³⁵ However, such a practice comes naturally and does not go against the grain of the Suttas or the mindfulness tradition (meditation practice).

Mindful “knowing” or direct watching underlies all satipatthana exercises: the other verbs [3] used in connected with satipatthana only add on to the basic “knowing” due to the more complicated nature of the object. This “knowing” and connected actions all relate directly to the attaining of focus and insight. In the popular “Vipassanā” method started in Burma, this is known as “labelling,” the meditator merely makes a mental note of what is going on at the six sense-doors. The main problem with “labelling” is that it is done with *mental verbalization* (“head talk”). The proper way is simply to watch *without comment*, a “knowing without words.” Commenting on certain innovative teachings in the name of Abhidhamma, **Sujato** graphically instructs:

So while the Buddha spoke of the mind “changing while it stands,” the Abhidhamma just speaks of “standing.” It is much easier to define a static entity than a process evolving over time. This is why a butterfly collector wants to have his butterflies dead, with a pin stuck through their heart and a little label underneath, not madly meandering about in the woods. The dead mind. But the Buddha was not a butterfly collector, he was an observer of nature. He wanted us to watch the flight and flutter of the butterfly, to understand how it behaves in its natural environment, and to follow it gently, delicately, quietly until it settles down to rest and be still according to its nature —which he called “samadhi.”
(Sujato, TMA:7, digital ed)³⁶

This strong but insightful criticism is understandable as Sujato belongs to the Thai forest tradition that emphasizes a direct experience of reality in one’s mindfulness practice. However, most beginners to meditation will be assailed by a barrage of sense-experiences, and the initial tool is to pick the most dominant of these, and note it just as it is. Some sort of labelling, whether sub-verbal (head talk) or silent noting (mental seeing), usually helps to minimize distraction, so that one could return to the meditation object. In fact, the main difference (perhaps the *only* practical difference) between the forest tradition and the modern “insight” (vipassana) method is this: while the forest method emphasizes silent noting, the insight method encourages the use of sub-verbal labelling. The purpose of both methods is the same: the overcoming of mental hindrances.

4.2 KNOWING

Sujato, in *A History of Mindfulness*, comments on the contemplation of the mind (*cittānupassanā*), showing how it deals basically with the abandoning of the mental hindrances. This also applies to a proper understanding of “labelling” or “mental noting”:

³⁵ See **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1(3.9c)+(8).

³⁶ D 22.2B/2:291; M 10.4B/1:56. For a differing opinion, see Analayo [3.9] above.

The overall context, the progressive structure of the [Satipaṭṭhāna] discourse, and the inclusion of the mind “compressed” [contracted] (by sloth) and “scattered” [distracted] (by restlessness) all suggest that here we are basically dealing with **the abandoning of the hindrances** on the plane of samadhi, an interpretation confirmed by the commentary. Here again, as in the contemplation of feelings, a distinctive facet of all the satipatthana material is the direct experience of the “exalted” mind, the “unexcelled” [unsurpassable] mind, the mind “in samadhi,” the “released” [liberated] mind—all synonyms for jhana.

These two sections share a common syntactical structure. For example: “When feeling a pleasant feeling, one understands ‘I feel a pleasant feeling.’” Or in the contemplation of mind: “One understands mind with lust as ‘mind with lust.’”

This reflexive structure is shared also with *ānāpānasati*: “When breathing in a long breath, one understands ‘I am breathing in a long breath.’” The phrasing in “quotation marks” (representing the Pali particle *iti*) was perhaps what prompted some schools to equate satipatthana meditation with mental noting. But this would be a naively literal interpretation.

Similar usages are found, for example, in the standard passage on the formless attainments. Due to the idiomaticness of the Pali, this is difficult to translate; literally it would be: “‘Space is infinite,’ one enters & abides in the field of infinite space.” Usually translators would say something like: “Aware that ‘Space is infinite,’ one enters & abides in the field of infinite space.” Obviously here the meditator has passed well beyond thinking or noting anything. The use of *iti* with repetitions in such contexts seems rather to intimate the reflexive, “seeking within” nature of meditative contemplation. One is not merely knowing the feeling, but one is conscious that one is knowing the feeling. (Sujato 2004b:149 f; emphases added)

Here, **Analayo** makes a similar note as Sujato has done, saying,

The way this instruction [the satipatthana refrain] is phrased suggests the use of mental labeling. Mindfulness is established that ‘there is a body’ (feelings, mind, *dharmas*). The Pāli particle *iti* used here indicates direct speech, which in the present context suggests a form of mental noting. This is in fact not the only instance of this kind of recommendation in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. Most of the instructions in the discourse use direct speech to formulate what is to be known.³⁷

This way of presentation shows that concepts, especially when used as labeling tools for the purpose of mental noting, can be skillfully employed with the context of *satipaṭṭhāna*.³⁸ Thus the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* does not require a complete relinquishment of all forms of verbal knowledge.³⁹ In fact, concepts are intrinsically related to cognition (*saññā*), since the ability to recognize and understand relies on a subtle level of mental verbalization and thereby on the use of concepts. The skillful use of labeling during *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation can help strengthen clear recognition and understanding. At the same time, labelling introduces a healthy degree of inner detachment, since the act of apostrophizing one’s moods and emotions diminishes one’s identification with them. (Analayo 2003:113 f)

³⁷ Eg M 1:56: “he knows, ‘I breathe in long’”; M 1:56: “he knows a lustful mind to be ‘lustful’”; M 1:59: “he knows, ‘I feel a pleasant feeling’”; M 1:59: “he knows, ‘there is the mindfulness awakening factor in me’”; M 1:162: “he knows as it really is, ‘this is *dukkha*’.” [Analayo’s fn]

³⁸ On labelling, cf Fryba 1970:130-132; Mangalo 1988:34; Nyanaponika 1968:13; Sujiva 2000:181-183. For a different opinion, see Sujato [4.2] below.

