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Ānâpâna,sati Sutta

The Discourse on the Mindfulness of the In-and-out-breathing | M 118

Theme: The breath meditation in practical detail

Translated and annotated by Piya Tan ©2003

1 The Sutta

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE

1.1.1 Sutta summary

1.1.1.1 The Ānâpâna,sati Sutta (M 118) is an exposition of the 16 steps of breath meditation in 4 tetrads [§§15-22], constituting the “mundane” or beginner’s practice; then, the application of these tetrads to the 4 focuses of mindfulness [§§23-28], to the 7 awakening-factors [§§29-40] and, finally, to spiritual liberation [§§41-43].

1.1.1.2 These 16 steps are found as a separate set in the Sarvâstivâda Madhyama and Saṃyukta Āgamas.¹ The Chinese Madhyama Āgama of the Sarvâstivâda, however, does not have a version of this Sutta; but there seems to be an isolated but related text.²

1.1.2 Sutta background

The inspiring Sutta prologue takes up about a quarter of the unabridged sutta [§§1-17]. The Buddha has just completed the three-month rains retreat with various prominent elder monks who have been advising and instructing new monks [§§1-3]. He then announces that he is staying on for another month, encouraging the monks to put in more effort in their training. [§4]

On hearing about the Buddha’s presence, the monks from the surrounding countryside flock to meet him [§§5-7]. The Buddha declares that the spiritual community is filled with accomplished disciples [§§8-12]. Even those who are not yet awakened are engaged in one of the 7 sets of practices, beginning with the 4 focuses of mindfulness [§§13-14].

1.1.3 Sutta overview

1.1.3.1 The main theme of this Sutta is the attainment of “**progressively higher distinction**” (*uḷâram pubbenâparam visesam*), that is, the 4 stages of sainthood: streamwinning, once-returning, non-returning and arhathood [§2+n]. The Buddha begins by declaring that **breath meditation** brings to perfection the 4 focuses of mindfulness, which in turn perfect the 7 awakening-factors, and which brings “true knowledge and liberation,” that is, self-awakening. Finally, he singles out the breath meditation for special mention. [§§15-16]

1.1.3.2 This rest of the Sutta records the teaching given on the final night of the 4-month retreat with the Buddha himself [§§17-44]. The contents of **Ānâpâna,sati Sutta** (M 118) are as follows:

¹ Rod Bucknell, in his “Pāli-Chinese Sutras Correspondences” (2004) lists T97.1:919 and SĀ 810 = T2.208 as “partial or doubtful cognates of the Pāli version.”

² THICH Minh Chau says that this is the “Chih-ching” (1991:347). “These miscellaneous discourses, found added to the major collections, consist of alternative translations and sometimes texts not found in the major Āgamas. Their doctrinal affiliations are usually unknown and they have been even less studied than the major collections.” (Sujato 2004:237 n359). See also Sujato 2004:145-147.

The prologue (§§1-17) [1.1.2]

- §§1-3 The Buddha just completes the 3-month rains-retreat which include some prominent elders.
 §4 The Buddha announces that he is staying on for another month.
 §§5-7 Monks from the surrounding areas flock to listen to the Buddha.
 §§8-12 The Buddha declares that the spiritual community is filled with accomplished disciples.
 §§13-14 Even the unawakened monks are engaged in practising one of the 7 sets of teachings. [1.3]
 §§15-16 The prominence of the breath meditation.

The levels of perfections through breath meditation

- §17 Preparation for the meditation.
 §§18-23 The mundane (basic) 16-step breath meditation.
 §§24-28 Perfection of the 4 focuses of mindfulness.
 §§29-40 Perfection of the 7 awakening-factors.
 §§41-44 Perfection of true knowledge and liberation. Conclusion.
- } [2.3.5.3]

1.1.4 Sutta significance

1.1.4.1 In the **Icchā,naṅgala Sutta** (S 54.11), breath meditation is declared to be “the noble abode, the perfect abode, the Tathagata’s abode,”³ because during the rains-retreat, the Buddha “mostly dwells in the concentration by mindfulness of breathing.”⁴ It is called an “abode” (*vihāra*) because the Buddha enjoys the bliss of dhyana through it.

The key text of breath meditation (*ānāpāna,sati*) is, of course, **the Ānāpāna,sati Sutta** (the discourse on the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing) found in the Majjhima Nikāya (M 118/3:77-88), SD 7.13. There are also 4 brief versions of the breath meditation given in the Saṃyutta (S 54.13-16) [1.2].

1.2 RELATED SUTTAS

1.2.1 The *Ānāpāna,sati Sutta* (M 118) should be studied with **the Ānāpāna Saṃyutta** (S 54),⁵ the most important sutta of which is **the (Ānāpāna,sati) Ānanda Sutta 1** (S 54.13), whose contents are reprinted in **S 54.14-16**, that is, 4 other versions of the mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna,sati*), differing only in their respective settings:

(Ānāpāna,sati) Ānanda Sutta 1	(S 54.13/5:328-333)	Ānanda asks a question (at Sāvattihī)
(Ānāpāna,sati) Ānanda Sutta 2	(S 54.14/5:333-335)	Unprompted, to Ānanda (at Sāvattihī?)
(Ānāpāna,sati) Bhikkhū Sutta 1	(S 54.15/5:335 f)	Monks ask a question (at Sāvattihī?)
(Ānāpāna,sati) Bhikkhū Sutta 2	(S 54.16/5:336-340)	Unprompted, to the monks (at Sāvattihī?)

The two **Ānanda Suttas** (S 54.13+14) differ only in that in the *Ānanda Sutta 2* (S 54.14), Ānanda requests the Buddha to teach him, “Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, have the Blessed One as refuge. It would be good indeed if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the monks would remember it.”⁶ These suttas also share a pericope on the 7

³ *Ariya,vihāra, brahma,vihāra, tathāgata,vihāra*. Cf *ariya,vāsa* in **Ariya,vāsa S 2** (A 10.20), SD 10.15.

⁴ S 54.11/5:325 f.

⁵ See Bodhi’s intro: S:B 1516 f.

⁶ *Bhagavam,mūlakā no bhante dhammā, bhagavaṃ nettikā, bhagavaṃ paṭisaraṇā. Sādhū vata bhante bhagavatañ-ñ’eva paṭibhātu etassa bhāsitaṃ attho.Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressantīti*. This is stock (M 1:309 f, 317, 465, 3:115; S 2:80 f; S 36.6.6/4:207; A 1:199, 4:158, 351, 5:355).

awakening-factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*).⁷ The 2 **Bhikkhū Suttas** (S 54.15+16), too, share a similar pattern, *mutatis mutandis*, in that the interlocuters are “a number of monks” (*sambahulā bhikkhū*).

1.2.2 The Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta (M 62) closes with the section on *ānāpāna,sati*, and ends with the remark that “when mindfulness of in-and-out-breathing is cultivated and often developed in this manner, even the last breath leaves with your knowledge, not without it.” (M 62,30/1:426). That is to say, when a dying person is mindful of his breath, he dies calmly with mindfulness and clear comprehension. **The Visuddhi,magga** says: “Herein there are 3 kinds of *final* breaths on account of cessation, that is to say, final in *becoming*, final in *absorption*, final in *death*. For, among the various kinds of existence, in-breaths and out-breaths occur only in the sense-sphere existence, not in the form-existence nor the formless existence.” (Vism 8.241/291 f)⁸

1.2.3 Writing and reading

1.2.3.1 The best known explanation on the traditional practice of breath meditation is given in **the Visuddhi,magga** (Vism 8.145-244). A good reference is Ñāṇamoli’s *Mindfulness of Breathing* (3rd ed 1973). Thich Nhat Hanh gives a contemporary free interpretation of breath meditation in *Breathe! You Are Alive* (1988, 1990, 1996). In other words, his translation and explanations do not closely follow the Pali but he has given his own views on them, like writing his own story. [1.2.3.4]

1.2.3.2 We thus have 2 styles of sutta-based works. The 1st kind is **explanatory** or **commentarial**, which basically tries to explain the sutta or passage based as close as possible to sutta teachings and early Buddhism to bring out the meaning and significance of the text. This is especially helpful and preferable when we read them for guidance and clarification in our own practice of early Buddhism.

The “**commentarial**” approach is, by definition, a “close study” of a sutta or text in keeping with other the teachings of other suttas and related texts, especially their classical commentaries. Such works often reflect the works and practice of those who are themselves committed Buddhist practitioners, following early Buddhism. Both these approaches try to bring out the teachings as “traditionally” intended, basically trying to answer: “What exactly in this passage saying?” or even “What is the Buddha (or his disciple) teaching?”

1.2.3.3 The 2nd style of writing is essentially a “free interpretation,” even a personal review of a sutta or Buddhist work. This style usually describes or reflects the works of popular teachers and Buddhist celebrities who work to attract and inspire followers rather than explain Buddhism in a traditional way. Their translations and interpretations of the suttas and texts are often said to be “free,” even “innovative.” In other words, they are meant to be read as the writer’s own ideas rather than as explaining the Buddha’s teachings.

Having said that, any self-respecting and responsible translator, teacher or writer knows Buddhist translation work and teaching involve a range of “textual fidelity,” close readings, explanations and interpretations of the texts and teachings. As such, whatever we are writing on the suttas or Buddhism is often our own views, rightly or wrongly, interpreting the original texts.

Serious students of early Buddhism are likely to ask that key question: Is the author a committed practitioner of early Buddhism? Here again, we need to give some allowance as to how we define “committed,” “practitioner” and “early Buddhism.” Generally, we each know (or think we know) what we are looking for, and this is what usually guides us in what to read (or *who* to read), and what to *do* about what we have read. This is something we must decide for ourselves.

⁷ **Ānāpāna,sati S**, M 118/3:85-87 (SD 7.13) = (**Bojjhaṅga**) **Sīla S**, S 46.3/5:67-70 (SD 10.15) = **Ānanda S 1**, S 5:331-333 = **Ānanda S 2**, S 5:334 f [1.2.1].

⁸ See **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62,30/1:426), SD 3.11 n.

1.3 THE 7 SETS

1.3.1 The Ānāpāna, sati Sutta opens with an extended list based on the 7 sets⁹ [§13], and culminates in the breath meditation [§14]. The 7 sets are elaborated in **the Mahā Sakul'udāyī Sutta**.¹⁰ In **the Pāsādika Sutta** (D 29), the Buddha exhorts,

Cunda, all of you to whom I have taught these truths that I have directly known should gather together and recite them, comparing meaning with meaning, comparing text with text [comparing spirit with spirit, letter with letter], without dissension [without quarrelling], so that this holy life might endure and stand for a long time for the profit of the many, the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans.

(D 29,16-18/3:127 f)

In **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), the Buddha exhorts regarding these 7 sets, thus: “You are to learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them” (D 16,3.50/2:120).

1.3.2 Various methods of meditation are then listed [§14], but only the breath meditation is explained in full. The Commentary explains the reason for this is that a large number of monks take it as their meditation practice (MA 4:139). It should also be added that the breath meditation is the key meditation in the Buddha's own spiritual life. The first record we have of his meditation experience is breath meditation when he is a child of 7, and on the night of his awakening, too, he uses the breath meditation (MA 2:291).¹¹

2 The breath

2.1 ĀNĀPĀNA

2.1.1 Vedic antecedents

2.1.1.1 The key ancient Indian word for breath is the Sanskrit term, *prāṇa* (P *pāṇa*), which means both breath and life (that is, to live is to breathe). The word *prāṇa* is a derivative noun, originally meaning “the breath in front,” that is, the inhaled air, and is combined with its opposite, *apāna*, “the breath down or away,” that is, the exhaled air, to refer to *respiration*. **Zysk** gives this helpful point regarding the ancient Indian conception of the breath:

Observation of the vital function of these complementary aspects of respiration, combined with intuitions about the function of wind after it entered the body, eventually led Indians to conceptualize and codify the bodily winds and their operations in the human organism. *Prāṇa* assumed the character of vital breath, inhaled air in the process of respiration, and was the principal wind in the upper part of the body, on which all other breaths depended. *Apāna* was the exhaled air, and the essential wind in the lower part of the body.

Ancient Indians identified organs resembling lungs (*pupphusa*, *kloman*) as part of human and animal anatomy, but they never understood their function in respiration. They conceived the lungs to

⁹ **The 7 sets** are: the 4 satipatthanas (*satipaṭṭhāna*) (SD 13), the 4 right efforts (*padhāna*) (SD 10.2), the 4 bases of power (*iddhi, pāda*) (SD 10.3), the 5 faculties (*indriya*) (SD 10.4), the 5 spiritual powers (*bala*) (SD 10.5), the 7 awakening-factors (*bojjhaṅga*) (SD 10.1), and the noble eightfold path (*atthaṅgika ariya, magga*) (SD 6.10). These 7 sets together form the 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi, pakkhiya, dhammā*).

¹⁰ M 77,15-21/11 f, SD 6.18.

¹¹ See eg **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,17.31-44/1:242-249), SD 1.12.

be the locus of phlegm, and usually the heart to be the seat of vital breath. Respiration was simply the intake and expulsion of vital air from the body. Once in the body, it was carried throughout the organism by a series of vessels and stimulated the vital functions of the various bodily organs and parts. Each bodily function or locus of bodily functions had a wind or breath that acted as its motivator, giving rise to innumerable vital breaths, which eventually became codified into five basic bodily winds: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*. (Zysk 1993:198)

2.1.1.2 While these terms began as metaphysical speculation in the early Upaniṣads, they have always been a clear, integral and effective methodology of early Buddhist meditation practice. The terms as such are not found in Buddhism, but what the Upaniṣads speculated on, the early Buddhist experienced directly and, more importantly, make it available, not just to the select few, but to all who would learn.

2.1.1.3 The first term, *prāṇa* [2.1.1.1], is the most common of the “5 winds,” and is a general term for the breath and for life (that which breathes) itself.¹² Although the Vedic system generally defines *prāṇa* as the in-breath, the Pali term here is usually *āna* (with the verb *assasati*, “he breathes in”).¹³ The term *apāna* came to mean “down-going winds” (*adho,gamā vātā*), the breath that moves down from the navel, controlling evacuation and flatus (the breaking of wind).¹⁴

Vyāna refers to the interval between inhalation and exhalation, that is, when we are very relaxed, or on a deeper meditation level.¹⁵ The Upanishadic tradition generally defines *samāna* as the breath in the abdomen (abdominal breathing) and associates it with the digestion of food and nourishment of the body.¹⁶ However, as we shall see from **the Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 62) [2.1.1.4], the early Buddhists are aware of both abdominal breathing (*kucchisayā vātā*) and thoracic breathing (*koṭṭhasayā vātā*).¹⁷

2.1.1.4 Now let us look at the early Buddhist definition of the wind element and the purpose of reflecting on it, as given in **the Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 62):

Rāhula, what is **the wind element** [motion]?¹⁸

The wind element may be either internal or external. And what, Rāhula, is the internal wind element?

¹² Ṛg,veda and Sāma,veda def *prāṇa* as being threefold: (1) it indicates and motivates life (ṚV 1.48.10, 66.1, 101.5, 3.53.21, 10.121.3); (2) it represents the atmospheric air (*vāta*) or wind (*vāyu*) inside man; and (3) it is connected with respiration (ṚV 10.189.1 f; SV 2.726 f). Cf connection of human breath and atmospheric wind in the Puruṣa hymn (ṚV 10.90.13). The Buddha however defines *pāṇa* as (1) the breath; (2) life; and (3) a living being. As evident from **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62) below, atmospheric wind or air is simply called *vāta*, whether internal or external. See also Zysk 1993:199-201.

¹³ Although this distinction is not prominent in the suttas, their Comys and Upaniṣads follow the same defs: see (2.1.2).

¹⁴ For further etym, see SD 49.4 (5.2.2).

¹⁵ Cf Chāndogya Upaniṣad: *yad vai prāṇiti sa prāṇaḥ | yad apāniti so ‘pānaḥ | atha yaḥ prāṇāpānayoḥ saṃdhiḥ sa vyānaḥ | yo vyānaḥ sāvāk | tasmād aprāṇann anapānan vācam abhivyāharati* || “the *prāṇa* is the out-breath, the *apāna* is the in-breath. The *vyāna* is where the *prāṇa* and the *apāna* meet. This *vyāna* is speech. Therefore, when one speaks, one stops the *prāṇa* and the *apāna*” (ChU 1.3.3). In ancient Indian medicine, *vyāna* is said to be responsible for blood circulation.

¹⁶ See eg Maitrī Upaniṣad 2.6 & Zysk 1993:205 f. This aspect of the 5 winds is close to *aṅgam-aṅgānusārino vātā* (M 62,11 below). Its prominence in our times is found as the “Vipassana” meditation method of watching the rise and fall of the belly (two-fingers’ breath above the navel), as taught by Mahasi Sayadaw.

¹⁷ See also Bodewitz 1986:334-336. For a summary, see Olivelle 1996:l-li.

¹⁸ “Wind,” *vāyo*, or “air” element, ie, motion, in Abhidhamma, said to be “strengthening” or “supporting” (*vitthambhana,lakkhaṇa*). On how winds cause pains, see **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,28-29/2:193), SD 4.9.

Rāhula, whatever that is wind [airy], wind-like and clung to internally and individually [belonging to oneself], namely,¹⁹

<i>uddhaṅgamā vātā</i>	up-going winds,
<i>adhogamā vātā</i>	down-going winds,
<i>kucchisayā vātā</i>	winds in the belly [abdominal breathing],
<i>koṭṭhasayā vātā</i>	winds in the chest [thoracic breathing], ²⁰
<i>aṅgam-aṅgānusārino vātā</i>	winds that course through the limbs, ²¹
<i>assāso passāso</i>	in-breath and out-breath,

or whatever else that is wind, wind-like and clung to internally and individually [belonging to oneself]—this, Rāhula, is called internal wind element.

Now both the internal wind element and the external wind element are simply wind element. And that should be seen as it really is with right wisdom thus:

‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

Having seen it thus as it really is with right wisdom, one is revulsed by the wind element, by wisdom the mind becomes detached [lust-free]. (M 62,11/1:422 f), SD 3.11

2.1.2 Buddhist definitions

2.1.2.1 The term *ānāpāna* (with variant readings: *ānāpāṇa*, *āṇāpāna*, *āṇāpāṇa*) means “inhaled and exhaled breath, inhalation and exhalation, inspiration and expiration, respiration, breathing” (CPD). The dvandva *ānāpāna* is resolved as *āna* + *apāna*.²² The verbs are *assasati* and *passasati*, respectively, and the Sutta instructs the meditator to first direct himself to *assasati* (“he breathes in”), and then to *passasati* (“he breathes out”). However, there are divergent opinions here.²³

2.1.2.2 The Visuddhi,magga says that the Vinaya Commentary takes *assāsa* (ie *āna*, Skt *prāṇa*) as the out-breath, and *passāsa* (or *apāna*), the in-breath.²⁴ The Sutta Commentaries (like the Upaniṣad tradition) [2.1.1], however, take them as the reverse. Buddhaghosa (the Vism author) himself notes that when a baby leaves its mother’s womb, the air is first expelled from within and then air enters with a fine dust, strikes the palate and is extinguished (with the baby’s sneezing) (Vism 7.164/271 f).

¹⁹ According to **Visuddhi,magga**, “winds” are responsible for the various internal motions of the body, viz, “up-going winds” (*uddhaṅgamā vātā*) for vomiting and belching, “down-going winds” (*adho,gamā vātā*) for the expelling of dung and urine (Vism 350). “Wind” here clearly refers to elemental “motion,” not to the object moved.

²⁰ *Koṭṭha* means “the stomach or abdomen” (PED); and, *kucchi* is “belly, womb.” As such, here I take *koṭṭhasayā* to be cognate with or related to Skt *koṣṭhya* (mfn), meaning “proceeding from the chest, emitted (as a sound) from the centre of the lungs” (SED), which makes clear sense here.

²¹ “Winds that course through the limbs,” *aṅgam-aṅgānusārino vātā*. In ref to this, **Peter Harvey** says, “Note that the ‘motion/air’ element might be related to the modern concept of electrical discharges of the nerves ... In that case, the mind would move the body by effecting the electrical modulation of nerve discharges.” (1993:7 digital ed). In contemporary terms, these “winds” clearly refer to the oxyhaemoglobin, ie, the oxygen in the blood, coursing through the body. Clearly, this is the *samāna* as def in Maitrī Upaniṣad, where it is said to be the wind that conducts into *apāna* (the downward passing wind) the coarse element of food and distributes in each limb the most subtle element of food (MU 2.6).

²² Cf Skt *prāṇāpāna*, ie *prāṇa* + *apāna* (ts), where *prāṇa* is the breath of life, the air inhaled, while *apāna* is the vital air (one of the 5 airs) [2.1.1.3] that goes down through the body and out through the anus (it also refers to the anus itself) (SED).

²³ For a detailed study on *āna* + *apāna*, see Analayo 2005 at M 1:425n = 2011:350 n53.

²⁴ *Assāso’ti bahi nikkhamana,vāto. Passāso ti anto pavisana,vāto. Suttant’atṭhakathāsu pana uppaṭipāṭiyā āgataṃ, “Assāsa means out-going wind; passāsa means in-coming wind. But in the Sutta Commentaries, it is the reverse”* (VA 2:408).

This divergence is also found in **the Mahāyāna**. The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Tibetan texts generally seem to take *āśvāsa* or *ucchvāsa* (Tib *dbugs brñubs*) as “in-breath,” and *praśvāsa* (Tib *dbugs phyuñ*) as “out-breath.”²⁵ The Ekōttar’āgama, however, refers to the former as the out-breath (出息 *chū xī*) and the latter as the in-breath (入息 *rù xī*) (EĀ17.1/T2.582a15).

2.1.2.3 T W Rhys Davids (PED: 92 under *ā + pa*)²⁶ says that “both terms [*assasati* and *passasati*] are semantically alike; but in exegesis however they have been differentiated in a way which looks like a distortion of the original meaning, viz ***assasati* is taken as ‘breathing out,’ *passasati* as ‘breathing in.’**” Among the modern dictionaries, Childers (1875, DPL 61), Trenckner et al (1924, CPD 523), and Cone (2001, DP 268) take *assasati* as “he breathes in.” The Sanskrit dictionaries,²⁷ however, take *assasati* (Skt ***āśvasati*, *āśvasiti***) as “he breathes out,” and *passasati* (Skt ***praśvasiti***) as “he breathes in.”

