

# MINDFULNESS & EARLY BUDDHISM

WITH DAVE SMITH & MIKE ZITTEL

## Criteria for the study and practice of Mindfulness *Dave Smith*

When we begin to study or attempt to understand the psychology of present-moment awareness we need to have a foundation for what it is that we are actually hoping to accomplish. The study of "conscious awareness" thru the practice of mindfulness and the Dharma is rich, fascinating, detailed, intellectually stimulating, pragmatic and brilliant. To begin, here is a simple criterion as to the purpose of this exploration.

1. The end result of this exploration is to know suffering, its cause, its release, and the process, which allows this to actually occur, namely, the four noble truths.

2. The "knowing" of this process is to be developed within the framework and practice of mindfulness meditation, and then applied to all areas of our lives. The development of mindfulness plays a key role in the destruction of greed, hatred and delusion in which the role of ethics plays a significant role.

3. Study of the Dharma and the practice of mindfulness should go hand and hand, as one has the ability to inform the other and vice versa. A balanced approach will produce the best result.

The practice of mindfulness is taken from a sutta in the pali canon entitled: Satipatthana: defined as the direct path to realization. The translation that we have used for Satipatthana is mindfulness. If we break the term into its roots we will find two very important ideas:

1. Sati- the ability to remember, to recognize and to see clearly.
2. Thanā- a ground or foundation.

Satipatthana- To remember, to recognize and to see clearly this ground, namely the impermanent, unreliable, stressful and impersonal nature of experience itself. Learning to navigate with skill, the groundless ground of lived experience.

The ability to perform this task is called

mindfulness, plain and simple. For mindfulness to be established there requires a matrix of skills and abilities. Mindfulness can't be reduced to just one simple task or skill. It requires a whole range of applications that need to be balanced and maintained all at once. Mindfulness is a mode of operating. It provides us the ability to view of our lives from a new and much wider perspective. It allows us to apply critical thinking and discernment, logic, ethics and an openness to question old ideas and core beliefs. It allows for personal change and transformation. It supports confidence and trust that we can overcome the challenges that we face. What may only begin as a momentary seed of awareness can be cultivated into a sense of conscious and concern that allows us to create a way of life that promotes long lasting well being and true happiness.

Sustained mindfulness practice requires that we maintain willingness for self-honesty and self-reflection that challenges our defense mechanisms. It confronts our denial and shines a light on our regrets. It puts us right in the center of our vulnerability, and we don't always like that. This is why, when mindfulness practices starts to actually work, we often run for the door because we may find ourselves awakening to the deepest patterns and habits of our suffering that we may prefer to go back to sleep.

Satipatthana intro:

*"This is the direct path for the purification of all beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & suffering, for the disappearance of grief & distress, for the development of the true method, & for the realization of unbinding, in other words, the four foundations of mindfulness. Which four?"*

*"There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself; ardent, alert, & mindful, putting aside craving & aversion with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in the same way, mind states in the same way, mental activities in & of themselves in the same way; ardent, alert, & mindful, putting aside craving & aversion with reference to the world."*

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## First foundation of mindfulness:

### Body *Dave Smith*

#### (1). Mindfulness of Breathing:

Once we get settled into this form of practice the instructions continue by suggesting that we apply mindfulness towards the experience of breathing. We know breathing in as breathing in; we know breathing out as breathing. We know if each breath is long, or if it's short, or its deep or if it's shallow. We establish mindfulness of breathing and then attempt to allow our breathing to settle into a natural rhythm.

#### (2). Mindfulness of postures:

The next set of practices is directed to the four postures. Bringing mindfulness to the experiences of walking, sitting, standing or lying down. This implies that mindfulness can and should be established with the context of our daily lives. Mindfulness can be applied to these four postures. The practice need not be simply reduced to formal sitting practice.

#### (3). Mindfulness and clear comprehension/ clear understanding:

The next set of practice is defined as clear comprehension, or we could say clear understanding. This aspect of mindfulness can be defined as fully-knowing what one is attending to. It requires the ability to both, be with and to know. The pali term for clear comprehension is sampajana, which literally translates as "one who sees correctly".

