

The Buddhist Way of Emancipation:
An Analytical Explanation
of
Mahā-satipatthāna Sutta



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The Buddhist Way of Emancipation: An Analytical Explanation of *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

Introduction

The practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* can be found in several places such as the *Dīghanikāya*, *Majjhimanikāya*, *Aṅguttaranikāya*, and *Samyuttanikāya*. This paper will be discussed the details based on the *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta* (no: 22) which consists in the *Dīghanikāya*.

Historical Background of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

The Buddha uttered this sutta to the people at the village 'kammāsadhamma in *Kuru* kingdom which was one of the sixteen kingdoms in ancient India¹.

According to the commentary, one rains retreat (*vassānakāla*) the Buddha was dwelling in the forest keeping a village named *Kammāssadhamma* as the place where he obtained food (*gocaragāma*). In this village the Buddha had preached several *suttas* such as the *Mahānidāna* and *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta* contained in *Dīghanikāya*, and the *Sāropama*, *Raṭṭhapāla*, *Māgandiya*, *Ānañjasappāya*, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, and *Rukkhūpama* contained in *Majjhimanikāya*².

The people were very intelligent and their understanding capacity was enough to practice *satipaṭṭhāna*. The people always were taking about their practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* in everywhere and shared meditational objects. According to the commentary, even animals also had followed the meditational object (*kammaṭṭhāna*).

Central Characteristic of the *Satipaṭṭhāna*

The practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* is only the way of emancipation what highly praised by the Buddha in *satipaṭṭhāna sutta*. The *sutta* says 'this is only the way to the purification of

¹ Aṅga, Magadha, Kasi, Kosala, Vajji, Malla, kuru, Panchala, Matsya, Vatsa, surasena, Avanti, Assaka, chedi, Gandhara, Kamboja.

² *Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā* of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 228.

The commentary is mentioned the *Rukkhūpama sutta*, but it is not founded in *Majjhimanikāya*.

beings, for overcoming sorrow and lamentation, for disappearance of suffering and grief, for gaining right path and for realization of *Nibbāna*, that is to say, the four establishments of mindfulness³.

The Buddha uttered emphatically in the *sutta* that only the way of purification of the beings is establishment of mindfulness. Here, ‘only the way’ means there is no two ways for purification or liberation of beings⁴, therefore, ‘*ekāyano maggo*’ is mentioned in the *sutta*. Practicing of this path can be attained to the liberation from the samsaric suffering. That is why, here, the term ‘*magga*’ is given meaning toward *Nibbāna*⁵.

The term ‘*visuddhi*’ means pure. The opposite meaning is impure. According to the interpretations of the commentaries, the mind becomes impure because of lust, covetousness and other cankers. Following this path the mind will be purified destroying all those cankers⁶.

In the beginning of the *sutta*, the Buddha has given a preface within a line for this practice concerning the ultimate happiness or supra-mundane happiness, it is four establishments of mindfulness.

Threefold Ways to Develop *Satipaṭṭhāna*

Referring to the *Bhikkhu sutta* in *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*, the Buddha has expounded threefold way to develop *satipaṭṭhāna*. According to this utterance of the Buddha, firstly one has to purify the very starting point of wholesome states. They are virtue that well purified and view straight⁷. So, virtue and right view are very important to develop *satipaṭṭhāna*. Being

³ “*ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā soka-pariddhavānaṃ samatikkamāya dukkha-domanassānaṃ atthaṅgamāya ñāyassa adhiḡamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*”... Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 290.

⁴ “*Tattha ekamaggo ti eko eva maggo. Na hi nibbānagāṃimaggo añño atthīti*” Ibid. P. 353.

“*ettha eka maggo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo na dvedhāpathabhūto ti evaṃ attho daṭṭhabbo*” Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 229.

⁵ “*nibbānagamaṇaṭṭhenāti nibbānaṃ gacchati adhiḡacchati, etenāti nibbānagamaṇaṃ, ...*” Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī, Buddhaghosa’s Commentary on the Dīgha-Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 355.

“*maggo ti kenaṭṭhena maggo? Nibbānagamaṇaṭṭhena, nibbānatthikehi maggaṇīyaṭṭhena ca*” Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P.231.

⁶ “*rāgādīhi malehi abhijjhāvisamalobhādīhi ca upakkilesehi kiliṭṭhacittānaṃ ...*” Ibid. P. 223.

⁷ “*tasmātiha tvaṃ bhikkhu ādimeva visodhehi kusalesu dhammesu. No ca ādi kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ: sīlañca suvisuddhaṃ, diṭṭhica ujukā*”. Bhikkhu sutta, Saṃyutta-nikāya Vol. V. Mahā-vagga. P. 143.

satisfaction of sensual pleasure is difficult to practice *satipaṭṭhāna*⁸. So, one must have to practice *satipaṭṭhāna* based upon the virtue and right view avoiding sensual desire.

