

**Mindfulness of Breathing**  
*(Ānāpānassati)*



The Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw

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(ànàpànassati)

**The Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw**

## CONTENT

Introduction

Places for Meditation

Posture for Meditation

Breathing Mindfully

The First Set of Four

Practising Samatha

Three Kinds of Nimitta

The Five Jhana Factors

The Five Masteries

The Four Jhanas

The Requisites of Enlightenment in Tranquility

Discerning the Objects for Vipassana

Discerning Ultimate Materiality

Discerning Ultimate Mentality

Discerning Dependent Origination

Practising Vipassana

The Requisites of Enlightenment in Vipassana

The Second Set of Four

The Third Set of Four

The Fourth Set of Four

Path and Fruition

The Requisites of Enlightenment in Path and Fruition

Conclusion

## **Mindfulness of Breathing**

(ànàpànessati)

### **Introduction**

Here we should like to explain very briefly how one meditates using mindfulness of breathing, in Pàli called ànàpànessati. Our explanation is based mainly on the `ânàpànessati Sutta' ('The Mindfulness of Breathing Sutta') of the Majjhima Nikàya (The Middle Length Discourses). There the Buddha explains why one should practise mindfulness of breathing.

**When, bhikkhus, mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and great benefit.**

Then The Buddha explains how mindfulness of breathing is of great fruit and great benefit:

**When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness.**

**When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfil the seven enlightenment factors.**

**When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated, they fulfil True Knowledge and Liberation.**

Here, the Buddha explains that when ànàpànessati, (mindfulness of breathing) is developed and cultivated, the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (satta-timsabodhipakkhiyadhammà), are thereby also developed and cultivated.

We shall now explain how it is done. We shall also explain how the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (satta-timsabodhipakkhiyadhammà), are thereby also developed and cultivated. We shall refer section by section to the `ânàpànessati Sutta'. Let us then take The Buddha's next explanation:

**Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu gone to the forest,**

**or gone to the foot of a tree, or gone to a secluded place,**

**sits down, having crossed his legs, set his body straight,**

**having mindfulness established before him.**

**He breathes in mindfully; he breathes out mindfully.**

## Places for Meditation

The Buddha said the bhikkhu has **gone to the forest, or gone to the foot of a tree, or gone to a secluded place**. That refers to places suitable for practising ànàpànassati: quiet places. In such places, there is little noise and other disturbance. That means one can easily calm one's mind down. But if there are no such places, one must simply ignore all noise and other disturbances. Then does any place become like a forest, the foot of a tree, or a secluded place, which means one can practise ànàpànassati anywhere.

## Posture for Meditation

The Buddha said also the bhikkhu **sits down, having crossed his legs, set his body straight**. That refers to the posture most suitable for ànàpànassati. Although ànàpànassati can and should be practised in every bodily posture, sitting is usually the best posture for developing deep concentration. And in sitting, one must keep one's body naturally straight: not too straight and stiff, and not too relaxed. A straight and comfortable sitting posture allows one to sit for a long time without developing tension or tiredness in the body.

## Breathing Mindfully

The Buddha said also the bhikkhu has **mindfulness established before him, and, he breathes in mindfully, he breathes out mindfully**. That refers to ànàpànassati, mindfulness of breathing: being mindful of the breath. To be mindful of the breath is to pay attention to the breath as it goes in and out at one's nostrils or at one's upper lip. When breathing in, one knows one is breathing in; when breathing out, one knows one is breathing out. That is how one breathes in mindfully, and breathes out mindfully.

Whenever one's mind wanders, one brings it calmly back to the breath. One does not get upset when one's mind wanders. And if one has trouble keeping one's mind on the breath, one counts the breaths:

- On one in-and-out breath, one counts 'one'.
- On the next in-and-out breath, one counts 'two'.
- On the next in-and-out breath, one counts 'three'.
- And so on, up to eight.

One counts the breaths until one's mind settles down calmly with the breath. Then one stops counting and is just mindful of the breath.

After this introductory explanation, The Buddha continues with four sets of four explanations.

