

THE WAYS OF ATTENDING TO MINDFULNESS



TRANSLATED BY

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The Long Discourse about the Ways of Attending to Mindfulness

Translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

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There are three versions of this text published on the website:

The first is the Pāli Text,
which shows how the text was established and the variant readings.

The second is a Text and Translation and includes doctrinal notes,
but excludes the variant readings.

There is also an English-Only version of the text,
with somewhat less notes.

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Introduction

Translations Consulted

The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, from **The Long Discourses of the Buddha**, a translation of the **Dīgha Nikāya**, by Maurice Walshe; Wisdom Publications, Boston 1995.

Comment: a popular, rather abbreviated and simplified (though not necessarily wrong) translation with basic doctrinal notes.

The Only Path to Nibbana, Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero, Singapore, 1999. *Comment: there are many inconsistencies in the translation, which is made into rather poor English.*

Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Suttaṃ, revised edition published Igatpuri, April 1993. *Comment: idiosyncratic translation according to the teachings given in the Goenka meditation system.*

The Foundations of Mindfulness, from **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha**, a translation of the **Majjhima Nikāya**, by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. *Comment: translation of the Majjhima version of the discourse, which is easily the best translation commercially available at the present time, clear and accurate, with excellent doctrinal notes drawn mainly from the commentaries by Bhikkhu Bodhi.*

The Way of Mindfulness, the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta And Its Commentary, by Soma Thera (translation of M. 10); 6th revised edition published by W.A.V.E., Kuala Lumpur, 1999. *Comment: translation of the Majjhima version of the sutta, and the commentarial material from the Aṭṭhakathā and Tīkā. A very useful work and quite reliable translation of the discourse, but the translations from the commentaries are sometimes mere paraphrases.*

Dictionaries

PD: A Dictionary of Pāli, Margaret Cone, Pali Text Society, Oxford, Vol I (2001) Vol II (2010).

PED: Pali-English Dictionary, T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, 1921-25, online edition.

CPD: Critical Pāli Dictionary, 1947- (unfinished), online edition.

CPED: Concise Pāli-English Dictionary, Ven. A.P. Buddhadatta, Colombo, 1958 reprinted 1968.

BHSD: Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary, Franklin Edgerton, New Haven 1953, reprinted Delhi 1998.

SED: Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Monier-Williams, 1899, online edition.

DPPN: Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, G.P. Malalasekera, Pali Text Society, London 1937.

Preface

The text of *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* presented here has been established through a comparison of four editions of the text, none of which are completely satisfactory. PTS, which was compared last of all, appears to give the more reliable readings, though greatly marred by excessive ellipses and inconsistency.

It may be noted here that although the early manuscripts did in fact greatly abbreviate the discourses, the ola-leaves were normally read aloud by a recitor (*bhāṇaka*) who would fill in the repetitions, the written text being merely an *aide-de-memoir* to such a person. Nowadays, however, with the texts being read aloud by people who certainly do not have them memorized, it seems more appropriate to print them in full for ease of recitation, a practice that is to be in every way encouraged, as it helps the teaching to sink into the heart.

I have taken a conservative approach in establishing the text, believing that there is unlikely to have been loss in textual matter in such an important work; but that additions are quite likely, especially when they bring the discourse into line with other readings found elsewhere in the Canon. This process of standardisation has probably been at work throughout the history of the textual transmission, but there seems to be no good reason for it to continue now. The additional readings found in the various editions are recorded in the notes.

An important exception to this is in the inclusion of two lines in the the section on the First Truth in *Dhammānupassanā*, defining suffering to include being joined to what is not liked and being parted from what is liked, and also in the analysis that follows. If these lines are not to be included here then they do not occur in the early texts at all, and must have come in from the *Suttantabhājanīyam* analysis of the Truths in the *Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga*, a situation that seems to me inherently unlikely.

The subjects given in the discourse for contemplation under the various headings vary greatly from those given in the *Vibhaṅga*. There we see that in the *Kāyānupassanā* is only Applying the Mind to Repulsiveness, and in the *Dhammānupassanā* there are only the Hindrances and the Factors of Awakening.

When we look at the *Satipaṭṭhāna* discourses, however, there are many additions to these. All the additions do in fact come from the teachings that are found elsewhere, and it is fairly straightforward to identify the source of much of the additional material.

For instance the fully expanded version of *Kāyānupassanā* evidently has been made by including the material found in the Mindfulness related to the Body Discourse (MN 119), which, after the setting, continues in the exact same order as we have here with Mindfulness while Breathing, The Postures, Full Awareness, Applying the Mind to

Repulsiveness, Applying the Mind to the Elements and the Nine Charnel Grounds.¹

I have shown elsewhere in my study of the Dhammapada how material comes into a text through association.² There I demonstrated how some verses which are otherwise unrelated have been added to the various chapters because they are in sequences that contain keywords that are being collected through collocation or thematic considerations.

The same sort of principle is at work here. Applying the Mind to Repulsiveness appears in The Mindfulness related to the Body discourse, but there it is in a sequence with the others as listed above. It is then a simple matter to include the rest of the material in The Ways of Attending to Mindfulness Discourse.

The Contemplation of Feelings and Mind occur the same in the *Samyutta* discourses as they do here, but in the Contemplation of (the Nature of) Things there is again expansion of the material, with the

¹ That discourse concludes with the absorptions, which are missing here, and shows how all these things lead up to complete Emancipation. Note that in the early parallel from the Sarvāstivāda school the *Smṛtyupasthānasūtraṃ*, the absorptions are indeed included, over and above the rest of the material, which further suggests that the Body Discourse is the origin of the expansion.

² See A Comparative Edition of the Dhammapada, especially the Introduction, 3 on Collocation onwards.

addition of the Constituents (of Mind & Matter), the Sense-Spheres and the Four Truths.

I cannot explain the addition of the Constituents and Sense-Spheres in the same way, although with the latter the formula that is used is found in many places throughout the discourses, in the Sense Spheres the exact formula is only found here, and either is original to the discourse or lost elsewhere.

But the Truths can again be accounted for by inclusion of material found elsewhere. First we should note that in the *Majjhimanikāya* version of the discourse, it simply states the truths, and doesn't elaborate on them at all: *a monk knows as it really is "this is Suffering" ... "this is the Origination of Suffering" ... "this is the Cessation of Suffering" and ... "this is the Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering"*.

In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*, which we are examining here, on the other hand there is considerable expansion of that basic statement, as the Truths are analysed and defined. The major part of the material comes verbatim from The Discourse giving the Analysis of the Truths (MN 141) inserted wholesale into the discourse here.

There is a difference though, as the material that forms the explanation of the Origination and Cessation is greatly expanded after their basic statements, with a further analysis. We can also find that sub-analysis in another discourse, this time coming from the

Nidānasamyutta, SN 12.66, the Discourse about Determining (*Sammasanasutta*).

When we piece this information together and present it in a table the origin of the extra material, as far as we can define it, is as follows:

Contemplation of the Body

In-breathing and Out-breathing *Mindfulness related to the Body*
The Postures *Mindfulness related to the Body*
Full Awareness *Mindfulness related to the Body*

Applying the Mind to Repulsiveness original

Applying the Mind to the Elements *Mindfulness related to the Body*
The Nine Charnel Grounds *Mindfulness related to the Body*

Contemplation of Feelings

Contemplation of the Mind

Contemplation of (the Nature of) Things

The Hindrances original

Constituents (of Mind & Matter) *? found in many places*
The Sense-Spheres *?*

The Factors of Awakening original

The Four Truths (summary) original

The Truth of Suffering The Analysis of the Truths
The Truth of Origination The Analysis of the Truths & Determining
The Truth of Cessation The Analysis of the Truths & Determining
The Truth of the Path The Analysis of the Truth

The Advantages

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The Long Discourse about the Ways of Attending to Mindfulness

Summary¹

Thus I heard:

at one time the Gracious One was dwelling amongst the Kurus² near a market town of the Kurus named Kammāssadamma.³

There the Gracious One addressed the monks (saying): “Monks!” “Venerable Sir!” those monks replied to the Gracious One, and the Gracious One said this:

¹ The titles given in this edition are as they appear in ChS and Only (though Only omits this particular title), which have been extracted from the end titles, which are omitted in those editions. Headings being a modern convenience unknown to the manuscript tradition, BJT omits them, but includes the end-titles. In this edition both have been included for convenience on the one hand, and authenticity on the other.