2.1.2.4 Edgerton, in his entries on *āśvāsa-praśvāsa*, remarks that “whatever may have been the meaning of the two terms, it seems clear that the [compound] (like *ānāpāna*) was commonly used in the sense of breath, collectively and as a whole,”²⁸ which **Analayo** further notes, is

a reasonable suggestion and certainly sufficient from a practical perspective, since whether the breath goes first in or out, the task of mindfulness remains the same. (2005:3 at M 1:425n)

The phrase, *ānāpāna*, then, can mean either “in-and-out breath” or “out-and-in breath,” or we can render it as simply “the breath.”²⁹ [2.1.1.3]

2.1.3 Pragmatic accuracy

In **the Ānāpāna,sati Sutta** (M 118), I have, out of necessity and convenience, translated the future-tense *assasissāmi* as the present “I breathe in,” and *passasissāmi* as “I breathe out.” It is a common Pali feature to apply the future tense to highlight spiritual states and key practices leading to such states.³⁰

Technical exactitude is helpful where we can be certain of it, without being caught up in a scholar’s hair-splitting, attending more to the word than to the spirit of the teaching. We may aim for what is called pragmatic accuracy or practical clarity so that we are able to proceed with our Dharma practice. Perhaps, with greater *mental clarity* and *perspicacity*, we may be able to re-examine what appears to be inexact or wrong with greater insight and vision.

2.2 BREATH MEDITATION, SATIPATTHANA AND AWAKENING-FACTORS

2.2.1 In **the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas**,³¹ breath meditation (*ānāpāna,sati*) is presented as an aspect of the 1st satipatthana (*kāye kāyānupassī*). The breath meditation is abruptly broken off, as it were, at the end of the 1st tetrad. In fact, here, the breath meditation is used as a launching pad in meditation of the body, and for the rest of the satipatthanas. The key practice of satipatthana (as has been discussed elsewhere), is the reflection of impermanence.³²

²⁵ For refs, see Edgerton, BHSD:110 under *āśvāsa-praśvāsa*.

²⁶ Online ed: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/pali/>

²⁷ Böthlingk (*Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, 1855-75, 4:173), Mylius (*Wörterbuch Sanskrit-Deutsch*, 1992:250) and Monier-Williams (1899: 696): http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/indologie/tamil/mwd_search.html.

²⁸ BHSD 1953:110 under *āśvāsa-praśvāsa*.

²⁹ See SD 7.13 (2.1): Ānāpāna.

³⁰ See eg *bhavissati*, (**Catukka**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36), SD 36.13 (6); *anussarissati*, **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,1.13.2 passim), SD 49.8a; *janissati*, **Acchariya,abbhuta S** (M 123,2.2), SD 52.2.

³¹ **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22/2:290-325), SD 13.2; **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10/1:55-63), SD 13.3. See Gethin 2001:56 f, 282 f.

³² See **An Introduction to the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas**, SD 12.1 (3.8).

However, in the **Ānāpāna Saṃyutta**,³³ breath meditation is generally presented as in the Ānāpānasati Sutta, which gives emphasis on all 4 satipatthanas and the 7 awakening-factors (*bojjhaṅga*).³⁴ In fact, the Ānāpāna,sati Sutta begins as a vehicle for the 1st satipatthana and ends up as a vehicle for all four:

Thus by starting with the watching of the breath as “body” the *bhikkhu* naturally progresses to the watching of feeling, mind and *dhammas* through the medium of the breath. Finally this brings to fulfillment not only the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, but also the seven factors of awakening, and knowledge and freedom (*vijjā-vimutti*). (Gethin 2001:57; cf 58 f)

2.2.2 In other words, and it is most important to note this, like satipatthana practice, the breath meditation is complete in itself, or in the words of **Gethin**:

... in the Ānāpānasati-sutta watching the breathing is not a preliminary of the *satipaṭṭhānas*, it actually is the *satipaṭṭhānas*. One must ask why *ānāpāna-sati* is singled out for treatment in this way. One reason might be because it is taken as the normative (not “original” or “only”) basis on which to abandon the five *nīvaraṇas* [2.3.3.7], establish the *satipaṭṭhānas* and develop the *bojjhaṅgas*. In many ways, then, the Ānāpānasati-sutta is simply an expanded and full illustration of just how the Buddhist path consists in the abandoning of the *nīvaraṇas*, establishing the *satipaṭṭhānas*, and developing the *bojjhaṅgas* [awakening-factors]. (Gethin 2001:59; emphases added)

2.3 PARIMUKHA

2.3.1 Abhidhamma interpretation

Unlike in Hatha Yoga, in breath meditation, the breath is *not* deliberately regulated, but rather a sustained effort is made to fix our awareness on the breath as it moves in and out in its natural rhythm. Those who follow the Abhidhamma and Commentarial traditions, teach that mindfulness should be focused at the nostril or the upper lip, wherever the contact of the breath is felt most distinctly. This tradition is mainly based on **the Paṭisambhidā,magga** and **Vibhaṅga** interpretation of *parimukhaṃ* as being “at the tip of the nose or at the centre of the upper lip.”³⁵

Parimukha, however, literally means “around (*pari*) the entrance (*mukha*),” and is here always used idiomatically and as an adverb, simply meaning “in front, before (us).”

This “contact-point” interpretation is upheld by U Thittila,³⁶ Maurice Walshe,³⁷ Soma Thera,³⁸ and Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi.³⁹ In this connection, the Tiantai⁴⁰ master, **Zhiyi** 智顓 (538-597), in his *Tóngméng zhǐguān* 童蒙止觀 (*Śamatha and Vipāśyanā for Beginners*), gives this advice for dealing with 2 kinds of distractions:

What is a **sinking mind**? If during the meditation the mind is dull, confused or unrecordable, while the head drops, this shows a sinking mind. In such a case, it should be fixed on the tip of the nose to nail it there and to prevent it from wandering elsewhere. This is the way to regulate a sinking mind.

³³ S 54/5:311-341.

³⁴ *Bojjhaṅga*, see §§30-40.

³⁵ Pm 1:171,19; Vbh 537/252,13. For further discussion, see above Intro (2), & **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22; M 10), SD 13 (3.9.4).

³⁶ Vbh:T 319, 328.

³⁷ D:W 1995:335.

³⁸ 1941:42 f digital ed.

³⁹ M:ÑB 2001:527.

⁴⁰ Tiāntái 天臺.

What is a **floating mind**? If during the meditation, it drifts about and is uneasy, while thoughts follow externals, this shows a floating mind. In such a case, it should be pushed down and fixed on the navel to prevent thoughts from rising; thus the mind will be stabilized and will be easily quieted.

Therefore, the absence of the sinking or floating state shows a regulated mind.

(Zhiyi, *Tóngmén Zhǐguān* 童蒙止觀 in Lu K'uan Yü, 1964:126;⁴¹ emphases added)⁴²

2.3.2 Modern interpretations

2.3.2.1 The most modern innovation here is that of “watching the rise and fall of the abdomen” introduced by Mingun Jetavana Sayadaw of Myanmar,⁴³ made famous by his pupil, **Mahasi Sayadaw** in the mid-20th century.⁴⁴ To avoid contradicting the Sutta and Commentaries, the Mahasi tradition has always taken care to present their main meditation practice as a contemplation of the wind element (*vāyo*)—that is, one of 4 primary elements used in meditation—not as a form of breath meditation.⁴⁵ But as we have already noted [2.3.1], this method, at least with focus on its location around the navel, has been taught some 1500 years ago by Zhiyi in China.

2.3.2.2 Around the same time as Mahasi Sayadaw, although less well-known, we have **Lee Dhammadharo's** method where “the resting spots of the breath” on which we centre our attention, given as “the tip of the nose, the middle of the head, the palate, the base of the throat, the breastbone (the tip of the sternum) and the navel (or a point just above it).”⁴⁶

2.3.2.3 Mahā Boowa,⁴⁷ too, teaches a very similar method.⁴⁸ However, **Nyanadhammo** (of the Cittaviveka Forest Order) notes that:

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?” (Nyanadhammo, “The Spiritual Faculties,” 1999:3)

⁴¹ Also called *Xiūxí zhǐguān zuòchán fǎyào* 修習止觀坐禪法要, *Xiǎozhǐguān* 小止觀, T1915 = T46.462-474. See Lu K'uan Yü 1969:126 & Zhiyi 1997. For Chin text: <http://www.ucchusma.idv.tw/chanzong/small.htm>.

⁴² For more details, see **Uddhacca,kukkucca**, SD 32.7 (2.2.4).

⁴³ On Mingun Sayadaw, see SD 60.1b (2.4.3.2); Mahasi Sayadaw, (2.4.5).

⁴⁴ “[T]he mind should be attentively riveted on the abdomen. It will then be noticed that the abdomen is rising and falling and that these movements take place in continual succession.” Mahāsi Sayādaw, *The Purpose of Practising Kammatthāna Meditation*, Rangoon: Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization, 1980:27 f. For criticisms of the Mahasi method, see G D Bond 1988: & L S Cousins 1996:42.

⁴⁵ Despite this, the Mahasi tradition has been severely criticized for contemplating the movement of the breath at the abdomen (Kassapa, “Meditation—right and wrong,” *Maha Bodhi*, Calcutta, 74,11-2 1966:242-245, esp 242). However, it is important to distinguish here between academic criticism (by non-meditators) and practical efficacy since it is well-known that meditation masters and methods never rely on merely one practice but are, as a rule, applied with a host of other helping practices and techniques. The question is not which method is right or wrong, but whether we have tried it or not, that is, whether it promotes mindfulness (“meditates”) in us or not, and our intentions behind the criticisms.

⁴⁶ Lee Dhammadharo, *Keeping the Breath in Mind & Lessons in Samādhi*, tr Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, 1983: 26; *Frames of Reference*, tr Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, 1987:16. See SD 60.1b (4.7.3).

⁴⁷ Wat Pah Bahn Taad, Udorn Thani province, Thailand. See SD 60.1b (4.7.9)/

⁴⁸ Mahā Boowa, *Wisdom Develops Samādhi*, Bangkok: Pow Bhavana Foundation, 1983:14-16.

2.3.2.4 Ajahn Chah similarly teaches that one should not locate the breath anywhere on the body, but simply note whether one can notice the breath or not.⁴⁹ This instruction is also found in the Chinese version of the **Mahā Rāhu’ovāda** (M 62) which instructs the meditator to be aware if the breath is present or if it is not present:

at the time when there is breath, he is aware it is there; at a time when there is no breath, he is aware it is not there. 有時有息亦復知有，又時無息亦復知無 (EĀ 17.1 = T2.582a19)⁵⁰

2.3.3 The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

2.3.3.1 Anālayo,⁵¹ in his comprehensive and conciliatory survey of *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization* (2003),⁵² gives insightful comments on the term **parimukha**, which should be carefully studied.⁵³ A few salient points should be noted here. In breath meditation, *parimukha*, usually translated as “in front” or “before” (oneself), may be taken literally as “around the mouth,” referring to the nostril or upper area.

However, such an interpretation is not applicable when the term is used, for example, in relation to overcoming the 5 mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇā*) [2.3.3.7] or in cultivating the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*).⁵⁴

Other occurrences of the expression “establishing mindfulness in front” [*parimukha*] occur in the context of forming the determination not to change one’s posture until realization is gained (as at M 1:219), in relation to developing a mind set on the welfare of both oneself and others (at M 2:139), when directing the mind to the reflective understanding that the defilements have been eradicated from one’s mind (at A 1:184), or as a part of the description of a monk well versed in meditation (at A 3:320). It may also be worthwhile to point out that the qualification “in front” appears to be more than simply part of a stereotype formula, since in several passages in the *Udāna* it is missing from otherwise identical description of meditators sitting down cross-legged. (U 21, 42, 43, 46, 60, 71, 77) (Anālayo 2003:128 n47; references normalized)

2.3.3.2 As such, only in the context of breath meditation, *parimukha* may be interpreted literally as in the nostril area or upper lip.⁵⁵ However, such a literal interpretation would not make sense elsewhere (in overcoming the mental hindrances or cultivation of the divine abodes) where no watching of the breath is involved.

Therefore, although to understand “in front” to indicate the nostril area makes sense in relation to mindfulness of breathing, alternative ways of practice, based on a more figurative understanding of the term, cannot be categorically excluded. In fact, several modern teachers have developed successful approaches to mindfulness of breathing independent of the nostril area. Some, for example, advise their pupils to experience the breath in the chest area, others suggest contemplating the air

⁴⁹ Ajahn Chah: https://www.ajahnchah.org/book/On_Meditation1.php; https://www.ajahnchah.org/book/On_Meditation1.php, rains retreat July 1978. Pasanno, *Settling the Mind*, 2015: <https://www.abhayagiri.org/reflections/85-settling-the-mind>. Cf Brahnavamso 1999:19.

⁵⁰ See **Mahā Rāhu’ovāda S** (M 26), SD 3.11 (2).

⁵¹ Dharma scholar and German sāmaṇera ordained in Sri Lanka.

⁵² Anālayo also quotes sources outside the Pāli tradition in a useful comparative manner, and this prob marks the beginning of an auspicious development within contemporary Buddhist studies by practising Buddhists. Sujāto of the Lokanta Forest Monastery at Bundanoon, New South Wales, Australia, is enthusiastic about such an approach, too.

⁵³ Anālayo 2003:128 f; 2011:350 f.

⁵⁴ The 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*) are those of lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), gladness (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) (A 1:184): see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5.

⁵⁵ As at Pm 3.170/2:171; Vim 8.103 (Vim:Ñ 1:420) [6.2.3]; Vism 8.161/271.

element at the abdomen, while still others recommend directing awareness to the act of breathing itself, without focusing on any specific location. (Anālayo 2003:129)

2.3.3.3 The term *parimukha* “around the mouth,” is often mentioned in the description of beginning meditation, especially satipatthana. It is commonly found in the phrase *parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhāpeti*, “one establishes the mindfulness *parimukha*” [§17.1]. However, *mukha* also has the sense of “front,” that is, any part of the face. From this, most translators have rendered it as simply “in front,” in the sense attending to it, and not letting it be forgotten and left “behind us,” so to speak.

This meaning has probably led **the Vibhaṅga** (a canonical Abhidhamma work) to explain it as “at the tip of the nose or at the centre of the upper lip” (Vbh §537/252). From this, we get the well-known modern notion of watching the breath “at the nose-tip” and so on. There is, however, no such description in the suttas.

The translation of *parimukha* as “in front (of us)” is supported by its Sanskrits cognate, *pratimukha*,⁵⁶ where the prefix *prati-*, says Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary (SED), has a range of senses that include: “towards; near; against; again; like (the face)” (SED 661: *prati*). Under *prati-mukha* (SED 662), SED gives “the reflected image of the face; being near, present.”

This understanding, refined by our experience of early Buddhist meditation, clearly suggests the sense of keeping our mindfulness “before us.” This is a broader and more practical sense than merely directing our attention to a particular spot (all the time), but when the breath becomes subtle, that sensation is lost, so is our attention. However, with mindfulness “before us,” it settles down and becomes more focused.

This practical broader sense is further supported by its context, that is, it appears in conjunction with the word *upaṭṭhāna*, meaning “establishing; presence.” Hence, we should “establish our mindfulness,” rather than being focused on any bodily point. Moreover, forest monks from Ajahn Chah’s monastery in northeast Thailand who practise breath meditation, as a rule, would advise us to determine, “Am I breathing in at this time, or am I breathing out at this time?”⁵⁷

The last word on this, then, should be to ensure that, in starting with breath meditation, we should determine that we are focused on the “knowing that we are breathing (or not).” This is a good summary of the instructions given in the 1st tetrad of **the Ānāpāna,sati Sutta** [§18], which are fully explained in the notes [4.4.1].

2.3.4 Which method is right?

2.3.4.1 So who is right: do we attend to some bodily contact-point, or do we simply attend to the knowledge that there is the breath? In meditation, it does not help to argue such points, which is the domain of the academic. Like an Artist, the meditator simply practises the **art of minding**. In real practice (with proper guidance in keeping with the suttas and our own experience), we will know what works for us and what does not. Our experience and wisdom are the two sides of the “meditator’s stone” rubbing and smoothing one another out.

2.3.4.2 These are all methods and strategies to prevent our mind from being overwhelmed by sense-data and to free it from mental distractions and hindrances. We should not *cling* to the mere “rightness” of a method or strategy, but rather be pragmatic in turning to the most effective approach that works by reflecting on the conditioned nature of all meditation methods. Only when we readily and **unconditionally** let go of even the present state can we arrive at the next one until there is no more “next.” This is called progress.

⁵⁶ Eg Skt **Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra** 27.16; Skt **Catuṣpariṣat Sūtra** 6.1; Skt **Śrāmaṇyaphala Sūtra** 63. BHS, however, has neither *pratimukha* nor *parimukha*.

⁵⁷ Nyanadhammo, “The Spiritual Faculties,” 1999:3. See Brahmavamso 2002:58; Sujato 2004:109. Soṇa, however, teaches the tradition of taking *parimukhaṃ* as air contact as “either at the nose or lip” (2000:6).

2.4 THE BREATH SIGN

In his instructive article, “The mystery of the breath nimitta” (2000), **Soṇa Bhikkhu**⁵⁸ refers (in his view) to three important texts: the Paṭisambhidā,magga, the Vimutti,magga and the Visuddhi,magga. **The Paṭisambhidā,magga** is a book in the Khuddaka Nikāya; **the Vimutti,magga** is an ancient treatise by Upatissa (the original Pali is lost; only the Chinese translation is extant); and **the Visuddhi,magga** is by Buddhaghosa. All three texts, Soṇa Bhikkhu points out, agree in regarding the breath in meditation should be watched “either at the nose or lip”⁵⁹ (2000:7).

The reason for this interpretation is the fact that *mukha* literally means “entrance, mouth.” As such, if we breathe through the nose, we should watch the breath contact at *the nose*. If we breathe through the mouth, we should watch it at *the lip*, which is especially helpful when we have a cold: we could then breathe through the mouth and watch the breath contact at the lip.⁶⁰ Soṇa Bhikkhu concludes his instructions with this important remark on breath meditation:

Some modern teachers have suggested that it doesn’t matter where the breath contact is located, probably in response to the phrase which occurs later on in the sutta: “Experiencing the whole body, he breathes in...,” etc. And since the whole body of the breath is not explicitly stated, they feel there is room for interpretation. But the breath as a “whole body” is explicitly mentioned in the Ānāpānāsati Sutta, though not in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, [but] the phrase means the same: “I say, bhikshus, that of bodies this is one, that is to say breathing-in and breathing-out” ([M 3:83 = M:H 3:125]; the footnote states that “... breathing is a body because it is included in the field of touch”).

As well there is an explicit location of “the entrance” in the sutta, which the three commentaries agree on, whatever the later confusion may have been. It also overlooks the simile which immediately follows the explicit location, ie, “**As a turner or his apprentice, while making a long turn, knows that he is making a long turn, or in making a short turn, knows that he is making a short turn**, so too a monk, in breathing in a long breath, knows that he breathes in a long breath, in breathing a short breath, knows that he breathes in a short breath ... and so trains himself, thinking: ‘I will breathe out, calming the whole body formation.’” [D 22,2.4/2:291]

The Buddha includes this apparently redundant simile for one reason. Similes, like pictures, are worth a thousand words and usually survive the butcheries of translation. This is the Buddha's fail-safe mechanism to show that as a lathe worker fixes his attention one-pointedly with his chisel on a single spot while the wooden spindle is in ceaseless motion, the meditator does likewise at the “entrance spot” while the breath continuously flows past. Basically, all the commentaries have managed to preserve this notion in the “simile of the saw,” but unfortunately the mouth as location is overlooked by the time of the Visuddhimagga.

All of this does not mean that there is only one way to attain serenity using the breath. If someone has developed a technique that issues in jhana and which does not follow the explicit instructions that is fine too. Whatever works. (Soṇa Bhikkhu, 2000:7; slightly edited)

3 “Mental noting” and “feeling”

3.1 PAJĀNĀTI AND SIKKHATI

3.1.1 Of the 16 steps or aspects of the breath meditation, only **aspects 1-2** (the first 2 steps of the 1st tetrad)

⁵⁸ Thai forest monastic tradition: Birkenhead Forest Monastery, British Columbia, Canada.

⁵⁹ Pm 3.170/2:171; Vim 8.103 (Vim:Ñ 1:420) [6.2.3]; Vism 8.161/271.

⁶⁰ Or, in the “Burmese” method, one could watch the rise and fall of the belly at a point 2 fingers’ breadth above the navel. On Zhiyi’s method, see (2a) above.

are noted by *pajānāti* (he understands, or knows); the rest (3-16) have the verb *sikkhati* (he trains), “I will breathe in ... out,” (*assasissāmi ... passasissāmi*) in the future tense (signifying mindful effort).

This clearly shows that steps 1+2 are an “active” but non-judgmental mental noting or “labelling,” while the rest are deliberate but “passive” mindful efforts in a meditative sense. This explanation is especially important for the beginners or in the early stages of our practice. This is to keep our breath meditation natural and harmonious in both body and mind.

3.1.2 When we start with breath meditation (or any proper meditation), our mind is likely to be easily distracted by sense-stimuli (such as a sound or a feeling) or thoughts. We should “know” (*pajānāti*) this, acknowledge it, not get caught up with it. This is what **mental noting or labelling** means. In a sense, we are “directing” our attention back to the breath (the meditation-object).

We must keep on doing this, as it were, until our attention *naturally* stays with the breath. Then, no more “directing” is needed. Now, we are making what may be said to be a “passive” effort of keeping the “**undirected**” attention on the breath comfortably and fully. Once we can do this, we are ready to move naturally to the next step.⁶¹

3.1.3 How do we “train” (*sikkhati*) ourself in breath meditation? Firstly, we move to this “training” stage, as we have noted [3.1.2], only *after* we have “resolved” aspects 1 and 2 (“watching” the breath in terms of length and movement). Note that the verb *sikkhati* comes from √SAK (Skt *śak*), “to be able” (eg *sakkoti*). In fact, technically, *sikkhati* is the desiderative (expressive desire or wish, that is, having a goal) of √SAK, expressing the idea of “wanting to be able to” fully feel the full breath.