The Buddha recommended to follow the *satipaṭṭhāna* threefold ways such as ‘dwell contemplating on the body, the feelings, the mind, and the mental thoughts of the internal (*Ajjhattam*)’. ‘*Ajjhatta*’ or internal means ‘look at the insight one’s own body, feelings, mind, and mental thoughts’. The second is ‘dwell contemplating on the body, the feelings, the mind, and the mental thoughts which belong to others’. And finally, ‘dwell contemplating on the body, the feelings, the mind, and the mental thoughts of both internal and external’⁹. The third idea which has to understand comparatively together with one’s own and others’ body, feelings, mind, and mental thoughts.

This statement is common for everywhere that the explanation of *Satipaṭṭhānas* is.

Realization of the reality

The real nature of the world can be described through the teaching of threefold characteristics (*Tilakkhaṇa*). They are impermanence or changing (*aniccha*), suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*). The characteristics of conditional things are arising (*uppādo paññāyati*), standing in changing momentarily (*ṭhitattha aññatattam paññāyati*), vanishing (*vayo paññāyati*). This perspectives of a person always accompanied by the wisdom. The *satipaṭṭhāna sutta* also plays very important role of the reality. There are three statements explained in every meditational method of *Satipaṭṭhāna* such as “*samudaya dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati*” means the reality of arising is observed within the body, “*vayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati*” means the reality of passing away is observed within the body, and then, “*samudaya-vayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati*” means the both reality of arising and passing away are observed within the body¹⁰.

Being Independent

The practitioner realize body as it is, as well as the feeling, the mind, and mental contents. While realizing them as they are, he knows there is no such a person or any other

⁸ Makkāṭṭa sutta Saṃyutta-nikāya Vol. V. Mahā-vagga. P. 148.

⁹ “*idha tvam bhikkhu ajjhataṃ..., bahiddhā..., ajjhatabahiddhā...*” Bhikkhu sutta, Saṃyutta-nikāya Vol. V. Mahā-vagga. P. 143.

¹⁰ Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 292.

beings what we call animals and so forth. He comes to conclude there are particular *dhammas* are be real and he removes feeling of ‘this is mine (*etaṃ mama*), this is I am (*eso hamasmī*), and this is myself (*eso me attā*) which always produce craving (*taṇhā*), ego (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). By practicing *satipaṭṭhāna*, one firstly removes *sakkāya diṭṭhi* that we always feel someone or something is there, it is the wrong view on the body (*sato kāyo sakkāyo*). Also it is the first one of the ten fetters. That is what *sutta* says ‘*atthi kāyo ’ti*’¹¹. He knows the physical body, the feeling, the mind, and mental contents internally and externally as they are. That the knowledge of truth leads him to understand clearly real nature what we call impermanence. Through this wisdom he understand everything is interpedently origination, there is no any entity as soul. This statement of mind makes him interdependent in the world. So then he free from all the attachments which are tied him.

Four Establishments of Mindfulness (*Cattāro Satipaṭṭhānā*)

Here, we need to understand clearly the etymological definition of the terms ‘*ātāpi*’, ‘*sampajāno*’, and ‘*sati*’.

‘*Ātāpi*’ (*ā + tap + e*) means ardent, also it is better to say as a consistent effort (which is not give up) to destroy the cankers. In the *Papañcasūdanī* commentary of *Majjhimanikāya* gives meaning of Pāli term ‘*ātāpi*’ as follows, ‘the mental thought of effort, the starting effort, going forth, and endeavor, exertion...’ and also declared as ‘the mental thought of effort, the faculty of effort, power of effort, and right effort (four types of effort)’¹². According to the *Anottappī sutta* (SN 16:2), ‘*ātāpi*’ means exertion of ardor to understand arising *akusala* which not arisen before and arisen *akusala* which not cessation, lead to misfortune. Also, non-arising

¹¹ Ibid. P. 292.

¹² “*ettha katamaṃ ātāpaṃ? Yo cetasiko viriyārambho, nikkammo, parakkamo, uyyāmo, vāyāmo, ussāho, ussolhī, thāmo, dhiti, asithilaparakkamatā, anikhittaddandatā, anikkhittadhūratā dhūrāsampaggāhi viriyaṃ viriyindriyaṃ viriyabalaṃ sammāvāyāmo, idaṃ vuccati ātāpaṃ*” *Papañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā* of *Buddhaghosācariya*. Vol. I. P. 245.

kusala which did not arise before and arisen *kusala* which ceased, lead to misfortune¹³. It is an ability to tolerate extreme suffering¹⁴ same as *sammā vāyāma*.