² *Kurūsu* is plural and means *amongst the Kurus*, or *amongst the Kuru people*, with the implication: *in the Kuru country*.

³ *Kammāssadammā* is an accusative having locative meaning here; according to the commentary the accusative is used because there was no monastery *in* the town, and the Gracious One stayed in the jungle *nearby* (though quite why that should change the case is unclear, as the locative regularly means *near* or *nearby*).

Summary

“This is a one-way path, monks, for the purification of beings,¹ for the overcoming of grief and lamentation, for the extinction of pain² and sorrow, for attaining the right way, for the direct realisation³ of Nibbāna, that is to say, the four ways of attending to mindfulness.⁴

¹ Commonly translated as either *the only path* or as *the direct path*. Doctrinally the former has to be excluded as the Buddha taught many paths according to temperament; and *sammāsati* forms only one part of the Noble Eightfold Path; *the direct path* on the other hand is really an unfortunate paraphrase, as a one-way street may and may not go directly to its destination, as witness the one-way streets in our cities. Rather the phrase means simply *a one-way path*, as it is translated here, which makes perfect sense doctrinally (as well as linguistically), as the characteristic of all one-way paths is that there is no turning back, and they lead one on until eventually they reach the conclusion, which, in this case, as we will see at the end, is final knowledge (*aññā*), or the state of non-return (*anāgāmitā*).

² In this compound *dukkha* means bodily pain as opposed to mental pain, *domanassa* or *sorrow*; but it should be clear that it also implies the ending of all suffering.

³ *Sacchi-* = *sa* (one’s own) *acchi* (eye); *with one’s own eyes, directly experiencing or realising*.

⁴ The correct parsing of *satipaṭṭhāna* is *sati + upaṭṭhāna* (cf. *smṛty-upasthāna* in BHS) which is recognized but rejected by the commentary, which favours the derivation from *sati + paṭṭhāna*. *Upaṭṭhāna* is derived from the verb *upaṭṭhāti* (itself a variant of *upaṭiṭṭhati*), and literally means *standing near*, therefore *attending on, serving*. Also related to *upaṭṭhāka*, an attendant (Ānanda was the Buddha’s main *upaṭṭhāka* in later years). The word *sati* is a feminine action-noun derived from the past participle of *sarati* the basic meaning of which is *remembers*. The translation of *sati* as *mindfulness* is something of a compromise, as *sati* doesn’t really mean simply *mindfulness*, which in normal English is synonymic with *carefulness*; but nor is it *simple awareness* or *bare attention*, rather the word seems to combine the two meanings and intends a careful sort of attention to whatever objects are arising in consciousness. If it wasn’t so cumbersome *reflective awareness* might be more indicative than *mindfulness*.

Summary

Which four?

Here,¹ monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body, ardent,² fully aware, and mindful, after removing³ avarice and sorrow regarding the world.⁴

He dwells contemplating (the nature of) feelings in feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world.

¹ Comm: *here means in this Sāsana*; which seems to be a little narrow, as many people today appear to be practising mindfulness without being within the Sāsana of the Buddha, even though it remains doubtful how far along the path anyone can go without having attained to right view (*sammā dīṭhi*).

² Comm: *ardent means having (enough) ardour to burn away the defilements in the three realms of existence, this is a name for (strong) energy*.

³ *Vineyya* is an absolutive (comm: *vineyyā ti ... vinayitvā*), which is an infinite verbal form syntactically dependent on a finite verb (here *viharati*). An absolutive signifies that the action is completed (perfected) in the past before the time of the finite verb. *Vineyya* is sometimes translated as though it were a present participle: *removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world* (or some such translation); however, as far as I have ever seen, the logic of the absolutive grammatically always implies that the action is complete *before* the action of the main verb, no matter what idiom we use in translation.

⁴ Comm: *the world of his own body, the world of the five constituents that provide fuel for attachment*. The same sort of interpretation is to be applied below to the world of the three feelings, the world of the mind and the world of (the nature of) things.

Summary

He dwells contemplating (the nature of) the mind in the mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world.

He dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world.

The Summary is Finished

Contemplation of the Body

The Section about In-breathing and Out-breathing

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body?

Here, monks, a monk who has gone to the wilderness, or has gone to the root of a tree, or has gone to an empty place, sits down. After folding his legs crosswise, setting his body straight,¹ and establishing mindfulness at the front,² being very mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.

While breathing in long, he knows “I am breathing in long”,
or, while breathing out long, he knows “I am breathing out long”;
or, while breathing in short, he knows “I am breathing in short”,
or, while breathing out short, he knows “I am breathing out short”.

¹ The absolutes here and in the next line are connected with the finite verbs *assasati* and *passasati* (as in Ñāṇamoli’s translation of MN 10), and not with *nisīdati* in the preceding line, in which case the folding of the legs, setting the body straight, and establishment of mindfulness would all occur before he sat down!

² *Parimukham* means *at the front*, or perhaps, *around the mouth*, i.e. it is a vague area, not meant to be confined to one particular spot or place, which would have been easy to designate if that is what was meant (like specifying *oṭṭha*, the lip). It is of course *the mindfulness* that is important in the practice, not the breathing as such, which only provides a basis for the mindfulness.

Contemplation of the Body

Experiencing¹ the whole body I will breathe in,² like this he trains,
experiencing the whole body I will breathe out, like this he trains;
calming the bodily process I will breathe in, like this he trains,
calming the bodily process I will breathe out, like this he trains.

Just as, monks, a clever turner or turner's apprentice while making a long turn knows "I am making a long turn", or, while making a short turn knows "I am making a short turn",¹

just so, monks, a monk while breathing in long, knows "I am breathing in long",

or, while breathing out long, he knows "I am breathing out long";

or, while breathing in short, he knows "I am breathing in short",

or, while breathing out short, he knows "I am breathing out short".

Experiencing the whole body I will breathe in, like this he trains,
experiencing the whole body I will breathe out, like this he trains;
calming the bodily process I will breathe in, like this he trains,
calming the bodily process I will breathe out, like this he trains.

¹ Paṭisambhidāmagga says: *body means the two bodies - the mind-body and the physical body*; this would seem to mitigate against breathing meditation being taken solely as a body-based meditation.

² The instruction here changes from the present tense for *breathing* to the future tense. The reason for this change is that once the mind is settled on the breath he needs to deliberately cultivate mindfulness to progress further in the practice.

Contemplation of the Body

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself,² or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others,³ or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others,⁴ or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and

¹ The choice of simile here is surely significant, as the turner knows not just *what* is happening, but *how he is making* it happen, so that knowledge of the intention is also included in the practice.

² The context seems to indicate that *contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body* means contemplating the transient, ownerless nature of the body, as is signified by the references to origination and dissolution (*samudaya* & *vaya* [= *anicca*]) on the one hand; and the impersonal knowledge “there is a body” (*atthi kāyo* [= *anattā*]) on the other. *Suffering*, the other of the three characteristics of existence (*tilakkhaṇa*) is implied in *impermanence*. And similarly in regard to the other contemplations.

³ That we are really talking about others’ bodies, and not the internal and external parts of our own body, is confirmed by the Abhidhamma Satipaṭṭhānavibhaṅga (translated elsewhere on this website), where the grammar excludes any other interpretation.