Hence, “to train” ourself regarding the breath means that we should ever fully “feel” (*paṭisaṃvedeti*),⁶² that is, directly experience, the breath before us. Then, we *allow or let* it transform itself from “a certain body amongst bodies” [§24.3] to “a certain feeling amongst feelings” [§25.3]. Note the vital phrase—“**full attention** to the in-and-out-breathing” preceding and defining that “feeling” phrase [§25.3]. Only with “full attention,” we *free* the breath from the body to be a “free” feeling (experience).⁶³

The breath is referred to as “a certain body” (*kāy’aññatara*) in the 1st tetrad [§24.3]—because it is still a bodily or physical event. Then, in the 2nd tetrad [§25.3], it is called “a certain feeling” (*vedanā’ññatara*)—it is no more a physical event, but a mental one to be “felt” (directly experienced) by us.⁶⁴

3.2 SUBVERBALIZING AND SILENCE

3.2.1 Mental states

3.2.1.1 As in *sati-paṭṭhāna* practice, so it is in the breath meditation: **the contemplating of the mind** (*cittānupassanā*), the 3rd tetrad [§26], deals directly with the abandoning of the mental hindrances. In the **Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), the section on “mind contemplation,” speaks of our understanding whether our mind is *lustful, hating, deluded, narrowed (constricted), distracted, small (unexalted), unsurpassable, unconcentrated, unfreed*, and their opposite.⁶⁵

⁶¹ On “directed meditation” and “undirected meditation,” see **Bhikkhuṇī Vāsaka S** (S 47.10 + SD 24.2 (1)).

⁶² See (4.4.2.3) n on *paṭisaṃvedī*.

⁶³ It helps here not to delve too much into these explanations when meditating. Just take these instructions as signposts, and keep moving on naturally along the meditation path.

⁶⁴ Further on *paṭisaṃvedeti*, see SD 17.3 (1.2.2).

⁶⁵ M 10,34 (SD 13.3).

Further, the terms *great mind*, *surpassable mind*, *concentrated mind* and *freed mind* all refer to dhyana. All this clearly suggests that we are basically dealing with the overcoming of the hindrances and with engaging in concentration (*samādhi*) leading to dhyana.⁶⁶

3.2.1.2 The understanding attending the contemplation of mind is similarly shared with the preceding **contemplation of feelings** (*vedanā'nupassana*), the 2nd tetrad [§25] in **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** [3.2.1.1]. There, it is said, for example, "Feeling a pleasant feeling, he understands, 'I feel a pleasant feeling.'" In the contemplation of mind, we have similarly: "(one) understands a lustful mind as 'lustful mind'."⁶⁷

The idea here is to acknowledge the mental state as it is. A beginner is likely to be drawn into the pleasantness or intrigue of such states. Intuitive teachers notice that for such meditators, it helps to subverbalize (mentally note) such states so that we are reminded of their intrusion and danger. Once we are used to identifying such states for what they are, we will be able to isolate and dispel them even silently, or with just an inner smile.

3.2.2 Reflexive awareness

3.2.2.1 We see this same reflexive "quote" in the breath meditation: "**Breathing in long, he understands 'I breathe in long'**" [§18(1)]. The 1st-person remarks "denoted by '*ti* or *iti*' here are simply meditation instruction of which we remind ourself. They may at the start be understood as a strategy to keep the mind to the breath by way of subverbalizing [2.3.1.4] or mental noting. However, this instruction should not remain on a literal level. Once the mind is clear, there is clearly no need for any more noting.

3.2.2.2 This same 1st-person quote syntax is found in stock passages on **the formless attainments**. In plain English such an interesting Pali quote syntax would literally sound: "'Space is infinite,' he attains and dwells in **the base of infinite space**." We translate the whole passage as: "By completely transcending the base of infinite space, aware that 'Consciousness is infinite,' he attains and dwells in **the base of infinite consciousness**." (S 40.6,4), SD 24.16.

Clearly here, in a formless attainment, the meditator has gone well beyond thinking or noting. In such a context, this repetitive quote is merely a linguistic device suggesting a silent reflexive awareness. We not only *know* the state, but we are *aware* that we know the state or the feeling.⁶⁸

Once again, we are reminded not to be overly concerned with right terminology and strategies until we have actually tried them out to see whether they work or not, and respond accordingly. Meditation is not a technical field of science, but rather the reflexive art of learning, appreciating wholesome mental states and how they free our mind. We can only learn best from experience.

⁶⁶ Comy confirms this (MA 1:279 f).

⁶⁷ M 10,32+32 (SD 13.3).

⁶⁸ Cf Sujato 2004:149 f.

4 Stages of practice in the Ānâpâna,sati Sutta: A recap

The 16 steps of *ānâpâna,sati as satipaṭṭhāna*

the 12 steps for getting into dhyana (mental absorption)—*samatha*

1. contemplation of the body [§24]

- step 1—knowing a long breath
- step 2—knowing a short breath
- step 3—experiencing the whole breath (or whole “body”)
- step 4—calming the breath (bodily formations)

2. contemplation of feelings: Entry into dhyana [§25]

- step 5—experiencing zest [joy]
- step 6—experiencing happiness
- step 7—experiencing mental formation (zest and happiness)
- step 8—calming both mental formations

3. contemplation of the mind [§26]

- step 9—experiencing the mind
- step 10—gladdening the mind (shining the meditation sign, *nimitta*)
- step 11—concentrating the mind (sustaining the sign)
- step 12—freeing the mind

the 4 steps to take after emerging from dhyana—*vipassanā*

4. contemplation of dharmas [§27]

- step 13—contemplating impermanence (*anicca*)
- step 14—contemplating fading away (of lust) (*virāga*)
- step 15—contemplating cessation (of suffering) (*nirodha*)
- step 16—contemplating letting go (of defilements) (*paṭinissagga*)

Table 4. The 16 steps of breath meditation [2.3]

4.0 The teaching section of the Ānâpâna,sati Sutta is very simple but well structured, beginning with **the Preamble** [§§15-16], which serves as a syllabus of the whole practice from the very beginning to spiritual liberation itself. The teaching is laid out in **4 stages**:

I. The basic breath meditation	§§15-23
II. The breath meditation as satipaṭṭhana	§§24-28
III. Applying thr 4 satipaṭṭhana to the 7 awakening factors	§§29-41
IV. The attainment of true knowledge and liberation	§§42-44

4.1 Part I opens with the practical instructions for the beginner, where the Buddha mentions the ideal places for meditation, the best posture and the essence of the breath meditation [§17]. Then follow the 16 aspects [4.3] of the breath meditation for the beginner [§§18-22], that is, the mundane practice of the worldly practitioner. The 4 dhyanas mentioned at this early stage are **the mundane dhyanas** (*lokiya jhāna*), that is, they are not very strong but nevertheless help us with the energy to further fine-tune our keeping of the moral precepts, and in due course lead us to the satipaṭṭhana level of practice.

It should be noted here that even if we do *not* attain dhyana at this point, our practice is still beneficial by way of **the perception of impermanence**.⁶⁹ If we constantly practise in this way, we are assured of attaining streamwinning in this life itself.

4.2 Part II deals with the breath meditation in terms of perfecting **the 4 satipatthanas** [§23], that is, when one has some experience of dhyana, one is then truly ready for the working on the focuses of mindfulness (*sati'-patthāna*) [§§24-27]. At this point, the Ānāpāna, sati Sutta states that dhyana forms the basis of the satipatthana (at least here). For at the end of the passage on “contemplating the body” (*kāyānupassanā*) in this section, it is stated that it is done by “removing covetousness and displeasure for the world” [§24.2], that is, by overcoming the mental hindrances; hence, attaining dhyana.

At this stage, “the in-and-out-breathing is **a certain body amongst the bodies**,” meaning that the body (manifested as the breath)⁷⁰ is seen as it really is in terms of the 4 elements, as “conscious matter”⁷¹ [§24]. Similarly, the Buddha declares that “full attention to the in-and-out-breathing is **a certain feeling amongst the feelings**,” meaning that our undivided attention to the true nature of feeling, too, can bring us to dhyana⁷² [§25]. In due course, too, we will truly know the nature of the mind [§26], and then we “**closely look on with equanimity**,” alluding to the 4th dhyana [§27]; that is, emerging from the 4th dhyana, we truly experience the mind directly as it really is.

4.3 Having mastered the dhyanas, the meditator is ready to go on to **Part III** of the breath meditation, to perfect **the 7 awakening-factors** [§§29-41]. Each of the 4 satipatthanas is now applied in terms of the 7 awakening-factors. Then, in **Part IV**, the awakening-factors, cultivated by way of **the viveka, nissita formula**—“that is dependent on *solitude*, dependent on *fading away* (of lust), dependent on *cessation* (of suffering), ripening in *letting go* (of defilements)”—bring about the spiritual liberation [§§41-43].

4.4 THE PROGRESS OF BREATH MEDITATION: THE 4 TETRADS AND 16 ASPECTS [TABLE 4]

4.4.1 The 1st tetrad: Contemplating the body (How the breath is refined) [§18]

Summary of the 1 st tetrad:	(1) long breaths;	[4.4.1.1]
	(2) short breaths;	[4.4.1.2]
	(3) whole body;	[4.4.1.3 f]
	(4) calming bodily formations.	[4.4.1.5]

4.4.1.1. (1) “Breathing in long [deep], he understands, ‘I breathe in long [Long in-breath]’ (dīgham vā assasanto, dīgham assasāmīti pajānāti); “or, breathing out long [deep], he understands, ‘I breathe out long [Long out-breath]’ (dīgham vā passasanto, dīgham passasāmīti pajānāti). [§18(1)]

Experientially, the breath meditation starts as a body-based exercise by watching the physical breath.⁷³ Upon closer scrutiny of our breath, we will notice that it comprises of a flow of 3 sequential parts: *a beginning, a middle and an ending*. Technically, this awareness is simply that of **the wind element (vāyo dhātu)**, of external wind being drawn into our being, processed by our body and then breathed out; the whole process goes in an endless cycle as long as life lasts. This perception of the whole process is what we call the “**breath**.”

⁶⁹ See any of the 10 suttas of **Okkanta Saṃyutta** (S 25): eg (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1/3:225), SD 16.7.

⁷⁰ See eg **Dhātu, vibhaṅga S** (M 140, 17/3:241), SD 4.17 & **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (2.1.6)..

⁷¹ See **Rūpa**, SD 17.2a (9).

⁷² See eg **Daṭṭhabba S** (S 36.5/4:207), SD 17.3(5).

⁷³ On “body-based” meditation (*kāyānupassanā*), see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,4 etc), SD 13.3; SD 30.3 (2.6.2.1).

Our body—specifically, the nerve-endings inside our nose sense the physical touch of moving air: this is an activity of body-consciousness, which is, then, at once relayed to mind-consciousness [Table 4.4.3.3]. The mind then cognizes this activity as a *bodily* activity; it perceives (re-cognizes) it as “breath,” knowing it as an *in-breath* or an *out-breath*, whether it is a *long* breath or a *short* one. [§18(1-2)]

4.4.1.2. (2) “Breathing *in short*, he understands, ‘I breathe *in short* [Short in-breath]” (*rassam vā assasanto, rassam assasāmīti pajānāti*); “or, breathing *out short*, he understands, ‘I breathe *out short* [Short outbreath]” (*rassam vā passasanto, rassam passasāmīti pajānāti*). [§18(2)]

When we understand that meditation is an exercise in **mental renunciation**, it greatly helps in our breath meditation.⁷⁴ In an important sense, meditation is essentially “*letting come, letting go*,” fully experiencing the truth and beauty of the present moment of impermanence. Hence, the more relaxed and “unconditional” we are, accepting this process as it is, the quicker and greater our progress in meditation.

When we *unconditionally* accept the breath with a calm mind, the **body**, too, becomes more relaxed, so that it needs less oxygen for itself: the breath slows down and becomes shorter and subtler all by itself. The two steps—*in* and *out*—naturally follow one another. The purpose of these 2 pairs of steps (long in-breath, long out-breath; short in-breath, short out-breath) is to fully experience the breath instead of being distracted by the many facets of sense-experience. We are focused on just one thing: the breath in progress, to free our mind from the body.⁷⁵

Technically, the recognition of the in-breath (long or short) and the out-breath (long or short) occurs through “initial application (*vitakka*), so called because it initiates a thought, that is, it directs our attention to the breath. Then “sustained application” (*vicāra*) keeps up the perception of the breath. All this occurs on what may be called a “subverbal” level; hence, the sutta sentences (in the 1st person), such as, “I breathe in long ...” etc [§18(1-2)], is a kind of **subverbalization**, halfway between speech and feeling.⁷⁶

4.4.1.3. (3) “He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing [Feeling] the whole body (of breath), I will breathe *in*” (*sabba,kaya,paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati*). “He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing the whole body (of breath), I will breathe *out*” (*sabba,kaya,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§18(3)]

The pair, *vitakka,vicāra*, simply refers to the way our mind keeps directing itself and holding itself onto the breath. Whenever we lose track of the breath, *vitakka* sets in again, then there is *vicāra*, and so on. As long as the attention is sustained, there is no need for the initial application. An important process that occurs during the “sustaining” mode is that our attention shifts from the perception of verbal constructs (just saying it) to actual perception of the breath. The mind is then effectively directed away from the diversity of sense-experience (the physical body) onto **“the whole body” of breath**.⁷⁷ [§18(3)]

“**The whole body of breath**” (*sabba,kāya*) begins to emerge from the total silence of the mind—when it is free from all words and thoughts. At first, we notice it for a while, peaking in its fullness; then, it fades away. Even at this point, we see the breath quite clearly, seeing even the spaces or pauses between the breaths. This is when the in-breath has *ended* and the out-breath has *yet* to arise. Then, the out-breath peaks and fades away again. This is the whole body of the breath.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ On meditation as renunciation, see **Hālidakkāni S 1** (S 22.3), SD 10.12; **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (1.6.2); **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (14.7).

⁷⁵ Cf Brahmavaṃso 1999; also 2002:59 f.

⁷⁶ On subverbalizing, see SD 15.1 (8.1.2).

⁷⁷ Comys confirms this: *sabba,kaya,paṭisaṃvedī ti sabbassa assāsa,passāsa,kāyassa paṭisaṃvedī* (PmA 1:312; VismMHT:Be 1:321).

⁷⁸ However, scholar monks and popular teachers like THICH Nhat Hanh (1990:6, 46-49), Bodhi (2001 n141) & Analayo 2019:1685 f, tend to take *sabba,kāya* to mean “the whole physical body.” Cf the remark that the in-and-out-breathing is

4.4.1.4 When our mind is free of all extraneous sense-data, this process of watching the whole breath [4.4.1.3] is easily sustained in a stable manner. Our attention then fixes itself onto the real and subtle features of the breath. This calming process may itself lead to dhyana, but this should not be done unless we are already well familiar with that stage. In other words, keep to the full attention of the breath: notice its beauty (radiance) and joy.

Indeed, at this stage, we can (and should) do *nothing* except to feel the joy, *be* this joy. When cognition returns, then, we further calm the joyful mental object by gently subverbalizing, “Calm, calm,” or “Peaceful, peaceful.” The breath then gets even finer and more radiantly beautiful. We should take every care to master stage 3 [§18(4)] *before* going into stage 4. We must first “see” what the “whole body” of breath [§18(3)] really is *before* we can actually calm it [§18(4)]. We can only calm the breath when we have our full attention on it.⁷⁹

Otherwise, our futile efforts in trying to calm it will only tire us: this is like revving up the car in the wrong gear: we waste petrol and the car stalls on a steep gradient. We will only mentally tire ourselves; we may even fall asleep! When this happens, (upon waking up) just take a step back, as it were. Go back to simply watching the breath just as it is: show it some lovingkindness, and just keep watching it unconditionally. What actually is happening here? [4.4.1.5]

4.4.1.5 (4) “He trains himself thus: ‘Calming the bodily formation (of breath), I will breathe in’” (*passambhayaṃ kaya,saṅkhāraṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati*); “He trains himself thus: ‘Calming the bodily formation (of breath), I will breathe out’” (*passambhayaṃ kaya,saṅkhāraṃ passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§18(4)]

Note that the first 4 tetrads [§18] constitute a “body-based meditation” [4.4.1.1]: the breath is still a bodily or physical experience. When we stop attending to the breath, the diversity of sense-experiences assail us again. To avoid this, we must “experience the whole body (of breath)” [4.4.1.4]. When this full attention is sustained, something truly beautiful occurs: we have “calmed the bodily formations” [§18(4)]. In simple terms, we no more experience the breath as a “bodily” event; it becomes a mental process.

This switch from a *bodily* process to a mental state brings about a numinous ecstasy (or enstasy, since it *stands within* the mind). When the mind is freed from the body, it rises into an open sky of bliss like a hot-air balloon whose ballast has been jettisoned. The breath is now fully reflected in our mind, and the mind in the breath (like two mirrors facing one another): the mind *is* now the breath, its only mental object. This also marks the end of the “body contemplation” (*kāyānupassanā*) phase, that is, the 1st four aspects of the breath meditation (the 1st tetrad).

Our perception of the breath refines itself by simply ignoring the flow of unrelated data, by overcoming their unstable display and play until the mind rises to a level of endurance from its ground of changing physical states. Indeed, when we lack an understanding of the reality of nonself (*anattā*), we are likely to imagine this mental “endurance” outshining its bodily state to be some kind of Self, Soul, Essence, or some abiding entity. Hence, the suttas remind us that such states are mind-made, conditioned and impermanent.⁸⁰

“a body among the bodies” [§24]. According to “New Age” transpersonal psychology (esp Bodywork and Breathwork), the whole body “breathes.” In practical meditation, it is obvious that we easily lose focus when we have to be mindful of the *whole* physical body. For the simile of the teacher and his 3 archery students illustrating the experience of the total breath, see Brahmavamso 2002:62 f. For a discussion, see Anālayo, Satipaṭṭhāna, 2003:131 f. Further details, see SD 13.1 (3.9.6).

⁷⁹ Cf Brahmavamso 1999; 2002:65.

⁸⁰ See S 15.2/2:179.

4.4.2 The 2nd tetrad: Contemplating feelings (How feelings are refined) [§19]

Summary of the 2 nd tetrad:	(5) experiencing zest [joy];	[4.4.2.1]
	(6) experiencing happiness;	[4.4.2.2]
	(7) experiencing the mental formations;	[4.4.2.3-5]
	(8) calming the mental formations.	[4.4.2.6]

4.4.2.1 (5) “He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing zest [joy], I will breathe in’” (*pīti, paṭisaṃvedī assa-sissāmīti sikkhati*); **“He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing zest [joy], I will breathe out’”** (*pīti, paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§19(5)]

The emergence of **the mental image** of the breath is attended by a profoundly intense and beautiful radiance. Since our eyes are closed in meditation, this can only be a mental experience. This brilliant yet subtle radiance is the pure bright mind (*pabhassara, citta*) that the suttas speak about.⁸¹ This is the beginning of **the 2nd tetrad: the contemplation of feelings** (*vedanā’nupassanā*), when we “**experience zest** [joy]”⁸² as we breathe in and out.

Now we come to challenging situation that distinguishes the Buddha Dhamma from other systems, religious or secular. As the playful uncertainties of our mind settles, change seems to be replaced by an aura of immanence and permanence. We no more see the present in terms of the “eternal” past. There seems to be no more change to define *time*. We do not feel any sense of past or future: only the universe of the timeless present! It can be said to be a “single point of time” or “one-pointed timelessness.”⁸³

The cognitive process, as we know it, seems to stop: we have no idea whatsoever of signs or states. **The affective process** fully takes over. We directly *feel* what is before us (like swimming underwater and not feeling the water); we *are* truly in the present; we are *the present*. In other words, we are on the threshold of a new mode of knowing, a higher level of profound awareness. In decisive ways, how we comprehend this state—even at this early stage of meditation—is still subject to how we have been cognitively conditioned: by our religious faith or by secular wisdom, or, more often, by our biases and ignorance.

We can only make sense of this immanence by names and forms that we are familiar with—perhaps God, Soul, Brahman, Form, Consciousness, and so on. In truth, it has no name: we are forced to confront **change**. We are that change: looking outside, the world, time and space, as it were, seem frozen like a diagram of the atomic structure. But there is really no such structure; it is the way our mind is able to capture the moment in a comprehensible and comprehensive way. For the unawakened mind, this is a religious experience, the root and seed of a powerful religion.⁸⁴ For those seeking awakening, it is only an early stage of mental liberation. More is yet to come. [4.4.4.2]

4.4.2.2 (6) “He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing happiness, I will breathe in’” (*sukha, paṭisaṃvedī assa-sissāmīti sikkhati*); **“He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing happiness, I will breathe out’”** (*sukha, paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§19(6)]

When we calm the breath down even further, it becomes further refined, profoundly stiller and subtler. Such a mind is naturally zestful, blissful and energized, since it has no sense-objects whatsoever to process and evaluate. Here, the mind is simply itself, pure mind. This is no ordinary happiness, unlike even the most rapturous of worldly pleasures.

⁸¹ On the radiant mind (*pabhassara, citta*), see **Cūḷ’accharā S** (A 2.6,3-5) SD 2.13; SD 54.2e (2.3.5.1).

⁸² On zest or joy (*pīti*), see §19(5) n.

⁸³ Cf Sujato 2001:77.

⁸⁴ On how religions and philosophies arise from meditation experience, see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.1 (6.1).

The supreme worldly pleasure comes from the sexual act, which nature has hardwired in humans for the sake of procreation to perpetuate samsara. However, this act is basically body-based, climaxing in an orgasm, the greatest pleasure the body can feel.⁸⁵ In a crude sense, zest or meditative joy (*pīti*) is our transcorporeal (beyond the body) experience of bliss. Since *pīti* is purely mind-based, we neither tire from it nor feel attached to it. Even the memory of such a bliss is profoundly gratifying in a wholesome sense.