There are four particular kinds of clear understanding within the pali texts.

The first aspect is to have clear understanding of what is beneficial. Before engaging in any activity we would consider whether or not it would be beneficial, or we might ask, would it be useful? The second aspect of clear comprehension builds on the first by asking the question is now the right or suitable time to do such activity? We may notice or discern that what we are about to do may have benefit or could be seen as being useful.

The third aspect is to consider if the action is within an appropriate domain. Or may think of this a skillful or even safe territory. If we wander to far or astray we may find that we will be vulnerable to the forces of greed, hatred and delusion. We learn to keep our awareness within sensations, feelings, attitudes and activities. Hence this called the meditators domain, the four foundations of mindfulness.

The final aspect of clear comprehension is traditionally called non-delusion. This is the fruit of practicing the previous three applications. Non-delusion simple means that we are now able to see things through the proper lens of wisdom or understanding.

#### 4). 32 Anatomical Parts of the body:

This set of mindfulness of body instructions is designed to bring us into the deepest aspects of body awareness and is skillfully interwoven within the next set which understanding the four elements of earth, air, fire and water.

Here is what the sutta states:

*In regards to the body one reflects on the anatomical parts of the body. One reflects that this body is covered with skin and full of impurities of all kinds from the soles of the feet upwards and from the hair of the head downwards, considering thus: "In this body, there are hairs of the head, hairs of the skin, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach with its contents, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid and urine."*

Translation: Thanissaro Bhikkhu

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## (5). Four Elements

1. Earth (solidity), 2. Air (motion) 3. Fire (temperature) 4. Water (liquidity)

As the sutta states:

Just as a skilled butcher or his apprentice, having killed a cow, would sit at a crossroads cutting it up into pieces, the monk contemplates this very body — however it stands, however it is disposed — in terms of properties: 'In this body there is the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property.' And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.  
Translation: Thanissaro Bhikkhu

## (6). Death Reflections

The final set of practices of mindfulness of the body requires reflections on death. Many Buddhist monks will meditate on the reality of death every morning. The paradox of the fact that death is certain and that the time of death is uncertain. This provides the proper motivation and commitment to practice. In our culture we see such a huge denial around death and dying. Anyone who has been to an open casket funeral will know what I am saying. Meditating and reflecting on death may not be for everyone, but at some point we may want to consider the fact that we will all die.

## Second foundation of mindfulness: Feelings

The role of feeling within this aspect of mindfulness encompasses the ability to both feel and to know. We simply feel the affect of the body, emotion and thoughts and we begin to know them as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. We come to see the stark reality that because there is pain, there are painful feelings. Because there is comfort, there are pleasant feelings and so on. This is the way feelings should be dealt with during

meditation, by being aware of them, by being mindful of them and by taking note of them. If we can see the arising and passing of feelings we are better able to avoid the craving and aversion that is deeply associated with them. By not attaching to feelings, we are liberated from the suffering that ensues.

## Third foundation of mindfulness: Mind

Within the third foundation of mindfulness we are instructed to be mindful of the mind. Namely we are investigating the presence and absence of greed, hatred and delusion. These factors arise in unwholesome states of mind. These mental factors arise at the point of contact and feeling and begin to corrupt the mind by allowing craving and reactivity to take hold, as we reach for pleasant, push away unpleasant and become confused and ambivalent towards neutral. Greed will usually manifest as the experience of anticipation. We may feel like we are waiting for, or wanting something to happen. Hatred will often show up in the form of resistance. If we encounter any type or form of unpleasantness we attempt to avoid, resist and reject. We may find that we impatiently wait for it to go away, thus giving rise to reactivity, as we are unable to hold or tolerate that which is unpleasant. Neutral may give rise to a sense of ambivalence, indifference, boredom and confusion. If we can bring interest and curiosity towards experiences of neutrality, we may experience ease, contentment and an overall sense of peace and well-being.