## The First Set of Four

With the first set of four explanations The Buddha explains:

[1] **When he [the bhikkhu] breathes in long, he understands:**

**'I breathe in long.'**

**When he breathes out long, he understands:**

**'I breathe out long.'**

[2] **When he breathes in short, he understands:**

**'I breathe in short.'**

**When he breathes out short, he understands:**

**'I breathe out short.'**

[3] **'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole [breath] body':**

**thus he trains.**

**'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole [breath] body':**

**thus he trains.**

[4] **'I shall breathe in tranquillizing the body-formation':**

**thus he trains.**

**'I shall breathe out tranquillizing the body-formation':**

**thus he trains.**

Here, mindfulness of breathing fulfils body-contemplation (*kayanupassana*), the first foundation of mindfulness. Here, the Buddha explains it for attainment of the four *anàpànassati*, which is samatha (tranquility meditation).

## Practising Samatha

The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out understanding that his breath is long or short. As one's mindfulness of breathing develops, this comes naturally: one comes naturally to understand that one's breath is sometimes long, sometimes short. It is not important whether it is long or short; what is important is that one is calmly aware that it is either long or short.

Then The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out experiencing the whole body. By the whole body (*sabbakaya*), The Buddha means the whole body of breath. This understanding also comes naturally. As one's mindfulness of breathing develops further, one becomes naturally aware of the beginning, middle, and end of each in-breath and each out-breath as it passes by the nostrils or at the upper lip. Here again, it is not important whether one's breath is long or short; what is important is that one all the time knows the whole body of each in and out breath: that one knows the whole body of breath from beginning to middle to end.

Lastly, The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out tranquillizing the bodily formation. By the bodily formation (*kayasankhara*), The Buddha means the breath passing in and out through the nose.

Tranquillizing the breath also comes naturally, because as one's mindfulness of breathing develops, one's breath becomes more and more subtle, more and more tranquil. So, all one does is to try all the time mindfully to comprehend the subtle breath.

If one is able in that way to be aware of the subtle breath for a long time, say for two or three hours, one's concentration will become even deeper than before. Eventually, one may experience the nimitta (sign of concentration).

### **Three Kinds of Nimitta**

To different meditators the sign of concentration, the nimitta, may appear differently: it is because of their different perception of the breath. To one the nimitta may appear as a mist, to another it may appear as smoke, to another as cotton wool, or simply as light, etc. In the beginning, however, the *nimitta* is usually grey: that is the *parikamma-nimitta* (preparatory sign). Then, as one's concentration develops, it becomes white, which is the *uggaha-nimitta* (learning sign). And as one's concentration develops further, it becomes bright and transparent, which is the *patibhaga-nimitta* (counterpart sign). The *anapana patibhaga-nimitta* is the object of absorption concentration based on in-and-out breath: it is the object of the *anapana jhanas*.

### **The Five Jhana Factors**

When the nimitta first appears, it comes and goes. But as one continues to be mindful of the breath, one's concentration deepens further, and the nimitta remains for longer and longer. When the nimitta joins the breath, and one's mind of itself fixes onto the nimitta, one pays no longer attention to the breath, only to the nimitta. Then, as one's concentration becomes deeper and deeper, so does the nimitta become brighter and brighter. That light is the light of wisdom (*pannaloka*).

One continues to focus on the *anapana patibhaga-nimitta* for longer and longer periods. One may then experience absorption concentration. It will first be the *anapana first jhana*.

Once one can maintain the first jhana for about two or three hours, one may try to discern the five jhana factors. Whenever one emerges from jhana, one discerns the area in one's heart where the *bhavanga-consciousness* rests: that is the heart-materiality. The *bhavanga-consciousness* is bright and luminous, and looks like a mirror in the heart: that is the mind-door. And when one discerns the mind-door, one will see the *anapana-patibhaga-nimitta* appear there. Then one discerns the five jhana factors:

1)Initial application ..... (vitakka):

it applies one's attention onto the anapana patibhaga-nimitta.

2)Sustained application.....(vicara):

it sustains one's attention on the anapana patibhaga-nimitta.

3)Rapture..... (piti):

it likes and is rapturous about the anapana patibhaga-nimitta.

4)Bliss..... (sukha):

it feels bliss at experiencing the anapana patibhaga-nimitta.

5)One pointedness. ....(ekaggatta):

it concentrates the mind into one point on the anapana patibhaga-nimitta.

First one discerns the jhana factors one by one, afterwards all five at once.