⁴ See DP, *ajjhataṃ* (and °*bahiddhā*) for these meanings. In Janavasabhasutta (DN 18,26) it says: *here ... a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body, ardent, with full awareness, mindfully aware, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world; while he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body there he becomes perfectly concentrated, perfectly clear, and, being perfectly concentrated, perfectly clear, he generates knowledge and insight regarding the external bodies of others. Similarly in regard to the contemplation of feelings, mind, and the nature of things.*

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dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness,¹ and he dwells independent,² and without being attached to anything in the world.³

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

The Section about In-breathing and Out-breathing is Finished

The Section about the Postures

Moreover, monks, a monk while going knows “I go”;⁴ or, standing he knows “I am standing”; or, sitting he knows “I am sitting”; or, while

¹ The translation follows the commentary, which says: *just as far as, this designates, and is limited to, purpose. This is what is said: whatever mindfulness is established is not for another reason. Then the meaning of as far as (is necessary for) a measure of knowledge is so as to increase more and more, further and further, knowledge and mindfulness, for the increase of mindfulness and full awareness.* For the same word in Sanskrit having this meaning see SED under *mātra*. This seems to me to make much better sense than the usual translation of *for just knowledge and remembrance* (Way); or *for mere understanding and mere awareness* (VRI). See also MN 22, near the end, where *saddhamatta* is translated by Ñāṇamoḷi and Bodhi (MLDB) as *sufficient faith*, and *pemamatta* as *sufficient love*.

² Comm: *he lives independent because he is not dependent on wrong views or craving.*

³ Comm: *he doesn't grasp (anything) thinking: this is my self or this belongs to my self.*

⁴ This is where the idea that *sati* is *mere awareness* breaks down irretrievably, because as the commentary says: *even animals like dogs and*

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lying down he knows “I am lying down”; or, in whatever way¹ his body is disposed, he knows it is (disposed) in that way.

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

The Section about the Postures is Finished

jackals know they are going when they are going ... but they do not uproot the perception of a self and cannot be said to be attending to mindfulness or a (proper) meditation subject. We see that mindfulness as taught here is always mindfulness of the true nature of reality, which is the liberating factor.

¹ The reduplication of the adverb gives it a distributive sense, *in whatever way*.

The Section about Full Awareness

Moreover, monks, a monk in going forwards, in going back, is one who practises with full awareness;¹ in looking ahead, or in looking around, he is one who practises with full awareness; in bending or in stretching, he is one who practises with full awareness; in bearing his double-robe, bowl, and (other) robes, he is one who practises with full awareness; in eating, in drinking, in chewing, in tasting, he is one who practises with full awareness; in passing stool and urine, he is one who practises with full awareness; in going, in standing, in sitting; in sleeping, in waking; in talking, and in maintaining silence, he is one who practises with full awareness.²

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others,

¹ Comm: *herein, there are four kinds of full awareness: full awareness of the purpose [of going], full awareness of the suitability [of going], full awareness of resort [where one is going], full awareness of non-delusion [while going].*

² This section emphasises that on all occasions during one's daily life one can maintain mindfulness, as long as one keeps in mind the true nature of the body, and doesn't cling to it, but that is only possible if one doesn't get caught up in daily activities, and therefore forgetful of the nature of reality.

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or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

The Section about Full Awareness is Finished

The Section about Applying the Mind to Repulsiveness¹

Moreover, monks, a monk in regard to this very body - from the sole of the feet upwards, from the hair of the head down, bounded by the skin, and full of manifold impurities - reflects (thus):

¹ As noted in the Introduction it appears from the other versions of the Satipaṭṭhāna practice in the Pāli discourses and from comparative studies of the texts in the early traditions that this section on repulsiveness is the only original section in Kāyānupassanā, which means that the rest of the meditations described in the discourse are later additions, which gives it special relevance. It should also be noted that traditionally the subject for meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) described here (*hairs of the head, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin*, etc.) is the first subject given to a newly ordained monastic, and may be taken as an introduction to the practice of mindfulness right at the beginning of the monastic’s life.

Contemplation of the Body

“There are in this body:

hairs of the head, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin,
flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys,
heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs,
intestines, mesentery, undigested food, excrement,¹
bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat,
tears, grease, spit, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.”²

Just as though, monks, there were a bag open at both ends, full of various kinds of grain, such as: hill rice, white rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame seeds, chickpeas; and a man with good vision having opened it were to reflect (thus): “This is hill rice, this is white rice, these are mung beans, these are sesame seeds, these are chickpeas”; even so, monks, a monk in regard to this very body - from the sole of the feet upwards, from the hair of the head down, bounded by the skin, and full of manifold impurities - reflects (thus):

“There are in this body,

¹ Only adds *the brain*, here and in the repetition below, which is an addition to the formula made in Medieval times. The list up to this point is of the items that have a preponderance of the earth-element, the ones after this point have a preponderance of the water-element.

² This is, of course, merely meant to be indicative of the sort of things found in the body, not a comprehensive list thereof, as can also be confirmed from the simile below where examples of grain are given, not a complete list of all known grains.

Contemplation of the Body

hairs of the head, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin,
flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys,
heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs,
intestines, mesentery, undigested food, excrement,
bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat,
tears, grease, spit, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

The Section about Applying the Mind to Repulsiveness is Finished

The Section about Applying the Mind to the Elements

Moreover, monks, a monk, in regard to this very body, however placed, however disposed, reflects by way of the elements:

“There are in this body,

the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element.”

Just as though, monks, a clever butcher, or a butcher’s apprentice, after slaughtering a cow, were sitting down at a crossroads after dividing it into portions; even so, monks, a monk in regard to this very body, however placed, however disposed, reflects by way of the elements:

“There are in this body,

the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or

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he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

The Section about Applying the Mind to the Elements is Finished

The Section about the Nine Charnel Grounds

The First Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it’s as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground,¹ **dead for one day, or dead for two days, or dead for three days, bloated, discoloured, having become quite rotten.**² He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):³ “This body

¹ A charnel ground is a place where bodies were left on the ground, sometimes elevated ground, to be devoured by animals or birds.

² More exactly, *vinīlaka* means *blue-coloured*.

³ In most countries these days there are no charnel grounds and it is not so easy to find abandoned bodies to do this practice, so monks in Buddhist countries often visit morgues or dissection rooms in hospitals. If actual dead bodies are not available, it is always possible to use one’s imagination. The point of the exercise is not morbidity, but insight, so a degree of spiritual

Contemplation of the Body

also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The First Charnel Ground)

The Second Charnel Ground

maturity and stability should be established before attempting the practice, which should preferably be done under the guidance of an experienced teacher. Monks in the time of the Buddha who did this practice without guidance started killing themselves (see the opening to Pārājika III in the Vinaya Suttavibhaṅga).

Contemplation of the Body

Moreover, monks, it's as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **being eaten by crows, or being eaten by hawks, or being eaten by vultures, or being eaten by dogs, or being eaten by jackals,¹ or being eaten by various kinds of worms.** He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):

“This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

¹ ChS has an expanded list, which includes *herons*, *tigers*, and *leopards*.

Contemplation of the Body

(The Second Charnel Ground)

The Third Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it's as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **a skeleton, with flesh and blood, bound together by tendons**. He then compares it with his very own body (thinking): "This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this."

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that "there is a body" is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The Third Charnel Ground)

The Fourth Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it's as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **a skeleton, without flesh, smeared with blood, bound together by tendons.** He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):

“This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The Fourth Charnel Ground)

Contemplation of the Body

The Fifth Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it's as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **a skeleton, no longer having flesh and blood, bound together by tendons**. He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):

“This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The Fifth Charnel Ground)

The Sixth Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it's as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **with bones no longer bound together, scattered in all directions,¹ with a hand-bone here, with a foot-bone there, with a knee-bone here, with a thigh-bone there, with a hip-bone here, with a bone of the back there, with the skull here.²** He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):

“This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the

¹ Literally: *scattered in the main and intermediate directions*.

² There are many variations in the lists given in the various editions here. BJT adds: *ankle-bone; shoulder-bone; neck-bone and tooth-bone*. ChS is different in content and order, and also in spelling in some cases: *ankle-bone, rib-bone, shoulder-bone, neck-bone and jaw-bone*. Similar variations occur in Only which adds: *rib-bone, chest-bone, arm-bone, shoulder-bone, neck-bone, jaw-bone and tooth*.