## Fourth foundation of mindfulness: mental activities / Categories of experience

Within the contemplation of the fourth foundation we see five sets of practices. Traditionally this contemplation is defined as mindfulness of dhammas.

The first set of consideration within the context of the fourth foundation is learning to understand what the five hindrances are and how to overcome them. Essentially the path to liberation will depend on how well we are able to abandon the hindrances. Much of the work

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that we do within mindfulness is learning how this may be done and is an ongoing aspect of practice. They are called hindrances because they hinder or block our ability to be at ease and create various forms of reactivity, stress and mental anguish. The five hindrances are craving, aversion, restlessness, lethargy and doubt.

The hindrance of craving is the experience of wanting something pleasant. It shows up as anticipation and anxiety. It has greed for its root. Aversion is the opposite of craving. It is the experience of wanting unpleasant to go away. It shows up as frustration and agitation. It has hatred for its root. Lethargy is the experience of a sluggish and spaced out mind. Lethargy is the experience of being dis-interested and un-engaged. Restlessness as a hindrance is typically associated with contents of the mind and may not be the same experience as physical restlessness, although they may be directly linked as we can often see. Restlessness as mental activity is likened to worry or remorse, typically worried about the future and feeling regret about the past. Restlessness may have flavors of greed, hatred or delusion as its root. Doubt is with a doubt, the most challenging hindrance to overcome. Doubt has delusion for its root and may also contain all or some of the other hindrances.

The second set of practices within the four foundations shows the Buddha's affinity for repetition by reminding us to continue to explore the full range of our experience. Within this set of practice we are invited to explore the five aggregates. Being able to work within the context of the five aggregates as a meditation practice is both exciting and useful. The five aggregates are form, feeling, perception, inclination, and consciousness. The five aggregates are how the Buddha defines the mind.

The third set is to revisit the 6 sense spheres:

1. See 2. Smell 3. Hear 4. Touch 5. Taste 6. Thought

Next we have the awakening factors in which there are seven. It may be no surprise that this list begins with mindfulness and carries all way through to culminate into equanimity.

The seven awakening factors are: mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, serenity, concentration and equanimity. Much has already been said of mindfulness. The second term, investigation implies a sense of curiosity and interest. This term is important because it is what activates a careful attention by bring conscious, concern, interest and curiosity. The middle three energy, joy and serenity are associated with subtle mental states that arise in meditation. These states will unfold into the experience of concentration and collectedness and finally flowing into the embodied experience of equanimity; the perfect balance of wisdom and compassion.

We finally see the Sutta conclude with a reflection and acknowledgment of the four noble truths. All schools of Buddhism hold the teachings of the four noble truths to be the very core, and heart of the Dharma. In fact, it's understood that all the teachings of the Buddha are contained within the structure of the four noble truths. In one sutta one of the Buddha's primary students named Sariputta reminds us that just like all the animals of the jungle footprint can fit inside that of an elephant, so is it true with the Dharma. All of the Buddha's teachings are to be found within the structure of the four noble truths.

## The Four Noble Truths

1. The truth of stress and suffering (dukkha)
2. The cause of suffering is repetitive craving (tanha)
3. The release of suffering is possible (nirodha)
4. The path that leads to the end of suffering is available (magga)

**Eight Fold Path:** The eightfold path is the process that allows us to achieve true happiness and liberation in this life. The eight-fold path is made up of three components, which mentioned before contain understanding, ethics and meditative training. The factors of the eight-fold path are here below:

1. Understanding: Skillful (1). View and (2). Intention
2. Ethics: Skillful (3). Speech (4). Action and (5). Livelihood
3. Meditation: Skillful (6). Effort (7). Mindfulness and (8). Concentration



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## Anapanasait practice, and how to 'properly bring and place the mind' Mike Zittel

Anapanasati practice is essentially the Buddha's most explicit and detailed teaching on a mediation practice. It follows in the structure of the Satipatthana Sutta in terms of breaking the practice into contemplating 4 general categories of: Body, Feeling, Thought, and Dhammas akin to the Satipatthana teachings. Whereas Satipatthana can be looked at as a 'broad net' or a 'wide umbrella' under which are many subcategories of consideration, Anapanasati can be regarded as taking 'one strand' out of each category and developing specific skill sets while contemplating said category. For example: in Body contemplation it specifically begins with breath and moves into body, but does not include various postures, anatomical parts, the 4 elements or Death reflection. While one rests attention on the breath one practices 'Clear comprehension/clear understanding' (mentioned in 3rd aspect of First Foundation-Body) of what is happening; the result of which skills of tranquility and insight are being trained.