Because of its profound and overwhelming nature, it takes some wisdom to recognize it. Those who are ignorant of the nature of the mind and impermanence, are likely to *fear* such an experience and feel a sense of awe and alienation. All that we have understood of the world, even of religion, do not seem to fit in this profoundly nameless blissful state.⁸⁶

If we compare zest (*pīti*) to an explosive mental rapture [§19(5)], then happiness (*sukha*) is its subsequent *resolved* state where we feel a total sense of inner peace and clarity [§19(6)]. By letting go of *zest*, simply letting it be, it settles down further into *happiness*. Once we have an experience of such *zest*, even just a glimpse of it in mindfulness practice (like the perception of impermanence), it is like meeting and being embraced by the most beautiful person we have ever admired. We will be able to feel it, at some level, in our wholesome actions, even in the mundane chores or events of our daily life. This is what empowers us with wise faith and diligence in the Buddha Dhamma.⁸⁷

4.4.2.3 (7) “He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing the mental formations, I will breathe in’” (*citta,saṅkhāra,paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati*); **“He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing the mental formations, I will breathe out’”** (*citta,saṅkhāra,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§19(7)]

This stage is about “experiencing the mental formations [mental functions]” (*citta,saṅkhāra,paṭisaṃvedī*).⁸⁸ The mental formations (*citta,saṅkhāra*)⁸⁹ are feeling and perception experienced in all 4 dhyanas. Here, it refers to the experience of **the breath as a mind-object (*dhamma*)**.

When the radiant mind [4.4.2.1] has arisen, it seems as if our breath is not present; there is only the beautiful inner stillness. In other words, we are still breathing, but not in a bodily sense; hence, we are unable to feel it in the ordinary sense. The breath is now a mental process, experienced only as a mental object.

We have already noted, in stage (5), how, with the arising of zest, the cognitive process shuts down and only the affective process works [4.4.2.1]. We stop knowing in the usual sense of reacting to sense-stimuli; we experience mind-objects directly: just as we neither “hear” good music nor “see” great art but *feel* their beauty in our whole being.

4.4.2.4 Unlike the gross processes of sense-experiences, this “**feeling**” (*paṭisaṃvedanā*),⁹⁰ since it occurs directly, without the medium of a sense-faculty, occurs smoothly in a non-reactive engaged way. This is because the mind is now fully focused on itself: it is truly “one-pointed” (*ek’agga*). **The Paṭisaṃbidā, magga** illustrates this with **the parable of the carpenter’s saw**:

⁸⁵ See **Sexuality**, SD 31.7.

⁸⁶ Such clearly was the case of Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) who recorded her mystical experiences in *The Interior Castle* (1588). See L S Cousins, “The stages of Christian mysticism and Buddhist purification: The Interior Castle of St Teresa of Avila and the Path of Purification of Buddhaghosa,” 1989. See also SD 38.4 (3.2.3.2); SD 53.18 (2.2.3.3).

⁸⁷ Further see Brahmavamso 1999; 2002:68.

⁸⁸ *Paṭisaṃvedī*, lit “one who experiences,” comes from the verb *paṭisaṃvedeti*, whose root is √VID, to know. Although, it is often tr as “to experience,” it has an inherent sense of “to feel,” ie, to directly experience things. See SD 17.3 (1.2.2).

⁸⁹ On *citta,saṅkhāra*, see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,14), SD 40a.9.

⁹⁰ This abstract n is not a canonical word but a comy term.

“Just as a tree [tree-trunk] were placed on level ground and a man were to cut it with a saw—the man’s mindfulness is fixed on the saw’s teeth where they touch the tree, without giving his attention to the saw’s teeth as they come and go”⁹¹ (Pm 1:171)

The man’s attention being fixed at the cutting point is like the famous present-moment awareness, mindfulness of the radiant mind, right where it is. The preposition “where” is a mere linguistic convenience, but really this “location” is in neither space nor time. There is no more beginning, ending or middle of the breath; there is only the radiant mind.

4.4.2.5 From the language of the 2nd tetrad, it clearly describes the stage of the arising of **the dhyanas** (*jhāna*), that is, where all physical sense-activities have stopped temporarily.⁹² To the outside world, it is as if the meditator is in a kind of deep hibernation, even dead. Even when medical instruments may not detect any signs of life (by “modern” definition), the meditator will “return to life” in due course.

Taking the text as it is, we can surmise that stage (5), “experiencing zest” suggests the 1st dhyana. Although stage (6) mentions only “experiencing happiness,” it can, with the presence of zest implied, be taken to refer to the 2nd dhyana. Stage (7) refers to “experiencing mental formations” (that is, feeling and perception) may well refer to the 3rd dhyana. Stage (8), “calming the mental formations” suggests the equanimity of the 4th dhyana.⁹³

Alternatively, we may say that the first 3 dhyanas may (successively) arise in stage (7), and the 4th dhyana in stage (8). The point is that there is no technical fixity about which dhyana arising at each of the aspects of the 2nd tetrad. Indeed, it is safe to say that these 4 tetrads [§§18-24] are actually meant for a **non-dhyana** practice [4.1]. In other words, this is still a mundane level of practice, but it’s a very good start.

Even at this early stage, it helps to maintain the habit of “contemplating impermanence” [§21(13)], that is, noticing how every effort we make at every stage involves and experiences some kind of **change** in our mental state and also our physical state, our whole being. This habitual reflection on impermanence will become very helpful when we reach stage (13). Even in itself, this reflection is the basis for our aspiration to streamwinning in this very life.⁹⁴

4.4.2.6 “**He trains himself thus: ‘Calming the mental formations, I will breathe in’**” (*passambhayaṃ citta, saṅkhāraṃ assasissāmiti sikkhati*); “**He trains himself thus: ‘Calming the mental formations, I will breathe out’**” (*passambhayaṃ citta, saṅkhāraṃ passasissāmiti sikkhati*). [§19(8)]

In real practice, we rarely fully accomplish the breath meditation in such a neat sequence. Very often, we need to work on a particular stage for a sustained period. In the case of stage (8), we often need to re-apply it in subsequent practice, especially when the zest [4.4.2.1] becomes too strong and disturb the stillness of the mind.

Further, other distractions may arise when we get caught up with the bliss. When it grows, we may feel overwhelmed. Instead of simply watching it, we become excited. Or when it seems to fluctuate, we fear losing it. In other words, we have allowed objective thought to return: the mind starts to speak: the beautiful silence is broken.

Ajahn Chah illustrates this meditative mishap with his famous **parable of the forest pool**, where the forest animals would gather to drink. In the still twilight moments, some of the rarest and most beautiful forest animals would appear at the poolside to drink. When we, the observer, as much as gasp in wonder, these beau-

⁹¹ *Seyyathāpi rukkho same bhūmi, bhāge nikkhitto, tam enaṃ puriso kakacena chindeyya, rukkhe phuṭṭha, kakaca, - dantānaṃ vasena purisassa sati upaṭṭhitā hoti, na āgate vā gate vā kakaca, dante manasikaroti.* (Pm 1:171,7-10)

⁹² See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4; SD 54.2e (2.3.5).

⁹³ Cf Brahmvamso 2002:68 f.

⁹⁴ See **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

tiful shy beings would at once disappear back into the forest.⁹⁵

In this parable, the still forest pool is our radiant mind; the beautiful forest animals are zest and happiness. We must simply let these forest beings drink in peace. We should be as still and silent as a forest tree on a windless day watching this drama of nature at its profoundest truth and beauty.

A potent strategy in the face of such profound joy is simply to **smile** at it. That is, when the slightest sense of cognition re-emerges, we temper it with a smile. In such a scenario, smiling is very effective in keeping our inner peace because it reflects the joyful nature of what has emerged before us, which we unconditionally accept.

4.4.3 The 3rd tetrad: Contemplating the mind (How the mind is refined) [§20]

Summary of the 3 rd tetrad:	(9) experiencing the mind;	[4.4.3.1-3]
	(10) shining the meditation sign;	[4.4.3.4-5]
	(11) sustaining the sign;	[4.4.3.6]
	(12) freeing the mind.	[4.4.3.7]

4.4.3.1 (9) “He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing the mind, I will breathe in’” (*citta,paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati*). **“He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing the mind, I will breathe out’”** (*citta,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§20(9)]

“Experiencing the mind” refers to attaining dhyana [4.4.2.5], since, by this time, our mind is profoundly *calm and clear*. Hence, we can actually know the mind in its profound radiant beauty. This beautiful mind began to arise earlier, in stage (6) [4.4.2.1], when zest arises in us. Although we see the mind as beautifully radiant then, it is even more so here.

The radiant mind that we “see” here—the proper word is “experience” (*paṭisaṃvedeti*), since it is all a mental phenomenon—is what is known as a “**meditation sign**” or “mental sign” (*nimitta*): the truth and beauty of reality reflected in our mind. This is really what we can call the beginning of true “knowing,” a direct experience of true reality.

When we look closely during our review on emerging from this stage, we will notice that there is only **knowing without any knower**. It’s like when we look into a mirror: we see an image (*nimitta*) of ourself: we *know* or re-cognize ourself. Yet, it is not really our “Self,” since it’s gone when we move away. The mirror is like our mental focus free from all dust and dirt of distractions. What we see is only a virtual mental image of a passing phenomenon, “ourself.” In our meditation, this beautiful image is a sky full of radiance and we are a single star in it. This is merely a reflection of our mind.

4.4.3.2 In a provisional sense, we can say that our mind itself (“we”) is the “**knower**.” This is a conditioned and relative term: we are the knower since we know the reflection before us. It is still a “**mind-made**” image in the sense it simply *reflects* our mind, and that we have ourself *projected* this image when our mind is free from distractions.

Our image in the mirror only reflects how we look and what we are doing. When we are still, the image is still, too. Even when we try to hold the mirror still, or it is fixed on its stand or on the wall, it does not help if we are not still. Indeed, we will not be able to see our features clearly when we are *not* still. Stillness, then, comes from the “knower,” our mind itself, not from the image or reflection. The image of our mind depends on how truly we know it. A vital part of our meditation is to refine and deepen this self-knowledge.

⁹⁵ See eg Brahmavamso, *The Jhanas*, Singapore, 2003:35 f.

4.4.3.3 We will here briefly examine what seems to be a technical point in early Buddhist psychology. Note that the Sutta simply speaks of the “mind” (*citta*), that is, experienced in breath meditation. Elsewhere, in the suttas, it is said that *citta*, *mano* and *viññāṇa* are all synonyms: “That which is called the *citta*, it is also *mano*, or *viññāṇa*.”⁹⁶ Hence, it is helpful to remember that the suttas do not always technically differentiate these 3 words: they all mean “the mind.”⁹⁷

Technically, in this meditative context, these 3 words, says the Commentaries, refer to the “mind-base” (*man’āyatana*), a collective term for all the different states of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (SA 2:98).⁹⁸ Now, *man’āyatana* appears quite often in the suttas but meaning simply the “mind” as an internal faculty.⁹⁹

If the radiant mind “experienced” in breath meditation (or in any dhyana) is taken as the “mind-base,” it must clearly refer to **the mind (the inner faculty) without any sense-object (*dhamma*)**. In fact, at this stage, even “mind-objects” (*dhamma, dhātu*) do *not* arise. Technically, a mind-object is an idea the mind itself creates that is not sense-based (such as most images in a dream).

This table of the 18 physical and mental elements (*dhātu*) will help us envision the nature and function of a *mind-object* (no 17). In this case, the “mind-base” is identical to the mind-element (no 16):

(1) eye-faculty ¹⁰⁰	(6) visible object	(11) eye-consciousness
(2) ear-faculty	(7) sound-object	(12) ear-consciousness
(3) nose-faculty	(8) smell-object	(13) nose-consciousness
(4) tongue-faculty	(9) taste-object	(14) tongue-consciousness
(5) body-faculty	(10) touch-object	(15) body-consciousness
(16) mind-element (<i>mano, dhātu</i>)	(17) mind-object (<i>dhamma, dhātu</i>)	(18) mind-consciousness (<i>mano, viññāṇa, dhātu</i>) ¹⁰¹

Table 4.4.3.3. The 18 elements

It should be noted here that the term “mind-base” (*man’āyatana*) is used in a non-technical sense. Its Abhidhamma technicality arose much later on as reflected in its role in, for example, the 5-door cognitive process (*viññāṇa, kicca*).¹⁰²

4.4.3.4 (10) “He trains himself thus: ‘Gladdening the mind, I will breathe in’” (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati*). **He trains himself thus: ‘Gladdening the mind, I will breathe out’”** (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§20(10)]

“Gladdening the mind” (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ*) refers to further refining the meditation sign, the radiant mind, by brightening it up. The mind is gladdened by **zest** when it attains the 1st or the 2nd dhyana. It

⁹⁶ *Yaṃ ... idaṃ vuccati cittaṃ’ti vā mano’ti vā viññāṇaṃ’ti vā*, D 1:21; *Yaṃ ca kho etaṃ ... vuccati cittaṃ iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇa iti pi*: see **Assutava S 1** (S 12.61,4+8 with monkey simile), SD 20.2; **Assutava S 2** (S 12.61,4+7), SD 20.3. In some sutta contexts, however, we do have *citta* = thought, *mano* = mind, and *viññāṇa* = consciousness: SD 17.8a (12), esp (12.5.4) summary.

⁹⁷ The synonymy of these 3 words is also accepted in most traditions following the Abhidharma period, but they were clearly differentiated within the Yogācāra (India, 4th cent CE). See SD 17.8a (12.5).

⁹⁸ See **Viññāṇa**, SD 17.8 (4.1); also S:B 2000:769 n154.

⁹⁹ On this “mind-element” (*mano, dhātu*), see SD 17.8a (12.1.2.1, 12.1.3.3); its function SD 7.1 (4.4).

¹⁰⁰ For the 5-door mental process (physical sense-cognition), see SD 19.14 (2).

¹⁰¹ See **Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137,4 f) + SD 29.5 (1.4.1), where, on the mind-base, see Table 1.4.2.

¹⁰² SD 19.14 (2 f). See eg “mind-base” in Abhidhammattha, saṅgaha: Abhs:BRS index under “mind (*mano*).”

can also be gladdened by the penetrating wisdom we eventually gain from insight into the **impermanence** of this beautiful state which is still conditioned and subject to arising and passing away.

On the other hand, we may need to brighten up the meditative sign (*nimitta*) even at this stage [§20(11)], whenever it appears to be dull or unstable. We need to brighten up the sign and keep it that way. The experience of zest powers up the radiance of the sign, which, as it were, feeds on joy. The more joy we feel, the brighter the sign; the brighter the sign, the more joyful we feel. It goes both ways.

The basic technique of empowering the sign is to keep returning our attention to the breath to prevent it from losing its momentum. A second way is to focus our attention in the present moment, not letting the mind wonder about what happened before or what will happen. When the radiance returns, we should train our attention at its centre, so that we do not pick on any imperfection near its edge. As long as we embrace the radiance, just smiling the inner smile at it, it keeps us connected to the joy.¹⁰³

4.4.3.5 The meditation sign can also lose its radiance on account of our weak mental effort or weak moral virtue. In the case of weak mental effort, we should turn to an **“inspiring meditations”** like a reflection (*anusati*) on any of the 3 jewels, on moral virtue (*sīlānussati*) or on charity (*cāgānussati*), or cultivate lovingkindness.¹⁰⁴ It also helps to ensure that our place of meditation is suitable, and our diet is balanced and healthy.

In the case of weak moral virtue which can cause persistent difficulties in our meditation, we should then examine whether we have been habitually breaking any precept or harbouring some negative emotions. If we notice some moral lapses, we should resolve this by apostrophically seeking forgiveness from the Buddha and also unconditionally forgiving ourselves by cultivating lovingkindness. A good strategy is to recall a time when we attended a study, retreat or event when we kept the precepts even for just that period.

When the “calmness” (*samatha*) approach does not seem to work, we may try getting into the “insight” (*vipassanā*) mode. This is to reflect on the conditioned nature of our meditative experience or our current state. Carefully reflect on their conditioned and impermanent nature, including applying some inspiring a Dhamma passage or a sutta teaching we have learned.

4.4.3.6 (11) “He trains himself thus: ‘Concentrating the mind, I will breathe in’” (*samādahaṃ cittam assasissāmīti sikkhati*). **He trains himself thus: ‘Concentrating the mind, I will breathe out’”** (*samādahaṃ cittam passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§20(11)]

“Concentrating the mind” (*samādahaṃ cittam*) refers to sustaining the meditation sign (*nimitta*). This is either the dhyana state itself, or the momentary concentration¹⁰⁵ arising from insight. The radiant sign is simply the reflection of our own mind; hence, it depends on our own inner stillness. When our mental concentration weakens, the sign fluctuates unsteadily. In fact, at the start, the sign usually only flashes momentarily and then disappears. Or, it may stray unpredictably around the mind’s field of vision. The brighter the sign is, the more likely it is to remain stable.

At this point, we are still not fully concentrated; hence, it’s best to direct the mind to oneself, the knower, and examine our mental state. Often the distraction is either fear or excitement. If it is the *first* time the sign arises in us, we may **fear** it, like our meeting an important but total stranger and not knowing what to do. Or, we are so captivated with the sign that we get carried away with **excitement** and lose our focus.

The solution is to stop reacting and to simply, as it were, surrender ourselves to the radiant mind. When we are in a strange new company, we must first silently watch and learn. It’s like learning to ride a bicycle the first time. We start off by holding the handlebars properly, feet on the ground, and, looking ahead, we keep on peddling without worrying about falling. And before we know it, we are well balanced and cycling around.

¹⁰³ See Brahmavamso 2002:76 f.

¹⁰⁴ See *anussati-t,thāna* at SD 24.8 (2.1).

¹⁰⁵ “Momentary concentration” (*khaṇika samādhi*), see SD 15.1 (9.4).

4.4.3.7 (12) “He trains himself thus: ‘Freeing the mind, I will breathe in’” (*vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati*). **“He trains himself thus: ‘Freeing the mind, I will breathe out’”** (*vimocayaṃ cittaṃ pasasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§20(12)]

“Freeing the mind” (*vimocayaṃ cittaṃ*) means that we should overcome all the mental hindrances,¹⁰⁶ that is, restraining all physical sense-stimuli so that the mind settles in itself. Or, when dhyana is already attained, we should work to gently let go of the grosser dhyana-factors¹⁰⁷ by attaining successively higher levels of concentration. A third task may be that of freeing oneself from any cognitive distortions—any wrong view or negative reactions to what occurs in our meditation; this is done through application of insight knowledge, that is, regarding any of them as being “mind-made”; hence, they are impermanent; or, when any hint of thinking occurs, we mentally note or subverbalize, “Let go; let go”

Usually, the mind here has two experiences that have the same effect, depending on our perspective. We may either find ourself “plunging” into the sign; then, the attention just sinks therein. Or else, that sign of radiance or “feeling” simply overwhelms or fully envelops us. So it seems, and “we” feel gratified, thinking, “This is it!” and so on. “We” do *nothing* in meditation; when we do nothing, *it* happens: the hindrances fall away and dhyana emerges.

Hence, the **dhyanas** are called states of “freedom” (*vimokkha*).¹⁰⁸ This is our journey into the final frontier, that of **inner space**, where the mind is free from all physical encumbrances: the mind is fully free from the body. It’s more than being merely an “out-of-body” experience: we are not floating somewhere in space. Rather, it is a profound spiritual state that is free from time and space and where we come face to face with our pure bright mind (*pabhassara,citta*) [4.4.4.2]. After all, time and space only work with the conscious physical body, but there is no “body” here. We do not feel the body any more; we feel only the profound bliss of the pure mind.¹⁰⁹

4.4.4 The 4th tetrad: Contemplating dharmas (How the mind’s state is refined) [§21]

Summary of the 4 th tetrad:	(13) contemplating impermanence;	[4.4.4.1 f]
	(14) contemplating fading away;	[4.4.4.3]
	(15) contemplating cessation;	[4.4.4.4]
	(16) contemplating letting go.	[4.4.4.5]

4.4.4.1 (13) “He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating impermanence, I will breathe in’ (*aniccānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*). **“He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating impermanence, I will breathe out’”** (*aniccānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§21(13)]

Remember that **the Ānāpāna,sati Sutta** comprises 4 aspects of practice and attainment [1.1.1.1], and we are just beginning with the practice. At this beginner’s level, we must work with the understanding that this last tetrad deals entirely with **insight**. We now can better understand how the previous 3 tetrads work with *both* calmness and insight (*samatha,vipassanā*).¹¹⁰ The insight we use and the insight we gain should bring us

¹⁰⁶ The 5 mental hindrances (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*) are (1) sensual lust (*kāma-c,chanda*), (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*), (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*), (4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), and (5) doubt (*vicikicchā*): M 3:49; M 1:274; A 4:437; see **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

¹⁰⁷ The dhyana-factors (*jhān’āṅga*) are the constituent qualities of a dhyana, beginning with a total of 5 factors—(1) initial application (*vitakka*), (2) sustained application (*vicāra*), (3) zest (*pīti*), (4) happiness (*sukha*) and (5) one-pointedness (*ek’aggatā*)—which are those of the 1st dhyana, omitting (5). The 2nd dhyana has (3)-(5); the 3rd dhyana (4) + (5); and the 4th dhyana only (5). See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (6).

¹⁰⁸ **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.33), SD 9; (**Aṭṭhaka**) **Vimokkha S** (A 8.66), SD 95.11.

¹⁰⁹ See Brahmavamso 1999; 2002:79-81.

¹¹⁰ See S:B 1950 n293.

to the last aspect (16), that of **relinquishment** (*paṭinissagga*), inner renunciation. [4.4.4.4].

Hence, we work with each of the first 3 aspects in this tetrad as long as we need to. Only when we have mastered stage (13) do we go to the next stage. In fact, this stage is, in a sense, on-going: we need to reflect on **impermanence** *whenever* we are slowed down or hindered in our practice. But here, it is done with a special purpose: to free our mind of defilements, at least temporarily [4.4.4.4]. Indeed, this is what a “free mind” really means: a spotless pure radiant mind whose wholesome effect stays with us for good, as it were.¹¹¹
[4.4.4.2]

4.4.4.2 Even as we meditate and when we have just emerged from dhyana, we may notice that things seem to be so “constant” that it is as if we have attained some “timeless” state. This is only the profound effect of our “pure bright mind” (*pabhassara,citta*). What we understand as our “self,” which seems to be *constant* in our daily life that we do not even notice it, is taking it for granted (as if it really exists) as an abiding self or a permanent entity. In dhyanic experience, any notion of self disappears—we may or may not be prepared for this.