³⁹ See Analayo 2003:113 n89 for refs regarding the need for ego skills for successful meditation and the danger of cultivating intellectual vacuity. **Ñāṇananda** speaks of “rallying the concepts for the higher purpose of developing wisdom whereby concepts themselves are transcended” (1971:60).

4.3 DIRECT EXPERIENCE

A *conceptual* approach to meditation often helps initially, but in due course, when the mind is calm enough, it should be dispensed with, so that one looks *directly* into the mind. **Analayo's** comments here are instructive:

Clearly, for the Buddha the mere absence of concepts does not constitute the final goal of meditation practice.⁴⁰ Concepts are not the problem, the problem is how concepts are used. An *arahant* still employs concepts, yet without being bound by them.⁴¹

On the other hand, *satipaṭṭhāna* has to be clearly distinguished from mere intellectual reflection. What this part of the “refrain” indicates is the extent to which concepts and labels are appropriate within the context of insight meditation. This should be kept to an absolute minimum, only “to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness.” Labelling is not an end in itself, only a means to an end. Once knowledge and awareness are well established, labelling can be dispensed with. (Analayo 2003:114)

Moreover, the Dharma as the liberating truth has to be directly experienced, just as food and medicine has to be taken by oneself and in a proper manner. One who merely studies a menu or argue over it without taking any food will surely go hungry. In **the Āyācana Sutta** (S 6.1), the newly awakened Buddha reflects on his realization, thus:

This Dharma that I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, unattainable through discursive thought,⁴² subtle, to be experienced by the wise.
(S 6.1/1:136-138), SD 12.2

— — —

⁴⁰ Analayo: In fact, even the fourth immaterial attainment (*n'eva,saññā,nāsaññ'āyatana*), a deep meditative experience as far removed from concepts as possible within the realm of mundane experience, still falls short of realization (fn). Cf Hamilton 1996:60.

⁴¹ Analayo: According to **It 53**, *arahants*, because of their penetrative understanding of concepts and verbal expressions, are able to use them freely, without in any way falling prey to them. Cf also Ñāṇananda: “to believe that by merely demolishing concepts or theories one can rise above them is to stop at the fringe of the problem.” (1986: 103)

⁴² *Atakkāvacaro* = *a* (from *na*) + *takka* + *avacara*, lit “not in the sphere of discursive thought (or logic)” (V 1:4 = D 2:36 = 37 = M 1:167 = S 1:136 ≠ M 1:487 ≠ 2:172; A 2:289; D 1:12; It 37). See **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.1.2), SD 49.8.

Giri-m-ānanda Sutta

The Giri-m-ānanda Discourse

A 10.60

[108]

1 At one time the Blessed One was dwelling in Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park, in Jeta’s Grove, near Sāvathī. At the time, the venerable **Giri-m-ānanda** was ill, in pain, gravely ill.

Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

2 “Bhante, the venerable Giri-m-ānanda is ill, in pain, gravely ill. It would be good, bhante, if the Blessed One would go to him out of compassion.”

THE 10 PERCEPTIONS

2.2 “Ānanda, if you approach the monk Giri-m-ānanda and speak to him regarding **the 10 perceptions**, it is possible that the monk Giri-m-ānanda, having heard the 10 perceptions, his illness will subside immediately.

What are the ten? **[109]**

3 THE 10 PERCEPTIONS

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------|
| i. The perception of impermanence. | <i>anicca,saññā</i> | [§4] |
| ii. The perception of nonself. | <i>anatta,saññā</i> | [§5] |
| iii. The perception of foulness. | <i>asubha,saññā</i> | [§6] |
| iv. The perception of danger [disadvantages]. | <i>ādīnava,saññā</i> | [§7] |
| v. The perception of abandoning. | <i>pahāna,saññā</i> | [§8] |
| vi. The perception of fading away (of lust) [of dispassion]. | <i>Virāga,saññā</i> | [§9] |
| vii. The perception of cessation. | <i>nirodha,saññā</i> | [§10] |
| viii. The perception of not delighting in all the world. | <i>sabba,loke anabhirata,saññā</i> | [§11] |
| ix. The perception of wishlessness towards all formations. | <i>sabba,saṅkhāresu aniccha,saññā</i> | [§12] |
| x. The mindfulness of the breath. | <i>ānāpāna,sati</i> | [§13] |

i. The perception of impermanence (*anicca,saññā*)⁴³

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of impermanence**?

4 Here, Ānanda, a monk who has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty place,⁴⁴ reflects⁴⁵ thus:

⁴³ On this important meditation, see **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

⁴⁴ “Empty place” (*suññ’āgāra*). This stock phrase of 3 places conducive to meditation are at D 2:29; M 1:56, 297, 398, 425, 2:263, 3:82, 89, 4:297; S 5:311, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 323, 329, 336; A 1:147, 148, 149, 3:92, 100, 4:437, 5:109, 110, 111; Pm 1:175, 2:36. In **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), probably an older account, the following instruction is given: “Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue and this aggregate of noble sense-restraint and this aggregate of noble mindfulness and clear knowledge and this aggregate of noble contentment, he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw” (*so iminā ca ariyena sīla-k,khandhena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena indriya,-samvarena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena sati,sampajaññaena samannāgato imāya ca ariyāya santuṭṭhitāya samannāgato vivittam senāsanaṃ bhajati, araññaṃ rukkha,mūlam pabbataṃ kandaram giri,guharaṃ susānaṃ vana,pattham abbhokāsam palāla,puñjam*, D 2,67/ 1:71): this stock passage also at **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), SD

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| form | is impermanent; |
| feeling | is impermanent; |
| perception | is impermanent; |
| formations | are impermanent; |
| consciousness | is impermanent. |

Thus he dwells contemplating⁴⁶ impermanence in these five aggregates of clinging. This, Ānanda, is called the perception of impermanence.

ii. The perception of nonself (*anatta,saññā*)

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of nonself**?