In early Buddhism there is no word for meditation. Early Buddhists trained to develop skill sets while in contemplation, including right concentration (tranquility), right mindfulness (insight). Even still Concentration and Mindfulness are English terms, the Pali terms are Samatha and Vipassana. In the Suttas they are often shorthanded as tranquility and Insight. Originally these qualities were to be developed in tandem. The following is a sutta regarding clear knowing, or sompajanna. It expounds upon what the resulting skills are developed.

AN Vijja-bhagiya Sutta: A Share in Clear Knowing

*"When tranquillity is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned.*

*"When insight is developed, what purpose does it serve? Discernment is developed. And when discernment is developed, what purpose does it serve? Ignorance is abandoned.*

*"Defiled by passion, the mind is not released. Defiled by ignorance, discernment does not develop. Thus from the fading of passion is there awareness-release. From the fading of ignorance is there discernment-release."*

translated from the Pali by  
Thanissaro Bhikkhu

b. Two qualities: Tranquility (Samatha), and Insight (Vipassana) Lets look at these today.

For this first talk I want to focus on the first aspect, Tranquility or Samatha:

*"When tranquillity is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned."*

What is Tranquility & Developing mind? The Pali term Samatha shares in the root word Samadhi:

Sam + ā + dhi

Properly + Bring + placement

Samatha practice is about how to "properly bring & place the mind." Otherwise put, the Tranquility practice is a training in how to still the mind, to train it to sit, rest and begin to see properly. When we begin to meditate our minds are a bit crazy, distracted. Often we have activated Default Mode Network- distinct regions of the brain that turn on when we are not engaged in a concentrated focus where the mind jumps between thoughts of past, plans for future and fantasy scenarios. How can one begin to meditate in this state? We 'properly bring and place the mind;' train the mind how to "sit, rest and see properly" We choose an 'object of focus' to have the mind rest upon, the breath, the body, Feelings, etc. Once the mind

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contacts the object and we have a bit of concentration so we can hold the object in attention, then we can see all that is happening in that relationship between 'subject' (our attention) and 'object' (of focus). Usually what is taking place in this relationship are the Kleshas, the mental/emotional states that cloud our perception and judgement.

If we are to consider that the core Dharma teaching are the 4 noble truths the general structure is

1.) There is a habit of Suffering/Stress (we are directed to contemplate what this is 2.) proper contemplation starts with knowing its origin, 3.) proper contemplation results in understanding its cessation, or what conditions end suffering/stress 4.) train for these conditions of liberation in all aspects of our life.

Then understanding the root causes of how suffering/stress begins at having this direct observation of the Kleshas as they play out in real time in our perception. We can only get a hold of this if we settle the mind and have it still upon an object of focus so we can get a look at it. We all have a sense of the clarity of our TV or computer monitor resolution, how clear or static our cell phone reception is- its part of our present tech culture. But why don't we have that sense of the resolution, clarity or static our perception of our mind has? Let's look at the second part of the quote regarding Tranquility practice:

"...And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned..."

As we settle the mind, we see how the Kleshas, the subtle Craving, Aversion, and tendency towards Unconscious reactions play out. This is what is pushing us away from the object of focus. When we can identify the flavor of Klesha pushing us away, we can develop a tolerance to it and tranquilize, calm, lessen its influence. This is how *sampajanna* (clear knowing) and *Samatha* (tranquility/concentration) work hand in hand. Anapanasati practice at times is regarded as a separate practice than Satipatthana. Understandably Anapanasati is often equated only with tranquility/Samatha. However this is not correct.