‘*Sampajāno*’ (*saṃ + pa + ñā + na*) the both pre-fixes ‘*saṃ*’ and ‘*pa*’ mean ‘completely’. ‘*Ñā*’ is ‘to know’ or ‘to understand’, so fully meaning is ‘to understand completely’. Also it is the wisdom which contained in fifty-two mental thoughts in Theravada *Abhidhamma*. It is the understanding of the nature of reality at the experimental level. So, the characteristic of real nature is impermanent (*anicca*) or momentarily changing. The commentary says, ‘understanding, investigation, investigation of doctrine descendent, the knowledge of concerning differences, skillfulness, cleverness, critical thinking, examining, extensive wisdom, insight wisdom...’ further, ‘the mental thought of wisdom, the faculty of wisdom, power of wisdom, non-delusion and right understanding’¹⁵.

Referring to the canonical texts and interpretation of Theravada Buddhist scholars, the term ‘*sati*’ has given many meanings. The term ‘*sati*’ (or ‘*sutee*’) can be found in ancient Hindu tradition as a strong practice, gives totally different idea with term in Buddhist ‘*sati*’. A widow has to burn herself to death on her husband’s pyre. In the Buddhism, ‘*sati*’ is referred to the mindfulness or awakening of mind. ‘*Sati*’ indicates other meaning also when it combined with other words, e.g. *satindriya* (faculty of mindfulness), *satimantu* (thoughtful or careful), *satisampajāñña* (memory and wisdom), and so on¹⁶.

The *Dhammasangani* gives a definition toward term ‘*sati*’ is collecting, calling back to the mind, remembering, bearing in mind, *sati* is not merely memory in the present, but also

¹³ “*kathañcāvuso, ātāpī hoti? idhāvuso, bhikkhu ‘anuppannā me pāpakā akusalā dhammā uppajjamānā anattāya saṃvatteyyun’ ti ātappaṃ karoti, ‘uppannā me pāpakā akusalā dhammā appahīyamānā anattāya saṃvatteyyun’ ti ātappaṃ karoti, ‘anuppannā me kusalā dhammā anuppajjamānā anattāya saṃvatteyyun’ ti ātappaṃ karoti, ‘uppannā me kusalā dhammā nirujjhamānā anattāya saṃvatteyyun’ ti ātappaṃ karoti. evaṃ kho, āvuso, ātāpī hoti”* Saṃyutta-nikāya Vol. II. Nidāna-vagga. P. 197.

¹⁴ “*yato kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu anuppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ anuppādāya ātappaṃ karoti, anuppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ uppādāya ātappaṃ karoti, uppannānaṃ sārīrikānaṃ vedanānaṃ dukkhānaṃ tikkhānaṃ kharānaṃ kaṭukānaṃ asātānaṃ amanāpānaṃ pānaharānaṃ adhivāsānāya ātappaṃ karoti, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, bhikkhu ātāpī nipako sato sammā dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ ‘ti”*. Mahacora sutta, The Aṅguttara-nikāya. Vol. I. P. 153.

¹⁵ “*tattha katamā sampajāññaṃ? Yā paññā pajānā vicayo paricayo dhammavicayo sallakkhaṇā upalakkhaṇā paccūpalakkhaṇā pañdiccaṃ kosallaṃ nepuññaṃ vebhavyā cintā upaparikkhā bhūrimedhā parināyikā vipassanā sampajāññaṃ patodo paññā paññindriyaṃ paññābalaṃ paññāsattaṃ paññāpāsādo paññā look paññā obhāso paññāpajjhoto paññāratanāṃ amigo dhammavicayo sammādiṭṭhi, idaṃ vuccati sampajāññaṃ...*” Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 245.

¹⁶ Buddhadatta, A. P. Concise Pāli-English dictionary. P. 258.

in the past, discriminating between good and bad'¹⁷. According to this definition sati is which accompanied with wholesome attitudes, it does not appears with unwholesome mental thoughts.

Considering the explanation of *Papañcasūdanī* commentary the 'sati' explained as 're-remembering, bearing in mind, non-floating...' and also mentioned as 'the mental thought of mindfulness, the faculty of mindfulness, power of mindfulness, and right mindfulness'¹⁸.

Usually the term 'sati' can be found together with *paññā* (wisdom) in the Buddhist teaching. The *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* also, the 'sati' becomes *paṭṭhāna* when it is joined with wisdom (*sampajāno satimā vineyya*)¹⁹. In order to establish mindfulness wisdom is very much useful. Therefore, in the Noble Eightfold Path the wisdom comes first in the path (*sammā diṭṭhi*).

The mindfulness is basically a particular way of paying attention to an object continually without lets the mind go away from the particular object. Continuation of paying attention on an object is very important to develop mindfulness. It can be gained the wisdom which can be eradicated all the taints in our life. There are four types of mindfulness which are presented by the Buddha as the practical methods to be purified. They are mindfulness on the body, mindfulness on the feelings, mindfulness on the mind, and mindfulness on the mental thought²⁰.