5 Here, Ānanda, a monk who has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house, reflects thus:

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| The eye is | nonsself; | forms are | nonsself. |
| The ear is | nonsself; | sounds are | nonsself. |
| The nose is | nonsself; | smells are | nonsself. |
| The tongue is | nonsself; | tastes are | nonsself. |
| The body is | nonsself; | touches are | nonsself. |
| The mind is | nonsself; | mind-objects are | nonsself. |

Thus he dwells contemplating nonself in these six internal-and-external sense-bases. This, Ānanda, is called the perception of nonself.

iii. The perception of foulness (*asubha,saññā*)⁴⁷

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of foulness**?

6 Here, Ānanda, a monk reviews⁴⁸ this very body, wrapped in skin and full of various impurities, from the soles of the feet upwards and from the crown of the head downwards:

‘In this body there are⁴⁹

8.10.67. The oldest reference to an ideal meditation spot is in **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26) and **Saṅgārava S** (M 100): “still in search of the wholesome, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I walked by stages through Magadha until eventually I arrived at Senānigama near Uruvelā. There I saw an agreeable spot, a delightful grove with a clear-flowing river with pleasant, smooth banks and nearby a village for alms resort. I sat down there thinking: ‘This is conducive for spiritual striving.’” (M 26,17/1:167 = 100,13/2:212).

⁴⁵ “(He) reflects,” *paṭisañcikkhati*, “he thinks over, discriminates, considers, reflects”; see Intro (3.2.2).

⁴⁶ *Anupassī*, see Intro (3.2.3).

⁴⁷ Here and in the suttas, this practice is called *asubha,saññā* (perception of foulness) or *asubha,bhāvanā*: see Ency Bsm sv & asubha. Comys, however, use *asubha* (as in *asubha,nimitta*, “the sign of foulness”) to refer to any of the 10 foul objects, ie bodily remains in one of the 10 stages of decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f). This suggests that the 2 meditations are closely related: as we contemplate on the canonical 9 stages of bodily decomposition, or a corpse [§§10-30], we also note its parts (where applicable). On details of practice, see **Kāya,gatā,sati S** (M 119), SD 12.21 (5). See also **(Iddhi,pāda) Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20/5:277 f) SD 28.14, on the analysis of will or desire (*chanda*). See also Analayo 2003: 146-152.

⁴⁸ “Reviews,” *paccavekkhati*, see Intro (3.2.4) & also **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1 (3.9.3.4).

⁴⁹ In this meditation of the body, the sets or groups are named after that last item. Sets (1)-(4) constitute the earth element (**Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S**, M 62,8/1:421 f), SD 3.11; groups (5)-(6) constitute the water element (M 62,9/1:422). The same sutta describes the fire element as *that by which one is warmed, ages, and burns, and that by which what is eaten, drunk, chewed and tasted gets completely digested*, or whatever else that is liquid, liquefied

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| (1) head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, | <u>skin</u> , ⁵⁰ |
| (2) flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, | <u>kidneys</u> , ⁵¹ |
| (3) heart, liver, membranes (around the lungs), ⁵² spleen, | <u>lungs</u> , ⁵³ |
| (4) large intestines, small intestines, stomach-contents, ⁵⁴ faeces, | <u>[brain]</u> , ⁵⁵ |
| (5) bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, | <u>fat</u> , ⁵⁶ |
| (6) tears, grease, saliva, snot, oil of the joints, ⁵⁷ | <u>urine</u> . ⁵⁸ |

Thus he dwells contemplating foulness in this body.
This, Ānanda, is called the perception of foulness.⁵⁹

iv. The perception of danger (*ādīnava,saññā*)

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of danger**?

7 Here, Ānanda, a monk who has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house, reflects thus:

“Of much suffering [**110**] is this body, with many dangers! Various kinds of illnesses arise in the body, such as⁶⁰

eye ailment, hearing ailment, nose ailment, tongue ailment, body ailment,
(*cakkhu, rogo sota, rogo ghāna, rogo jivhā, rogo kāya, rogo*);
head ailment, ear ailment, mouth ailment, teeth problem, cough,
(*sīsa, rogo kaṇṇa, rogo mukha, rogo danta, rogo kāso*);
cold, heat [burning], fever, stomach ailment, faintness [swooning], diarrhoea, colic, cholera,
(*sāso pināso ḍaho jaro kucchi, rogo mucchā pakkhandikā sūlā visūcikā*);
leprosy, abscess [boils], eczema, tuberculosis, epilepsy;⁶¹
(*kuṭṭham gaṇḍo kilāso soso apamāro*);

and clung to internally and individually [belonging to oneself] (M 62,10/1:422); and the air (or wind) element as *up-going winds [burping], down-going winds, winds in the belly [flatulence], winds that course through the limbs, in-breath and out-breath*, or whatever else that is air, airy and clung to internally and individually [belonging to oneself] (M 62,11/1:422 f). See prec n.

⁵⁰ *Kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco*. The meditation on these five parts “with skin as the fifth” or “skin pentad” (*taca, pancake kamma-t, thāna*) (Vism 242=8.50) forms the basic spiritual practice first taught to monks at the end of ordination.

⁵¹ *Maṁsaṁ nahāru aṭṭhi aṭṭhi, miñjā vakkam*.

⁵² “Membranes,” alt tr “pleura,” *kilomaka*, ie a pair of membranous sacs surrounding the lungs.

⁵³ *Hadayaṁ yakanam kilomakam pihakam papphasam*.