This is where some understanding of the Buddha Dhamma helps us understand that there is really **no abiding self**; that is, the teaching of **non-self** (*anattā*). If we do not have such understanding or choose to reject such a truth, then, we may fall into the notion of some “abiding entity”: the Self, Soul, Godhead, Brahman, Other, etc. Only “empty” phenomena roll on, like the single frames of a long celluloid film-loop projecting themselves rapidly on our mind’s screen. It’s the “movies,”: but nothing is moving; only the mind is.
[4.4.2.1]

When we can truly see this non-self of **change**, we are so profoundly transformed that we will abandon any notion of *self-identity*; we have no *doubt* about this reality; and we see the frivolity and futility of *rituals and vows*. We become **streamwinners**, the first-steppers on the path of awakening.¹¹²

4.4.4.3 (14) “He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating fading away, I will breathe *in*’ (*virāgānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*). “He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating fading away, I will breathe *out*’” (*virāgānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§21(14)]

“Fading away” (*virāga*) is also translated as “dispassion” [§42]. If our reflection on impermanence does not work, then we should go on to reflect on the “fading away.” This is when things just disappear; those things we assume to be so close to us that we thought were essentially a part of us. Then, suddenly, surprisingly, they are no more there.

Both “contemplating fading away” and the next, “contemplating cessation” (stage 15) can be seen as an insight into the momentary cessation, even destruction, of phenomena; and the supramundane path leading to nirvana is itself the fading away of lust (*virāga*) and the cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering.

4.4.4.4 (15) “He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating cessation, I will breathe *in*’ (*nirodhānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*). “He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating cessation, I will breathe *out*’” (*nirodhānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§21(15)]

Broadly speaking “cessation” (*nirodha*) refers to the world as we knew it no more appears so: our false view of the world is gone. This is the world produced by our senses and directed by our mind. This is a world that demands all our attention—all our sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts. It’s like a protracted existence in a Pokemon world, running after these monsters: we want to capture them *all*. There is no

¹¹¹ The caveat, “as it were,” means that although its beneficial effect stays with us, we may forget this when we are caught up with the world again (as in the case of Deva,datta). However, when we do get back into practice, this “past good” (*pubbe kata,puññatā*, Sn 260, SD 101.5) will facilitate our return to goodness and towards the path.

¹¹² See **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

end to all this; hence, this is suffering.

Specifically, “cessation” refers to the ending of suffering, the sense of lack and our insatiable drive to futilely feed and fill that lack. At this stage something that seemed to be always there has now disappeared. The world as we knew it is no more there. We are in a completely new time-space reality. We have a clearer and happier vision of what are real and good. Hence, our life is more meaningful and purposeful in the best senses of the words.¹¹³

“Cessation” is, of course, **the 3rd noble truth**: that of the ending of suffering—that is nirvana. Although we may have yet to attain nirvana, as *streamwinners*, we catch glimpses of it. We are like desert travellers, parched, thirsty and dirty, who have come to an oasis with a deep well, and we can see the water deep down.¹¹⁴ It’s a just a matter of time and effort before we are able to quench our thirst and have a good rest. For the moment, we have to work with the last stages of the breath meditation to move on to higher states of spiritual excellence.

4.4.4.5 (16) “He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating relinquishment, I will breathe in’ (*paṭinissaggânu-passī assasissāmīti sikkhati*). **“He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating relinquishment, I will breathe out’** (*paṭinissaggânu-passī passasissāmīti sikkhati*). [§21(16)]

A simple word for “**relinquishment**” (*paṭinissaga*) is “letting go.” Hence, to “contemplate relinquishment” means we reflect on, prepare ourself for, the giving up (*pariccāga*) or abandoning (*pahāna*) of **defilements** (wrong ways and wrong views) through insight, so that we reach the path for “leaping forward” (*pakkhandana*)¹¹⁵ into nirvana. The idea, then, is that of ridding ourself of rubbish and baggage that we do not need for our journey toward the path and moving on to nirvana.

At this level, **renunciation** (*nekkhamma*) takes on a deeper sense. Conventional renunciation—that of leaving the world for the monastic life—is the *socially* ideal way of life for leaving behind our baggage so that we can fully engage ourself with the task of attaining arhathood or non-returning in this life itself. In fact, this is what dhyana does: it empowers us to rise above the limits of our physical body so that we taste pure mental pleasures, much more pleasurable than what our body can give us. Hence, we will never even think of being attracted to such bodily or worldly pleasure. Dhyana empowers renunciation; it effects our fully letting go of the world in every sense of the word.

Patinissagga has a deeper sense of renunciation, that which is found only in the arhat. He is one who has fully given up the “knower” (a broad term for the unconscious or latent tendencies), that is, how our senses engage the world—the “all” (*sabba*), the sense-faculties and their objects. This engagement then feeds the “doer” (a broad term for karma and formations).¹¹⁶

Although such an existential engagement seems to be with “something” out there, it is really about how we perceive the world, and then create our own virtual reality—this is a back-and-forth exchange of subjectifying and objectifying. This is an incessant and instinctive process by which we give “names” (*nāma*) to “forms” (*rūpa*) out there but “bending” (*namati* or *nameti*) and “owning” them, thus reifying them.

These **owning** and reifying aspects of our unawakened nature are the drives (as ignorance and craving) exerted by a special aspect of the “knower,” that is the **controller**, sometimes called “the will.” This is tech-

¹¹³ On the first 2 truths as the meaning of life, and the last 2 as the purpose of life, see SD 1.1 (4.0).

¹¹⁴ (**Nidāna**) **Kosambī S** (S 12.68,60), SD 70.11.

¹¹⁵ *Pakkhandana* is the noun of *pakkhandati*, (lit) “to spring or leap (forward), to jump (on to); to be after someone in pursuit; (fig) to rejoice in, find pleasure or satisfaction in, to take to.” When applied to nirvana, it connotes a joyful embrace of it.

¹¹⁶ On the “knower” and the “doer” in meditation, see **Saṅkhāra**, SD 17.6 (8.4); SD 15.1 (1.5).

nically known as “**formations**” (*saṅkhāra*), the most potent and insidious manifestation of which is called “**mental proliferation**” (*papañca*).¹¹⁷

These are basically the on-going activities of the controller’s minions, “thoughts,” that is, the untamed mind (*citta*), that work to reify and own *all* that we experience, instead of leaving them alone and so learning from them.

These instinctive tendencies have been abandoned by the arhat. As non-arhats, we need to understand them and progressively give them up. An effective renouncing practice here is that of **not identifying** with any of our experiences—simply, letting them come, letting them go, and learning from them. This empowers us with what is known as “**not-that-ness**” (*atam, mayatā*).¹¹⁸ This is a higher form of renunciation that brings us closer to the path, if not nirvana.

4.4.4.6 While the previous three tetrads deal with both calm and insight, this **4th and last tetrad** deals only with insight. “Contemplating fading away ... ” (stage 14) and “contemplating cessation ... ” (stage 15) can be understood both as stronger insight into the **impermanence** (stage 13) of formations and, on a higher level, as *the supramundane path* leading to nirvana, that is, the fading of lust (*virāga*) and the cessation of suffering.

“**Contemplating letting go**” (stage 16) is the full and final giving up of all our defilements (basically, the 3 roots of greed, hate and delusion) through insight and the gaining of nirvana through the path. This is the end of our inner journey on the path of awakening. This is where we do not see ourself as *a* traveller or *the* Traveller: there is only *the path*. Having completed the journey, we no more feel its toils and troubles, all our burdens are put down; we are uplifted with the joy and freedom of awakening.

4.4.5 “I WILL BREATHE IN ... BREATHE OUT”

4.4.5.1 Notice that the phrase, “**I will breathe in ... breathe out,**” is present in all the 16 aspects that are the 4 tetrads of breath meditation. As characterizing our practice, this phrase represents a stable anchor for our mind so that it does not wander away from the task at hand as described in each of the 16 aspects. This dynamic sentence itself reminds us that **our breath** is always in motion. After all, it is an aspect of the wind element (*vāyo*), or simply “motion.” This is a physical aspect of a broader reality, that of universal change or **impermanence**.

4.4.5.2 A deeper significance of the sentence, “I will breathe in ... breathe out,” is that it is a shorthand for **the reflection on impermanence**. Our breath gives us life: it *is* our life. We are only alive when we allow this in-breathing and out-breathing; having taken in a breath, we can and must only give it back, *every time*. This exchange is a constant reminder of the universal true reality—that of **impermanence**.

At every stage of our breath meditation, every tetrad, every aspect of each tetrad, we are experiencing the reality of impermanence by responding to it in different ways. Every breath we take, and watched mindfully, seeing its impermanence in some way, brings us closer to the truth and beauty of universal reality. Essentially, this is what happens in breath meditation.

4.4.5.3 The tetrads are sets of meditative practices for calmness or insight or both. At first, they are not really “stages,” since it takes some expertise to master them in their natural progression. As unawakened beings, we need to master these “**aspects**” first by understanding them through practice. This is, in fact, how the 4 tetrads work. We can summarize the totality of the 16 aspects of breath meditation as follows: [1.1.3.2]

¹¹⁷ The function or active nature of “mental proliferation” is known as “proliferation of conception and perception” (*papañca, saññā, saṅkha*): see SD 6.14 (3).

¹¹⁸ See *Atam, mayatā*, SD 19.13.

I. The mundane or basic <u>breath meditation</u>	streamwinning or once-returning	§§18-23
II. The breath meditation as 4 <u>satipatthana</u> ¹¹⁹	non-returning or arhathood ¹²⁰	§§24-28
III. Applying satipatthana to the 7 awakening factors ¹²¹	non-returning or arhathood ¹²²	§§29-41
IV. The attaining of true knowledge and liberation	arhathood	§§42-44

5 Pīti and sukha

We experience **zest** [joy] (*pīti*) in any of two ways: by attaining either the 1st or 2nd dhyana in which zest is present, we experience it in the mode of **calm** (*samatha*); by emerging from that dhyana and reflecting that zest is subject to destruction, we experience zest in the mode of **insight** (*vipassanā*).

Psychologically, *pīti* is a kind of “joyful interest,” and, as such, may be associated with wholesome, unwholesome or neutral states (BDict: *pīti*). Zest belongs to the formation group (*saṅkhāra-k, khandha*) while **happiness** (*sukha*) belongs to the feeling group (*vedanā-k, khandha*). Buddhaghosa compares zest to when a thirsty man lost in the desert finds water; happiness is what he feels when he is drinking the water. (Vism 4.94 ff).

6 Meditation sign (nimitta)

6.1 THE BREATH SIGN

6.1.1 In “The Mystery of the Breath Nimitta” (2000), **Bhikkhu Soṇa** explains that the simile of a clear full moon to which the dhyanic mind is compared in the Paṭisambhidā “degenerates to a mistaken literalization as internally produced visual data” in the Visuddhi, magga’s description of the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga, nimitta*). However, let us get the terms right first. By ***nimitta*** is meant “a characteristic mark or phenomenon, which accompanies and helps identify an experience” (2000:1).¹²³ For example, when one feels weakness, has a headache and nausea, each of these is a sign of the flu.

6.1.2 According to **the Buddhist Dictionary**, there are 3 types of *nimitta*. The 1st type, the “preparatory image or sign” (*parikamma, nimitta*), refers to the perception of the meditation object. When the mind reaches a weak degree of concentration, a still unsteady and unclear image or “acquired sign” (*uggaha, nimitta*), also called “learning sign,” arises. This is the 2nd type of *nimitta*.

This percept precedes the arising of an entirely clear and steady image, the “counter-sign” (*paṭibhāga, nimitta*). The appearance of this 3rd type of *nimitta* signals the arising of the “neighbourhood (or access) concentration” (*upacāra, samādhi*), the state preceding full dhyana. Both these states share the same sign and are different only in the intensity of their component factors. The countersign is more refined and clarified, resulting from greater concentration. [6.4]

6.2 THE VIMUTTI, MAGGA EXPLANATION

6.2.1 The Vimutti, magga, in reference to “grasping” (*gahaṇato*) to the various meditation subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna niddesa*), states that:

¹¹⁹ On the 4 satipatthanas, see SD 13.1.

¹²⁰ See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,46 esp 46.2), SD 13.3.

¹²¹ On the 7 awakening-factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*), see **Bojjhaṅga Sīla S** (S 46.3), SD 10.15.

¹²² See **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3,12-19), SD 10.15.

¹²³ On defs of *nimitta*, see SD 13.1(3.1d).

the sign of one meditation subject is to be grasped through the touched, namely, the mindfulness of breathing. Furthermore, the sign of one meditation subject is to be grasped through the seen or the touched, namely, the wind totality [*kaṣiṇa*].” (Vimm 7.11; Vimm:Ñ 1:250) [6.3.2]

This distinction is critical, notes Soṇa. It shows that the breath of breath meditation is different from other meditation-objects in that it is exclusively tactile.¹²⁴

6.2.2 Visual objects may be perceived during breath meditation as a side-effect for some meditators. However, the meditator should remain focused only on the tactile sensation (the touch) of the breath. In this connection, **the Paṭisambhidā, magga** says:

... as such, the monk sits, having established mindfulness at the nose-tip or at the sign of the mouth [lip], without paying attention to the coming and going [rising and falling] of the in-breath and the out-breath as they come and go; as he disregards the coming and going of the in-breath and the out-breath, he put forth effort, and carries out his task. Through his effort he gains excellence.¹²⁵

6.2.3 The Vimutti, magga (chapter 8), in the section on the mindfulness of breathing, describes what happens next for a meditator who puts forth proper effort:

Thus, observing the touch of the wind of the in-breaths and our-breaths at the [tip of the] nose or on the [upper] lip gives rise to the sign¹²⁶ of the wind [of the breath], which is not caused by [attending to] shape or colour.¹²⁷ When the meditator has practised, has practised much the sign [of wind], he extends it¹²⁸ at the tip of the nose, at the glabella,¹²⁹ at the forehead. He establishes it in many places and pervades his head with [the sign of] wind. From here on, he extends [the sign further and], and pervades the whole body with rapture and pleasure (*pīṭisukha*). This is called “success” (*sampatti*).¹³⁰

Furthermore, there is a meditator who from the beginning sees different signs such as smoke, mist, dust, gold sand, or [he experiences] the pricking of a needle or an ant’s bite, or he sees various forms (or colours). If the meditator’s mind is not clearly aware of these different signs, his mind will give rise to different perceptions, and there will be distortion [of perception] (*vipallāsa, vipariyāya*), not the perception of the breath. If the meditator is clearly aware of them, he does not attend to different signs. Mindfully breathing in and mindfully breathing out, he avoids attending to other signs. If the meditator attends thus, different signs promptly cease, and he obtains the subtle sign.¹³¹

When the mind is heedful, mindfully breathing in and mindfully breathing out, the sign [arises]. Due to [the arising of] the sign, motivation (*chanda*) to practise arises. Due to motivation, mindfully breathing in and mindfully breathing out, rapture arises. Due to rapture, and due to motivation, mindfully breathing in and mindfully breathing out, equanimity arises. Due to equanimity, due to

¹²⁴ For a better understanding, see Bhikkhu Soṇa’s “The Mystery of the Breath Nimitta” (2000): <http://www.birken.ca/library>. For a more detailed study of *nimitta*, see **Nimitta**, SD 19.7.

¹²⁵ Pm 3.170/2:171. *Evam evaṃ bhikkhu nāsik’agge vā mukha, nimitte vā satim upaṭṭhapetvā nisinno hoti, na āgate vā gate vā assāsa, passāse manasi karoti, na āgatā vā gatā vā assāsa, passāsā aviditā honti, padhānañ ca paññāyati, payogañ ca sādheti. Visesaṃ adhigacchati padhānañ ca.* (Pm 3.170/2:171)

¹²⁶ For nn, see Vimm:Ñ 1:420 n628, etc.

¹²⁷ *Sanṭhāna, rūpa/vaṇṇa*. See Vimm:Ñ 1:420 n629.

¹²⁸ See Vimm:Ñ 1:421 n630 (long n).

¹²⁹ “Glabella,” the smooth part of the forehead between the eyebrows.

¹³⁰ See Vimm:Ñ 1:421-423 for nn631-637.

¹³¹ Cf Pm 1:185.

rapture, and due to motivation, mindfully breathing and mindfully breathing out, his mind becomes undistracted. When the mind is undistracted, the hindrances are suspended and the jhāna factors manifest.¹³² Thus, the meditator, having attained stillness (*upasama*), attains the four jhāna attainments,¹³³ as was taught fully above. (Vimm:Ñ 8.103; Vimm:Ñ 1:420-423)¹³⁴

Bhikkhu Soṇa reminds us that these warnings about **not being distracted** in meditation seems directly derived from the Ānāpāna,sati Sutta (M 118) itself, where the Buddha declares:

“I do not say there is development of breathing for one who is forgetful, who lacks clear understanding.” [§26.3]

6.3 THE VISUDDHI,MAGGA EXPLANATION

6.3.1 However, in **the Visuddhi,magga**, we find a literalization of a simile that needs to be corrected so as not to confuse meditators. Let us first look at the problem passages:

... So too, the bhikkhu should not look for the in-breaths and out-breaths anywhere else than the place normally touched by them. And he should take the rope of mindfulness and the goad of understanding, and fixing his mind on the place normally touched by them, he should go on giving his attention to that. For as he gives his attention in this way they reappear after no long time, as the oxen did at the drinking place where they met. So he can secure them with the rope of mindfulness, and yoking them in that same place and prodding them with the goad of understanding, he can keep on applying himself to the meditation subject.

214. When he does so in this way, the sign [see corresponding note, next paragraph] soon appears to him. But it is not the same for all; on the contrary, some say that when it appears it does so to certain people producing a light touch like cotton or silk cotton or a draught.

215. But this is the exposition given in the commentaries: It appears to some like a star or a cluster of gems or a cluster of pearls, to others with a rough touch like that of silk-cotton seeds or a peg made of heartwood, to others like a long braid string or a wreath of flowers or a puff of smoke, to others like a stretched-out cobweb or a film of cloud or a lotus flower or a chariot wheel or the moon’s disk or the sun’s disk. (Vism 8.213-215/284 f; Soṇa’s emphases)

6.3.2 A note from the **Param’attha,mañjusā**, the commentary to the Visuddhi,magga, reads:

“The sign” is the learning sign and the counterpart sign, for both are stated here together. Herein, the 3 similes beginning with cotton are properly the learning sign, the rest are both. “Some” are certain teachers. The similes beginning with the “cluster of gems” are properly the counterpart sign.

(VismA 786, n58) [6.2.1]

6.3.3 The similes mentioned in Vism 8.214-215 above represent both tactile and visual sense perceptions. It clearly reflects that

¹³² Cf Pm 1:177.

¹³³ It is uncertain whether 四禪定 *sì chán dìng* means “the 4 dhyanas” in pl, or the 4th dhyana in sg. Because the 4th dhyana is not mentioned in the preceding [?], this prob refers to the former. (Vimm:Ñ 1:423 n638). Anyway from the context of Vimm 8.103 (esp with mention of “jhāna factors”) the 4 form dhyanas are meant.

¹³⁴ See also Sona 2000 amplified n: Vimm:ESK 158 f.

a mix-up came about as a result of an error in the transmission (perhaps an error in written transcription) based on data obtained from earlier commentarial material such as the Vimuttimagga and the canonical Paṭisambhidāmagga, or of having taken literally what originally was meant as a simile.

(Bhikkhu Soṇa 2000:3)

6.4 HOW DHYANA ARISES THROUGH THE BREATH MEDITATION

6.4.1 The 2 signs

6.4.1.1 We have already spoken of the 3 kinds of mental signs (*nimitta*) [6.1]. Here, we will focus on the last two to understand, in theory, how dhyana arises. **Dhyana** (*jhāna*) is such a joyful and peaceful state of mind, freed of all sense stimuli that it is also known as “calmness” (*samatha*). In terms of actual practice of the breath meditation, this happens when the mind is said to have attained “full concentration.” This blissfully freed mind is preceded by what is known as “access concentration.”

6.4.1.2 The mind becomes concentrated on the level of access by the abandonment of **the mental hindrances** [6.4.3.7], that is, when the mind is completely free (but briefly) from the body. The mental hindrances are the demanding and distracting activities of the 6 senses (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind). When the mind is fully free of the body, the physical senses also cease their activities, so that the mind, too, stops conceiving, that is, generating ideas with the senses-faculties. The mind, then, basically only perceives, without *conceiving*.¹³⁵ In aesthetic terms, we can say that, in dhyana, the mind **feels**, directly experiences the object, free from thinking (without projecting itself).¹³⁶

6.4.1.3 The whole process leading up to dhyana is easy to understand in term of “access concentration” and “full concentration.” When we are focused on watching the breath, having let go of all distractions, we come closer to directly seeing the breath as it really is, that is, we do not even need to think about it. This stage is known as “access” (*upacāra*), because we are in the proximity or “neighbourhood” of full concentration or dhyana— hence, this is called “neighbourhood concentration” or “access concentration” (*upacāra, samādhi*).

When the mind is totally free of the mental hindrances for a longer period, then it is fully free from the 6 senses, and fully absorbed in itself, it is said to have attained dhyana, that is, “full concentration” (*appanā, samādhi*).¹³⁷ When this sense-free concentration arises only momentarily, on and off, it is called “**momentary concentration**” (*khaṇika samādhi*). Even these momentary flashes of calm and clarity—like lightning flashing in the dark night sky—we can clearly, even fully, but only briefly, see the true nature of impermanence, or of suffering or of nonself. This is truly an epiphany, a sudden but overwhelming vision of true reality that is profoundly joyful and liberating.

6.4.1.4 Dhyana is said to have arisen when all **the dhyana-factors**—initial application, sustained application, zest, joy, and one-pointedness¹³⁸—are attained, the mind is said to have attained full concentration or attainment (*appanā*), that is, the 1st dhyana.¹³⁹ In practice, it is difficult to distinguish between the two—

¹³⁵ On perceiving (*sañjānana*), or better, perception (*saññā*), see **Saññā**, SD 17.4. On conception (*maññanā*), see **Mūla,pariyāya S** (M 1,3) n, SD 11.9; **Ejā S 1** (S 35.90), SD 29.10 (3). See also SD 31.10 (2.6); SD 43.3 (4.2.3.5).

¹³⁶ On the usage of “feeling” in meditation, see Reflection R418, “Feeling meditation,” 2015.

¹³⁷ For further details on *upacāra samādhi* and *appanā samādhi*, see **Samadhi**, SD 33.1a (3.1).

¹³⁸ These dhyana-factors (*jhān’āṅga*) are also fivefold, respectively: (1) *vitakka*, (2) *vicāra*, (3) *pīti*, (4) *sukha*, and (5) *ek’aggata*: see SD 8.4 (6).