### **The Five Masteries**

Next one develops the five masteries of the first jhana:

- 1) Mastery in entering the first jhana when one wants to.
- 2) Mastery in remaining in the first jhana for as long as one has determined.
- 3) Mastery in emerging from the first jhana at the determined time.
- 4) Mastery in adverting one's attention to the factors of the first jhana after one has emerged from it.
- 5) Mastery in reviewing the factors of the first jhana.

### **The Four Jhanas**

After that, to attain the anapana second jhana, one reflects on the disadvantages of the first jhana and the advantages of the second jhana: the one is threatened by the nearness of the hindrances, and its factors are weakened by the grossness of the two factors of initial and sustained application, which the other does not have. And determining to remove the two grosser factors, one concentrates on the anapana patibhaga-nimitta again, to enter into jhana. Then one emerges from that jhana, and if one sees only three jhana factors (rapture, bliss, and one-pointedness), it means one has successfully attained the anapana second jhana. Then one develops the five masteries of that jhana.

In the same way, one removes the factor of rapture to attain the third jhana, which has only bliss and one-pointedness. And one removes the factor of bliss to attain the fourth jhana, which has only one-pointedness and equanimity. One develops the five masteries for both jhanas.



As one progresses through the jhanas, one's breath becomes more and more tranquil, more and more subtle. With the fourth jhana, one's breath stops: that is how one fully tranquilizes the bodily formation.

### **The Requisites of Enlightenment in Tranquility**

When one attains the four anapana jhanas, one is practising samatha (tranquility meditation). That means one is actually developing the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment including the seven enlightenment factors. How?

- To be mindful of the breath body, in the way we have explained, is body contemplation; to be mindful of the jhana factors of pleasant and neutral feelings is feelings contemplation; to be mindful of the exalted mind is mind contemplation; and to be mindful of things such as the anapana patibhaga-nimitta and the jhana factors is dhammas contemplation. That is to develop the four foundations of mindfulness (*cattaro satipatthana*).
- Furthermore, to make effort to remove unwholesome things such as the five hindrances (sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and scepticism); and to make effort to develop wholesome things such as the five controlling faculties (faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom), the four anapana jhanas etc. that is to develop the four right efforts (*cattaro sammappadhana*).
- Furthermore, to enter into jhana with either predominantly zeal, or predominantly effort, or mind, or investigation, is to develop the four bases of spiritual power (*cattaro iddhipada*).
- Furthermore, to have strong faith in anapanassati; to make constant effort to concentrate on the anapana patibhaga-nimitta; to be mindful of the patibhaga-nimitta; to concentrate on the patibhaga-nimitta; and to comprehend the patibhaga-nimitta, is to develop the five controlling faculties (*panca indriyani*). To develop them in this way, is also to develop the five powers (*panca balani*).
- Furthermore, to be mindful of the anapana patibhaga-nimitta; to investigate the patibhaga-nimitta; to make constant effort to focus on the patibhaga-nimitta; to be rapturous upon focusing on the patibhaga-nimitta; to tranquilize one's mind upon the patibhaga-nimitta; to concentrate on the patibhaga-nimitta; and to look upon the patibhaga-nimitta with equanimity, is to develop the seven enlightenment factors (*satta bojjhanga*).
- Lastly, to understand the anapana patibhaga-nimitta is Right View; to apply one's mind to the patibhaga-nimitta is Right Thought; to abstain from wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood by having undertaken the precepts, is Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood; to make effort to concentrate on the patibhaga-nimitta is Right Effort; to be mindful of the patibhaga-nimitta is Right Mindfulness; and to have jhana is Right Concentration. To develop those eight things is to cultivate the eight factors corresponding to the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyo atthangiko maggo*): at this stage the factors are only mundane.

That is how to develop samatha using anapanassati (mindfulness of breathing) is to develop all thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment including the seven enlightenment factors.

## Discerning the Objects for Vipassana

Having developed the four anapana jhanas, one is now able to practise vipassana.

Because with the light of wisdom one has developed with anapanassati (mindfulness of breathing), one is now able to discern ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality, and their causes. They are the objects of Vipassana.