⁵⁴ *Udariyam*, lit “that which is in the *udara* (stomach),” sometimes tr as “gorge” (Vism:Ñ 8.120/-122/258 f); technically, this includes chyme (food half-digested by gastric juices, expelled into the duodenum).

⁵⁵ *Antam anta, guṇam udariyam karisam*. See M 3:90; KhpA 38. Later traditions add the 32nd part—*matthake mattha, luṅgam* (lit “the brain in the head”) (Khp 3; Pm 1:6 f; Vism 8.42-144/239-266): “brain” is not listed at S 4:111). Although “brain” is usually listed last, Comys list it as no 20, after “faeces” (KhpA 60; Vism 8.126/260) in the set headed by “large intestines” since they have similar or related appearances. For a fascinating discussion on how ancient ascetics obtain such knowledge of the human anatomy, see Zysk 1998:34-37.

⁵⁶ *Pittam semham pubbo lohitaṁ sedo medo*.

⁵⁷ *Lasikā*, ie synovial fluid.

⁵⁸ *Assu vasā kheḷo siṅghāṇikā lasikā muttam*.

⁵⁹ **Satta,saññā S** (A 7.46.3-4/4:46 f), SD 15.4 shows how the perception of foulness removes sexual desire.

⁶⁰ This section contains one of the oldest references of medicine in Indian social history. See Intro (2) above.

⁶¹ Those with these 5 diseases are barred from joining the order (V 1:70-73, 93, 2:271, 4:8; VA 995 f; see also Nm 1:17, 47, 2:304; Nc 166).

ringworm,⁶² itch, scabs, pustules,⁶³ scabies, jaundice,⁶⁴ diabetes, piles, boil, fistula,
(daddu kaṇḍu kacchu rakhasā vitacchikā lohita, pittaṃ madhu, meho aṃsā piḷakā bhagandalā);
⁶⁵bile disorder,⁶⁶ phlegm disorder,⁶⁷ wind disorder,⁶⁸ a combination of them, a change in the
 temperature, improper self-care,⁶⁹ ailments due to assault [trauma upon oneself caused by
 outside agencies],⁷⁰ ailment due to the results of one's karma,
(pitta, samuṭṭhānā ābādhā semha, samuṭṭhānā ābādhā vāta, samuṭṭhānā ābādhā sannipātikā
ābādhā utu, pariṇāmajā ābādhā visama, parihārajā ābādhā opakkamikā ābādhā kamma,
vipākajā ābādhā);
 cold, heat, hunger, thirst, voiding, urinating (*sītaṃ uṇhaṃ jighacchā pipāsā uccāro passāvo*).

Thus he dwells contemplating the dangers in this body.

This, Ānanda, is called the perception of danger.

v. The perception of abandoning (*pahāna, saññā*)

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of abandoning**?

8 Here, Ānanda, a monk does not give in to a sensual thought that has arisen, but he abandons it, pushes it away, makes an end of it, brings it to extinction.

He does not give in to a thought of ill will that has arisen, but he abandons it, pushes it away, makes an end of it, brings it to extinction.

He does not give in to a violent thought that has arisen, but he abandons it, pushes it away, makes an end of it, brings it to extinction.

⁶² *Daddu*, Skt *dadru*, *dardru*, *dadrula*, *dadura* (*dardara*), *dardula*, *dradula*, a skin disease, probably a kind of leprosy or ringworm.

⁶³ *Rakhasā*, *rakhasā*, *nakhasā*. Comy say that this is “an ailment at the place scratched by the nails (*nakha*)” (AA 5:43; NmA 1:61).

⁶⁴ *Lohita, pitta*, lit “bile in the blood.” “Jaundice” is conjectured by FL Woodward, A:W 5:75.

⁶⁵ While the first 4 ailments are internal, the rest are external, except for karmic results, which are both. The first 4 of these ailments—the 3 peccant (illness-bringing) humours and their combination—are central to Āyurveda medical aetiology. The first 3 humours (Skt *doṣa*) are the *tri, doṣa* of Āyurvedic medicine. They also form a prominent aspect of the Mahāyāna medicinal philosophy and healing (Zysk 1998 ch 4). These 8 ailments are mentioned in **Sivaka S** (S 36.21 @ SD 5.6), **Samaṇa-m-acala S 1** (A 4.87,5/2:87), and (**Samaṇa**) **Sukhumāla S** (A 5.104/3:131). In the last sutta, one who is disease-free is said to be one free from these 8 causes (cf Nm 370). In **Milinda, pañha** (Miln 134 f), Nāgasena discusses the 8 causes of suffering in the context of the Buddha's lack of moral vice. All this attests to the early history of this aetiology.

⁶⁶ Symptoms of bile disorders (*bhagandalā*) include nervousness and excitement suggesting that one has emotional and neurotic problems.

⁶⁷ Symptoms of phlegm disorders (*pitta, samuṭṭhānā ābādhā*) include sluggishness and apathy suggesting that one has depression.

⁶⁸ Symptoms of wind disorders (*vāta, samuṭṭhānā ābādhā*) include hiccup, stitch (brief sharp pain running through the body) and stomach-ache. Also at **Sivaka S** (S 36.31,6/4:230), SD 5.6.

⁶⁹ Causes of *visama, parihārajā ābādhā* include sitting or standing too long, and being bitten by a snake.

⁷⁰ *Opammikā ābādhā*. It is also translated as “assault” or “external agency,” but the Pali forms *upakkama*, *opak-kama*, *opakkamika*, and the Sanskrit *upakrama* (from *upa-* and *√KRAM*, to stride) have the primary meaning of “attacking suddenly.” As such, Zysk thinks “it therefore could be equivalent to the *āgantū*, or external, category of disease causation in Indian medicine. According to the āyurvedic medical tradition, *āgantū* causes are generally violent and traumatic and involve injury to the body” [Caraka Saṃhita Sūtrasthāna 20.3; Suśruta Saṃhitā Sūtrasthāna 1.24 f] (Zysk 1998:30). This suffering may arise from being arrested for crime, being attacked by robbers, accidents, etc; the Buddha's foot being hurt by a piece of rock due to Devadatta's attempted assassination.