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body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The Sixth Charnel Ground)

The Seventh Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it’s as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **having white bones, like the colour of a conch**. He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):

“This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him

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just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The Seventh Charnel Ground)

The Eighth Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it's as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **a heap of bones more than a year old**. He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):

“This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full

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measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The Eighth Charnel Ground)

The Ninth Charnel Ground

Moreover, monks, it's as if a monk might see a body thrown into a charnel ground, **rotten bones that have become like powder**. He then compares it with his very own body (thinking):

“This body also has such a nature, has such a constitution, has not gone beyond this.”

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the body, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the body, or else mindfulness that “there is a body” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full

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measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body.

(The Ninth Charnel Ground)

The Fourteen Contemplations of the Body are Finished

Contemplation of Feelings

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) feelings in feelings?

Here, monks, a monk when experiencing a **pleasant feeling** knows “I experience a pleasant feeling”; or, when experiencing an **unpleasant feeling** he knows “I experience an unpleasant feeling”; or, when experiencing a **neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling**¹ he knows “I experience a neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling”.²

Or, when experiencing a **sensual pleasant**³ **feeling** he knows “I experience a sensual pleasant feeling”; or, when experiencing a **spiritual pleasant feeling** he knows “I experience a spiritual pleasant

¹ To be parsed as *a-dukkhaṃ a-sukhaṃ*. Another word that is used for this is *upekkhā*, which in this context would mean *indifferent feeling*.

² These are the three basic feelings that are enumerated in the teaching, what follows is a further division of these feelings depending on whether they are connected with sense-desire or not. Pleasant feelings that are not connected with sense-desire are recommended by the Buddha for loosening attachment to those that are so connected, see *Saḷāyatanavibhaṅgasuttaṃ*, MN 137.

³ Comm: *sensual pleasant and so on - sensual pleasant is a name for the five strands of sensuality dependent on the sensual, and the six happy feelings connected with the life of the householder; spiritual pleasant is a name for the six happy feelings connected with the life of renunciation.*

Contemplation of Feelings

feeling”; or, when experiencing a **sensual unpleasant¹ feeling** he knows “I experience a sensual unpleasant feeling”; or, when experiencing a **spiritual unpleasant feeling** he knows “I experience a spiritual unpleasant feeling”; or, when experiencing a **sensual neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant² feeling** he knows “I experience a sensual neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling”; or, when experiencing a **spiritual neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling** he knows “I experience an spiritual neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling”.

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) feelings in feelings in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) feelings in feelings in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) feelings in feelings in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the feelings, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the feelings, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the feelings, or else mindfulness that “there are feelings” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a

¹ Comm: *sensual unpleasant* is a name for the six sorrowful feelings connected with the life of the householder; *spiritual unpleasant* is a name for the six sorrowful feelings connected with the life of renunciation.

² Comm: *sensual neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant* is a name for the six equanimous feelings connected with the life of the householder; *spiritual neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant* is a name for the six equanimous feelings connected with the life of renunciation.

Contemplation of Feelings

full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) feelings in feelings.

Contemplation of Feelings is Finished

Contemplation of the Mind

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) the mind in the mind?

Here, monks, a monk when a mind **has passion** knows “the mind has passion”,¹

or when a mind is **without passion** he knows “the mind is without passion”;²

or when a mind **has hate** he knows “the mind has hate”,

or when a mind is **without hate** he knows “the mind is without hate”;

or when a mind **has delusion** he knows “the mind has delusion”,

or when a mind is **without delusion** he knows “the mind is without delusion”;

or when a mind is **collected** he knows “the mind is collected”,

¹ Relying on an ambiguity in the Pāli (which also exists in the English), at the beginning of the *Contemplation of (the Nature of) Things* the commentary will say: *to teach ... the contemplation of mind the Auspicious One ... took up the constituent of consciousness*. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in the constituents, however, is confined to the six spheres of consciousness. The complexes that are defined here more properly belong to the constituent of (mental) processes.

² The commentary explains that when *without passion* is said it does not indicate the supermundane state, but only that the mind is in a worldly wholesome or inconsequential state and the same interpretation is to be applied to *hate* and *delusion* below. Throughout this section the Comm is careful to note that we are not talking about supermundane states.

Contemplation of the Mind

or when a mind is **scattered** he knows “the mind is scattered”;¹

or when a mind has **become very great** he knows “the mind has become very great”,

or when a mind has **not become very great** he knows “the mind has not become very great”;²

or when a mind is **surpassable** he knows “the mind is surpassable”,

or when a mind is **unsurpassable** he knows “the mind is unsurpassable”;

or when a mind is **concentrated** he knows “the mind is concentrated”,

or when a mind is **not concentrated** he knows “the mind is not concentrated”;³

or when a mind is **liberated** he knows “the mind is liberated”,

¹ Comm: *saṅkhittam* means fallen into sloth and torpor, this is therefore a name for a shrunken mind; **scattered** means having become agitated, this is therefore a name for the distracted mind. I depart from the commentary here in my translation as the whole logic of this passage is that ethical opposites are being set in contrast, and *shrunken* on the one hand, and *distracted* on the other are not opposites ethically and therefore do not fit into this pattern. *Saṅkhittam* literally means *thrown (or brought) together*, and *vikkhittam* means *thrown apart*.

² Comm: **become very great** means being conversant with the form and formless fields; **not become very great** means being conversant (only) with the sensual field. Similarly for *surpassable* & *unsurpassable* below.

³ Comm: **concentrated** means he who has fixed concentration or access concentration; **not concentrated** (indicates being) devoid of both (types of) concentration.

Contemplation of the Mind

or when a mind is **not liberated** he knows “the mind is not liberated”.¹

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the mind in the mind in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the mind in the mind in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) the mind in the mind in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in the mind, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in the mind, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in the mind, or else mindfulness that “there is a mind” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the (the nature of) the mind in the mind.

Contemplation of the Mind is Finished

¹ Comm: **liberated** means liberated by (replacing) this factor (with the opposite factor, during vipassanā meditation), and by withdrawing support (in absorption meditation); **not liberated** (indicates being) devoid of both (types of) liberation. We can note here that the list of qualities in this section is ordered not according to logical opposites, but according to grammatical opposition.

Contemplation of (the Nature of) Things

The Section about the Hindrances

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things?¹ Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the five hindrances.

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the five hindrances?

Here, monks, a monk having **sensual desire** in himself² knows “there is sensual desire in myself”; or, not having sensual desire in himself he

¹ The commentary has 2 explanations for the meaning of *dhamma* in this section, one is that *Contemplation of the Body* dealt with form, *Contemplation of Feelings* and *Mind* dealt with the formless, and *Contemplation of (the Nature of) Things* deals with a mixture of form and formless; or, secondly, a division into the constituents was intended: *body* = *form, feelings, mind* = *consciousness*, and here *dhamma* = *perception* and *(mental) processes*. Translations usually follow the second of these explanations, giving *dhamma* the meaning of mental contents or mental objects. However, as noted above, *Contemplation of Mind* really deals with mental processes, not with the sense consciousness. As noted in the Introduction, in other versions of this teaching it appears that the original structure of this section only included the hindrances and the factors of awakening, which are both lists of ethical qualities of mind. I believe *dhamma* in this original context probably meant *ethical states*, a well-attested meaning for the word, but one no longer useable once the additions of the constituents, sense-spheres and truths have been included.

² Here *ajjhataṃ* takes on another nuance. The parsing of the word is as *adhi-*, here meaning *in, within* + *-atta*, meaning the self, to be translated when

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

knows “there is no sensual desire in myself”. How there is an arising of sensual desire that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of sensual desire that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of abandoned sensual desire again in the future – that also he knows.¹

Having **ill-will** in himself he knows “there is ill-will in myself”; or, not having ill-will in himself he knows “there is no ill-will in myself”. How there is an arising of ill-will that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of ill-will that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of abandoned ill-will again in the future – that also he knows.

Having **sloth and torpor** in himself he knows “there is sloth and torpor in myself”; or, not having sloth and torpor in himself he knows “there is no sloth and torpor in myself”. How there is an arising of sloth and torpor that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of sloth and torpor that has arisen² – that also he

standing alone as *oneself* (*himself*, *herself*, *itself*), according to context. In the next line, when in conjunction with *me* it becomes *myself*.

