

Outline of the *Satipatthāna Sutta*,
The Four Ways of Establishing Mindfulness

Compiled by Peter B. Williams

“Bhikkhus, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of *Nibbāna*, namely, the four *satipatthānas*.”

“What are the four? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating *dhammas*, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.”

1. Mindfulness of Body

A. Mindfulness of Breathing

“Ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.
Breathing in long, he understands “I breathe in long” ...
Breathing in short, he understands “I breathe in short” ...
He trains thus, ‘I shall breathe in, experiencing the whole body [of breath],’
he trains thus, ‘I shall breathe out, experiencing the whole body [of breath].’
He trains thus, ‘I shall breathe in, tranquilizing the bodily formation,’
he trains thus, ‘I shall breathe out, tranquilizing the bodily formation.’”

[Refrain] “In this way, he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in the body its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in the body both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that ‘there is body’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.”

B. The Four Postures – walking, standing, sitting, and lying down

“When walking, a bhikkhu understands: ‘I am walking’; when standing, he understands: ‘I am standing’; when sitting, he understands: ‘I am sitting’; when lying down, he understands: ‘I am lying down.’”

[Refrain] – same as above

C. Clear Awareness of Activities

“A bhikkhu is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when: looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when”: flexing and extending his limbs; ... wearing his robes; ... eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; ...

defecating and urinating; ... walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent.”

[Refrain] – same as above

D. Reflection on the Parts of the Body

“A bhikkhu reviews this same body...as full of ... many kinds of impurity:”
... Head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, synovial fluid, and urine.”

[Refrain] – same as above

E. The Four Elements

Examine the body for these elements: Earth, water, fire, air

[Refrain] – same as above

F. The Nine Charnel-Ground Contemplations

“Again, a bhikkhu, as if he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground” would contemplate his own body similarly, “‘This body is of the same nature, this body will become like that, it is not exempt from that fate’:

1. “One, two, or three days dead – bloated, livid, and oozing matter...
2. “Being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms...
3. “A skeleton with flesh and blood held together with sinews...
4. “A fleshless skeleton, smeared with blood, connected by sinews...
5. “A skeleton without flesh and blood, connected by sinews...
6. “Disconnected bones scattered in all directions – here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin bone, there a thigh bone...
7. “Bones bleached white, the color of shells...
8. “Bones heaped up, more than a year old...
9. “Bones rotted and crumbled to dust.”

[Refrain] – same as above

2. Contemplation of feelings

“Here, when feeling a pleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel a pleasant feeling’; when feeling an unpleasant feeling, he knows ‘I feel an unpleasant feeling’; when feeling a neutral feeling, he knows ‘I feel a neutral feeling.’

[Refrain] - “In this way, he abides contemplating feeling tone as feeling tone internally, or he abides contemplating feeling tone as feeling tone externally, or he abides contemplating feeling tone as feeling tone internally and externally”...

3. Contemplation of Mind

“A bhikkhu understands mind affected by lust as mind affected by lust, mind unaffected by lust as mind unaffected by lust...mind affected by hate as mind affected by hate, mind unaffected by hate as mind unaffected by hate...affected/unaffected delusion...understands contracted mind as contracted, distracted mind as distracted...exalted/unexalted mind...surpassed/unsurpassed mind...concentrated/unconcentrated mind...liberated/unliberated mind.”

[Refrain] - “In this way, he abides contemplating mind as mind internally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind externally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind internally and externally”...

4. Contemplation of *Dhammas*

A. Five hindrances

Desire
Aversion
Sleepiness, mental dullness
Restlessness
Doubt

[Refrain] - “In this way, he abides contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas* internally, or he abides contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas* externally, or he abides contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas* internally and externally”...

B. Five aggregates

Material form (includes the body)
Feeling tone
Perception
Mental formations
Consciousness

[Refrain] – same as above

C. Six internal and external sense bases

Eye - sights
Ear - sounds
Nose - smells
Tongue - flavors
Body - sensations
Mind – mental objects (thoughts, images, emotions, etc.)

[Refrain] – same as above

D. Seven factors of enlightenment

Mindfulness
Investigation
Effort, energy

Joy, rapture
Tranquility
Concentration
Equanimity

[Refrain] – same as above

E. Four noble truths – fourth truth is the Eightfold Path

The truth of *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness)
The truth of the cause of *dukkha*
The truth of the end of *dukkha*
The truth of the path that leads to the end of *dukkha*

[Refrain] – same as above

Sources

Analayo. (2003). *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization*. Cambridge, UK: Windhorse Publications, Ltd.

Majjhima Nikāya 10. Satipatthana Sutta: The Discourse on the Arousing of Mindfulness. Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

Majjhima Nikāya 10. Satipatthana Sutta: Frames of Reference. MN 10 PTS: M i 55. Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.010.than.html>. Accessed Feb. 20, 2014.