He does not give in to evil unwholesome states that have arisen, but he abandons them, pushes them away, makes an end of them, brings them to extinction.

This, Ānanda, is called the perception of abandoning.

vi. The perception of fading away (*virāga,saññā*)

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of fading away** (of lust) [the perception of dispassion]?

9 Here, Ānanda, a monk who has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house, reflects thus:

‘This is peaceful! This is sublime! That is, the stilling of all formations, the letting go of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, *the fading away*, nirvana.’

This, Ānanda, is called the perception of fading away.⁷¹

vii. The perception of cessation (*nirodha,saññā*)

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of cessation** (of suffering)?⁷²

10 Here, Ānanda, a monk who has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house, reflects thus:

‘This is peaceful! **[111]** This is sublime! That is, the stilling of all formations, the letting go of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, *the cessation*, nirvana.’

This, Ānanda, is called the perception of cessation.

viii. The perception of not delighting in all the world (*sabba,loke anabhirata,saññā*)

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of not delighting in**⁷³ **all the world**?

11 Here, Ānanda, abandoning any engagement and clinging to the world due to mental stand-points, adherences [mindsets] and latent tendencies, he refrains from them, being one with no clinging.

This, Ānanda, is called the perception of not delighting in all the world.⁷⁴

ix. The perception of wishlessness towards all formations (*sabba,saṅkhāresu aniccha,saññā*)⁷⁵

And what, Ānanda, is **the perception of wishlessness towards all formations**?

12 Here, Ānanda, a monk is pained by all formations, ashamed of them, revulsed by them.

This, Ānanda, is called the perception of wishlessness towards all formations.

⁷¹ Both this perception and the next are reflections on nirvana, and are subsumed under the recollection of peace (*upasamānussati*), explained at Vism 8.245-251/293 f.

⁷² On this perception, see prec n.

⁷³ “Not delighting in,” *anābhirata*, which is syn with *nibbidā*, “disenchantment, disillusionment, revulsion.”

⁷⁴ This is the 4th perception of the seven found in **Satta,saññā S** (A 7.46.3-4/4:46 f), SD 15.4, where it is explained in more detail: its practice is said to lead to nirvana; the immediate benefit is that the mind shrinks away from worldly thoughts. Cf *Atammayatā*, SD 19.13.

⁷⁵ The spelling is *aniccha* = *na + icchā*. Sometimes wrongly read as *sabba,saṅkhāresu anicca,saññā*. As noted by Bodhi, *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, “It is hard to see exactly how the explanation ties in with the theme of impermanence. Some MSS read the name of this perception as *sabba,saṅkhāresu anicchā,saññā*, “perception of wishlessness (or non-desire) in regard to all formations,’ which may be more original.” (1999:313 n51).

x. The mindfulness of the breath (*ānāpāna,sati*)

And what, Ānanda, is **the mindfulness of the breath**?⁷⁶

13 Here, Ānanda, a monk who has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house,⁷⁷ sits down, and having crossed his legs⁷⁸ and keeping his body upright,⁷⁹ establishes mindfulness before him.⁸⁰

—Mindfully⁸¹ he breathes in, mindfully he breathes out.

THE 16 PHASES OF BREATH MEDITATION

A. The 1st tetrad: Contemplation of the body

13.2

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Breathing in long [deep], ⁸² | he knows: ‘I breathe in long [Long in-breath]’; ⁸³ |
| Or, breathing out long [deep], | he knows: ‘I breathe out long [Long out-breath]’; |
| (2) Or, breathing in short, | he knows: ‘I breathe in short [Short in-breath]’; |
| Or, breathing out short, | he knows: ‘I breathe out short [Short out-breath]’; ⁸⁴ |

⁷⁶ For detailed study, see *Ānāpāna,sati S* (M 118,17-21/3:82 f), SD 9.7. See also Vism 8.145-244 for explanation. Bodhi says: “While the first three tetrads can be developed in the mode either of tranquillity or insight, the fourth tetrad is exclusively a subject of insight meditation.” (*Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, 1999:313 n52).

⁷⁷ “Empty place,” (*suññ’āgāra*): see §4 n.

⁷⁸ “Sitting cross-legged” (*pallaṅkam ābhujitvā*) here helps one to spread one’s body weight over the greatest area, thereby reducing tiredness so that one can focus better on the meditation. This is the prescribed posture for breath meditation which is best done in the sitting posture.

⁷⁹ “Keeping his body upright” (*ujum kāyam paṇidhāya*). This is mainly for the sake of warding off discomfort and pain after a long sitting. Imagine a pendulum or plumbline hanging from just below one’s skull with the pendulum ball hanging inside the belly. When one bends too far forward, or one sits leaning too far back, the pendulum hangs outside the body—the centre of gravity is outside the body. When one’s centre of gravity is outside the body, it tires more quickly.

⁸⁰ *Parimukhaṃ*, lit “around the mouth,” here always used idiomatically and as an adverb, meaning “in front”: so U Thittila (Vbh:T 319, 328), Walshe (D:W 1995:335), Soma Thera (1941:42 f digital ed), and Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (M:ÑB 2001:527). The Vibhaṅga explains it as “at the tip of the nose or at the centre of the upper lip” (Vbh §537/ 252): see important n to §18(1). **Where to watch the breath?** Brahmavamso, however, says that *parimukha* does not mean “just on the tip of the nose, or on the lip, or somewhere in front of your eyes ... [but] just means [to] make it important.” (2002:58). “Often people are told when meditating to watch the breath at the tip of the nose, but actually many people find this is a distraction. If you look at the suttas, the Buddha never tells us to watch the breath in a physical place. He says to know that you are breathing in and to know that you are breathing out. The important thing is to note it in time. So: ‘Am I breathing in at this time, or am I breathing out at this time?’” (Nyana dhammo 1999:3). Soṇa Bhikkhu, however, teaches the “traditional” approach of taking *parimukhaṃ* as air contact as “either at the nose or lip” (2000:6). (All three teachers here are pupils of Ajahn Chah.) On *parimukha*, see SD 13.1.