¹ Many teachings these days seem to stop short at just knowing the state of the mind, but this in itself is not sufficient for the practice of mindfulness, which continues by elucidating the further skilful states of mind that need to be developed to be able to overcome the various sorts of defilements that can arise in the mind.

² Comm: *these six things lead to the giving up of sloth and torpor: grasping that the cause is in too much food, a complete change of the postures,*

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knows; and how there is a non-arising of abandoned sloth and torpor again in the future – that also he knows.

Having **agitation and worry** in himself he knows “there is agitation and worry in myself”; or, not having agitation and worry in himself he knows “there is no agitation and worry in myself”. How there is an arising of agitation and worry that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of agitation and worry that has arisen¹ – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of abandoned agitation and worry again in the future – that also he knows.

Having **doubt** in himself he knows “there is doubt² in myself”; or, not having doubt in himself he knows “there is no doubt in myself”. How there is an arising of doubt that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of doubt that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of abandoned doubt again in the future – that also he knows.

applying the mind to the perception of light, dwelling in open grounds, having spiritual friendship and suitable talk.

¹ Comm: *these six things lead to the giving up of agitation and worry: learning, questioning, gratitude towards the discipline, association with elders, having spiritual friendship and suitable talk.*

² *Vicikicchā* is from the verb *vicikicchati*. The verb is made from the prefix *vi-* with the intensive verb *cikicchati* which is formed from √ *cit*, meaning, therefore, *to think and think*; the prefix *vi-* should be taken in the second sense given in PED: denoting *disturbance, seperation, mixing up...*: it thus means *thinking again and again in a mixed up way.*

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in things, or else mindfulness that “there are these (various) things” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the five hindrances.

The Section about the Hindrances is Finished

The Section on the Constituents (of Mind & Matter)

Moreover, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the five constituents (of mind and matter) that provide fuel for attachment.¹

¹ *Upādāna* has two meanings, *attachment* and *fuel*, and they are probably both implied in this context, hence the translation adopted here.

Pañcakkhandha is commonly translated as the *five aggregates*, which had

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the five constituents (of mind and matter) that provide fuel for attachment?

Here, monks, a monk (knows): “such is **form**, such is the origination of form, such is the passing away of form; such is **feeling**, such is the origination of feeling, such is the passing away of feeling; such is **perception**, such is the origination of perception, such is the passing away of perception; such are **(mental) processes**, such is the origination of (mental) processes, such is the passing away of (mental) processes; such is **consciousness**, such is the origination of consciousness, such is the passing away of consciousness”.

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution

me scurrying to the dictionary when I first encountered it, as I had no idea what *aggregate* could mean in such a context. What it actually means, in more lucid English, is *constituent*, which is the translation adopted here. As what they constitute may not be altogether clear there is the explanatory addition in brackets.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

in things, or else mindfulness that “there are these (various) things” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the five constituents (of mind and matter) that provide fuel for attachment.

The Section on the Constituents is Finished

The Section on the Sense-Spheres

Moreover, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the six internal and external sense-spheres.¹

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the six internal and external sense-spheres?

Here, monks, a monk knows the **eye**, and he knows **forms**; and the fetter¹ that arises dependent on the pair of them² – that also he

¹ In the Dhamma the sense-spheres include the five physical senses as well as the mind. These are then further divided into the internal sense-spheres: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; and their external equivalents: forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles and thoughts. These form the basis for sensual attachment.

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knows. How there is an arising of a fetter that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of a fetter that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of an abandoned fetter again in the future³ – that also he knows.

He knows the **ear**, and he knows **sounds**, and the fetter that arises dependent on the pair of them – that also he knows. How there is an arising of a fetter that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of a fetter that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of an abandoned fetter again in the future – that also he knows.

He knows the **nose**, and he knows **smells**, and the fetter that arises dependent on the pair of them – that also he knows. How there is an

¹ Ten fetters are mentioned in the commentary (to MN 10): *the passion for sense-desire (kāmarāga)*, *revulsion (paṭigha)*, *conceit (māna)*, *views (diṭṭhi)*, *doubt (vicikicchā)*, *grasping at virtue and practice (sīlabbataparāmāsa)*, *passion for existence (bhavarāga)*, *jealousy (issā)*, *selfishness (macchariya)* and *ignorance (āviijā)*. This is an Abhidhammic list, which differs from the fetters normally listed in the discourses (at DN 6, etc.)

² This is an important principle in the Dhamma: the fetter is not the eye, and similarly it is not the form (and not the ear or sound, nor any of the other pairs mentioned). The fetter arises dependent on them, but it is the mental defilement which is the fetter, and it is perfectly possible to have eyes and forms without the fetter (see SN 41.1).

³ According to the commentary here views, doubt, grasping at virtue and practice, jealousy and selfishness are thrown off at the first stage of Awakening (*soṭāpatti*); gross sense-desire and revulsion by the second stage (*sakadāgāmitā*) and even subtle forms of the same by the third stage (*anāgāmitā*); and conceit, passion for existence and ignorance by the fourth and final stage (*arahatta*).

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arising of a fetter that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of a fetter that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of an abandoned fetter again in the future – that also he knows.

He knows the **tongue**, and he knows **tastes**, and the fetter that arises dependent on the pair of them – that also he knows. How there is an arising of a fetter that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of a fetter that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of an abandoned fetter again in the future – that also he knows.

He knows the **body**, and he knows **tangibles**, and the fetter that arises dependent on the pair of them – that also he knows. How there is an arising of a fetter that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of a fetter that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of an abandoned fetter again in the future – that also he knows.

He knows the **mind**, and he knows **thoughts**, and the fetter that arises dependent on the pair of them – that also he knows. How there is an arising of a fetter that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is an abandonment of a fetter that has arisen – that also he knows; and how there is a non-arising of an abandoned fetter again in the future – that also he knows.

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Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in things, or else mindfulness that “there are these (various) things” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the six internal and external sense-spheres.

The Section on the Sense-Spheres is Finished

The Section about the Factors of Awakening

Moreover, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the seven factors of Awakening.¹

¹ *Bojjhaṅga > Bodhy + aṅga, Bodhi + aṅga.* From √ *budh*, the primal meaning of which is *to awaken*. Through development *bodhi* also means *to understand*, hence the alternative translation *Enlightenment*. The commentary allows for both meanings: *the seven harmonious qualities by which he completely awakens, rises from the sleep of the corruptions, or*

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the seven factors of Awakening?¹

Here, monks, a monk having the **Mindfulness factor of Complete Awakening** in himself knows “there is the Mindfulness factor of Complete Awakening in myself”; or, not having the Mindfulness factor of Complete Awakening in himself he knows “there is no Mindfulness factor of Complete Awakening in myself”. How there is an arising of the Mindfulness factor of Complete Awakening that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is fulfilment of the development of the Mindfulness factor of Complete Awakening that has arisen – that also he knows.

Having the **Investigation of the (nature) of things² factor of Complete Awakening** in himself he knows “there is the Investigation of the (nature) of things factor of Complete Awakening in myself”; or, not having the Investigation of the (nature) of things factor of Complete Awakening in himself he knows “there is no Investigation

penetrates the Truths, those harmonious qualities are (called) Complete Awakening.

¹ When we look at the structure of this section we can see that it follows the same model as the Hindrances above. These two sections appear to be the earliest and most original form of the Dhammānupassanā, to which the others were later added in the centuries following the parinibbāna.

² Again here we can see a play on words, because *dhamma*, which is *the Teaching of Lord Buddha*, is also *the true nature of things*, and ultimately they are not different from one another, but in translation we have to choose the meaning that is most important to convey.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

of the (nature) of things factor of Complete Awakening in myself”. How there is an arising of the Investigation of the (nature) of things factor of Complete Awakening that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is fulfilment of the development of the Investigation of the (nature) of things factor of Complete Awakening that has arisen (until) it comes to fulfilment¹ –that also he knows.

