

## PREFACE

To the first edition

This is not a beginner's guide, of which there are many. But there are many kinds of beginners, too. As long as you have an interest in practical meditation, or even its theory to begin with before taking it up or to research in it, this is a great place to start, as this book is based on the meditation teachings and methods of early Buddhism.

Buddhist meditation (and meditation in general) is today very popular and diverse in nature. Although most Buddhists know meditation as a personal spiritual practice, there are also commercialized forms of meditation, which generally present it as being beneficial in a worldly way, and with their own costs.

Even within Buddhist circles themselves, well-intentioned teachers often teach different forms of meditation, or different versions of the same meditation. An understanding of the sutta teachings on meditation helps in our understanding of the reasons for such variance and see the heart of the teachings. In fact, when we are experienced in meditation and understand Dharma teachings on morality and the mind, we would find that any meditation worth its name has its uses and benefits.

This series of sutta-based translations and teachings aims to provide us, often in some detail, a better understanding of meditation teachings and practices. This is not a basic practice manual, but a handbook for those who already have some practical experience of meditation, or intend to take up meditation so that their practice is safe and beneficial.

This is the first of the "Buddhist Meditation" (BM) series dealing with early Buddhist meditation. This volume covers the basic nature of meditation and dhyana, and some broad issues and controversies regarding meditation, comprising the following articles from the Sutta Discovery series:

1	<i>Bhāvanā</i>	SD 15.1
2	Samādhi Bhāvanā Sutta (A 4.41)	SD 24.1
3	<i>Viveka, nissita</i>	SD 20.4
4	Samadhi	SD 33.1a
5	<i>Nimitta</i>	SD 19.7
6	Nimitta Sutta (A 3.100b)	SD 19.12
7	Dhyana	SD 8.4
8	The layman and dhyana	SD 8.5
9	The Buddha discovered dhyana	SD 33.1b

A careful study of these teachings would enhance our meditation, which in turn would further deepen our insight into the Buddha's teachings. In this way, both meditation and wisdom are harmoniously cultivated, so that we would reach the presence of nirvana. (Dh 372)

For explanation of the conventions used in this book, see under Epilegomena in the Dharmafarer website.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/sutta-discovery/guides>