¹³⁹ On the dhyanas, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

access concentration and full concentration—since their only difference is in their duration. Access concentration is only *momentary*, while full concentration is *sustained*: it can last for hours, even days (as in the case of the Buddha).

7 Breath meditation in practice

Box 7. PRACTICAL SUMMARY ON BREATH MEDITATION (Soṇa Bhikkhu):

- (1) Attend to the sensation of breath/air wherever it enters and exits the body.
- (2) If visual perceptions arise, ignore them.
- (3) If the mind wanders, do not allow it. Return to only the point of contact of breath.
- (4) Hold attention on the breathing process throughout the entire duration of in-breaths and out-breaths.
- (5) The sensation or perception of moving air turns into a static feeling—this is a sign of the mind stilling.
- (6) Dwell on this airy, buoyant quality, which should pervade the head, as a sense of cool and airy emptiness. This may pervade the whole body. This is a further “sign” of growing stillness.
- (7) Keep focusing on this experience of airy lightness.
- (8) All mental hindrances [4.4.3.7] will fall away and the 5 dhyana-factors¹⁴⁰ will arise (at any of 3 levels: weak, medium or strong).
- (9) Refer to the Ānāpānasati Sutta for further instructions.

7.1 SEQUENCE OF PRACTICE

The first exercise of the 16-steps of the Ānāpānasati Sutta closely corresponds to that of the Madhyama Āgama, which speaks at first of simply knowing in-breath and out-breath, and then noting them to be long or short. This is followed by training in experiencing the “whole body” and in calming the “bodily activities.”

Anālayo remarks on his footnote:

In regard to the last of these steps, MĀ 98 agrees with the Pali versions on instructing to train in calming the bodily activities when breathing in, but when breathing out it speaks of training in calming the verbal activities (T1.582c17: 學止口行息出). This appears to be a textual corruption, since the pattern of the instructions in all other cases simply applies what had been done during the in-breath to the out-breath.

Another exposition of these four steps of mindfulness of breathing, found in SĀ 810 at T2.208a27, does have calming the bodily formations on both occasions, when breathing in and when breathing out. (2005:5 n35)

7.2 THE ĀGAMA VERSION

In the contemplating of the body of **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta**,¹⁴¹ the Pāli sequence is “**the breath meditation**,” “the 4 postures,” and “clear comprehension.” The sequence in the Madhyama Āgama versions, however, is just the reverse: clear comprehension, the 4 postures, and breath meditation.¹⁴² On this issue of practice sequence of the breath meditation, **Anālayo** notes:

¹⁴⁰ “Dhyana factors,” *jhān’āṅga*: **Vibhaṅga** gives a list of 5 dhyana-factors as follows: initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), zest [joyful interest, or simply “joy”] (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) (Vbh 257). See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4(5-6).

¹⁴¹ D 22; M 10.

¹⁴² MĀ 98 = T1.582b21.

A point in favour of the Madhyama Āgama presentation is that **mindfulness of the four postures and clear comprehension [full awareness] of the activities of the body** are relatively rudimentary forms of contemplation. Due to their more elementary character, it seems reasonable to place them at the beginning of an exposition of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. From a practical perspective, these two types of mindfulness practices would constitute convenient ways for building up a foundation in mindfulness, thereby enabling the meditator to better undertake the more sophisticated exercises listed later on.

Another point in favour of the Madhyāma Āgama sequence is that mindfulness of postures and of activities is predominantly concerned with the body in action. In contrast, the Pāli instructions for mindfulness of breathing describe the practitioner sitting down cross-legged in order to carry out this exercise.

The same requirement may well apply to the remaining exercises for mindfulness of breathing to the third position, after mindfulness of postures and activities, the description of the sitting postures would also move to the most convenient position within the Pāli list of exercises for mindfulness of the body. Such a shift of position can moreover claim for support the Pañca, vimśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā and the Śāriputrābhidharma, both of which similarly have mindfulness of postures and activities precede mindfulness of breathing.¹⁴³ (2005:6 f)

8 Living and recent teachers

8.1 The Ānāpāna, sati Sutta describes the method used by the Buddha himself to win awakening. The best way of understanding the Ānāpāna, sati Sutta is to cultivate the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing with guidance from a living master or an experienced teacher. The purpose of this Sutta is for us to a practical one: the experience of calm and insight through mindfulness of the breath. It is like a driving manual, but one has to learn to drive under the guidance of an experienced instructor before one can learn to drive correctly and safely.

8.2 Many good teachings and commentaries have been given on this Sutta. A most comprehensive and helpful theoretical study of the breath meditation is perhaps **Anālayo's *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct way to realization*** (2003:125-136) and fully annotated, is actually an exposition on **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), SD 13, but the common passages are valuable for a good understanding of the Ānāpāna, sati Sutta. Such writings highlight the historical importance of the breath meditation as an early Buddhist teaching, which are still available to us, as such, we are fortunate enough to experience the benefits of the authentic practice, that is, breath meditation as taught by the Buddha and practised by the early saints.

Nyanaponika Thera's *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (1962), although dated in parts, is still a classic, containing an anthology of relevant texts translated from the Pali and Sanskrit. Chapter 6 deals with the mindfulness of breathing (pp 108-113). Part 2 contains the basic text of Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (translated with notes) (pp 115-135); Part 3.39 is the Discourse on Mindfulness of Breathing (excerpts: M 118,15-43) (pp 165-169).

Ñāṇamoli's translation, *Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānāpānasati): Buddhist texts from the Pali Canon and Extracts from the Pali Commentaries*¹⁴⁴ is invaluable for the serious student and teacher for a more extensive study of the text. This is helpful sutta-based background reading, which gives us a good idea of the true purpose of breath meditation.

¹⁴³ **Pañca, vimśati, sāhasrikā**, Dutt 1934:204, tr Conze 1990:153; **Śāriputrābhidharma**, T1548 = T28.613b3.

¹⁴⁴ 1952; 2nd ed 1964 (1973).

Buddhadāsa's well-known *Ānāpānasati: Mindfulness with Breathing: unveiling the secrets of life; a manual for beginners* (1989)¹⁴⁵ is written from a spiritual reformer's viewpoint and is especially readable for those who wish to make a contemporary application of the meditation. Such writings make us aware of a wide variety of methods and explanations available to us, and we should try them out to see which ones help us feel more calm and clear—and joyful—in mind.

Sona¹⁴⁶ has written an important article, "The mystery of the breath nimitta, or the case of the missing simile: an essay on aspects of the practice of breath meditation" (2000). This must-read article is found at <http://www.birken.ca/library> or its mirrors.

Brahmavaṁso's article, "The beautiful breath: The *Ānāpānasati Sutta*," in clear simple language, is in the *Dhamma Journal*.¹⁴⁷ This practical article helps put us on the right track towards improving our breath meditation, which means that we need to learn from the mistakes so that we progress in our own practice.

Thich Nhat Hanh's *Breathe! You Are Alive: Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing* was first published as *Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing* (1988), with commentary (1996).¹⁴⁸ This book is popular for the western and westernized mind for its contemporary style. It is a good non-technical introductory reading to breath meditation. However, it is wanting in some of its technical details. Whenever we are uncertain from its reading, it helps to check with the translation below (SD 7.13), along with its notes.

For a comparative study of the breath meditation as taught in the Pali Canon and the method as taught in the Chinese Ekōttara Āgama, see **Mahā Rāhu'ovāda Sutta**, SD 3.11 (2).

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NOTE OF APPRECIATION

My joyful thanks to friends of the Pali Yahoo Group, especially John Kelly for his invaluable help in proof-reading the text and suggestions, and to Ong Yong Peng for his contagious enthusiasm and energy. My maiden attempt at translating this sutta was done using the trilinear method (Pali/verbatim English/idiomatic English) used during the "Pali Without Grammar" course (Pali Centre, Singapore, Feb-Mar 2003). The trilinear method was then introduced to the Pali Yahoo Group where it is well received. The trilinear edition is being used by such centres as the Bhavana Society, Washington, and the Insight Meditation Society, Barre, Massachusetts, USA. Beginning March 2005, I am deeply grateful to **Anālayo** for sharing the drafts of his *Comparative Study of the Majjhima* in the light of Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan texts which also provide very insightful commentaries into the Suttas and early Buddhist practice. I have also been deeply moved by **Sujato's** *A History of Mindfulness* (2004), which uncannily speaks my own mind on the issues of "vipassana," sutta study, worldly monastics and other issues. Above all, Sujato reminds us that "silence is no option" when the truth can help us grow on the spiritual path.

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¹⁴⁵ Tr from the Siamese by Santikaro Bhikkhu; Bangkok, 1987; 2nd ed, 1989.

¹⁴⁶ Birken Forest Monastery, British Columbia, Canada, belonging to Ajahn Chah's lineage.

¹⁴⁷ Dhamma Journal 3,1 Jan 2002:61-108 (ch 9).

¹⁴⁸ Tr fr the Vietnamese by Annabel Laity. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990; rev 1996. Although this is a very free tr, it is a good start to further examine meditation so as to inspire us into the actual practice of breath meditation.

Ānāpāna,sati Sutta

The Discourse on the Mindfulness of the In-and-out-breathing

M 118

[78] 1 Thus have I heard.

The Buddha and the great saints teaching

1.2 At one time, the Blessed One was staying in the Mansion of Migāra’s Mother in the Eastern Park near **Sāvattthī**, together with a great many very well-known elder disciples:¹⁴⁹

the venerable Sāriputta,
the venerable Mahā Moggallāna,
the venerable Mahā Kassapa,
the venerable Mahā Kaccāna,
the venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita,
the venerable Mahā Kappina,
the venerable Mahā Cunda,
the venerable [79] Anuruddha,
the venerable Revata,
the venerable Ānanda,

and other very well-known elder disciples.

2 Now at that time, elder monks were advising and instructing **new monks**:

some elder monks were advising and instructing	10 monks;
some elder monks were advising and instructing	20 monks;
some elder monks were advising and instructing	30 monks;
some elder monks were advising and instructing	40 monks.

2.2 And the new monks, having been exhorted and instructed by the elder monks, had attained progressively higher distinction.¹⁵⁰

The Buddha extends his stay at Sāvattthī

3 At that time—it was¹⁵¹ the Uposatha day¹⁵² of the 15th on the full-moon night of **the invitation ceremo-**

¹⁴⁹ “Together ... elder disciples,” *sambahulehi abhiññātehi abhiññātehi therehi sāvakehi saddhim*. This phrase is stock: **Mahā Go,siṅga S** (M 32,1/1:212), SD 44.12; **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118,1/3:78 f), SD 7.13; **Kaṇṭhaka S** (A 10.72,1/5:133), SD 80.17. Cf the opening of **Naḷaka,pāna S** (M 68,2/1:462), SD 37.4.

¹⁵⁰ “Progressively higher distinction,” *ulāraṃ pubbenāparaṃ visesaṃ*, here refers to any of the 4 stages of sainthood: streamwinner (*sot’āpanna*), once-returner (*sākad’āgāmī*), non-returner (*anāgāmī*) and arhat (*arahanta*); also, as *ulāraṃ visesaṃ*, only in **Lohicca S** (D 12/1:229-233 passim), SD 34.8. In the sense of the dhyānas (*jhāna*), see, eg, **Dhamma,cetiya S** (M 89,12+18/2:121, 124), SD 64.10; **Bhikkhuṇī Vāsaka S** (S 47.3+10/5:154 f ×5), SD 24.2. For defs of the 4 types of saints, see eg **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 112,9-12/3:80) & **Mahāli S** (D 6,13/1:156). Cf the story of Sāriputta’s meeting with Assaji: when Sāriputta realizes that he does not attain any “higher [further] excellence” (*upari,visesa*), ie any higher attainment than streamwinning, he decides to meet the Buddha himself (DhA 1:94).

¹⁵¹ *Tad ahu* (cf Skt *tad ahan, tad ahar*), “that day, that very day.” See *aha(n), aha(r)* in CPD 1:527 & DPL 1:271.

ny¹⁵³ —the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the community of monks. [§7]

3.2 Surveying the very silent community of monks, the Blessed One addressed them (thus):

4 “Bhikshus, I am content¹⁵⁴ with this progress. My mind is content, bhikshus, with this progress.

4.2 So, bhikshus, assert all the more effort to attain the unattained, to achieve the unachieved, to realize the unrealized.

4.3 I will wait right here at Sāvattḥī for **the Komudī full moon** of the 4th month.”¹⁵⁵

5 The monks of the country-side heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One will remain at Sāvattḥī for the Komudī full moon of the 4th month.”

5.2 The monks of the countryside then left for Sāvattḥī to see the Blessed One.

6 And the elder monks exhorted and instructed the new monks all the more intensively:

some elder monks were advising and instructing	10 monks;
some elder monks were advising and instructing	20 monks;
some elder monks were advising and instructing	30 monks;
some elder monks were advising and instructing	40 monks.

6.2 And the new monks, having been exhorted and instructed by the elder monks, attained *progressively higher distinction*.

Teaching on the heartwood

7 At that time—it was the Uposatha day of the 15th the full-moon night of **the Komudī full moon** of the 4th month—the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the community of monks. [§3] [80]

7.2 Then, surveying the silent community of monks, the Blessed One addressed them.¹⁵⁶

8 “Bhikshus, this assembly is without idle chatter, free from idle chatter.

8.2 Bhikshus, this assembly is pure, established in **the heartwood**.¹⁵⁷

8.3 Such a community (*saṅgha*) of monks as this, bhikshus, such an assembly (*parisā*)¹⁵⁸ of monks as this, bhikshus, is difficult to see in this world.

¹⁵² Uposatha. **The Indian year**, according to the ancient Indian system, is divided into 3 seasons (*utu*)—the hot season (*gimha*), the cold season (*hemanta*), and the rains (*vassa*) (A 4:138, SnA 317)—each lasting for 4 lunar months or “moons” (*cātu,māsa*). Each of these seasons is subdivided into eight fortnights (*pakkha*), the 3rd and the 7th containing 14 days and the others 15. Each month has 2 fortnights. Within each fortnight, the nights of the full moon (of the “bright half” or waxing moon, *sukka,pakkha*) and the new moon (either the 14th or the 15th) (of the “dark half” or waning moon,” *kaṇha,pakkha*) and night of the half-moon (the 8th) are regarded as especially auspicious, called *uposatha*, Sabbath or observance day. On king Bimbisāra’s proposal, the Buddha adopted these observance days (V: 101 f), on which occasion the monks would assemble to recite the Monastic Code (*pāṭimokkha*) (V 1:101-104) and the laity would visit the monasteries to observe the Uposatha precepts (the 8 Precepts). For the Indian seasons, see **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (9.4). On the monsoons, see **Vāsi,jaṭa S** (S 22.101,20/3:155) n on “the cold season,” SD 15.2a.

¹⁵³ *Pavāraṇā*. This ceremony concludes the annual three-month monastic rains retreat, during which monks invite one another to be admonished regarding any misconduct that had been “seen, heard or suspected” of them. **Pavāraṇā S** (S 8.7/1:190-192) describes such a proceeding.

¹⁵⁴ *Āradḍha*, “accomplished, achieved; pleased, satisfied” (CPD, DP), pp of *ārajjhati*; not pp of *ārabhati*, “undertakes, initiates.”

¹⁵⁵ Komudī is the full-moon day of the month of Kattikā, the 4th month of the rainy season. It is so called because the white water-lily (*kumuda*) bloomed at that time.

¹⁵⁶ The foll whole section as at D 1:117, 133; M 3:80; A 2:183.

¹⁵⁷ “Established in the heartwood” (*sāre patitṭhitā*), ie, established in moral virtue, etc (AA 3:168). *Suddhā sāre*, alt tr “of the pure essence”: *sāra*, “heartwood,” that is, the core or essence of anything; the pith or the best of wood—a simile for spiritual strength and attainment. See, for example, **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18,12/1:111) and **Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S** (D 25,15-19). The Buddha’s humour is evident in such a simile given in *Udumbarika Sīhanāda S* (D 25,15-19/3:47-53).

8.4 Such a **community of monks** [a sangha] as this, bhikshus, such an assembly as this, bhikshus, is worthy of offerings,
worthy of hospitality,
worthy of gifts,
worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms,¹⁵⁹
a supreme field of merit for the world.

8.5 For such a community of monks as this, bhikshus, such an assembly as this, bhikshus, even a **small gift** becomes great, and a great one becomes greater.¹⁶⁰

8.6 Such community of monks as this, bhikshus, such an assembly as this, bhikshus, is **worthy of going many yojanas** [leagues] with only a travel-bag¹⁶¹ just to see it.¹⁶²

The 4 types of saints

9 Bhikshus, there are **monks** in this community of monks who are **arhats,**
with mental influxes¹⁶³ destroyed, who have lived the holy life,
done what is to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal,¹⁶⁴
destroyed the fetters of being, fully freed through true knowledge.¹⁶⁵
Such is the nature, bhikshus, of the monks in this community of monks.

10 Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who,
with the destruction of the 5 lower fetters,¹⁶⁶ are **spontaneously reborn**,¹⁶⁷

¹⁵⁸ *Saṅgha* and *parisā* may be synonyms here, but more likely, the Buddha is alluding to the community (*saṅgha*) of noble disciples (the 4 kinds of saints), whereas “assembly” (*parisā*) incl monks who have not gained the path, but are pure in moral conduct and diligent in mental training, and will attain the path in no time.

¹⁵⁹ *Añjalī*, or more fully, *kamal’añjalī*, “lotus gesture,” is, with palms pressed together between the chest level and the crown showing one’s devotion.

¹⁶⁰ For a discussion on gifts, see, eg, **Dakkhiṇā, vibhaṅga S** (M 142) and **Dakkhiṇā S** (A 4.78/2:80 f).

¹⁶¹ *Puṭosena*, vl *puṭamsena* (mostly Comys), a bag for carrying food when travelling, a knapsack. See foll n.

¹⁶² *Puṭosenāpi tathā, rūpo ayam bhikkhave bhikkhu, saṅgho, tathā, rūpā ayam parisā* (Sī Pī Ka). As at D 1:117, 133 (= *pātheyyam gahetvā, puṭo amse assāti*, “with provision in hand, a bag over the shoulder,” DA 1:288, 4:139; AA 3:168); M 3:80; A 2:183. See prec n.

¹⁶³ “**Mental influxes**,” *āsava* (lit, “inflow, outflow”) or “mental fluxes,” comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, bad (influence), or simply left untr. Abhidhamma lists 4 kinds of āsava: those of (1) sense-desire (*kāma’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16,2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*oghā*) and “yokes” (*yogā*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting that of views) is prob older, and virtually syn with the ignorance [SD 11.14 (9.1)], craving for sense-pleasures, and craving for existence found at the start of the dependent arising formula. The triad is also found more frequently in the suttas: SD 30.3 (1.3.2); **D 33**,1.10(20)/3:216; **M 2**,99.3 (SD 8.10), **M 9**,70/1:55 (SD 11.14); **M 121**,12/3:108 (SD 11.3); **S 38.8**/4:256 (SD 75.22(8)), **45.163**/5:56; **A 3.58**,5/1:165 (SD 94.5), **A 3.59**,4/1:167 (SD 80.16), **A 6.63**,9/3:414 (SD 6.11). The destruction of these āsavas is equivalent to arhathood. See SD 56.4 (3.8.1.1); BDict āsava.

¹⁶⁴ *Sadatthā*, may be resolved as: (1) *sa-d-atthā*, “one’s own goal,” (2) *sant + atthā*, “the sublime goal,” “the ideal.”

¹⁶⁵ “Fully free through true knowledge,” *sammad-aññā*: SD 54.2g (2.2.2).

¹⁶⁶ They keep us within the lower realms (the sense-worlds). **The 10 fetters** (*dasa, samyojanā*) are: (1) personality view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa, rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa, rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*paṭigha*) is replaced by ill will (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*).

and there attain final nirvana, without ever returning from that world.
Such is the nature, bhikshus, of the monks in this community of monks.

11 Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks those who, with the destruction of the 3 fetters¹⁶⁸ and with the diminishing of lust, hate and delusion, are **once-returners**, returning only once¹⁶⁹ to this world **[81]** to make an end of suffering. Such is the nature, bhikshus, of the monks in this community of monks.

12 Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks those who, with the total destruction of the 3 fetters, are **streamwinners**, no longer bound for the lower world,¹⁷⁰ sure of going over to self-awakening. Such is the nature, bhikshus, of the monks in this community of monks.¹⁷¹

The 7 sets of spiritual strategies¹⁷²

13 (1) Bhikshus, there are **monks** in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the 4 focuses of mindfulness**.¹⁷³ Such, bhikshus, is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.

(2) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the 4 right exertions**.¹⁷⁴ Such, bhikshus, is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.

(3) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the 4 bases for (spiritual) success**.¹⁷⁵ Such, bhikshus, is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.

¹⁶⁷ As a non-returner, reborn in the pure abodes (*suddh'āvāsa*), the 5 highest heavens of the form world (*rūpa,loka*) inhabited only by non-returners who live there until they become arhats and attain nirvana. These worlds are Āviha ("Non-declining"), Ātappa ("Unworried"), Sudassā ("Clearly Visible"), Sudasī ("Clear-visioned") and Akañiṭṭhā ("Highest") (D 3:237, M 3:103, Vbh 425, Pug 42-46). One may become a non-returner in this world itself, but upon dying, one is reborn in the pure abodes, never to be return to the sense-world any more.

¹⁶⁸ The (first) 3 fetters: see §10n.

¹⁶⁹ *Ke sakim deva*.

¹⁷⁰ *Avinipāta*, alt tr "not fated for birth in a suffering state"; opp of *vinipāta*, "the world of ruin/suffering," another name for the 4 woeful courses (*duggati*) or the 4 lower worlds (*apāya*), esp as *niraya, tiracchāna, pettivisaya, asurakāyā* (Khpa 189,12 = DA 2:496,11 (on D 2:55,27) = SA 2:97,5 (on S 2:92,16); Vism 13.92 f). Sometimes 5 courses (*pañca, gati*) (D 33,2.1(4)/3:234; A 9.68/4:459) are mentioned: the hells (*niraya*), the animal birth (*tiracchāna, yoni*), the ghost realm (*petti-* or *pitti, visaya*), the human world (*manussa*) and the heavenly world (*deva*). Of these, the first three are woeful, with the asura-demons (*asura, kāya*) as the fourth woeful course. The remaining two are "happy courses" (*sugati*). For a discussion, see A:ÑB 1999:14-19. See **Pañca, gati S** (A 9.68/4:459), SD 2.20. On a late work, **Pañca, gati, dīpana**, ed L Feer (JPTS 1884:152 ff); tr Feer, Annales du Musée Guimet 5, 1883:514-528: sv Naraka, kaṇḍa, Tiracchāna~, Peta~, Manussa~, Deva~.