Having the **Energy factor of Complete Awakening** in himself he knows “there is the Energy factor of Complete Awakening in myself”; or, not having the Energy factor of Complete Awakening in himself he knows “there is no Energy factor of Complete Awakening in myself”. How there is an arising of the Energy factor of Complete Awakening that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is fulfilment of the development of the Energy factor of Complete Awakening that has arisen – that also he knows.

Having the **Joyful-Interest factor of Complete Awakening**² in himself he knows “there is the Joy factor of Complete Awakening in

¹ SN Bojjhaṅgasamyuttam (46.2) asks how this factor comes to fulfilment, and answers: *there are, monks, things that are wholesome and unwholesome, blameworthy and blameless, despicable and excellent, things that resemble the dark and the bright, herein he should be one who makes much of wise reflection (on these things).*

² Comm: *these eleven things lead to the arising of the Joyful-Interest factor of Complete Awakening: recollection of the Buddha; recollection of the Dhamma, Saṅgha, virtue, generosity, and the gods; recollection of peace; avoidance of rough people; association with admirable people; reflection on discourses that inspire confidence; and being intent upon it (not: the inclination towards joy, as translated in Way [pg. 163], which is too passive*

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

myself”); or, not having the Joyful-Interest factor of Complete Awakening in himself he knows “there is no Joyful-Interest factor of Complete Awakening in myself”. How there is an arising of the Joyful-Interest factor of Complete Awakening that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is fulfilment of the development of the Joyful-Interest factor of Complete Awakening that has arisen – that also he knows.

Having the **Calmness¹ factor of Complete Awakening** in himself he knows “there is the Calmness factor of Complete Awakening in myself”; or, not having the Calmness factor of Complete Awakening in himself he knows “there is no Calmness factor of Complete Awakening in myself”. How there is an arising of the Calmness factor of Complete Awakening that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is fulfilment of the development of the Calmness factor of Complete Awakening that has arisen – that also he knows.

Having the **Concentration factor of Complete Awakening** in himself he knows “there is the Concentration factor of Complete Awakening in myself”; or, not having the Concentration factor of Complete

- deliberately cultivating it is what is meant). *Pīti* is defined as fivefold: *slight joyful-interest, momentary joyful-interest, reoccurring joyful-interest, transporting joyful-interest, suffusing joyful-interest*. The common translation of *pīti* as *rapture* would seem to apply only to the last of these.

¹ *Passaddhi* is derived from the verb *passambhati, calms, quiets, allays*. Another word used in this discourse from the same root is *passambhayam* (present participle from causative *passambheti*) in the *Ānāpānappabbaṃ* at the beginning of the Contemplation of the Body section.

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Awakening in himself he knows “there is no Concentration factor of Complete Awakening in myself”. How there is an arising of the Concentration factor of Complete Awakening that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is fulfilment of the development of the Concentration factor of Complete Awakening that has arisen – that also he knows.

Having the **Equanimity factor of Complete Awakening** in himself he knows “there is the Equanimity factor of Complete Awakening in myself”; or, not having the Equanimity factor of Complete Awakening in himself he knows “there is no Equanimity factor of Complete Awakening in myself”. How there is an arising of the Equanimity factor of Complete Awakening that has not arisen – that he knows; and how there is fulfilment of the development of the Equanimity factor of Complete Awakening that has arisen – that also he knows.

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in things, or else mindfulness that “there are (various) things” is

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the seven Factors of Awakening.

The Section about the Factors of Awakening is Finished

The Section about the Four Truths

Moreover, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the Four Noble Truths.

And how, monks, does a monk dwell contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the Four Noble Truths?

Here, monks, a monk knows as it really is “this is **Suffering**”, he knows as it really is “this is the **Origination of Suffering**”, he knows as it really is “this is the **Cessation of Suffering**”, he knows as it really is “this is the **Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering**”.¹

The Truth of Suffering¹

¹ In the Satipaṭṭhānasuttaṃ of Majjhimanikāya, this is the end of the The Section about the Four Truths, only here in the Mahā- is it elaborated on.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

Now what, monks, is the Noble Truth of Suffering?²

Birth is suffering

also old age is suffering

also death is suffering

also grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair, is suffering

also being joined to what is not liked is suffering,

also being parted from what is liked is suffering,³

also not to obtain that which one longs for is suffering

in brief, the five constituents (of mind and body) that provide fuel for attachment are suffering.⁴

¹ From here on the analysis of the truths corresponds closely to Ven. Sāriputta's exposition of the same subject in The Discourse giving the Analysis of the Truths (M. 141, which has some small variations), but with the analysis of the 2nd and 3rd truths greatly expanded.

² *Dukkha* is the same word that is used in the analysis of the feelings, meaning there: *unpleasant (feeling)*. This is unfortunate as people tend to think it has the same meaning here, which is not the case. Even pleasant feeling is impermanent and therefore *dukkha* in this sense (though it is not *dukkhavedanā*, of course). A more comprehensive translation might be *unsatisfactoriness* (and its cognates), a word too cumbersome to use without risking sounding pedantic, but good to bear in mind as a meaning for *dukkha*.

³ PTS omits these two lines, saying they might be an addition from The Discourse that Set the Dhamma Wheel Rolling (the First Discourse of the Buddha), but is then also forced to omit the later text that explains these lines. However, the explanation does not occur in the first discourse, or anywhere else in the early texts except in the Satipaṭṭhāna discourses, so that it seems that if they are genuine they must belong here.

⁴ To reiterate, it is not that the constituents are always suffering as in the examples given above (like birth, etc.), though they are always prone to it,

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

Now what, monks, is **birth**?

For the various beings in the various classes of beings (there is) birth, being born, appearing, turning up;¹ the manifestation of the constituents (of mind and body), the acquisition of the sense spheres:

this, monks, is called birth.

Now what, monks, is **old age**?²

For the various beings in the various classes of beings there is old age, agedness, broken teeth, greying hair, and wrinkled skin; the dwindling away of the life span, the decay of the sense faculties:

this, monks, is called old age.

Now what, monks, is **death**?

For the various beings in the various classes of beings there is a fall, a falling away, a breaking up, a disappearance, a dying, a

rather it is that being impermanent they can never provide complete satisfaction.

¹ We can see here the methodology employed with definitions in the early texts, which is to define terms by synonyms, so their actual usage in the particular context can be clearly understood.

² Here is a good example of the methodology at work: *jarā* in its most general sense means *maturing*, which can of course have a positive sense. But in this context it doesn't mean so much *maturing*, as *over-maturing*.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

death, a making of time; the break up of the constituents (of mind and body), the throwing off of the body; the cutting off of the life faculty:

this, monks, is called death.

Now what, monks, is **grief**?

For he who has, monks, some sort of misfortune or other, who is touched by some sort of painful thing or another, there is grief, grieving, the state of grieving, inner grief, great inner grief:

this, monks, is called grief.

Now what, monks, is **lamentation**?

For he who has, monks, some sort of misfortune or other, who is touched by some sort of painful thing or another, there are laments, great laments, lamenting, great lamenting, the state of lamenting, the state of great lamentation:

this, monks, is called lamentation.

Now what, monks, is **pain**?¹

¹ We can see in this definition how sometimes *dukkha* is restricted in meaning to *bodily pain*. Compare the definition of *domanassa, sorrow, mental pain* which follows where *dukkha* is also used in the definition, but with a broader connotation.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

That, monks, which is bodily pain, bodily disagreeableness, pain born of contact with the body, disagreeable feeling:

this, monks, is called pain.

Now what, monks, is **sorrow**?

That, monks, which is mental pain, mental disagreeableness, pain born of contact with the mind, disagreeable feeling:

this, monks, is called sorrow.

Now what, monks, is **despair**?

For he who has, monks, some sort of misfortune or other, who is touched by some sort of painful thing or another, there is desponding, despairing, the state of despondency, the state of despair:

this, monks, is called despair.

And what, monks, is the suffering from **being joined to what is not liked**?

Here, for that one who has unwanted, unlovely, unpleasant forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and thoughts; or, for that one who has those who do not desire his welfare, benefit, comfort and security - (and then) having meetings, assembly, connection, and interaction with them:

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

this, monks, is called the suffering from being joined to what is not liked.