The teaching of the four establishments of mindfulness is essential and very popular meditational method in Theravada tradition. To follow them, one must be clever and need sufficient wisdom together with consistent effort²¹.

For the mindfulness on the body, there are six methods what we have to cultivate. The first method is the observation rhythm of the breathing. The second method is the paying attention to the primary four postures such as going, standing, sitting, and lying down. The third, the constant thorough understanding of impermanence, reflections on the repulsiveness, reflection on the material elements, and the nine charnel-ground observations. Then the last

¹⁷ Mrs. Rhys Davids, Translation of Dhamma Sangani Buddhist Psychology. P .16.

¹⁸ "tattha katamā sati? Yā sati anussati paṭissati sati saraṇatā dhāraṇatā apilāpanatā asammūsanatā sati satindriyaṃ satibalaṃ sammā sati, ayaṃ vuccati sati. Attaha" *Papañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā* of *Buddhaghosācariya*. Vol. I. P. 245.

¹⁹ Goenka, S. N. Discourses on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. P. 5.

²⁰ Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta, *Dīgha Nikāya*. Vol. II. P. 290.

²¹ Sūda sutta, *Samyutta-nikāya* Vol. V. Mahā-vagga. P. 151.

part of the *sutta* explained several *dhammas* such as the five hindrances, the five aggregates, sense spheres, factors of enlightenment, the four noble truths, and so on.

Contemplation to the Breathing (*Ānāpānasati*)

The etymological definition of the ‘*ānāpāna*’ is breathing in or inhale (*āna*) and breathing out or exhale (*apāna*). It is also called *kāyasaṃkhāra* (substratum of the body). This is the first meditation method for the field of mindfulness on the body. This is not only given in Buddhism but also can be found in other tradition like Hindu, and it is available even the age in which a Buddha is not born (*Abuddhotpāda-kāla*).

Practicing this method, one can achieve to the four *jhānas*²² which will give the rebirth in *rūpāvacara brahma*-realms. Also by the realizing of respiration through the threefold characteristics (*tilakkhaṇas*) or realizing the constituents of *jhānas* (*jhanaṅga*) means *vipassana*, one can attain to liberation²³.

Normally, to practice meditation we have to select the suitable place. It should be solitude, secluded, and without disturbance. The Buddha required a forest (*Araññe*), the foot of a tree (*Rukkhamūle*), the hall where nobody stays (*Suññāgāra*)²⁴. It is not easy for meditation the place where always people going here and there and making noisy. Therefore those places which recommended by the Buddha, much better for meditation²⁵.

Also, the Buddha recommended certain position only for this meditation method. The practitioner should sit down with cross-logged posture, keeping upper position of the body straight.

The second step is establishment of awareness around the mouth or where can be felt the breath coming and going. Then he knows ‘I am breathing in and out even long and short breath coming and going’. It means the mind is concentration on the respiration. While keep

²² Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 249.

²³ Ibid. P. 249.

²⁴ Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 291.

²⁵ Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 247.

on this, he can feel whole respiration which coming and going²⁶. Normally, the beginner cannot feel whole respiration. When practice, more and more only can be felt whole respiration. From now on, the practitioner has to train with feeling the whole respiration and body activities in calmed. One has to follows this whole process by contemplating in one's own body and other, and also both one's own body and other.

According to *Ānāpāna sutta* in *Majjhimanikāya*, there are sixteen steps to follow this meditation method but in this *sutta* explained only four steps²⁷.

Awareness of Four Postures (*Iriyāpatha*)

The second method of *kāyānupassana* is mindfulness on the four postures. According to this practice the practitioner has to be mindfully while walking, standing, sitting and lying down. Usually, in our daily life, the mind and physical activities are not performing together, for instance, when we walk normally the mind has taken other object and think on it. Therefore, the mind is wondering on something or somewhere else.

According to this practice, when one is walking, he knows well 'I am walking' and in the same way, whether standing, sitting or lying down, and whatever postures of the body also should know as well as four postures²⁸.

Mostly, one attaches to the dancing or other physical performances. If he perceives without designation of dancing, and thinks that just moving body or body parts with particular rhythmic steps, he can understand it is just a physical activity which are using physical postures.

²⁶ “*Sabbakāya paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, Sabbakāya paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati*” Mahā-satipatthāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 291.