In the Anapanasati sutta the Buddha says that "Mindfulness of in and out breathing, when developed and pursued, brings the four frames of reference to completion. The four frames of reference, when developed and pursued, bring the seven factors for awakening to completion. The seven factors for Awakening, when developed and pursued, bring clear knowing and release to completion." The Four Frames reference is the 4 foundations of Satipatthana. Buddha gave the teaching of Anapanasati as one method of developing tranquility and insight by focusing on the Satipatthana in a very directed way, leading one all the way to Nibbana.

## Anapanasati Practice\*

Taken from Anapanasati Sutta, translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

(\*in following presentations I will provide an edit that is gender neutral)

### *1st Tetrad Body (Kayaanupassana):*

"[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long';

or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.'

[2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short';

or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.'

[3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.' [2] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.'

[4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

### *2nd Tetrad Feeling (Vedananupassana):*

"[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.'

[6] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.'

[7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.'

[4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.'

[8] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.'

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## 3rd Tetrad Mind (Cittaanupassana)

"[9] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.'

[10] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in satisfying the mind.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out satisfying the mind.'

[11] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.'

[12] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.' [5]

So when early 'Mindfulness Meditation' was being developed, meditation was not a word. Instead a monk was instructed to find a quiet place to sit, 'being Mindfulness to the fore' and train to cultivate twin characteristics of tranquility & insight, (samadhi and vipassana), in tandem to work towards liberation. Looking at Samadhi, it is about how to wrangle in the mind and place it properly on an object. Once it is settled one can investigate, what is the mind's relationship to what it is looking at? In the body? In the Feelings, In the Mind? The Anapanasati practice emphasizes cultivating 'clear comprehension' a deep understanding of what one's mind/body experience is in each moment in order to facilitate awakening.

Next we will look at Vipassana, the 4th Tetrad and the 3 Characteristics.

For the purpose of this first part of the day I will focus on the 1st three of the four Tetrads. What we see here is a process by which we are asked to 'train' to place the mind on a given object, the breath. This narrow focus helps us to learn to discern what is relevant and what is not with respect to our goal; in this case breath. Everything else can go in the back seat. Incrementally as time passes and our attention deepens we incrementally expand our awareness to include ever more aspects of our awareness: into the body, then calming the body. We bring attention towards a specific feeling tone of cultivating joy (classically rapture as it relates to the jannha practice), as this deepens the body becomes a safe and steady anchor so we can begin to open up to the mind without becoming overly identified with ever thought and emotion that arises. Again we become aware and then calm or tranquilize the kleshas. This is a very deep cleaning that we are doing; in essence we systematically are intentionally working our attention through each cognitive, affective and somatic branch of the sensory system and identifying our maladaptive conditioning, bad habits of mind, and reinforcing new habits that support well being and the overall awakening process.

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## The 3 Marks of Existence

Mike Zittel

They are considered to be a very central teaching in the Dharma. Essentially they are three characteristics that underly all experience: Dukkha, Anicca, Anatta.

Anicca, or Impermanence, is inherent in all created things. All things change.

Dukkha, sometimes translated as suffering, stress, dissatisfaction. Often when we base our happiness upon something being permanent, when it inevitably changes we experience suffering.

Anatta, or Not-Self. The concept that what we experience is not necessarily ourselves.

These are very brief and general answers.

I've heard them described this way often. Unfortunately although true, it seems vague, abstract, esoteric and how is it relevant to our experience? Many times this teaching is left behind by students.

To understand why the 3 Marks are so important and instrumental in understanding Awakening, unbinding, and nibbana let's reconnect with our previous discussion of Tranquility and Insight.

If Tranquility/Samatha is about how to properly place the mind in order to cultivate states of mind free from hinderances. Insight practice is about freeing ourselves of conditioning that inclines us towards suffering. Samatha helps us be able to truly be 'with' our experience in all the foundations (body, feeling, mind). But what then? How do we go from noticing something to making a beneficial change?

