

development of supernormal powers, *sati* also reaches a high degree of purity, due to its association with deep equanimity.

Even though *sati* has thus an important role to fulfill in regard to the development of deeper levels of concentration (*samādhi*), the characteristic functions of *sati* and concentration are quite distinct. While concentration corresponds to an enhancement of the selective function of the mind, by way of restricting the breadth of attention, *sati* on its own represents an enhancement of the recollective function, by way of expanding the breadth of attention. These two modes of mental functioning correspond to two different cortical control mechanisms in the brain. This difference, however, does not imply that the two are incompatible, since during absorption attainment both are present. Yet, during absorption *sati* becomes mainly presence of the mind, when it to some extent loses its natural breadth due to the strong focusing power of concentration.

The difference between these two becomes evident from the vocabulary employed in a discourse from the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* (S. V, 156). In this discourse the Buddha recommended that, if one is being distracted or sluggish while practising *satipaṭṭhāna*, one should temporarily change one's practice and develop a tranquility (*samatha*) object of meditation, in order to cultivate internal joy and serenity. This he termed a 'directed' form of meditation *paṇidhāya bhāvanā*. Once, however, the mind has been calmed, one can return to an 'undirected' mode of meditation (*apanidhāya bhāvanā*, namely the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*). The distinction drawn in this discourse between directed and undirected forms of meditation suggests that, considered on their own, these two modes of meditation are clearly different. At the same time, however, the whole discourse is concerned with their skilful interrelation, clearly demonstrating that whatever the degree of their difference, the two can be interrelated and supports each other.

The characteristic quality of concentration is to direct and apply the mind, focusing on a single object to the exclusion of everything else. Thus the development of concentration promotes a shift from the common structure of experience as a subject-object duality towards an experience of unity. Concentration, however, thereby excludes a broader awareness of

circumstances and of their interrelations. Yet, this awareness of circumstances and interrelations is essential in order to become aware of those characteristics of experience whose understanding leads to awakening. In this context, the broadly receptive quality of *sati* is particularly important.

Thus, although it plays an important part in the development of absorption, considered on its own *sati* is a mental quality distinct from concentration. Indeed, the reason why even the attainment of high levels of absorption by itself is insufficient for liberating insight is quite probably related to the inhibition of the broadly receptive observational qualities of awareness by the strong focusing power of absorption concentration. See also AWARENESS, SATIPATTHĀNA.

Anālayo

#### Reference

- <sup>1</sup> • *Micchā sati* occurs e.g. at D. II, 353; D. III, 254; D. III, 287; D. III, 290; D. III, 291; M. I, 42; M. I, 118; M. III, 77; M. III, 140; S. II, 168; S. III, 109; S. V. 1; S. V, 12; S. V, 13; S. V, 16; S. V, 18—20; S. V, 23; S. V, 383; A. II, 220-229; A. III, 141; A. IV, 237; and A. V, 212-248.

**SATIPATTHĀNA** (Sanskrit *smṛtyupasthāna*), is a compound of *sati*, mindfulness or awareness, and *upaṭṭhāna*, with the *u* of the latter term being dropped due to vowel elision. The Pāli term *upaṭṭhāna* literally means 'placing near', and in the present context refers to a particular way of 'being present' and 'attending' to something with mindfulness. Thus *satipaṭṭhāna* means that *sati* is 'being present' in the sense of attending to the current situation. The word *satipaṭṭhāna* can then be translated as 'presence of mindfulness' or as 'attending with mindfulness'.