⁸¹ Ce Se Ke PTS *sato*.

⁸² As one relaxes and settles down, the breath calmly shortens. As the body relaxes, it needs less oxygen. The 2 steps thus naturally follow one after the other. The idea of these 2 steps (long breath, short breath) is just to be with the breath instead of being distracted. On these 4 tetrads and 16 aspects, see Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 2003: 133-136. On the breath, see SD 7.13 (2).

⁸³ I have rendered these important sentences and those of the first 2 (“noting”) tetrads using very short sentences (not grammatically complete sentences) to reflect a “bare noting” (denoted by *pajānāti*) that should occur in meditation whose purpose is mental focus. Only the steps 1-4 are noted by *pajānāti* (he knows or understands); the rest (5-16) are *sikkhati* (he trains) or “training” aspects (ie one has to put in more regulated effort), “I will breathe in ... out,” (*assasissāmi...passasissāmi*). On “mental noting,” see important n on “Mental noting”: Intro (4).

- (3) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, experiencing the whole body (of breath)';⁸⁵
 He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, experiencing the whole body (of breath)';
 (4) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, calming the bodily formation (of breathing)';⁸⁶
 He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, calming the bodily formation (of breathing)';⁸⁷

B. The 2nd tetrad: Contemplation of feelings

13.3

- (5) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, experiencing zest [joy]';⁸⁸
 He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, experiencing zest [joy]';
 (6) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, experiencing happiness';⁸⁹ [M 3:83]
 He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, experiencing happiness';

⁸⁴ In practical terms, focusing on the first 2 factors of this tetrad, that is maintaining one's undivided focus on the breath or one's conception of it can lead to dhyana. However, in (**Pabbateyyā**) **Gāvī S**, the Buddha warns Moggallāna not to go into the 2nd dhyana until he has thoroughly mastered the 1st dhyana (A 9.35/4:418 f qu at Vism 153 f).

⁸⁵ "Experiencing the whole body (of breath)," *sabba,kāya,paṭisaṁvedī*. MA glosses *sabba,kāya* as "the whole body of breath," ie, its 3 phases of each in-breath and out-breath through its 3 phases of beginning, middle and end. For effective breath meditation, we just target the mind via only the breath. When we are mentally still enough, we see the mental breath arising out of the stillness. We see it grow to its peak and then fade away. This will recur until the in-breath has completely subsided. Then, as it were, we have truly renounced the world. The mind clears up even more so that we even see that space between the breaths. The in-breath has stopped, the out-breath has yet to arise. Then the out-breath begins to grow to its peak and then fades away again. This is called the whole of the breath." However, Thich Nhat Hanh (1990:6, 46-49) & esp Bodhi (2001 n141) take *sabba,kāya* to mean "the whole physical body." Cf the remark that the in-and-out-breathing is "a body among the bodies" (§24). According to transpersonal psychology (especially bodywork and breathwork), the whole *body* "breathes." For the simile of the teacher and his three archer students illustrating the experience of the total breath, see Brahmavamso 2002:62 f. For a discussion, see Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 2003:131 f.

⁸⁶ "The bodily formation," *kāya,saṅkhāra*. The bodily formation is the in-and-out-breathing itself (M 44,13/ 1:301; S 41.6/4:293,15: *assāsa,passāsa kāya,saṅkhāro*). See **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.14) for explanation of *kāya,saṅkhāra*. This calming process may lead to the development of dhyana, but this is not the right time yet. When we have full attention, the next stage is where beauty and joy begin to appear. We simply keep the mind-object "peace, peace," or "calm, calm." In this case, we willfully but gently calm the breath down. It gets subtler and more beautiful. But we have to be careful here: if we calm the breath in the 4th stage before completing the 3rd stage, that's when we go to *sleep*! With full attention we calm that breath-object. In other words, get the full breath-image well in mind first. Only then calm it down.

⁸⁷ At this point even after the breath has been calmed down, if we still do not experience joy [zest] (*pīti*) or the "beautiful breath," then we should proceed to the next 2 steps to willfully arouse feelings of joy [zest].

⁸⁸ "Zest," *pīti*. Sometimes translated as "joy" or "rapture," but "**zest**" is closer to evoking the more subtle yet enthusing nature of *pīti*. One experiences **zest** (*pīti*) in 2 ways: by attaining either the 1st or 2nd dhyana in which zest is present, one experiences it in the mode of calm (*samatha*); by emerging from that dhyana and reflecting that zest is subject to destruction, one experiences zest in the mode of insight (*vipassanā*). Psychologically, *pīti* is a kind of "joyful interest," as such may be associated with wholesome, unwholesome or neutral states (BDict: pīti). Zest [joy] belongs to the formation aggregate (*saṅkhāra-k,khandha*) while happiness (*sukha*) belongs to the feeling aggregate (*vedanā-k,khandha*). Zest [joy] is compared to when a thirsty man lost in the desert finds water; happiness is what he feels when he is drinking the water. See Vism 4.94 ff.