We could say that Insight/Vipassana is about what to focus on. Let's return to the Vijja-bhagiyā Sutta: A Share in Clear Knowing

*...When insight is developed, what purpose does it serve?*

*Discernment is developed.*

*And when discernment is developed, what purpose does it serve?*

*Ignorance is abandoned.*

*So, insight develops discernment which helps us abandon ignorance... sounds a little wonky. Let's take another shot at it. Previously, by practicing Samatha we cultivated a*

a settled mind, rested in body, then we opened up to the mind/body process. We noticed sense impressions - thoughts, feelings rise and fall some momentary, some that seemed like habits of mind. This leads us to what it is we are investigating; Sankharas. Sankharas, or Fabrications are any volitional formations.

Sankharas - 'Fabrications' or volitional formations. A mental Fabrication can consist of the thinking/feeling process. A term that I like is 'sense impression' as it has 2 connotations: a.) sense impressions as an occasional passing sensory event (a momentary thought or emotion); b.) sense impressions as imprints - an imprint like a groove. We can have experiences that make an imprint on our minds that then effect how we see things. A bad experience that then creates a fear that lasts through life, a bad altercation with a particular person that then distorts how we perceive larger groups of people with shared characteristics. This form of fabrication is a deeper imprint that shapes our conditioned mind. We can observe its reactivity as we engage in meditation. Not knowing this process of sankharas being present leaping ahead of us and coloring the glasses through which we see the world is a part of what is meant by 'Ignorance'. So Insight/Vipassana helps us see through 'ignorance' and connects us with the deeper conditioning that distorts perspective and drives behavior.

So we by taking time to sit in a secluded way, in a simplified environment the mind can settle and then notice more refined and subtler aspects of the thinking/feeling process. In just attempting to be present with our body/feeling/mind we get agitated, sleepy, dreamy, restless, start planning etc. Chances are after a while we see that although the 'actors' may change in the content of our drifting, but that we may notice certain patterns that are unique to us. One person may be more of a planner, one person may notice more spacing out, one person may note constantly returning to fantasies that make them angry, afraid, or sad. This is our conditioning playing out.

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Returning now to 3 Marks. Ever watch fire-works? The crowd sits in anticipation, a fire-work shoots into the air, Boom! it blossoms, spreads, becomes diffuse, then dissipates and falls fading to meager shimmering then ceases. This is impermanence. This is how Impermanence is experienced in our sensory system.

At first we notice what is new, novel in experience- what is that thought, what is that feeling? What is that? We all have a tendency to notice the novel, then block it out. As we meditate in time we see the causes and conditions for what instigates a thought, what precedes an emotion, what triggers a particular feeling. Now with a 'properly placed mind' we have concentration to stay with a particular strand of sensory experience, we can watch the feeling arise from the beginning, watch it blossom, spread, become diffuse and fall. Even as other sense experiences keep shooting up like the grand finale of the fire-works show, we can choose to stay with one aspect of sense experience watch its flu rise, then fall. As we watch a feeling or thought rise we may notice how we are inclined to grip on it, or 'believe' it. A wave of anger comes "I am angry!" We experience it as constant, we experience it as ourself, we grasp onto it as self even though it is so stressful. This is experiencing anger with 'ignorance'. Observing it in meditation we can see...

Impermanence - (when seen directly, w sensory clarity, concentration and equanimity) a sense experience is ever changing. It rises, blooms, dissipates then fades. Somatic sensation, Affect in the body, Cognition - all have this characteristic. We train to track its rate of change...in time...in space....

Not-Self - As we observe the Impermanence of our sense experience we begin to have a more 'objective view' of it; our 'self identification' tied to that particular sense experience begins to drop away.

Dhukka - The more impermanence occurs with the sense experience and we become more objective, we begin to realize the degree of discontent, distress we had when grasping at the sense experience. We are more inclined to let go, relinquish our grasp.