The Pāli commentaries (e.g. *MA*. I, 238 or *Vism*. 678) however derive *satipaṭṭhāna* from the word *paṭṭhāna*, 'foundation' or 'cause'. With this commentarial explanation *satipaṭṭhāna*, instead of representing a particular attitude of being aware, becomes a 'foundation of mindfulness' *paṭṭhāna* being understood to refer to the 'cause' for the establishment of *sati*. This moves emphasis from the activity to the

object. Yet according to the rules of Pāli grammar on this derivation one would expect a doubling of the consonant, the resulting term then being *satipaṭṭhāna*. Moreover in the discourses contained in the Pāli canon the corresponding verb *paṭṭhāti* never occurs together with *sati*. In fact the noun *paṭṭhāna* is not found at all in the early discourses, but comes into use only in the historically later *Abhidhamma* and the commentaries. In contrast, the discourses frequently relate *sati* to verb *upaṭṭhahati*, indicating that 'presence' (*upaṭṭhāna*) is the etymologically correct derivation. This is also corroborated by the equivalent Sanskrit term *smṛtyupasthāna*, which documents that *upasthāna*, or its Pāli equivalent *upasthāna*, is correct choice for the compound.

On numerous occasions in the discourses four *satipaṭṭhānas* are enumerated, which are concerned with contemplating the body, feelings, mind and phenomena. According to the detailed exposition found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* (M. I, 55-63), the range of the first *satipaṭṭhāna*, contemplation of the body, proceeds from mindfulness of breathing, of postures and of various activities, via an analysis of the body into its anatomical parts and its basic elements, to contemplating a corpse in decay.

The first of these, mindfulness of breathing, as a meditation exercise constitutes a convenient way of building up a foundation in mental calm and concentration. Mindfulness of breathing also has a considerable potential as a tool for the development of insight, the impermanent nature of the breath being easy to notice and thus a constant reminder of the impermanent nature of one's entire existence, which is so dependent on the next breath to be taken in.

The next of the exercise for body contemplation, mindfulness of the four postures of one's body, aims in particular at the development of general body awareness, a development which counters the mind's tendency to distraction and thus serves as an important foundation for more formal sitting meditation. Somewhat similar is also the third exercise, mindfulness and clear comprehension of bodily activities, which relates general awareness of the body to particular activities.

The next body contemplation exercise is concerned with the anatomical constitution of the body,

exemplified by listing its various parts. This exercise can act as a convenient antidote to conceit and sensual desire. The first anatomical parts mentioned in this list are usually being taught to Buddhist monks and nuns on their day of ordination, no doubt as an encouragement to embark on this particular exercise as a protective and supportive practice for their celibate life.

Next comes contemplation of the body in terms of the four elements, which are earth (*paṭhavi*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), and air (*vāyo*). This exercise can lead to deep insight into the selfless nature of the body, which is but a combination of these four elements and thereby not different from any other manifestation of these four elements found elsewhere in nature.

The body contemplations conclude with the cemetery contemplations, which direct mindfulness to different stages of a dead body in decay. Similar to the contemplation of the anatomical parts, this exercise can also act as an antidote to conceit and sensual desire. It moreover quite vividly documents the impermanent nature of the body, whose final destination is none other than death.

Central topics of the first *satipaṭṭhāna* are thus a gradual building up of foundations in mental calm and mindfulness and a deepening insight into the true nature of the body.

The second *satipaṭṭhāna* is concerned with contemplation of feelings. According to the instructions given, feelings are to be distinguished according to their affective quality into pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*dukkha*) and neutral (*adukkhmasukha*) types. Here the mediator's task is to be aware of the affective input provided by feeling during the very early stages of the process of perception, before the onset of reactions, projections and mental elaborations in regard to what has been perceived. According to the later part of the instructions for this *satipaṭṭhāna*, these three types of feelings are moreover to be differentiated into worldly (*sānisa*) or unworldly (*nirānisa*) occurrences. The later part of contemplation of feelings thus introduces an ethical distinction of feelings, aimed at the important difference between worldly feelings caused by 'carnal' experiences, and unworldly feelings related to renunciation and spiritual practices.