⁸⁹ As we calm the breath down, we get to a stage where the breath becomes very, very refined, very peaceful, very smooth. The mind naturally becomes very happy. This is another type of happiness, and it takes some wisdom to recognize it. The Buddha teaches the 5th and 6th steps to arouse radiant beauty. The 5th step is the deliberate arousal of zest (*pīti*) with the beautiful breath; the 6th step is the deliberate arousal of happiness (*sukha*). This is an important training in meditation: we should be able to recognize zest and happiness from whatever we are doing. When the breath is very peaceful, we only need to seek that bliss and we will feel it. This is the "beautiful breath."

- (7) He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe in, knowing the mental formations [mental functions]’;⁹⁰
 He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe out, knowing the mental formations [mental functions]’;
 (8) He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe in, calming the mental formations [mental functions]’;⁹¹
 He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe out, calming the mental formations [mental functions]’;

C. The 3rd tetrad: Contemplation of the mind

13.4

- (9) He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe in, experiencing the mind’;⁹²
 He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe out, experiencing the mind’; [112]

⁹⁰ “Knowing the mental formations [mental functions],” *citta,saṅkhāra,paṭisaṃvedī*. This refers to the experience of the breath as a dharma [mind-object]. “When the beautiful breath is established, it may appear that our breath has disappeared, that we have just this beautiful, stable peace inside but no breath. What has happened is that we are still breathing, but the breath is no longer being experienced as a touch on the body, but it is experienced as an object in the mind. We are switching from *feeling* to *knowing*. The sense base of physical touch turns off and the mind turns on. We are still breathing but the knowing is so focused that the experience is like a smooth flow in one direction only. It’s like when a **carpenter** saws a piece of wood, he can see the whole saw from the handle to the edge of the saw blade. As he concentrates on the cut, his attention focuses closer and closer onto the point where the saw touches and cuts the wood. The saw handle and tip soon disappear from his vision. In due course, all he sees is that cutting point when saw meets wood—this is all he attends to. He needs no concept of the start, middle or end of the saw. The same method given in the previous note applies to the 2nd and 3rd clauses. According to some teachers, in the second, the 3 lower dhyans are present and in the third, all 4 are present. Mental formations here refer to feelings, perceptions and other mental concomitants, which are calmed by the development of successively higher levels of calm and insight. See **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.14) for explanation of *citta,saṅkhāra*.

⁹¹ “Calming the mental formations [mental functions],” *passambhayaṃ citta,saṅkhāraṃ*. It may happen at this and subsequent stages of the meditation that the zest [joy] becomes a little too “lively” and therefore disturb the tranquillity. Because of this the Buddha taught 8th step. Or, fear may arise alongside the bliss: “This is a bit too much for me.” So the bliss disappears. Fear destroys tranquillity. We simply need to be still; a gentle smile helps if there is any thought. Ajahn Chah relates **the parable of the forest pool** where one needs to be very still in one’s hide to observe those rare and beautiful animals come to the water-edge to drink. At the slightest gasp of wonder, they will just disappear back into the forest. See eg Brahmavamso, *The Jhanas*, Singapore, 2003:35 f.

⁹² “Experiencing the mind.” This is the stage when we can really know the mind, experience it, ie, by what we call a “sign” (*nimitta*), a reflection of the mind. Since the mind is that which is “knowing,” how can the “knower” know itself? Like a person who looks into a mirror. Only that way can we see our face, our reflection. The reflection we see here, the *nimitta*, is a true reflection of the mind. It’s as if the mirror has finally been cleaned of all this dust and grime on its surface, and now at last we can see ourselves. We experience the mind (*citta,paṭisaṃvedī*) through the *nimitta*. (See Brahmavamso 2002:73 f for **simile problems**). The *nimitta* is just a reflection of the “knower,” the meditator’s mind: one’s image in the mirror only reflects one’s looks and does what one does! If the watcher is still, the image, too, is still. It does not help to hold the mirror still: one has oneself to remain still. Instead, focus on the knowing, the mind that is experiencing this, and calm that into stillness. Bodhi (a self-confessed non-meditator) says that “experiencing the mind” is to be understood by way of the 4th jhāna (2001 n1118). *Citta*, “mind,” is synonymous with *mano* and *viññāṇa* (*Yaṃ... idaṃ vuccati cittan ti vā mano ti vā viññāṇan ti vā*, D 1:21; *Yaṃ ca kho etaṃ ... vuccati cittam iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇa iti pi*, S 2:94 f), so too in most traditions following the Abhidharma period, but they were clearly differentiated within the Yogācāra. SA says that all the three are names for the mind-base (*man’āyatana*). A:B 769 n154.

- (10) He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe in, gladdening the mind’;⁹³
 He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe out, gladdening the mind’;
 (11) He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe in, concentrating the mind’;
 He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe out, concentrating the mind’;⁹⁴
 (12) He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe in, freeing the mind’;⁹⁵
 He trains himself thus: ‘I will breathe out, freeing the mind’;

⁹³ “Gladdening the mind” (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ*), ie, shining the meditation sign. The meditation sign (*nimitta*) may appear to some as being “too dull” or “unstable,” which are addressed by the 10th and 11th steps, respectively; “shining the *nimitta* and sustaining the *nimitta*. The more zest [joy] there is in the mind, the more brilliant shines the *nimitta*. To enter dhyana, the *nimitta* has to be the most brilliant thing that we have ever seen. We can help it shine in any of 4 ways: (1) focus on centre of the *nimitta*; (2) sharpen the attention in the present moment; (3) smile at the *nimitta*; (4) go back to the beautiful breath. The reflex may be dull also due to poor moral conduct or to low mental effort. In the case of poor moral conduct, one should “spend some effort purifying your conduct beyond the meditation cushion. Keep your precepts faultlessly. Check your speech. The Buddha said that without first purifying *sīla* [moral conduct], it is impossible to purify *samādhi* [mental concentration].” (2002:75). In the case of low mental energy, one should remedy it by switching to “**the inspirational meditations**” like a reflection (*anussati*) on any of the 3 Jewels, on giving (*cāgānussati*) or *mettā, bhāvanā*. According to Bodhi, “gladdening the mind” is either the attainment of the first 2 dhyanas (containing joy) or as the penetration of those dhyanas by regarding them with insight as subject to destruction. (A:B n1118)