This is a more succinct way of looking at the 3 Marks. Our conditioning arises in meditation, we see it as a sensory event, we can notice its rising, impermanence, fading... we become more objective and relinquish our grasp on it. The being stuck on an emotion ends. The fixation on a deluded fantasy stops, our attention returns to the present with more clarity.

Buddhadassa a 20th century monk writes in his book 'Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree'

*We should understand that they are of great importance, but in this instance, the Buddha included [dukkha & anatta] both within aniccā~ because of the fact that, if we fully realize impermanence, we will naturally realize dukkhā~ within it; and if we fully realize both impermanence and unsatisfactoriness, then we'll realize anattā – that there is nothing to attach to as "self" or as "ourself."*

He continues on to emphasize how fundamental it is for one to cultivate the focus of Impermanence and, by extension, the whole 3 Marks:

*In another place, the Pali scriptures record that the Buddha said: "Medhiya, perception of not-self appears to one who has perception of impermanence; one who perceives not-self removes ego conceit and experiences nibbana here and now." This shows that the Blessed One held that when there is perception of impermanence there is perception of not-self, ego-conceit is abandoned, and nibbana is realized. To put it more succinctly, one who perceives impermanence realizes that very nibbana.*



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## 4th Tetrad of Anapanasati

In our last sit we focused on Anapanasati Tetrads 1-3. The 4th tetrad is the Dhammas. In Satipatthana there are many subcategories of experience and mental activities. In Anapanasati as we traverse the 4 Foundations through working the 4 Tetrads in a concise way, then yes, when we are working in the 4th Tetrad Dhammaanupassana (continuous observing/contact with the Dhammas), all these can arise. What is unique in the Anapana practice is that the exercises direct us to discern the process of Impermanence in what we are noticing. If it is the hinderances, the aggregates or if its our own conditioning in the form of the Sankharas, we are directed to notice the underlying activity, the common denominator of experience, or the 3 Marks or Characteristics of all phenomena.

Anapanasati and the 4th Tetrad

"[13] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on [impermanence].'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on [impermanence].'

[14] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion [literally, fading].'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.'

[15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.'

[16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.'

He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'

Impermanence, Fading Away, Cessation, Relinquishment. What is fascinating is that we are directed to notice the passing away aspect of any Sankhara - sense impression/or conditioning. As well we notice that as we maintain contact with the passing away of a sense experience, so to do we notice how our degree of identification with that sense experience diminishes. We are angry, agitated - that is a hinderance. We look at it in meditation. We see moment by moment the feelings arise in the body, they trigger a particular thought, which triggers a body sensation etc. If we sit with one particular rising of a sensation, say, the feeling in the body, we watch it as it rises, blossoms, then fades away. As it fades so to does our belief that "I am angry." We watch how anger can happen and our sense of objectivity can rise as we let go of the anger being our 'seat of identity' or what we refer to in that moment for an "I am" experience.

By contacting, discerning the Impermanence of the object of focus, we begin to let go of it being 'I', this is insight into Anatta, or Not-Self. Resultingly the Dukkha (suffering/stress) diminishes....or fades, ceases and is relinquished. This is the completion of the Path, from contacting Dukkha, to understanding its origin, to Understanding its cessation. The 4 Noble Truths is crucially connoted to Impermanence and the 3 Characteristics. As we do this practice we begin to notice our perception of self and world shift, we notice our behavior becomes less driven, we are less part to harm ourself or others. In many way this practice is reprogramming ourselves. We are getting rid of the bad code, the messaging that blocks a deeper happiness. Next what we need to do is begin to train for new habits. Habits of conditioning the heart in the Bramha Viharas.

# MINDFULNESS & EARLY BUDDHISM

## Bramha Vihara Practice: Heart Practices

Dave Smith

### What are heart practice meditations?

Heart practices encompass a range of concepts, ethics, and actions found within the structures of early Buddhism. Mindfulness helps to create and widen that space, and ethics teach us how to respond appropriately. For the sake of keeping things simple we will refer to these trainings as heart practices. These heart practices are the responsive aspect of ethical mindfulness. They are best cultivated within the mental faculty of intention.