### Discerning Ultimate Materiality

To discern ultimate materiality, one begins with four elements meditation (catudhatuvavatthana). That is, one discerns the four elements in one's body, including one's breath. One discerns the four elements by way of twelve characteristics:

<b>Earth Element</b>	<b>Water Element</b>	<b>Fire Element</b>	<b>Wind Element</b>
1) hardness 2) roughness 3) heaviness 4) softness 5) smoothness 6) lightness	7) flowing 8) cohesion	9) heat 10) cold	11) supporting 12) pushing

One discerns these twelve characteristics first in one part of one's body, and then in another. With practice, one will be able to discern all twelve characteristics throughout one's body quite quickly: about two to three rounds a minute. Then, to develop one's concentration further, one takes an overview of the body to discern each characteristic in the body as a whole. With practice, one will be able to discern all twelve characteristics almost at once. And with yet further practice, one will then be able to discern the twelve characteristics as just the four elements: earth, water, fire, and wind. Then, as one's mindfulness of and concentration on the four elements develops, one will perceive one's body in different ways. It will first appear as a grey body, then as a white body, and then as a transparent body like a block of ice. When one discerns the four elements in that transparent body, it emits brilliant light, and then when one sees space element in it, it breaks into tiny particles that arise and pass away at great speed: they are in Pali called rupa kalapas (clusters of materiality). But they are not ultimate materiality.

To discern ultimate materiality, one discerns the four elements in single rupa kalapas, one element after the other. Afterwards, one discerns the various kinds of derived materiality (upada rupa) : for example, colour, odour, flavour, and nutritive essence. Altogether one discerns and analyses twenty-eight types of materiality. They are ultimate materiality, arising and passing away. Then one analyses the ultimate materiality of the external world: that of other beings, and that of inanimate things.

## Discerning Ultimate Mentality

Having discerned ultimate materiality, one then discerns ultimate mentality. One begins with the four jhanas. One enters into jhana, and emerges. Then as before, one discerns the anapana patibhaganimitta in the mind-door. And then one discerns the jhana cognitive-process's individual mental formations. For example, one discerns the thirty-four mental formations of the anapana first jhana cognitive process:

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) consciousness          | (18) fear of wrongdoing             |
| (2) contact                | (19) non-greed                      |
| (3) feeling                | (20) non-hatred                     |
| (4) perception             | (21) neutrality of mind             |
| (5) volition               | (22) tranquility of mental body     |
| (6) one-pointedness        | (23) tranquility of consciousness   |
| (7) life-faculty           | (24) lightness of mental body       |
| (8) attention              | (25) lightness of consciousness     |
| (9) initial application    | (26) malleability of mental body    |
| (10) sustained application | (27) malleability of consciousness  |
| (11) decision              | (28) wieldiness of mental body      |
| (12) effort                | (29) wieldiness of consciousness    |
| (13) rapture               | (30) proficiency of mental body     |
| (14) desire                | (31) proficiency of consciousness   |
| (15) faith                 | (32) rectitude of mental body       |
| (16) mindfulness           | (33) rectitude of consciousness and |
| (17) shame of wrongdoing   | (34) wisdom faculty                 |

One discerns these thirty-four mental formations systematically: one by one.

First, one emerges from the anapana first jhana, and discerns the mental formation consciousness of each of the jhana cognitive process's consciousness moments. Then again one enters the first jhana, again emerges, and now one discerns both the mental formation consciousness as well as the mental formation contact. Then again one enters the first jhana, again emerges, and again discerns consciousness and contact, and now also feeling. In that way, one adds one mental formation at a time, till one in the end is able to discern all thirty-four mental formations of the first jhana.

In the same way one discerns the thirty-two mental formations of the second jhana; and the thirty-one mental formations of the third and fourth jhanas. That is ultimate mentality, arising and passing away.

The four anapana jhanas are fine-material realm cognitive processes, and they are only wholesome. But there are also other kinds of mentality. So one discerns also the various mental formations of sensual realm cognitive-processes: of the eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-door, wholesome and unwholesome. Afterwards, one discerns the ultimate mentality of the external world: that of other beings.

When this stage of the meditation is complete, one will have done four things:

- 1) One will have discerned one's own ultimate materiality (internally), and all other materiality, externally.
- 2) One will have discerned ultimate mentality internally and externally.
- 3) One will have discerned ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality together internally and externally.
- 4) One will have distinguished ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality internally and externally to see that there is no self, no person, and no being, but only materiality and mentality arising and passing away.

When one has completed these four things, one will have attained the Knowledge of Defining Mentality-Materiality (*Namarupaparicchedanana*).