¹⁷¹ On the noble individuals, see **Kiṭṭhā, giri S** (M 70), SD 12.2 (5).

¹⁷² On the 7 sets: see (1.3) above + SD 9 (10bc).

¹⁷³ *Sati'paṭṭhāna*. I have analyzed it as *sati + upaṭṭhāna* (setting up) rather than *sati + paṭṭhāna* (foundation). Cf Ñāṇa-moli & Bodhi 2001 n136.

¹⁷⁴ *Samma-p, padhāna*, right exertion or striving, same as right effort, the 6th limb of the noble eightfold path.

¹⁷⁵ *Iddhi, pāda*, the 4 bases for (spiritual) success: focus of will (*chanda*), of effort (*vīriya*), of mind (*citta*), of investigation (*vīmaṃsā*) (D 3:213 = M 1:103 = 2:11; D 3:221; Vbh 216).

- (4) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the 5 spiritual faculties.**¹⁷⁶
Such, bhikshus, is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (5) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the 5 spiritual powers.**¹⁷⁷
Such, bhikshus, is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (6) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the 7 awakening-factors.**¹⁷⁸
Such, bhikshus, is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (7) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the noble eightfold path.**
Such, bhikshus, is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.

Meditation methods

- 14** (1) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **lovingkindness.**
Such is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (2) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in **[82]** this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **compassion.**
Such is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (3) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **gladness.**
Such is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (4) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **equanimity.**
Such is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (5) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **foulness.**¹⁷⁹
Such is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.

¹⁷⁶ *Indriya*, the 5 spiritual faculties: faith (*saddhā*), effort (*vīriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*) (D 2:239, S 5:193; Tha 352).

¹⁷⁷ *Bala*, the 5 spiritual powers: same as *pañc'indriya*, but are unshakable (untouched by their opposites) in the stream-winner (A 5.15) (D 3:239, S 48.43, S 50, A 3:10, Vbh 342).

¹⁷⁸ See §§30-36.

¹⁷⁹ "The cultivation of foulness," *asubha, bhāvanā*, or "meditation on the foulness," ie the contemplation on the 31 (Comy, 32) parts of the body. In the Suttas, this practice is called *asubha, saññā* (perception of foulness), as in **Mahā Rāhu'ovāda S** (M 10,10/1:57). In the Comys, *asubha, nimitta* (the sign of foulness) refers to one or other of the 10 foul objects, ie a corpse in one of the 10 stages of bodily decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f). Sometimes (eg Vism 8.2) "mindfulness regarding the body" (*kāya, gatā, sati*) is used here. Sometimes the term "perception of foulness" (*paṭikkula, saññā*) is used here, but it specifically refers to the foulness of food (D 3:289, 291; S 5:132; A 4:49). In fact, *kāya, gata, sati* is a general term denoting a range of practices based on the perception of the impermanence of the physical body. See BDict: *kāya-gatā-sati*.

- (6) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the perception of impermanence.** Such is the nature of the monks in this community of monks.
- (7) Bhikshus, there are *monks* in this community of monks who dwell devoted to the cultivation of **the mindfulness of the in-and-out breath.**¹⁸⁰

I. THE CULTIVATION OF THE MINDFULNESS OF THE IN-AND-OUT-BREATHING

Preamble: The preliminary stages and benefits of the practice

15 (1) Bhikshus, when cultivated, often developed, is of great fruit, great benefit. ¹⁸²	the mindfulness of in-and-out-breathing, ¹⁸¹	[§§16-23]
(2) <u>The mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing</u> , when cultivated, often developed, brings to perfection	the 4 focuses of mindfulness.	[§§24-28]
(3) <u>The 4 focuses of mindfulness</u> when cultivated, often developed, bring to perfection	the 7 awakening-factors.	[§§29-41]
(4) <u>The 7 awakening-factors</u> when cultivated, often developed, bring to perfection	true knowledge and liberation.	[§§42-44]

CULTIVATING THE MINDFULNESS OF THE BREATH

16 And, bhikshus, how is **the mindfulness of in-and-out-breathing** cultivated, how is it often developed, to be of great fruit, great benefit?¹⁸³

17 Here, bhikshus, a monk¹⁸⁴ who has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty abode,¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Comy explains the reason why of all the meditation methods listed, only the breath meditation is expounded in full: this is because a large number of the monks take it as their meditation practice (MA 4:139). It should also be added that the breath meditation had been the key meditation in the Buddha's own spiritual life. The first record we have of his meditation experience was breath meditation when he was a child of 7, and on the night of his awakening, too, he used the breath meditation (MA 2:291). See **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,17.31-44/1:242-249), SD 1.12.

¹⁸¹ "In-and-out-breathing" *ānāpāna*. The Skt word for "breath" is *prāṇa* (Pali *pāṇa*), which also refers to "life-force" (Chin qi). Its Greek cognate is *pneuma*, from which we get "pneumatic," "pneumonia," etc. Another Indian word for breath is *āna*, as found in the dvandva *ānāpāna*, usually rendered as "in and out breath," sometimes used interchangeably as "out and in breath." The word *ānā* has the Latin cognate of *anima* (breath, soul) as found in such English words as "animal," "animated," etc. The Paṭisambhidā, magga Comy say: "*Āna* is air going inwards; *apāna* is air going outwards. Some, however, say it is the other way around" (PmA:Ce 320). See (2).

¹⁸² §§15-23. See **Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 62,5/1:420).

¹⁸³ See M:ÑB, 2nd ed 2001:1190 f nn140-142. This section is identical to that of **Sati'paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,4) except for the similes in the latter. The whole section on the Mindfulness of the Breath (M 118.16-22) here is identical to that of **Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 62,25-29/1:425-427). The Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S ends by stating that breath meditation benefits one in that "even the final in-breaths and out-breaths are known as they cease, not unknown" (M 62,30), that is, the practitioner dies with a calm and clear mind.

¹⁸⁴ DA on **Mahā Sati'paṭṭhāna S** with the identical context here says that "monk" (*bhikkhu*) indicates "whoever undertakes that practice ... is here comprised under the term *bhikkhu*." See Dh 142; also Dh 362, 260-270. Cf **Bhikkhu Vagga** (ch 25) and **Brāhmaṇa Vagga** (ch 26) of Dh.

¹⁸⁵ This stock of 3 places (a forest, *arañña*; the foot of a tree, *rukkha,mūla*; an empty abode, *suññ'āgāra*) conducive to meditation are at **D** 2:291; **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. **Pavevika Sutta** (A 3.92) mentions 7 places: a forest,

sits down, and having crossed his legs and keeping his body upright, establishes mindfulness before him.¹⁸⁶
17.2 — Mindfully¹⁸⁷ indeed he breathes in, mindfully he breathes out.¹⁸⁸

SYNOPSIS: THE 16 ASPECTS

A. The 1st tetrad: Contemplating the body¹⁸⁹

- 18** (1) Breathing *in long* [deep],¹⁹⁰ he understands, 'I breathe **in long** [Long in-breath]';¹⁹¹
Or, breathing *out long* [deep], he understands, 'I breathe **out long** [Long out-breath]';¹⁹²
(2) Or, breathing *in short*, he understands, 'I breathe **in short** [Short in-breath]';¹⁹³
Or, breathing *out short*, he understands, 'I breathe **out short** [Short out-breath]';¹⁹⁴
(3) He trains himself thus: 'Experiencing [Feeling] **the whole body** (of breath), I will breathe *in*';¹⁹⁵
He trains himself thus: 'Experiencing the whole body (of breath), I will breathe *out*';¹⁹⁶

the foot of a tree, a cemetery, a forest path [a remote forest], the open air, a heap of straw, a thatched shelter (*arañ-ñāṃ rukkha, mūlaṃ susānaṃ vana, pantham* [vl *vana, pattham*] *abbhokāsaṃ palāla, puñjam bhusāgāraṃ*, A 3.92/1:241, SD 44.2). **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2), prob a very ancient account, gives 9 places suitable for meditation, and the spiritual preparation for living in such places, thus: "Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, this aggregate of noble sense-restraint, this aggregate of noble mindfulness and full awareness, and this aggregate of noble contentment, he resorts to a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a gorge, a hillside cave, a cemetery, a remote forest [jungle grove], the open air, a heap of straw" (*so iminā ca ariyena sīla-k, khandhena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena indriya, saṃvarena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena sati, sampajaññena samannāgato imāya ca ariyāya santuṭṭhitāya samannāgato vivittam senāsanaṃ bhajati, araññam rukkha, mūlam pabbataṃ kandaram giri, guhaṃ susānaṃ vana, - pattham abbhokāsaṃ palāla, puñjam*, D 2,67/1:71 = SD 8.10; V 2:146; M 3:3; A 2:210. These are def at DA 209-210, VbhA 366 f. 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).

¹⁸⁶ **Parimukham**, 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 (1998:42 f digital ed), and Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (M:ÑB 2001: 527). See (2.3.3.3) above. On the 8 supports of meditation, see SD 60.1b (5.7.2).

¹⁸⁷ Ce Se Ke PTS *sato*.

¹⁸⁸ *So sato'va assasati sato passasati*. Cf the sentence for the Buddha's own breath meditation, where *va* or *eva* is omitted, in **lcchā, naṅgala S** (S 54.11,4), SD 44.9.

¹⁸⁹ On contemplation of the body, see SD 60.1b (5.8.1).

¹⁹⁰ The tr here is idiomatic. On these 4 tetrads and 16 aspects, see Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 2003:133-136. See (2.3.1.2).

¹⁹¹ *Dīgham vā assasanto, dīgham assasāmīti pajānāti*. 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 steps 1-2 (the long breath, the short breath; each long or short) are noted by *pajānāti* (he understands or knows); the rest (3-16) are *sikkhati* (he trains) or "training" aspects (ie one has to put in more regulated effort), "I will breathe in ... out," (*assasissāmi ... passasissāmi*). In the breath, see (2.1). See important n on "mental noting" [3]; also SD 56.13a (4.2): meditation language.

¹⁹² *Dīgham vā passasanto, dīgham passasāmīti pajānāti*. [4.4.1.1]

¹⁹³ *Rassaṃ vā assasanto, rassaṃ assasāmīti pajānāti*. [4.4.1.1]

¹⁹⁴ *Rassaṃ vā passasanto, rassaṃ passasāmīti pajānāti*. In practical terms, focusing on the first 2 factors of this tetrad, that is maintaining our 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). [4.4.1.2].

¹⁹⁵ *Sabba, kaya, paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.1.3 f]

- (4) He trains himself thus: ‘**Calming the bodily formation**¹⁹⁷ (of breath), I will breathe *in*’;¹⁹⁸
 He trains himself thus: ‘Calming the bodily formation (of breath), I will breathe *out*’.¹⁹⁹

B. The 2nd tetrad: Contemplating feelings²⁰⁰

- 19 (5) He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing **zest** [joy], I will breathe *in*’;²⁰¹
 He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing zest [joy], I will breathe *out*’;²⁰²
 (6) He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing **happiness**, I will breathe *in*’;²⁰³ [83]
 He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing happiness, I will breathe *out*’;²⁰⁴
 (7) He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing **the mental formations**,²⁰⁵ I will breathe *in*’;
 He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing the mental formations, I will breathe *out*’;²⁰⁶
 (8) He trains himself thus: ‘**Calming the mental formations**, I will breathe *in*’;²⁰⁷
 He trains himself thus: ‘Calming the mental formations, I will breathe *out*’.²⁰⁸

C. The 3rd tetrad: Contemplating the mind²⁰⁹

- 20 (9) He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing **the mind**, I will breathe *in*’;²¹⁰
 He trains himself thus: ‘Experiencing the mind, I will breathe *out*’;²¹¹

¹⁹⁶ *Sabba,kāya,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Experiencing the whole body (of breath),” *sabba,kāya,paṭisaṃvedī*. 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 [4.4.1.3 f].

¹⁹⁷ Or “activity.”

¹⁹⁸ *Passambhayam kāya,saṅkhāram assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “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*). [4.4.1.5]

¹⁹⁹ *Passambhayam kāya,saṅkhāram passasissāmīti sikkhati*. At this point even after the breath has been calmed down but we still do not feel zest (*pīti*) or the breath’s radiance (the “beautiful breath”), then, we should direct our attention to wilfully (but gently) arouse it: see (4.4.1.5).

²⁰⁰ On contemplation of the mind, see SD 60.1b (5.8.3).

²⁰¹ *Pīti,paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Zest,” *pīti*. Sometimes tr as “rapture,” but “**zest**” is closer to evoking a more subtle yet enthusing nature of *pīti*. We experience zest in 2 ways: by attaining either the 1st or 2nd dhyana in which zest is present, we experience it in the mode of calm (*samatha*); or, by emerging from that dhyana and reflecting that zest is subject to destruction, we experience zest by way 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 belongs to the formation group (*saṅkhāra-k,-khandha*) while happiness (*sukha*) belongs to the feeling group (*vedanā-k,-khandha*). Zest is compared to when a thirsty man lost in the desert finds water; happiness (*sukha*) is what he feels when he is drinking the water. See Vism 4.94 ff. [4.4.2.1]

²⁰² *Pīti,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.2.2].

²⁰³ *Sukha,paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.2.2]

²⁰⁴ *Sukha,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.2.2].

²⁰⁵ Or, “mental functions.” On *kāya,saṅkhāra*, see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,14); see (4.4.2.3).

²⁰⁶ *Citta,saṅkhāra,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.2.3-5].

²⁰⁷ *Passambhayam citta,saṅkhāram assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Calming the mental formations [mental functions],” *passambhayam citta,saṅkhāram*. [4.4.2.6].

²⁰⁸ *Passambhayam citta,saṅkhāram passasissāmīti sikkhati*.

²⁰⁹ On contemplation of the mind, see SD 60.1b (5.8.3).

²¹⁰ *Citta,paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Experiencing the mind,” *citta, paṭisaṃvedī*. Here, it refers to the 4 dhyanas. See (2.3.3.1-3).

²¹¹ *Citta,paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.3.1-3]

- (10) He trains himself thus: ‘**Gladdening the mind**, I will breathe *in*’;²¹²
 He trains himself thus: ‘Gladdening the mind, I will breathe *out*’;²¹³
 (11) He trains himself thus: ‘**Concentrating the mind**, I will breathe *in*’;²¹⁴
 He trains himself thus: ‘Concentrating the mind, I will breathe *out*’;²¹⁵
 (12) He trains himself thus: ‘**Freeing the mind**, I will breathe *in*’;²¹⁶
 He trains himself thus: ‘Freeing the mind, I will breathe *out*’.²¹⁷

D. The 4th tetrad: Contemplating dharmas²¹⁸

- 21** (13) He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating **impermanence**, I will breathe *in*’;²¹⁹
 He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating impermanence, I will breathe *out*’;²²⁰
 (14) He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating **fading away** (of lust), I will breathe *in*’;²²¹
 He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating fading away (of lust), I will breathe *out*’;²²²
 (15) He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating **cessation** (of suffering), I will breathe *in*’;²²³
 He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating cessation (of suffering), I will breathe *out*’;²²⁴
 (16) He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating **letting go**²²⁵ (of defilements), I will breathe *in*’;²²⁶
 He trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating letting go (of defilements), I will breathe *out*’.²²⁷

22 Bhikshus, this is how the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing, when developed, often cultivated, is of great fruit and great benefit.²²⁸

²¹² *Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Gladdening the mind” (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ*), ie refining the meditation sign. See (4.4.3.4).

²¹³ *Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.3.4 f]

²¹⁴ *Samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.3.6]

²¹⁵ *Samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Concentrating the mind” (*samādahaṃ cittaṃ*), ie, sustaining the meditation sign (*nimitta*). See (4.4.3.6).

²¹⁶ *Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Freeing the mind” (*vimocayaṃ cittaṃ*). See (4.4.3.7).

²¹⁷ *Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.3.7]

²¹⁸ These last 4 aspects, ie, the 4th tetrad relate to the meditator who has just emerged from the dhyana. The 1st 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?” All such reflections give rise to deep insight. Having reflected thus, we either take up *satipaṭṭhāna* (the 4 focuses of mindfulness) or just go directly to the last 4 aspects of breath meditation (as taught here). We have any one of these 4 aspects, (13)-(16), to contemplate on after emerging from dhyana. See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10): SD 13.1 (5D.4); Buddhadasa’s teachings: SD 60.1b (5.8.4). See also Brahmavaṃso 1999; 2002:81-85.

²¹⁹ *Aniccānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Contemplating impermanence,” *aniccānupassī*, ie contemplating the 5 aggregates as impermanent because they undergo rise, fall and change, or momentary dissolution. See (4.4.4.1).

²²⁰ *Aniccānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.4.1 f]

²²¹ *Virāgānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Contemplating fading away,” *virāgānupassī*.“ See (4.4.4.3).

²²² *Virāgānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.4.3]

²²³ *Nirodhānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.4.4].

²²⁴ *Nirodhānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.4.4]

²²⁵ Alt tr: “relinquishment.”

²²⁶ *Paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati*. “Contemplating relinquishment [letting go],” *paṭinissaggānupassī*, ie the giving up (*pariccāga*) or abandoning (*pahāna*) of defilements through insight and the entering into (*pakkhandana*) nirvana by attaining the path. [4.4.4.5].

²²⁷ *Paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati*. [4.4.4.5 f].

²²⁸ On the 1st 3 tetrads (*samatha*) leading to *vipassana* in the 4th tetrad, see SD 60.1b (5.8.5).

II. THE PERFECTION OF THE 4 FOCUSES OF MINDFULNESS

23 And how, bhikshus, is the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing developed, often cultivated, to bring *the 4 focuses of mindfulness to perfection*?²²⁹

(A) Contemplating the body

24 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk,

- (1) breathing in long, understands [knows], 'I breathe in long [Long in-breath]';²³⁰
or, breathing out long, understands, 'I breathe out long [Long out-breath]';
- (2) or, breathing in short, understands, 'I breathe in short [Short in-breath]';
or, breathing out short, understands, 'I breathe out short [Short out-breath]';
- (3) trains himself thus: 'Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe in';
trains himself thus: 'Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe out';
- (4) trains himself thus: 'Calming the bodily formation (of breath), I will breathe in';²³¹
trains himself thus: 'Calming the bodily formation (of breath), I will breathe out';—

24.2 on that occasion, bhikshus, the monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful,²³²
dwells contemplating the body in the body,²³³ removing²³⁴ covetousness and displeasure²³⁵ for the world.²³⁶

²²⁹ "Bring ... to perfection," PTS paripūreti.

²³⁰ See §18(1-2) n.

²³¹ Kāya,saṅkhāra, see §18(4) n.

²³² *Ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhā,domanassam* here is essentially synonymous with *vigatābhijjho vigata,vyāpādo asammūlho sampajāno patissato* mentioned in connection with the 4 divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*) (**Kesa,puttiyā S**, A 3.65,15.1/1:192). Their application, however, differ: the former points to the result of meditation, while the latter is a part of the meditation process itself. On *sampajāno satimā*, see Vism 4.174/163 which explains that full awareness (*sampajañña*) has the characteristic of non-confusion; its function is to investigate and manifested as scrutiny. *Mindfulness* (*sati*) has the characteristic of remembering. Its function is not to forget and is manifested as guarding. *Sampajāno* is also tr as "clearly comprehending," "fully understanding" (see M:ÑB 2001 n147).

²³³ "Contemplating the body in the body," *kāye kāyānupassī*, ie "one who contemplates the body as the body"; §25 "contemplating feeling in the feeling," §26 "contemplating mind in the mind, and §27 "contemplating dharma in the dharma." In each case, they are not to be seen as "This is mine" (*etam mama*) (which arises through craving, *taṇhā*), or as "This I am" (*eso'ham asmi*) (due to conceit, *māna*), or as "This is my self" (*eso me attā*) (due to wrong view, *diṭṭhi*) (**Anattā Lakkhaṇa S**, S 3:68 @ SD 1.2). In short, such experiences are not "beliefs" but direct experiences of reality. See Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. For detailed studies, see **I: The nature of identity**, SD 19.1; **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a; **Mine: The nature of craving**, SD 19.3.

²³⁴ *Vineyya*, this means that the 5 hindrances [2.3.3.7] have to be abandoned prior to practising *satipaṭṭhāna*. This is because the hindrances, in the form of mental impurities (*cetaso upakkilesa*), weaken wisdom (*paññāya dubbhālī, karaṇe*) (D 2:83, 3:49, 101, A 2:211, 3:93, 100, 386 f, Vbh 245, 256). In **Naḷaka,pāna S** (M 68 @ SD 37.4), the Buddha tells Anuruddha, "While [a son of good family] still does not attain joy [zest] and happiness on account of being secluded from sensual pleasures and secluded from unwholesome states, or some other state that is more peaceful than that, covetousness [and the other four hindrances] will invade his mind and remain ..." (M 68,6.2/1:463).

²³⁵ "Covetousness and displeasure," *abhijjhā,domanassam*, "hankering and fretting for the world" (Walshe, 1995:335 & n632); alt tr "longing and loathing." MA says that "covetousness and displeasure" here signify the first 2 hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of dharmas, which begins with the 5 hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇā*: sensual lust, desire, ill will, restless and worry, sloth and torpor, doubt): see **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,36) on how to deal with the hindrances in our meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā,domanassa*, there is an interesting

24.3 Bhikshus, this in-and-out-breathing is a certain body amongst the bodies,²³⁷ I say.

24.4 Therefore, bhikshus, on that occasion, the monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells contemplating the body in the body,²³⁸ *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*.