Heart practices or Metta practices are divided into four particular sets. We incline the mind toward qualities that act as appropriate responses to the various and nuanced conditions we face in our lives. Classically these four sets are defined as loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekkha).

### Kind-Friendliness (Metta)

Kind-friendliness is the first foundation of metta practices. This is understood to be a beneficial attitude or quality in every situation. It is always appropriate. It holds ease, peace, and contentment as a baseline attitude and promotes its increase. It has the ability to remove ill-will. It is able to see the goodness in others as well as the self without being tempted toward blame or finding fault. It seeks to further cooperation and understanding even in the presence of difficulty. It can be seen as radical humility.

### Compassion (Karuna)

Compassion is the second aspect of heart practices and has the specific aim of being directed toward pain and suffering. It is often defined as a movement of the heart when we come into contact with pain and anguish. This definition also implies the same quality when we face our own suffering. It is the motivation and willingness to alleviate the suffering of others and our selves through any means we have. As a quality of mind it is only appropriate and necessary during moments of distress, sadness, pain or suffering. It simply

intends to help or hold that which hurts.

However, Compassion is also an action, an ethic, primarily characterized as promoting the removal of suffering in others and of one-self.

With compassion comes the inability to express hatred. Its expression is the manifestation of non-violence. It has the ability to uproot the intention to cause harm. It can be brought about by seeing and understanding the difficulties and pains of others while holding a sincere desire to alleviate such suffering. It succeeds when it causes violence and ill-will to descend. It fails when it produces depression and sorrow.

### Forgiveness

There is no official Pali translation for the word forgiveness that I have come across but the idea of forgiveness is expressed wholeheartedly throughout the teachings. For that reason I find that it's best to include it within the cultivation of the heart practice of compassion. Forgiveness practice plays a critical role in the development of compassion. Forgiveness is the antidote to resentment. The internal manifestations of blaming ourselves are guilt, shame, and remorse. Of course, at times it will be important for us to acknowledge the harm we have caused and it is helpful to experience an appropriate amount of regret, but at some point we need to forgive ourselves for our past actions. In fact, forgiveness is the most effective strategy when it comes to simply letting go. Understanding that blaming is only a source of harm to others and ourselves, we set the intention to hold forgiveness as quality that we aim to embody.

Working with and practicing forgiveness happens on three levels. We consider asking forgiveness for the harm we have caused others, we forgive ourselves, and then we offer forgiveness for those who have harmed us.

# MINDFULNESS & EARLY BUDDHISM

## **Appreciation (Mudita)**

The most common translation for mudita is sympathetic joy. It is also the antidote to jealousy and envy. I prefer to use the term appreciation because it has a much more common meaning to us. Mudita has the ability and characteristic of gladdening. It helps us to overcome the common attitude of "how come them and not me." We may find that we often become jealous or self-conscious when we are faced with the good fortune of others. This creates the experience of separation and we become disconnected and self-centered. We may consider how unfortunate it is to be unable to participate in the happiness and success of others, especially when the person is somebody we really care about. Whether it is a good friend, colleague, or family member, wouldn't we want to be able to appreciate his or her good fortune? We want to develop a specific practice to evoke and embody this quality of appreciation.

Such a practice gives us the ability to participate in all of the happiness, joy, success, and pleasure of this world without the need for it to be our own. If we restrict our experience of gratitude to our own gains and successes we severely limit our potential joy and happiness. We create a mind that compares and contrasts. We may become competitive, bitter, and even resentful. If we can bring awareness and appreciation to the good fortune of others, it allows us to keep from closing off from the world and revel in happiness and connection.

intends to help or hold that which hurts. However, Compassion is also an action, an ethic, primarily characterized as promoting the removal of suffering in others and of one-self.

## **Equanimity (Upekkha)**

Equanimity is the practice that holds everything together. We simply acknowledge the truth that our happiness and our freedom is dependent on our actions, not on our wishes. Equanimity balances compassion with wisdom. It allows us to experience the full range of the ethics mindfulness and allows us to see the truth that life is both tragic and beautiful.