Contemplation of the mind covers the presence or absence of four unwholesome states of mind: the lustful (*sarāga*), angry (*sadosa*), deluded (*samoha*) and the distracted (*vikkhitta*) states of mind. The main task here is to avoid being carried away by any particular train of thought and instead to clearly recognize the state of mind underlying this train of thought. In this way the motivating forces at work in one's mind are uncovered and insight into the working mechanism of the mind becomes possible. The latter part of the same contemplation of the mind is also concerned with the presence or absence of four higher states of mind: the great (*mahaggata*), unsurpassable (*anuttara*), concentrated (*samāhita*) and liberated (*vimutta*) states of mind, these terms being mainly references to states of mind experienced during the more advanced stages of tranquility meditation.

The hindrances (*nīvarana*), those factors that particularly obstruct the proper functioning of the mind and therewith all attempts at meditation, are the first object of contemplation of phenomena. In regard to the hindrances one is to recognize their presence and absence, and one is to gain insight into how they arose, how they can be overcome, and how their future arising can be prevented.

After covering the hindrances to meditative practice, the fourth *satipaṭṭhāna* next progresses to two analyses of subjective experience: the five aggregates and the six sense spheres. In regard to the aggregates, their arising and passing away is to be contemplated. This exercise can lead to insight into the impermanent and selfless nature of all aspects of what one takes to be 'oneself'. Such contemplation of the arising and passing away of the aggregates features prominent in the discourse as a form of meditation capable of leading all the way through to full awakening. In regard to the sense-spheres, here the arising of a fetter at any sense-door is the object of *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation. The meditator's task here is to gain insight into and control over the influence exercised by experience on the mind.

These two analyses are followed by contemplation of the awakening factors (*bojjhanga*). These awakening factors, of which *sati* is the first and foundational one, are those seven mental qualities or factors that have to be brought into being in order to be able to gain awakening. Their contemplation as a *satipaṭṭhāna* is

to be aware of their presence and absence, and to be aware of how they can be brought into being and further developed.

The culmination of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice is reached with the contemplation of the four noble truths, full understanding of which coincides with realisation. According to the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta*, contemplation of the four noble truths can be undertaken by either contemplating *dukkha* and its arising, or by directing mindfulness to the cessation of *dukkha* and the path leading thereto (prose introduction to *Sn.* 724).

The *satipaṭṭhāna* commentary recommends each of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* for a specific type of character or inclination (*MA.* I, 239). According to its exposition; body and feeling contemplation should be the main field of practice for those who tend more strongly towards craving, while meditators predominantly given to intellectual speculation should place more emphasis on contemplating mind or phenomena. Understood in this way, practice of the first two *satipaṭṭhānas* suits those with a more affective inclination, while the other two are particularly recommendable for those of a more cognitive orientation. In both cases, those whose character is to think and react quickly can profitably centre their practice on the relatively subtler contemplations of feelings or phenomena, while those whose mental faculties are more circumspect and measured will have better results if they base their practice on the grosser objects of body or mind.

The *Nettipakaraṇa* and the *Visuddhimagga* also set the four *satipaṭṭhānas* in opposition to the four distortions (*vipallāsas*), which are to mistake what is unattractive, unsatisfactory, impermanent, and not self, for being attractive, satisfactory, permanent, and a self (*Nett.* 83 and *Vism.* 678). According to them, contemplation of the body has the potential to reveal in particular the absence of bodily beauty; observation of the true nature of feelings can counter one's incessant search for fleeting pleasures; awareness of the succession of states of mind can disclose the impermanent nature of all subjective experience, and contemplation of phenomena can reveal that the notion of a substantial and permanent self is nothing but an illusion. This presentation brings to light the main

theme that underlies each of the four *satipaṭṭhāna* and indicates which of them is particularly appropriate for dispelling the illusion of beauty, happiness, permanence, or self. Although the corresponding insights are certainly not restricted to one *satipaṭṭhāna* alone, nevertheless this particular correlation indicates which *satipaṭṭhāna* is particularly suitable in order to correct a specific distortion (*vipallāsa*).