Mostly, the scholars translate the Pāli term ‘*sabba-kāya*’ as the whole body. Probably, the literally meaning of *sabba-kāya* can be translated as whole-body, but it cannot provide the fully meaning for this meditation method, because the practitioner has to keep the mind around mouth or place where respiration can be felt. So in case, there is a simile to understand it, suppose, the mind as a guard. The guard have to stay at the gate, he cannot follow the people who coming in and going out. He has to stay at gate and check who going in and out from the gate. That means mind cannot move from the place where recommended to keep mind (*parimukhaṃ satim upatthapetvā*). Here ‘sati’ denotes the mind. This simile enough to understand it following knowledge of meditation practice.

Etymology, ‘*kāya*’ has many senses such as body, multitude, collection, etc. Here, the multitude or mass is given meaning, the mass of the air of the breathing is shown.

²⁷ *Ānāpāna sutta*, The *Majjhima-nikāya*. Vol. III. P. 78.

²⁸ Mahā-satipatthāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 292.

So, every physical activity is the same. Therefore, spontaneously he realizes those activities just as action and nothing to attach, and no one to do it.

Referring to the commentary, one has to know completely about the action, suppose, the body is moved by the diffusion of the mind, intention and the element of motion or air²⁹. So, one has to understand whole process of the actions.

Clear comprehension on physical activities (*Sampajāna*)

The *Sampajāna* (*saṃ + pa + jāno*) is adjective derived from *sampajañña*. There are four types of *sampajañña* which recommended to follow this meditation method³⁰. They are following,

The *Sātthaka-sampajañña* – the clear comprehension to the sense of action (going, doing, etc. what for?)

The *sappāya-sampajañña* - the clear comprehension to the beneficial or the suitability of action.

The *gocara-sampajañña* - the clear comprehension to the one's own resort or ancestral domain of action.

The *asammoha-sampajañña* – the clear comprehension to the absence of confusion of action.

This method seems to be further practice of all kinds of physical activities in our daily life. According to details of this *sutta*, the mindfulness should keep on every moment with whatever the action, it should be clearly comprehension on physical activities. The *sutta* explained,

‘being mindfulness or clear comprehension of walking forward and coming back, looking straightforward and side-ways, bending and stretching, chewing, attending to the nature calls, walking, standing, sitting, lying down, waking and sleeping, speaking and keeping silent – whatever the activity is being practiced³¹.

²⁹ “*cittakiriyavāyodhātuvippharena sakalakāyassa purato abhinīhāro gamananti vucchati*” Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 251.

³⁰ Ibid. P. 253.

³¹ Mahā-satipatṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 292.

Observation of Repulsiveness in the Body (*Paṭikkūlamānasikāra*)

This meditation method is more effective in order to remove sexual desire and strong attachment to the body specially obsession of the outer beauty of the body. So contemplating on the repulsiveness is very much helpful to practice *dhamma* without any disturbances of lustful thought.

Referring to the *sutta*, there are 32 repulsiveness in the body,

‘From the soles of the feet upward and from the hair of the head downward the entire body covered by skin is reflected on as impure in different ways’. They are hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow of the bone, the kidneys, heart, the liver, the membrane, the spleen, the lungs, intestine, the mesentery, the undigested food in the stomach, the excrements, the brain, the bile, the phlegm, the pus, the blood, the sweat, the fat, the tears, the grease, the saliva, the snot, the synovia fluid, the urine³².

Mostly, nobody wants to look at the impurity of the body. This kind of feeling brings aversion with unpleasant sensation because the intention rooted to the *dosa citta*. By realization of real nature of the body (impurity) through the contemplating of repulsiveness, it starts practice of *vipassana* (insight meditation), therefore, there is no arising of aversion looking at such an ugly thing in the body.

There are two types of *paṭikkūla*, one is present rooted to the hatred (*dosa*) and the other is present with wisdom. For the second does not accompany both attachment and aversion.

The *sutta* is mentioned an example to understand this method that a double-mouthed provision bag full of different grains, such as hill paddy, paddy, green gram, cowpeas, sesame and husked rice, a person who with good eyes (practitioner) can see all these different grains, so much a things are seen in this body covered with skin.

Reflection of the Primary Elements (*Dhātumanasikāra*)

The physical body is made by the four primary material elements such as the element of solidity or hardness, the element of cohesion, the element of heat, and the element of motion.

³² Ibid. P. 293.

Based on those elements, all of material things are aroused (24 forms out of 28 in *Abhidhamma*). They are called *upādāya rūpas*³³.

The *sutta* says, however the body is placed and disposed the elements in it are just reflected about ‘the element of solidity or hardness, the element of cohesion, the element of heat, and the element of motion’³⁴.

There is an example to understand this properly, a butcher or his apprentice kills a cow and divides into parts, and sells them. Now there is no cow, only its consists such as flesh, skin, liver, lung, blood, so and so forth understood as these four elements. When one understands in this way, he realizes the body as just four elements. Then the designation of person or being will be disappeared³⁵.