And what, monks, is the suffering from **being parted from what is liked**?

Here, for that one who has wanted, lovely, pleasant forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and thoughts; or, for that one who has those who do desire his welfare, benefit, comfort and security - mothers, or fathers, or brothers, or sisters, or friends, or companions, or blood relatives - (and then) not having meetings, assembly, connection, and interaction with them:

this, monks, is called the suffering from being parted from what is liked.

Now what, monks, is the suffering from **not obtaining what one longs for**?

To those beings subject to birth, monks, a longing like this arises: “Oh, might we not be subject to birth, may birth not come to us!” But that cannot be attained merely by longing for it:

this is the suffering from not obtaining what one longs for.

To those beings subject to old age, monks, a longing like this arises:

“Oh, might we not be subject to old age, may old age not come to us!” But that cannot be attained merely by longing for it:

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

this is the suffering from not obtaining what one longs for.

To those beings subject to sickness, monks, a longing like this arises:

“Oh, might we not be subject to sickness, may sickness not come to us!” But that cannot be attained merely by longing for it: this is the suffering from not obtaining what one longs for. To those beings subject to death, monks, a longing like this arises: “Oh, might we not be subject to death, may death not come to us!” But that cannot be attained merely by longing for it:

this is the suffering from not obtaining what one longs for.

To those beings subject to grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair, monks, a longing like this arises:

“Oh, might we not be subject to grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair, may grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair, not come to us!” But that cannot be attained merely by longing for it:

this is the suffering from not obtaining what one longs for.

Now what, monks, in brief, are the **five constituents (of mind and body) that provide fuel for attachment** which are suffering?

They are as follows:

the form constituent that is fuel for attachment

the feelings constituent that is fuel for attachment

the perceptions constituent that is fuel for attachment

**the (mental) processes constituent that is fuel for attachment
the consciousness constituent that is fuel for attachment.**

These, monks, are called, in brief, the five constituents (of mind and body) that provide fuel for attachment which are suffering.

This, monks, is called the Noble Truth of Suffering.

The Truth of Origination

And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Origination of Suffering?

It is that craving which leads to the continuation of existence, which is connected with enjoyment and passion, greatly enjoying this and

that, as follows:

craving in regard to sense pleasures

craving in regard to the continuation of existence¹

craving in regard to the discontinuation of existence.²

¹ I translate *bhava* simply as existence in the context of the 3 planes of *bhava* (*kāmahava*, *sensual existence*; *rūpabhava*, *form existence*; *arūpabhava*, *formless existence*). But in this context it is the *continuation* of existence that is at the heart of the matter. *Bhava* here is divided into *kammabhava*, *continuation of existence through (result-producing) actions*; and *uppattibhava* *the continuation of existence through rebirth*.

² Comm: *Kāmataṇhā* is *craving in regard to sense pleasures, this is a name for passion regarding the five-fold sense-pleasures*. *Bhavataṇhā* is *craving in regard to the continuation of existence, because of having a wish for existence. This is a term associated with the arising of the eternalist view*,

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

Now where,¹ monks, does that craving when it is arising arise?²
When settling where does it settle?

In the world there is that which is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.³

And in the world what is likeable and pleasing?

In the world **the eye** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.⁴

In the world **the ear** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

passion for the form and formless existences, and a desire for absorption. Vibhavataṇhā is craving in regard to the discontinuation of existence, this is passion associated with the annihilationist view.

¹ In Saccavibhaṅgasutta (MN 141) this section, which expands on the second Noble Truth is not found. It appears to have been brought in from the the Discourse about Determining (*Sammasanasutta*, SN 12.66), which follows the very same scheme. The same applies to the third Noble Truth below.

² This cognate use of the present participle and the present tense of the same verb, apart from its use in this and the following section, seems to be very rare in the discourses. The only other occurrence I have found is *ummajjamānā ummajjanti* (*emerging they emerge*) in the simile of the fisherman at the end of *Brahmajālasutta* (DN 1).

³ As we will see in the section on cessation, although this is the place where it arises, it isn't the place where it *necessarily* arises, it can also cease in the same place, provided there is mindfulness and understanding, particularly of the danger involved in sense-desire.

⁴ The commentary says: *craving does not arise when these have not arisen in that place, (but) because of manifesting again and again arisen craving settles. Therefore the Auspicious One said: "In the world the eye is likeable and pleasing..." and so on.*

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **the nose** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **the tongue** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **the body** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **the mind** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

* * *

In the world **forms** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **sounds** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **smells** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **tastes** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **tangibles** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **thoughts** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

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In the world **eye-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **ear-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **nose-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **tongue-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **body-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **mind-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

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In the world **eye-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **ear-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **nose-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **tongue-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **body-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **mind-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **feeling born of eye-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **feeling born of ear-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **feeling born of nose-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **feeling born of tongue-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **feeling born of body-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **feeling born of mind-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

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Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **perception of forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **perception of sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **perception of smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **perception of tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **perception of tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **perception of thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

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In the world **intention in regard to forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **intention in regard to sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **intention in regard to smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **intention in regard to tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **intention in regard to tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **intention in regard to thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

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In the world **craving for forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **craving for sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **craving for smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **craving for tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **craving for tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **craving for thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

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In the world **thinking about forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **thinking about sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **thinking about smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **thinking about tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **thinking about tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **thinking about thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

* * *

In the world **an examination of forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **an examination of sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **an examination of smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **an examination of tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **an examination of tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

In the world **an examination of thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is arising arises, here when settling it settles.

This, monks, is called the Noble Truth of the Origination of Suffering.

The Truth of Cessation

And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering?

It is the complete fading away and cessation without remainder of that craving - liberation, letting go, release, and non-adherence.

Now where, monks, is that craving when it is being abandoned (actually) abandoned? When ceasing where does it cease?

In the world there is that which is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

And in the world what is likeable and pleasing?

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **the eye** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **the ear** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **the nose** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **the tongue** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **the body** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In this world **the mind** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

* * *

In this world **forms** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In this world **sounds** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **smells** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **tastes** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **tangibles** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **thoughts** are likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

* * *

In the world **eye-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **ear-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **nose-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **tongue-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **body-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **mind-consciousness** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

* * *

In the world **eye-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **ear-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **nose-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **tongue-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **body-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **mind-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

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In the world **feeling born of eye-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **feeling born of ear-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **feeling born of nose-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **feeling born of tongue-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **feeling born of body-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **feeling born of mind-contact** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

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Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **perception of forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **perception of sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **perception of smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **perception of tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **perception of tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **perception of thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

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In the world **intention in regard to forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **intention in regard to sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **intention in regard to smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **intention in regard to tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **intention in regard to tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **intention in regard to thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

* * *

In the world **craving for forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **craving for sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **craving for smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **craving for tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **craving for tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **craving for thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

* * *

In the world **thinking about forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **thinking about sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **thinking about smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **thinking about tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **thinking about tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **thinking about thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

* * *

In the world **an examination of forms** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **an examination of sounds** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **an examination of smells** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **an examination of tastes** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

In the world **an examination of tangibles** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

In the world **an examination of thoughts** is likeable and pleasing - here this craving when it is being abandoned is abandoned, here when ceasing it ceases.

This, monks, is called the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

The Truth of the Path

Now what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering?

It is this noble¹ path with eight factors,² as follows:

right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood right endeavour, right mindfulness, right concentration.³

Now what, monks, is **right view**?

That, monks, which is knowledge about suffering
knowledge about the origination of suffering
knowledge about the cessation of suffering
knowledge about the practice leading to the cessation of suffering.

This, monks, is called right view.¹

¹ *Ariya* means primarily *belonging to the Ariyan people*; when used ethically, however, as the Buddha used it, it had the meaning of *civilised, worthy*, and therefore *noble*.

² Traditionally the Path is divided into three sections: virtue (*right speech, action and livelihood*), mind-mastery (*right endeavour, mindfulness and concentration*) and wisdom (*right view and thought*), but it should be borne in mind that all factors of the Path work to support each other, and this is not a hierarchical sequence.