In the end, however, all four *satipaṭṭhānas* partake of the same essence. According to the *satipaṭṭhāna* commentary, each of them is capable of leading to realization, like different gateways leading to the same city (*MA*, I, 239). As the commentary to the *Vibhaṅga* points out, the fourfold division is only functional and can be compared to a weaver splitting a piece of bamboo into four parts to weave a basket. (*VibhA*, 222).

According to a set of verses in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta*, these four *satipaṭṭhānas* form the direct or only path (*ekāyano maggo*) for crossing the flood in past, present, and future times (*S.V.* 168 and *S.V.* 186). The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* also uses the same expression in order to introduce *satipaṭṭhāna* as the path for the purification of beings and for the realisation of *Nibbāna* (*M*, I, 55). *Satipaṭṭhāna* is indeed a necessary requirement for awakening, since whosoever have escaped, are escaping, or will escape from this world, all of them do so by way of well developing the four *satipaṭṭhānas* (*A.V.* 195). That is, only with *Satipaṭṭhāna* is awakening possible, not without it.

*Satipaṭṭhāna* stands, however, in necessary interdependence with the other factors of the noble eightfold path, so that it would be a misunderstanding to believe that by practicing only *satipaṭṭhāna*, awakening can be gained. Rather, for *satipaṭṭhāna* to yield its potential fruits, right view and good standards of morality are the indispensable foundations (see *S.V.* 143; *S.V.* 165; *S.V.* 187; and *S.V.* 188).

Another important requirement for successful *satipaṭṭhāna* practice is that it should lead to insight into the arising and passing away of phenomena. This importance is highlighted in the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* (*S.V.* 183), according to which it is this insight which marks the distinction between mere establishment of *satipaṭṭhāna* and its complete and full 'development' (*bhāvanā*). This passage indicates

that mere awareness of the various objects listed under the four *satipaṭṭhānas* may not suffice for the task of developing penetrative insight. What is additionally required is to move on to a comprehensive vision of impermanence, to contemplating the arising and passing away of all events, a requirement explicitly mentioned in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* after each of the exercises.

In this way, based on right view and moral conduct and aimed at an understanding of the impermanent and therewith unsatisfactory and selfless nature of reality, *satipaṭṭhāna* forms the path leading to the realisation of the goal supreme, of *Nibbāna*.

See also ĀNĀPĀNA-SATI, ANUPASSANĀ, ASUBHA BHĀVANĀ, CONTEMPLATION, DHAMMĀNUPASSANĀ, KĀYAGATĀSATI, KĀYĀNUPASSANĀ, SATI, SUKKHAVIPASSAKA.

Anālayo.

**SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA** is the title of the tenth discourse of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (*M*, I, 55-63). Precisely the same discourse recurs as the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (*D*, II, 305-315), the only difference being that this discourse offers a more extensive treatment of the four noble truths, the last of the *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplations. Apart from these two, there are also three smaller *Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas* at *S*, IV, 360, *S*, IV, 363 and *A*, III, 142. The first two of these three just briefly point out that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* lead to the unconditioned. The third, in some editions also called the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, declares that being mindful of five things, namely the rise and fall of phenomena, the lack of beauty of the body, the lack of appeal in food, the unattractive nature of the whole world, and the impermanent nature of all conditioned phenomena, will enable one to become an arahant or a non-returner. In addition to these discourses, there is also a *Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta* at *S.V.* 141-192: a *Satipaṭṭhāna Vagga* at *A*, IV, 457-462; a *Satipaṭṭhāna Vibhaṅga* at *Vbh.* 19-207; and a *Satipaṭṭhāna Kathā* at *Kvu.* 155-159 and at *Ps.* II, 232-235. Evidently the topic of *Satipaṭṭhāna* has received ample treatment in the Pali Canon.

Not only the Pali Canon offers descriptions of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, but the Chinese *āgamas* have also

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