Nine Cemetery Observations (*Nava Sīvatika*)

This meditation method is about what happen to the body after the death. There are nine situations are discussed in the *sutta* what should be reflected. Nowadays, we cannot find the dead body in the cemetery which is thrown away, because the dead body is burned or buried depending on cultural issues. In the Buddha’s time, mostly the dead body was thrown away in the cemetery without burying or burning. Therefore, this meditation method was more practically at the Buddha’s time.

In the first step, the meditation object is a dead body which is thrown away in the cemetery one-day, two-days or three-days after the death, which is swollen, blue, and festering.

So, looking at this kind of dead body, he has to contemplate ‘this body of mine, too, is of the same nature as that (dead) body, is going to be like that body, and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body’³⁶.

In the second step, he has to reflect the dead body which is thrown in a cemetery, is eaten by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals or different kinds of worms, and has to consider his own body in the same way.

³³ Maha thera, Narada. A Manual of Abhidhamma. P. 290.

³⁴ Mahā-satipatṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 294.

³⁵ Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 272.

³⁶ Mahā-satipatṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 295.

In the third step, he has to reflect the dead body which is reduced to a skeleton with flesh or blood attached, held together by tendons. And also has to consider his own body in the same way.

Then again, the corpse reduced to the skeleton without any flesh but smeared with blood and held together by tendons.

The next, the corpse reduced to the skeleton without flesh or blood attached, held together by tendons.

The next, they view only disconnected bones scattered in all directions: the bone of a head or foot, a knee-bone, thigh-bone, pelvis, spine, or skull.

The next, the bones are white, bleached.

Now reflect the bones that after more than a year are just lying in a heap.

Then reflect bones that are rotting and breaking down into dust.

Establishment of Mindfulness on the Feelings (*Vedanānupassanā*)

The second method of *Satipaṭṭhāna* is the observation of nine-fold sensations or feelings (*Vedanānupassana*).

Following the details given in the *sutta*, there are three types of sensations discussed in the beginning of this section. They are directly caused by or related to the physical body. The body by itself cannot feel them, and they are felt by mind but based on the body. They are the pleasant feeling, the unpleasant feeling, and the neutral feeling. Referring to the *sutta*, ‘experiencing the pleasant feeling, the practitioner should understand well this as ‘the experience of pleasant feeling’. In the same way, ‘the experiencing unpleasant feeling, the practitioner should know well this as the experience of unpleasant feeling, and the experiencing neutral feeling, the practitioner should know well this as experience of neutral feeling’³⁷.

There are another two categories of feelings such as ‘*sāmisā*’ (caused by the craving) and ‘*nirāmisā*’ (caused by the non-craving). Again each of them has divided into three such as ‘the pleasant feeling caused by the craving, the unpleasant feeling caused by the craving, and the neutral feeling caused by the craving’. And also ‘the pleasant feeling caused by the non-

³⁷ Ibid. P. 298.

craving, the unpleasant feeling caused by the non-craving, and neutral feeling caused by the non-craving'. Those feelings are directly related to the mental part of a being. Suppose, a meditator who practices long time but unable to attend in *jhāna*, then he feels hesitate about his practice. This feeling is related to the mind, not concerning the body. These sensations also should be realized by practitioner in the same way of the other feelings.

The sensation which is caused by craving is unwholesome and leads to impurity or to the samsaric suffering. And the sensation which is caused by non-craving, is wholesome leads to the purity or liberation.

Feeling is impermanent, it is changed momentarily due to the condition. Therefore, one has to understand impermanence of the feeling³⁸.

Observation of the Mind (*Cittānupassanā*)

There are eighty-nine consciousness in Theravada *Abhidhamma*³⁹. Here, one has to realize all those *cittas*.

The mind is always together with mental thoughts, and both of them cannot exist alone or separately. They are depend on each other. The mind has given the name due to the mental object that performs in the mind. In that way, the mind should be observed, suppose, just as in the *sutta*, when the lust (*sarāgaṃ*) is in the mind, observed it as 'the mind with lust', when it passes away also observed as 'the mind is free from lust (*vītarāgaṃ*)'. Similarly, practitioner has to observe the mind with hatred (*sadosaṃ*) or without hatred (*vītadosaṃ*), and the mind with ignorance (*samohaṃ*) or without ignorance (*vītamohaṃ*)⁴⁰.

Referring to the commentary, the meaning of 'sarāga' is considered as eightfold *lobha cittas*, and *vītarāga*, *vītadosa* and *vītamoha* are considered as *lokiyakusalāvyakata cittas*. The two *dosa cittas* are consideration of *sadosa*, the *samoha* is considered as all the *akusala cittas* because the *moha cetasika* is present in every *akusala cittas*⁴¹.

³⁸ Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 278.

³⁹ Maha thera, Narada. *A Manual of Abhidhamma*. Pp. 10-61.