⁹⁴ “Concentrating the mind” (*samādahaṃ cittaṃ*), ie, sustaining the meditation sign (*nimitta*). Sometimes, even a brilliant *nimitta* may appear unstable, but this only reflects the knower; when the knower moves, so does the sign. Often for the first few times a *nimitta* appears, it flashes up for a short time and then disappears. Or else it moves around in the mental field of vision. It is unstable. Usually, the bright powerful *nimittas* remain longer than the dull weak ones. To strengthen the *nimitta*, we should focus on the knower, that which is experiencing this, and calm that into stillness. Once again, it is usually fear or excitement that creates the instability. We are reacting too much rather than passively observing. Experiencing the *nimitta* for the first time is like meeting a stranger. Often we are on the edge because we do not know who he is or how he thinks. Or, we should recall how we first learned to cycle. We just hold the handle-bars and look ahead and gently pedal the bike. We have to learn not to grip the *nimitta* too hard or stiffly. As we let go of controlling the *nimitta*, it will stay with us like a kitten that is used to us. According to Bodhi, “concentrating the mind” refers either to the concentration pertaining to the *jhāna* or to the momentary concentration that arises along with insight (M:B n1118)

⁹⁵ “Freeing the mind” (*vimocayaṃ cittaṃ*). Meditators often describe this in either of 2: we find ourself “diving” into the *nimitta*; the attention just sinks in there. Or else that *nimitta* (as a beautiful light or feeling) just completely envelops us. It just happens. We enter dhyana by letting go of controlling the mind. Hence, the Buddha calls the dhyanas stages of freedom (*vimokkha*) [D 16,3.33, A 8.66]. This is probably the most truly powerful experience in one’s life, when one can really call oneself a “mystic.” It is a kind of momentary “joy of awakening” (*sambodhi sukha*, M 1:454). This is an experience “where the mind is free from the body. It’s not floating out there but it’s not located in space and time any more. Space and time have works with the body. When the mind is free from all of that, there is just bliss. We do not feel anything in the body; there is no body to feel! In fact, we are as it were in a total hibernation of the physical senses.

D. The 4th tetrad: Contemplation of dharmas⁹⁶

13.5

(13) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, contemplating impermanence';⁹⁷

He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, contemplating impermanence';

(14) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, contemplating the fading away (of lust)';⁹⁸

He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, contemplating the fading away (of lust)';

(15) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, contemplating the cessation (of suffering)';⁹⁹

He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, contemplating the cessation (of suffering)';

(16) He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe in, contemplating the letting go (of defilements)';¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹He trains himself thus: 'I will breathe out, contemplating the letting go (of defilements).'This, Ānanda, is called the mindfulness of the breath.**Giri-m-ānanda is healed**

14 Ānanda, if you approach the monk Giri-m-ānanda and speak to him regarding the 10 perceptions, it is possible that the monk Giri-m-ānanda, having heard the 10 perceptions, will have his illness subside immediately."

15 Then the venerable Ānanda, having learned the 10 perceptions before the Blessed One himself, approached the venerable Giri-m-ānanda. Having approached the venerable Giri-m-ānanda, he spoke to him regarding the 10 perceptions.

Then the venerable Giri-m-ānanda, upon hearing the 10 perceptions, his illness subsided immediately. The venerable Giri-m-ānanda recovered from his illness, and that is how the venerable Giri-m-ānanda was rid of his illness.

— evaṃ —

⁹⁶ These last following 4 stages relate to the meditator who has just emerged from dhyana. The first thing we should do then is to review that state: "What was that?" "How did that arise?" "How do I feel?" "Why do I feel that way?" "What have I been doing all this time?" "What worked and what failed?" "What was the result of the meditation?" "Why is it happy?" Such reflections give rise to deep insight. We can then either take up the 4 satipatthanas or go directly to the last 4 stages of breath meditation. The meditator has any of these 4 following things [§§13-16] to contemplate on after emerging from dhyana. See SD 13.1 (5D)(iv).

⁹⁷ "Impermanence," *anicca*. What we call the "self," something that appears to be so constant that we do not even notice it. In dhyana, any idea of self disappears. If you experience this deeply as "nonself," it's very likely to give rise to the experience of streamwinning.

⁹⁸ "Fading away," *virāga*, also tr as "dispassion" [§42]. If reflections on impermanence do not work, then we should go on to reflect on the "fading away" (*virāga*). This is when ideas of things which were so close or essential to you just disappear.

⁹⁹ "Cessation," *nirodha*. What was once there had now disappeared. Much of the world as we know it ceases for the moment. We are in a completely different mind-space. Cessation is also the 3rd noble truth [the cessation of suffering]. Cessation comes from letting go. All that's left is the opposite of *dukkha*, that *sukha* (happiness). The ending of suffering is happiness.

¹⁰⁰ "Letting go," *paṭinissagga*, or "abandoning." Here *paṭinissagga* is not giving way what's "out there," but rather accepting what's "here and now." We let go of the "doer," even the "knower," ie, the "controller" or the will. This is the path to the end of suffering.

¹⁰¹ While the previous 3 tetrads deal with both calm and insight, this tetrad deals only with insight. "Contemplating the fading away..." and "contemplating the cessation..." can be understood both as insight into the impermanence of formations and as the supramundane path leading to Nirvana, that is, the fading of lust (*virāga*) and the cessation of suffering. "Contemplating the letting go..." is the giving up of defilements through insight and the gaining of Nirvana through the path.

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