### **Discerning Dependent Origination**

Now one is able to discern dependent origination (*paticcasamuppada*). Gradually recollecting one's past materiality and mentality, one is able to recollect the first moment of one's present life: at conception. Then one goes further back, to recollect the last moments of one's past life. There one goes along the continuity of mentality-materiality, backwards and forwards, to find the causes for one's present rebirth.

One's present mentality-materiality is the result of mainly five things.:

- 1) **Ignorance (*avijja*): ignorantly believing that there exists a real human being.**
- 2) Craving (*tanha*): craving for that human being's life.
- 3) Clinging (*upadana*): clinging to that human being's life.
- 4) Volitional formations (*sankhara*): the volitional formations responsible for one's present rebirth. When it is a human rebirth, the volitional formations are always wholesome.
- 5) Existence of kamma (*kammabhava*): the kammic force that produced one's present rebirth.

Having discerned these five main causes for one's present life, one then discerns the relationship between the five past causes and the present results. Then, in the same way, one discerns the relationship between causes and results in more past lives, and in future lives. And systematically one discerns all twelve links of dependent origination: ignorance, formations, consciousness, mentality-materiality, the six bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, coming into existence, birth, and ageing & death. One discerns their causal relationship in past lives, the present life, and in future lives.

When one has discerned the relationship between causes and results in this way, one will have attained the The Knowledge of Apprehending the Condition (*Paccayapariggahanana*).

### **Practising Vipassana**

With the two know ledges we just mentioned (the Knowledge of Defining Mentality-Materiality, and the Knowledge of Apprehending the Condition), one will have discerned ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality, and their causes. They are altogether called formations (*sankhara*). Formations are ultimate reality, which, as explained before, is the object of vipassana. Based upon the two knowledges, and using the light of the fourth anapana jhana, one now practises vipassana.

Vipassana is to know and see the true nature of all formations. How to practise vipassana? One discerns all the formations that one discerned before, but this time, one contemplates them in three ways:

- 1) Knowing and seeing formations arise and pass away, one contemplates them as impermanent (*anicca*).
- 2) Knowing and seeing how formations are oppressed by arising and passing away, one contemplates them as suffering (*dukkha*).
- 3) Knowing and seeing that they possess nothing permanent, no eternal essence, one contemplates them as non-self (*anatta*).

Contemplating ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality and their causes in this way, again and again, one comes to understand that formations are nothing more than three things: impermanence, suffering, and non-self. That is their intrinsic nature; their true nature. And contemplating ultimate reality in this way, one attains higher and higher insight knowledges (*vipassana nana*).

As one's vipassana knowledge increases, one contemplates also the vipassana know ledges themselves as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. That is called reflective insight (*pativipassana*). A vipassana knowledge appears in a mind-door cognitive process. In each such mind-door cognitive process there is a mind-door adverting-consciousness and seven impulses. Usually, each of the seven impulses comprises thirty-four mental formations: the same as the thirty-four mental formations we mentioned in connection with the anapana first jhana.

## The Requisites of Enlightenment in Vipassana

When one uses anapanassati to practise vipassana (insight meditation), one is also cultivating the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment including the seven enlightenment factors. How?

- To practise vipassana as we have explained is mindfully to contemplate the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self in four things: materiality, feelings, mind, and dhammas. That is to cultivate the four foundations of mindfulness (*cattaro satipatthana*).
- Furthermore, to make effort to remove unwholesome things such as the perverted perceptions of permanence, pleasure, and self; and to make effort to develop wholesome things such as the perceptions of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, to attain the vipassana knowledges, is to cultivate the four right efforts (*cattaro sammappadhana*).
- Furthermore, to practise vipassana with either predominantly zeal, or predominantly effort, or mind, or investigation, is to cultivate the four bases of spiritual power (*cattaro iddhipada*).
- Furthermore, to have strong faith in vipassana (which is to have strong faith in the usefulness of knowing and seeing that the true nature of formations is impermanence, suffering and non-self); to make continuous effort to know and see the true nature of formations; to be mindful of their true nature; to concentrate on the true nature of formations; and to comprehend their true nature, is to cultivate the five controlling faculties (*panca indriyani*). To cultivate them in this way is also to cultivate the five powers (*panca balani*).
- Furthermore, to be mindful of the true nature of formations (their nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self); to investigate their true nature; to make constant effort to know and see the true nature of formations; to be rapturous at knowing and seeing their true nature; to tranquillize one's mind upon the true nature of formations; to concentrate upon their true nature; and to look upon their true nature with equanimity, is to cultivate the seven enlightenment factors (*satta bojjhanga*).
- Lastly, rightly to understand the true nature of formations (their nature of impermanence; suffering, and non-self) is Right View; to apply one's mind to the true nature of formations is Right Thought; to abstain from wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood by having undertaken the precepts is Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood; to make effort to know and see the true nature of formations is Right Effort; to be mindful of their true nature is Right Mindfulness; and to concentrate on the true nature of formations is Right Concentration. To cultivate those eight things is to cultivate the eight factors corresponding to the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyo atthangikomaggo*): at this stage they are only mundane.