⁴⁰ Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 299.

⁴¹ Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. Pp. 279-80.

In the Buddhism, the craving, aversion and ignorance are roots of unwholesome which always perform in the mundane state of the mind, mostly found in beginner of meditation practice.

The next state of the mind is '*saṅkhitta*' means contracted or shrunken state of the mind which is accompanied by sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), and '*vikkhitta*' means confused or distracted state of the mind which is occupied by restlessness (*uddaccha*)⁴². They also should be observed as 'the mind is contracted or the mind is distracted'.

Dhyanic state of the mind is called '*mahaggata*' translated as limitless, and considered the *rūpāvacara cittas* and '*amahaggata*' considered as *kāmāvacara cittas*⁴³. *Dhyanas* are also one of them that unthinkable in the world⁴⁴. Within the dhyanic power, the mind is not limited to the particular area. Therefore, it is called '*mahaggataṃ cittaṃ*'. Here, the meditator has to observe 'the mind is *mahaggata* or it is not *mahaggata*'⁴⁵. Those who have this state of the mind definitely their rebirth will take in Brahma's realms which have lifespan for a long period of time.

Again, the practitioner observes the mind which has higher state, both *kāmāvacara* and *arūpāvacara cittas* are considered as *savuttaraṃ*, also the *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara cittas* are considered as *anuttara*⁴⁶. So, this state of the mind is also observed as 'whether mind is higher or not higher'.

The next state of the mind is deep concentrated mind (*samāhitam*) which has reached to the *appanā-samādhi* or *upacāra-samādhi*, the state before attaining to the *jhana*. The mind *asamāhita* is which absence of both *appana* and *upacāra samādhi*⁴⁷. The practitioner should observe this state as 'the mind is with deep concentrated or without deep concentrated'⁴⁸.

The last state of the mind is liberated mind, liberated from all the fetters (*saṃyojans*), also called *Arahant*. Referring to the commentary, the mind (*vimutta*) which has abandoned cankers in states of *tadaṅga* and *vikkhambanavimutti*, the meaning of *avimutta* is given the mind

⁴² Ibid. P. 280.

⁴³ Ibid. P. 280.

⁴⁴ "Acintita Sutta: Unconjecturable" (AN 4.77), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, web. 3.10.2019
<<http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/an/an04/an04.077.than.html>>

⁴⁵ Mahā-satipatṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 299.

⁴⁶ Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 280.

⁴⁷ Ibid. P. 280.

⁴⁸ Mahā-satipatṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 299.

without both states. And the commentary explained further, there is no chance for the states of *samuccheda*, *paṭipassaddhi*, and *nissaraṇa*⁴⁹. This state of the mind is also observed as ‘the mind is liberated or in bondage’⁵⁰.

Awareness of the Mental Contents (*Dhammānupassanā*)

There are many meanings of the term ‘*dhamma*’ in Buddhism. According to the *satipaṭṭhāna*, the *dhamma* is deliberated as the mental contents same way as mental thoughts. In this the last part of four *satipaṭṭhānas*, and several *dhammas* are discussed such as the Five Hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*), the Five Aggregates subject to the grasping of it (*pañcupādanakkhandha*), the Sense Faculties (*dvādasāyatana*), the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*satta-bojjhanga*), and the Four Noble Truths (*cattāro ariyasacchāni*).

Contemplation of Five Hindrances (*Nīvaraṇa*)

Usually, the hindrances are real barrier to do something welfare. They always occupy the ordinary state of the mind. They are sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. In this section also same as before, the practitioner has to observe when the sensual desire is inside ‘there is sensual desire’, and when it absence ‘there is no sensual desire, when it arises which were lying deep inside and had not previously come to the surface now do so, also when it is eradicated just observe ‘it has been eradicated’. And the eradicated sensual desire does not come back again’⁵¹. Likewise, other hindrances also should be observed.

Contemplation of Five Aggregates (*Khandha*)

The next, the practitioner observes the attachment to the five aggregates. They are the attachment to the aggregate of forms, the attachment to the aggregate of feelings, the attachment to the aggregate of perceptions, the attachment to the aggregate of mental formations, the attachment to the aggregate of consciousness. For this method also should be observed ‘the aggregate of forms as they are, also arising of them and their passing away. In

⁴⁹ Panañcasūdanī Majjhimanikāyatṭhakathā of Buddhaghosācariya. Vol. I. P. 280.

⁵⁰ Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. Vol. II. P. 299.

⁵¹ Ibid. P. 300.

the same way should be observed the aggregate of feelings, the aggregate of perceptions, the aggregate of mental formations, and the aggregate of consciousness⁵².