³ The eightfold Path, when fulfilled, becomes the tenfold Path, with the addition of *right knowledge* and *right freedom*.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

Now what, monks, is **right thought**?

The thought of renunciation, the thought of good-will, the thought of non-violence.²

This, monks, is called right thought.

Now what, monks, is **right speech**?

Refraining from false speech
refraining from malicious speech
refraining from rough speech
refraining from frivolous talk.³

¹ Mundane right-view is defined elsewhere (MN 41, 117, etc.) as: *there are gifts, offerings and sacrifices, there are fruit and result for well-done and badly-done deeds, there is this world and the next world, there are (obligations towards) Mother and Father, there are spontaneously born (heavenly) beings, there are in this world monks and priests who have practiced and attained correctly, and those who, themselves having directly realised it with their deep knowledge, make known this world and the next world*; i.e. one must have understanding of wholesome and unwholesome actions, one's duties to others, a belief in the heavenly realms and confidence in good teachers. If someone doesn't have these, it is hard to see how he could make progress to supermundane right-view.

² *Avihimsā* (non-violence) is simply another form of the better known *ahimsā*, a fundamental virtue associated with Mahātma Gandhi, which has been very influential in modern politics as a different way of getting things done: for those who are physically weak it adds the strength of morality.

³ All four are normally included in the five virtuous practices (*sīla*) under right speech (*musāvāda*), but sometimes spelt out to make another set of eight virtuous practices, which has right livelihood as the eighth (*ājīvā-ṭṭhamakasīla*).

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

This, monks, is called right speech.

Now what, monks, is **right action**?

Refraining from killing living creatures
refraining from taking what has not been given
refraining from sexual misconduct.¹

This, monks, is called right action.

Now what, monks, is **right livelihood**?

Here, monks, a noble disciple, having abandoned a wrong way of livelihood, makes his living by a right way of livelihood.²

This, monks, is called right livelihood.

¹ These are the first three of the five precepts undertaken by lay followers. Together with the previous right speech and restraint from intoxicants they constitute the basic level of morality expected of anyone following the teaching.

² Five types of wrong livelihood for merchants are explained in *Vañijjāsuttam* (AN 5.177): *dealing in weapons (lit. swords), living beings, meat, intoxicants and poisons*; but generally speaking any activity whereby in the course of earning one's living one has to break the precepts could be considered wrong livelihood. For monks and nuns, making a living through reading of signs, fortune telling, acting as a go-between, casting spells, accountancy, poetry, philosophy or acting as medical assistants would count as wrong livelihood (see DN 1, where they are spelt out in great detail).

Now what, monks, is **right endeavour**?

Here, monks, a monk generates desire for the non-arising of bad and unwholesome things that have not yet arisen,¹ (in this regard) he endeavours, instigates energy, exerts his mind, and makes an effort.

Regarding bad and unwholesome things that have already arisen he generates desire for their abandonment, (in this regard) he endeavours, instigates energy, exerts his mind, and makes an effort.

He generates desire for the arising of wholesome things that have not yet arisen, (in this regard) he endeavours, instigates energy, exerts his mind, and makes an effort.

Regarding wholesome things that have arisen he generates desire for their endurance, persistence,² multiplication, extension, development, and fulfilment, (in this regard) he endeavours, instigates energy, exerts his mind, and makes an effort.

¹ This section on the endeavours is a good example of the Pāli usage of negatives, which sounds so awkward in English, where we would normally say something simple here, like: *he endeavours to prevent bad and unwholesome things from arising*. In Pāli, though, there is a tendency to work with negative and positive forms of the same word through the exchange of prefixes, and with cognate forms.

² Normally *asammosa* would mean lack of confusion, absence of delusion, etc. Here the commentary defines it thus: *asammosāyā ti avināsanattham*;

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

This, monks, is called right endeavour.

Now what, monks, is **right mindfulness**?

Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) the body in the body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world.

He dwells contemplating (the nature of) feelings in feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world.

He dwells contemplating (the nature of) the mind in the mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world.

He dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, after removing avarice and sorrow regarding the world.

This, monks, is called right mindfulness.

for persistence means for non-destruction - a meaning that is demanded by the context.

Now what, monks, is **right concentration**?

Here, monks, a monk, quite secluded from sense desires, secluded from unwholesome things, having thinking, reflection, and the happiness and joy born of seclusion, dwells having attained the first absorption.¹

With the calming down of thinking and reflection,² with internal clarity, and one-pointedness of mind, being without thinking, without reflection, having the happiness and joy born of concentration,³ he dwells having attained the second absorption.

With the fading away of joy he dwells equanimous, mindful, fully aware, experiencing happiness through the body,⁴ about which the

¹ *Right Concentration* is always defined in terms of the absorptions in the discourses; there is no mention of such things as access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) or momentary concentration (*khaṇikasamādhi*) until commentarial times. If they were sufficient to fulfil the Path we might have expected the Buddha to mention them.

² *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are sometimes translated as *applied and sustained thought*. But if this is correct then they have a meaning in this context that they have nowhere else, as elsewhere they always have the much broader meanings of *thinking and reflection*, as translated here.

³ These are the sorts of pleasurable states of mind that counteract the attachment to sense-desires, and are always recommended in the discourses, as they lead on along the Path to liberation; it is an example of what was mentioned in the Vedanānupassanā as: *spiritual pleasant feeling*.

⁴ Always defined in the commentaries (e.g. MNiddA, Guhaṭṭhakasuttaniddesavaṇṇanā; VinA, Verañjakaṇḍavaṇṇanā, etc.) as being the *nāmakāya*, or *mind-body*.

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

Noble Ones declare: “He dwells pleasantly, mindful, and equanimous,” he dwells having attained the third absorption.

Having abandoned pleasure, abandoned pain, and with the previous passing away of mental happiness and sorrow, without pain, without pleasure, and with complete purity of mindfulness¹ owing to equanimity, he dwells having attained the fourth absorption.

This, monks, is called right concentration.

This, monks, is called the Noble Truth of the Practice Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.

* * *

Thus he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things in regard to himself and in regard to others, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of dissolution in things, or he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and dissolution in things, or else mindfulness that “there are these (various) things” is established in him just as far as (is necessary for) a full measure of

¹ If we interpret the compound differently this might be taken to mean: *complete purity of mindfulness and equanimity.*

Contemplation of the (the Nature of) Things

knowledge and a full measure of mindfulness, and he dwells independent, and without being attached to anything in the world.

In this way, monks, a monk dwells contemplating (the nature of) things in (various) things, in the Four Noble Truths.

The Section about the Four Truths is Finished

Contemplation of (the Nature of) Things is Finished

The Advantages of Developing the Ways of Attending to Mindfulness

Whoever, monks, should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **seven years**, for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected: final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone seven years, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **six years** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone six years, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **five years** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected: final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone five years, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **four years** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

The Advantages of Developing Mindfulness

Let alone four years, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **three years** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone three years, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **two years** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected: final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone two years, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **one year** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone one year, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **seven months** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone seven months, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **six months** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge

The Advantages of Developing Mindfulness

in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone six months, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **five months** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone five months, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **four months** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone four months, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **three months** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone three months, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **two months** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

The Advantages of Developing Mindfulness

Let alone two months, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **one month** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone a month, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **half a month** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

Let alone half a month, monks, whoever should develop these four ways of attending to mindfulness in this way for **seven days** for him, out of two results, a particular result is to be expected final knowledge in this very life; or, there being some attachment remaining, the state of non-returner.

This is a one-way path, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of grief and lamentation, for the extinction of pain and sorrow, for attaining the right way, for the direct realisation of Nibbāna, that is to say, the four ways of attending to mindfulness. Thus, whatever was said, it is for this reason it was said.”

The Advantages of Developing Mindfulness

The Gracious One said this,

and those monks were uplifted and greatly rejoiced in what was said by the Gracious One.

*The Advantages of Developing
the Ways of Attending to Mindfulness is Finished*

*The Long Discourse about
the Ways of Attending to Mindfulness is Finished*