(B) Contemplating feelings [Entry into dhyana]

25 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk [84]

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (5) trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing zest [joy], | I will breathe in’; ²³⁹ |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing zest [joy], | I will breathe out’; |
| (6) trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing happiness, | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing happiness, | I will breathe out’; |
| (7) trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing the mental formations, | I will breathe in’; ²⁴⁰ |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing the mental formations, | I will breathe out’; |
| (8) trains himself thus: | ‘Calming the mental formations, | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Calming the mental formations, | I will breathe out’;— |

25.2 on that occasion, bhikshus, the monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells **contemplating feeling in the feeling**,²⁴¹ *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*.

25.3 Bhikshus, full attention²⁴² to in-and-out-breathing²⁴³ is a certain feeling amongst the feelings,²⁴⁴ I say.

related passage from **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S**: “Bhikshus, before my awakening, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me ... ‘Whatever physical joy and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the wretchedness (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world.’” (A 3.101/1:258, thanks to Robert Eddison). My understanding here regarding the naming of the first 2 mental hindrances as *abhijjhā, domanassa* is to show that with their elimination the other hindrances are eliminated, too.

²³⁶ “World” (*loka*). **Vibhaṅga** says: “This very body is the world, and the 5 aggregates of clinging (ie, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness) is the world—this is called the world.” (Vbh 195). However, in his amplified tr at Vbh 105, U Thittila has “world (ie, in ideational objects)” as *dhammā*, mental objects (Vibh:T 139).

²³⁷ “A certain body amongst the bodies,” *kāyesu kāy’aññatara*. Nyanaponika: “one of the bodily processes” (1962:167). This sutta sentence is missing from Thich Nhat Hanh, 1990. **SA** on Kimbila S (S 54.10), SD 16.11: “I call it the wind body (*vāyo, kāya*) among the bodies of the 4 elements. Or else, it is a ‘certain kind of body’ because it is included in the tactile base amongst the various components of the form body” (SA 3:271). It is a bodily phenomenon: the in-and-out breath is known through the touch sensation or “tangible object base” (*phoṭṭabb’āyatana*), a tangible base. Each in- or out-breath is “a body” because it is a part of the “body of wind” (*vāyo, kāya*) or “wind element” (*vāyo dhātu*), one of the 4 primary elements (*mahā, bhūta*) making up the body (and everything else) (MA 4:140,1-6). Cf §18(3) n & esp (3.1.3). See **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1 (3.4).

²³⁸ DA (on Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S) explains why “body” is used *twice* here: “For determining the object and isolating it,” which Ñāṇamoli paraphrases as “This means not confusing, during meditation, body with feeling, mind, etc. The body is contemplated just as body, feeling just as feeling, etc.” (2001 n138 on Satipaṭṭhāna S).

²³⁹ “Zest,” *pīti*, see §19(5)n.

²⁴⁰ Or, “mental functions,” *citta, saṅkhāra*, see §19(7)n.

²⁴¹ “Contemplating feeling in the feeling,” *vedanāsu vedanā’nupassī*, ie, “one who contemplates feeling as feeling.” See §24 n.

²⁴² MA explains that full (or “bare”) attention (*sādhuka manasikāra*) is not itself actually feeling, but is spoken of as such only *figuratively*. In the 2nd tetrad, the actual feeling is the happiness mentioned in the 2nd clause and also the feeling connoted by the expression “mental formations” in the 3rd and 4th clauses. (MA 4140,11-141,3)

²⁴³ “Full attention to the in-and-out-breathing” (*assāsa, passāsaṃ sādhukaṃ manasikāraṃ*). Comy: Attention is not really pleasant feeling, but this is a heading of the teaching. In this tetrad, in the 1st verse (*pada*) feeling is alluded to under the heading of ‘rapture’; in the 2nd verse, it is directly found as ‘happiness.’ In 3rd and 4th verses, feeling is included in the mental formation [*saññā ca vedanā ca citta, saṅkhāro*, S 4:293].” (SA 3:271)

[A certain feeling amongst the feelings, I say, namely, full attention to in-and-out-breathing.]

25.4 Therefore, bhikshus, on that occasion, the monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells contemplating feeling in the feeling, *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.*

(C) Contemplating the mind

26 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| (9) trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing the mind, | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Experiencing the mind, | I will breathe out’; |
| (10) trains himself thus: | ‘Gladdening the mind, | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Gladdening the mind, | I will breathe out’; |
| (11) trains himself thus: | ‘Concentrating the mind, | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Concentrating the mind, | I will breathe out’; |
| (12) trains himself thus: | ‘Freeing the mind, | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Freeing the mind, | I will breathe out’; — |

26.2 on that occasion, bhikshus, the monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells **contemplating the mind in the mind**,²⁴⁵ *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.*

26.3 I do not say, bhikshus, that there is the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing for one who is forgetful [confused], who lacks clear understanding.²⁴⁶

26.4 Therefore, bhikshus, on that occasion, the monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells contemplating mind in the mind, *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world.*

(D) Contemplating dharmas [Emerging from dhyana]

27 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|----------------------|
| (13) trains himself thus: | ‘Contemplating impermanence, | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Contemplating impermanence, | I will breathe out’; |
| (14) trains himself thus: | ‘Contemplating fading away (of lust), ²⁴⁷ | I will breathe in’; |
| trains himself thus: | ‘Contemplating fading away (of lust), | I will breathe out’; |

²⁴⁴ “A certain feeling amongst the feelings,” *vedanāsu vedanā’ññatara* [prec n]. There are 3 types of feelings: pleasant (sukha), unpleasant (dukkha) and neutral (*adukkham-asukha*)—we contemplate on any of these as each arises. Cf §24 n on “a certain body amongst the bodies.” Comy on Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S says that it is not easy to be mindful of a neutral feeling, and that it should be best approached by way of inference, by noting the absence of both pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Comy illustrates with the example of a hunter seeing tracks before and after a rock, thereby inferring the track of an animal (MA 1:277). **Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** says that only the sense of touch is accompanied by pain or pleasure, while feelings arising at the other 4 sense-doors are invariably neutral (Dhs 139-145; Abhs 2). The suttas, however, speak of pleasant and unpleasant sights, sounds, smells, and tastes, that, in turn, condition the arising of corresponding feelings of pleasure or displeasure (S 4:115, 119, 125, 126). “This Abhidhammic presentation offers an intriguing perspective on contemplation of feeling, since it invites an inquiry into the degree to which an experience of delight or displeasure in regard to sight, sound, smell or taste is simply the outcome of one’s own mental evaluation” (Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 2003:171). See **Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas**, SD 13.1 (3.4). See esp (3.1.3).

²⁴⁵ “Contemplating the mind in the mind”: see §24n. MA says that although the meditator takes as his object the sign of the in-and-out-breathing, he is said to be “contemplating mind in the mind” because he maintains his mind on the object by arousing *mindfulness and full knowing*, 2 mental factors. (MA 4:141,23-142,3).

²⁴⁶ *Nāhaṃ bhikkhave muṭṭha-s,satissa asampajānassa ānāpāna.sati,bhavanāṃ vādāmi.*

²⁴⁷ “Fading away,” *virāga*, also translated as “dispassion” (see §42).

- (15) trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating cessation (of suffering),²⁴⁸ I will breathe in’;
 trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating cessation (of suffering), I will breathe out’;
 (16) trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating letting go (of defilements), I will breathe in’;²⁴⁹
 trains himself thus: ‘Contemplating letting go (of defilements), I will breathe out’; —

27.2 on that occasion, bhikshus, the monk exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells **contemplating dharmas in the dharmas**,²⁵⁰ *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*.

27.3 Having seen with wisdom the abandonment of covetousness and displeasure, [85] he closely looks on with equanimity.²⁵¹

27.4 Therefore, bhikshus, on that occasion, the monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells contemplating dharmas in the dharmas, *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*.

28 Bhikshus, when the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing is thus cultivated, thus often developed, it brings **the 4 focuses of mindfulness** to perfection.

III. PERFECTION OF THE 7 AWAKENING-FACTORS

29 And how, bhikshus, are **the 4 focuses of mindfulness** cultivated, often developed to bring **the 7 awakening-factors** to perfection?²⁵²

(A) Contemplating the body

30 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells **contemplating the body in the body**,²⁵³ *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*, then, undistracted²⁵⁴ mindfulness is established in him.

(1) Bhikshus, on any occasion, when undistracted mindfulness is established in a monk, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of mindfulness** is aroused in the monk.

²⁴⁸ “Cessation,” *nirodha*: see §21 (15).

²⁴⁹ See §21 (16) n.

²⁵⁰ “Dharmas” (*dharmā*) here refers to “mind-objects” or “the nature of things” that arises in the mind. See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), SD 13.1 (5D) *Dhammānupassanā*.

²⁵¹ Saṃyutta Comy on **Kimbila S** (S 54.10), SD 16.11: Here “**covetousness**” (*abhiññā*) is only the hindrance of sensual lust; by “**displeasure**” (*domanassa*) is meant the hindrance of ill will.* This tetrad is stated by way of insight only. These two hindrances are the first of the 5 hindrances [2.3.37], the first section in the contemplation of dharmas. Thus, he says this to show the beginning of the contemplation of dharmas. By “abandonment” (*pahānaṃ*) is meant the knowledge that effects abandoning, eg, one abandons the perception of permanence by the contemplation of impermanence. By the words “having seen with wisdom” (*paññāya disvā*), he shows the sequence of insights, thus: “With one insight knowledge, he sees the knowledge of abandonment, that is, the knowledges of impermanence, dispassion, ending and letting go; and that, too, he sees by yet another.” “He closely looks on with equanimity” (*sādhukam ajjhupakkhitā hoti*): one is said to look on with equanimity when one has fare along the path, and when one has established oneness (of mind). “Looking on with equanimity” (*ajjhupakkhanā*) can also refer to the conascent mental states (in meditation) or to the object. Here, the looking on at the object is intended. (SA 3:272 f). [*Although “**covetousness and displeasure**” is taken by the Sutta’s Comy to refer to only the first two mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇā*), sensual lust and ill will, in the early Suttas, the dvandva is clearly a synecdoche (or short form) for all the 5 hindrances (*pañca, nīvaraṇā*) [2.3.3.7] themselves, whose removal leads to mindfulness (*sati*), mental concentration (*samādhi*) and dhyana (*jhāna*). See SD 13.1 (4.2.5).]

²⁵² This section (M 118,29-40/3:85-87) is a pericope = **Sīla S**, S 5:67-70 = **Ānanda S 1**, S 331-333 = **Ānanda S 2**, S 334 f. The closing section (M 118,41-44/3:88) is also found in the 2 **Ānanda Ss** (S 54.13-14/S 333, 335).

²⁵³ “Contemplating the body in the body.” See §24n.

²⁵⁴ Be Ce Ee *asammutṭhā*; Se Ke *appammatṭhā*.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of mindfulness.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of mindfulness is fully developed for the monk.

31 (2) Dwelling thus mindful, he investigates and examines²⁵⁵ that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, dwelling thus mindful,

investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation**²⁵⁶ is aroused by the monk.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation is fully developed for the monk.

32 (3) For one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it, tireless effort²⁵⁷ is aroused.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *tireless effort* is aroused in a monk

who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of effort**²⁵⁸ is aroused by the monk.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of effort.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of effort is fully developed for the monk.

33 (4) For one who has aroused effort, there is spiritual²⁵⁹ zest [joy].

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *spiritual zest* arises **[86]** in a monk,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of zest** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of zest.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of zest is fully developed for the monk.

34 (5) For one whose mind is zestful, the (mental) body is tranquil,²⁶⁰ the mind is tranquil, too.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk's mind is zestful, becomes tranquil in body, tranquil in mind,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of tranquillity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of tranquillity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of tranquillity is fully developed for the monk.

²⁵⁵ Thus Ke Ce Se PTS. Be *pavicarati*.

²⁵⁶ *Dhamma, vicaya*. Sometimes this is taken as "investigation of the teaching," but the meaning here actually is "investigation of bodily and mental phenomena" (Walshe 1995 n690). This is the key awakening-factor, ie, "awakening" itself, while the others are "factors" that help this awakening to be realized (Nm 456). **Milinda, pañha** compares *dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga* to a sword, which in order to cut needs the use of the hands (representing the other 5 factors) (Miln 83): see Gethin 2001:185. On the two applications of *dhamma, vicaya*—in the teaching and in the meditation contexts—see **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3), SD 10.1(1).

²⁵⁷ "Tireless effort," Ce *viriyam asallīnam*.

²⁵⁸ *Vīriya sambojjhaṅga*. This is identical to the 4 right efforts of the noble eightfold path.

²⁵⁹ *Nirāmisa*, "not of the flesh," here meaning 'non-carnal' or 'spiritual', which according to Comy refers to the 6 zestful feelings connected with the sense-doors, but not dependent on sense-desire (MA 1:279). Its opp is *s'āmisa* = *sa-āmisa*, "sensual," lit "with flesh," thus connoting some sense of the carnal, ie connected to the pleasures of the 5 senses (*kāma, guṇā*) (S 4:235, 236). In **Sal-āyatana, vibhaṅga S** (M 137), *s'āmisa* and *nirāmisa* refer to the household life and to the renounced life respectively. Elsewhere, as in **Suddhika Nirāmisa S** (S 36.29), *nirāmisa pīti*, *nirāmisa sukha* and *nirāmisa upekkhā* are experienced in the dhyanas (S 36.29.8-15/4:236 f). See D 2:298; M 1:59; S 4:235, 236 (x2); A 1:81, 3:412l Pm 2:233. See also Sue Hamilton, Identity and Experience, 1996:43 f. On *āmisa* and *nirāmisa*, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,32/-1:59) and **Dhamma, dāyāda S** (M 3). See also MA 1:89, 279.

²⁶⁰ On the (mental) body (*nāma, kāya*), see SD 10.15 (2.3.2) esp 2.3.2.1.

35 (6) For one tranquil in body and happy, the mind becomes concentrated.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, a monk, tranquil in body and happy, becomes concentrated, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of concentration** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of concentration.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of concentration is fully developed for the monk.

36 (7) He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when the monk *closely looks on with equanimity* at the mind thus concentrated,

On that occasion, **the awakening-factor of equanimity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of equanimity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of equanimity is fully developed for the monk.²⁶¹

(B) Contemplating feelings

37 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells **contemplating feeling in the feeling**,²⁶² *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*, then, undistracted mindfulness is established in him.

(1) Bhikshus, on any occasion, when undistracted mindfulness is established in a monk, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of mindfulness** is aroused in the monk.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of mindfulness.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of mindfulness is fully developed for the monk.

(2) Dwelling thus mindful, he investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, dwelling thus mindful,

investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation is fully developed for the monk.

(3) For one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it, tireless effort is aroused.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *tireless effort* is aroused in a monk

who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of effort** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of effort.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of effort is fully developed for the monk.

(4) For one who has aroused effort, spiritual zest arises.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *spiritual zest* [joy] arises in a monk,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of zest** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of zest.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of zest is fully developed for the monk.

²⁶¹ On this *sambojjhaṅga* passage, cf the shorter *nīvaraṇa, pahīna* passage at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.76/1:73), SD 8.10n for other refs.

²⁶² "Contemplating feelings in the feeling." See §24n.

(5) In one whose mind is zestful, the (mental) body is tranquil, the mind is tranquil, too. Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk's mind is zestful, becomes tranquil in body, tranquil in mind, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of tranquillity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of tranquillity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of tranquillity is fully developed for the monk.

(6) For one tranquil in body and happy, the mind becomes concentrated. Bhikshus, on any occasion, a monk, tranquil in body and happy, becomes concentrated, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of concentration** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of concentration.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of concentration is fully developed for the monk.

(7) He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. Bhikshus, on any occasion, when the monk *closely looks on with equanimity* at the mind thus concentrated, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of equanimity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of equanimity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of equanimity is fully developed for the monk.

(C) Contemplating the mind

38 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells **contemplating the mind in the mind**, *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*, then undistracted mindfulness is established in him.

(1) Bhikshus, on any occasion, when undistracted mindfulness is established in a monk, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of mindfulness** is aroused in the monk.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of mindfulness.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of mindfulness is fully developed for the monk.

(2) Dwelling thus mindful, he investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, dwelling thus mindful,

investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation is fully developed for the monk.

(3) For one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it, tireless effort is aroused.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *tireless effort* is aroused in a monk

who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of effort** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of effort.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of effort is fully developed for the monk.

(4) For one who has aroused effort, spiritual zest arises. Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *spiritual zest* [joy] arises in a monk, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of zest** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of zest.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of zest is fully developed for the monk.

(5) In one whose mind is zestful, the (mental) body is tranquil, the mind is tranquil, too. Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk's mind is zestful, becomes tranquil in body, tranquil in mind, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of tranquillity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of tranquillity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of tranquillity is fully developed for the monk.

(6) For one tranquil in body and happy, the mind becomes concentrated. Bhikshus, on any occasion, a monk, tranquil in body and happy, becomes concentrated, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of concentration** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of concentration.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of concentration is fully developed for the monk.

(7) He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. Bhikshus, on any occasion, when the monk *closely looks on with equanimity* at the mind thus concentrated, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of equanimity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of equanimity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of equanimity is fully developed for the monk.

(D) Contemplating dharmas

39 Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, exertive, clearly comprehending, mindful, dwells **contemplating dharma in the dharma**,²⁶³ *removing covetousness and displeasure for the world*, then, undistracted mindfulness is established in him.

(1) Bhikshus, on any occasion, when undistracted mindfulness is established in a monk, on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of mindfulness** is aroused in the monk.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of mindfulness.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of mindfulness is fully developed for the monk.

(2) Dwelling thus mindful, he investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk, dwelling thus mindful,

investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation. **[87]**

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation is fully developed for the monk.

(3) For one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it, tireless effort is aroused.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *tireless effort* is aroused in a monk

who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of effort** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of effort.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of effort is fully developed for the monk.

(4) For one who has aroused effort, spiritual zest arises. Bhikshus, on any occasion, when *spiritual zest* [joy] arises in a monk,

²⁶³ "Contemplating dharmas in the dharma." See §27.2 n. For de4tails: **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), SD 13.1 (5D) *Dhammā-nupassanā*.

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of zest** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of zest.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of zest is fully developed for the monk.

(5) In one whose mind is zestful, the (mental) body is tranquil, the mind is tranquil, too.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when a monk's mind is zestful, becomes tranquil in body, tranquil in mind,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of tranquillity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of tranquillity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of tranquillity is fully developed for the monk.

(6) For one tranquil in body and happy, the mind becomes concentrated.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, a monk, tranquil in body and happy, becomes concentrated,

on that occasion, **the awakening-factor of concentration** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of concentration.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of concentration is fully developed for the monk.

(7) He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated.

Bhikshus, on any occasion, when the monk *closely looks on with equanimity* at the mind thus concentrated,

On that occasion, **the awakening-factor of equanimity** is aroused in him.

On that occasion, the monk cultivates the awakening-factor of equanimity.

On that occasion, the awakening-factor of equanimity is fully developed for the monk.

40 Bhikshus, the 4 focuses of mindfulness thus cultivated, thus often developed, bring **the 7 awakening-factors** to perfection.²⁶⁴

IV. PERFECTION OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND LIBERATION

Conclusion

[88] 41 And how, bhikshus, are the 7 awakening-factors cultivated, often developed, to bring **true knowledge and liberation** to perfection?²⁶⁵

42 Here, bhikshus,

(1) a monk cultivates the awakening-factor of mindfulness

that is dependent on solitude,²⁶⁶ dependent on fading away (of lust) [dispassion],²⁶⁷

dependent on cessation (of suffering),²⁶⁸ ripening in letting go (of defilements).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ MA says that this passage shows that the awakening-factors exist together in each mind-moment in the practice of insight-meditation.

²⁶⁵ This closing section (M 118,41-44/3:88) is a pericope = **Ānanda S 1** (S 54.13-14/5:333) = **Ānanda S 2** (S 54.14/5:335).

²⁶⁶ Here "solitude" (**viveka**) (or seclusion) has a special reference to the overcoming of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇā*). This whole phrase, beginning with "dependent on solitude"—*viveka, nissitaṃ virāga, nissitaṃ nirodha, nissitaṃ vossagga, nissitaṃ vossagga, pariṇāmiṃ dhamma, vicaya, sambojjhaṅgaṃ*—is called **the viveka, nissita formula**. See Gethin 2001:162-168. According to **Paṭisambhidā, magga**, there are 5 kinds of "solitude" (*viveka*), ie overcoming of the hindrances [2.3.3.7]: (1) solitude through suppression (*vikkhambhana viveka*); (2) solitude through the substitution of opposite or displacement by opposites (*tad-aṅga viveka*); (3) solitude through cutting off (*samuccheda viveka*); (4) solitude through tranquillization (*paṭipassaddhi viveka*); and (5) solitude through escape (*nissaraṇa viveka*) (Pm 1:27, 2:219-224; Vism 13.12/410, 22.110/693). See also **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (Intro), SD 13.1 §4.2.3.

²⁶⁷ **Virāga**, also tr as "dispassion." [2.3.4.3]

²⁶⁸ **Nirodha**, ie, "cessation of suffering." [2.3.4.4]

(2) He cultivates the awakening-factor of **dharma-investigation** that is dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements).

(3) He cultivates the awakening-factor of **effort** that is dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements).

(4) He cultivates the awakening-factor of **zest** that is dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements).

(5) He cultivates the awakening-factor of **tranquillity** that is dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements).

(6) He cultivates the awakening-factor of **concentration** that is dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements).

(7) He cultivates the awakening-factor of **equanimity** that is dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements).

43 Bhikshus, the 7 awakening-factors thus cultivated, thus often developed, bring **true knowledge and liberation** to perfection.²⁷⁰

44 This is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, the monks rejoiced in the Blessed One's word.

— evaṃ —

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²⁶⁹ MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (**vossagga**): “giving up” (*pariccāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), ie culminating in nirvana. **Gethin** notes that this phrase is not unique to the 7 *bojjhaṅgā*, but is also found in connection with the factors of the noble eightfold path, the *indriyā* and *balā* (2001:162 f). This formula shows that each *bojjhaṅga* is to be developed successively “as dependent on solitude, dispassion [fading away] and cessation” (Gethin 2001:166).

²⁷⁰ MA says that the mindfulness that comprehends breathing is mundane. The mundane mindfulness of the breath perfects or fulfills the mundane focuses of mindfulness. The mundane focuses of mindfulness perfect the supramundane awakening-factors, and the supramundane awakening-factors perfect true knowledge and liberation, ie the fruit and nirvana.

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