Contemplation of Sense-bases (*Āyatana*)

The twelve *āyatanas* also known as sense-bases or sphere. The Pāli term ‘*āyatana*’ is the place where doing activities. Suppose, a money bank. Just a building is not considered as a bank, it must have activities deal with customers. In the same way, there are twelve internal and external *āyatanas* which are related to us such as,

Internal faculty

external faculty

Eye-faculty, (*cakkhāyatana*)

faculty of form, (*rūpāyatana*)

Ear-faculty, (*sotāyatana*)

faculty of sound, (*saddhāyatana*)

Nose-faculty, (*ghāṇāyatana*)

faculty of smell, (*gandhāyatana*)

Tongue-faculty, (*jivhāyatana*)

faculty of taste, (*rasāyatana*)

Body-faculty, (*kāyāyatana*)

faculty of tangible, (*poṭṭhabbāyatana*)

Mind-faculty, (*manāyatana*)

faculty of mental thought, (*dhammāyatana*)

Referring to the details given by the *sutta*, the meditator has to realize properly three things such as eye-faculty, visual object, and fetters which arisen depend on both. After that when arising of the non-arising fetters comes to be, and when they are eradicated just observe they have been eradicated and they do not come back again⁵³. The other faculties and the fetters which are arisen depend on them also should be realized.

Contemplation of Factors of Enlightenment (*Bojjhaṅga*)

The *Bojjhaṅga* (*Bodhi* + *aṅga*) translated as factors of enlightenment, also they are qualities to be cultivated in order to attain enlightenment. They are

Enlighten factor of mindfulness (*sati-sambojjhaṅga*)

⁵² Ibid. P. 301.

⁵³ Ibid. P. 302.

Enlighten factor of investigation in dhamma (*dhammavicaya-sambojjhaṅga*)

Enlighten factor of effort (*virīya-sambojjhaṅga*)

Enlighten factor of delight (*pīti-sambojjhaṅga*)

Enlighten factor of tranquility (*passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga*)

Enlighten factor of concentration (*samādhi-sambojjhaṅga*)

Enlighten factor of equanimity (*upekkha-sambojjhaṅga*)

Whether sati is present or not present in the mind, it is observed by the practitioner, also he observes, when arising of the non-arising sati comes to be, and when they are cultivated until become completed⁵⁴. In this way, the other enlighten factors are also observed.

Contemplation of Four Noble Truths (*Catusacca*)

The most essential doctrine of Buddhism is the four noble truths. By realization of four noble truths one can be liberated. Just knowing of the four noble truths is not enough to attain liberation. Therefore, they should be realized as the real nature of them (*yathābhūtaṃ*). There are four factors such as the truth of suffering, origin of suffering, cessation of suffering, the path leading to the cessation of the suffering.

The *sutta* explains the four noble truths one by one very vastly. So, the practitioner has to realize the truths together with their origination, cessation and the path. One who realizes the four noble truths, he is liberated destroying ignorance that mentioned in *Sammādiṭṭhi sutta* as he is a noble disciple with right view whose view is straight⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ Ibid. P. 303.

⁵⁵ *Sammādiṭṭhi sutta*, The Majjhima-nikāya, vol. I. P. 46.

Conclusion

Practicing the *satipaṭṭhāna* can be destroyed the hindrances in our mind which is called *akusala-rāsi*. In this sense, the Buddha mentioned *satipaṭṭhāna* as *kusala-rāsi* (a heap of the wholesome)⁵⁶. The *satipaṭṭhāna* is the monk's own resort and ancestral domain. The Buddha uttered to the monks in the *Sakuṇagghi sutta* that 'when one strays outside one's own resort into the domain of others, it is not suitable place for him, therefore, we should not stray outside our own resort into domain of others because the Evil One (*Mārā*) will gain access to those who stray outside their own resort into the domain of others. Evil one will get hold on them. In here, the five cords of sensual pleasure are considered as outside one's own resort (*agocare*) and domain of others (*paravisaye*). The ancestral domain and one's own resort explained as the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*⁵⁷.

The Buddha recommended practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* to get cure from the suffering of samsara. In details at the end of the *sutta*, whoever practices *satipaṭṭhāna* in such a way (as the Buddha said) for minimum seven days and maximum seven years one of two results would be expected for him, either *Anāgāmi* (non-returner) or *Arahant* (one who emancipated). The Buddha's guarantee of the results can be obtained in this life or after this life.

People have different perspective (*nānattha saññā*), thinking (*nānattha manasā*), understanding (*nānattha paññā*), and so forth. Therefore, each person can get the result depends on their capacity of understanding. In case, my suggestion is to cultivate *satipaṭṭhāna* every moment, no matter what you are doing.

⁵⁶ Kusalarāsi sutta, Saṃyutta-nikāya Vol. V. Mahā-vagga. P. 146.

⁵⁷ Ibid. P. 147.

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