That is how to cultivate vipassana using anapanassati (mindfulness of breathing) is to develop all thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment including the seven enlightenment factors. That was the first set of explanations in the '*Anapanassati Sutta*'.

## The Second Set of Four

The second set of explanations by The Buddha are:

- [1] **'I shall breathe in experiencing rapture': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out experiencing rapture': thus he trains.**
- [2] **'I shall breathe in experiencing bliss': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out experiencing bliss': thus he trains.**
- [3] **'I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation': thus he trains.**
- [4] **'I shall breathe in tranquillizing the mental formation': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out tranquillizing the mental formation': thus he trains.**

Here, mindfulness of breathing fulfils feelings-contemplation (*vedananupassana*), the second foundation of mindfulness. It is both samatha and vipassana meditation.

- 1) The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out experiencing rapture (*piti*). Rapture is one of the jhana factors of the first and second jhana. So one enters those two jhanas, emerges, and emphasizing rapture, one discerns their mental formations, and contemplates them as impermanent, suffering and non-self. That vipassana knowledge will then also be associated with rapture. It is a law of nature that when there is rapture in the object of vipassana, there is also rapture in the vipassana knowledge. That is how one breathes in and out experiencing rapture.
- 2) Then The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out experiencing bliss (*sukha*). Bliss is one of the jhana factors of the first, second, and third jhana. So, as before, one discerns the mental formations of those three jhanas (now emphasizing bliss), and contemplates them as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Here, one's vipassana knowledge will be associated with bliss. That is how one breathes in and out experiencing bliss.
- 3) Then The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out experiencing the mental formation. By mental formation (*cittasankharo*), He means here perception (*sanna*) and feeling (*vedana*). Perception and feeling are associated with all four jhanas. So, as before, one discerns the mental formations of the four jhanas (now emphasizing perception and feeling), and contemplates them as impermanent, suffering and non-self. That is how one breathes in and out experiencing the mental formation.
- 4) Lastly, The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out tranquillizing the mental formation: tranquillizing perception and feeling. One does that automatically when one enters the four anapana jhanas in succession. Why is that? Because the higher the jhana, the more tranquil perception and feeling. So, here again, discerning the increasingly tranquil mental formations of the four jhanas, and contemplating them as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, one's vipassana knowledge will also be increasingly tranquil. That is how one breathes in and out tranquillizing the mental formation.

We have now explained the second set of instructions given by The Buddha in the '*Anapanassati Sutta*'.

## The Third Set of Four

The third set of instructions by The Buddha are:

- [1] **'I shall breathe in experiencing the mind': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out experiencing the mind': thus he trains.**
- [2] **'I shall breathe in gladdening the mind': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out gladdening the mind': thus he trains.**
- [3] **'I shall breathe in concentrating the mind': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out concentrating the mind': thus he trains.**
- [4] **'I shall breathe in liberating the mind': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out liberating the mind': thus he trains.**

Here, mindfulness of breathing fulfils mind-contemplation (*cittanupassana*), the third foundation of mindfulness. Here too, it is both samatha and vipassana meditation.

- 1) The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out experiencing the mind. When one abides in any of the four anapana jhanas, one's mind is focussed on the anapana-patibhaga-nimitta with mindfulness and comprehension. That is how one breathes in and out experiencing the mind in samatha. Emerging from jhana, and emphasizing the mind, one then contemplates its mental formations as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. That is how one breathes in and out experiencing the mind in vipassana.
- 2) Then The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out gladdening the mind. Gladdening the mind is the same as rapture, and as explained before, rapture is one of the jhana factors of the first and second jhanas: that is how one breathes in and out gladdening the mind in samatha when one abides in any of the two anapana jhanas. Emerging from one of the two jhanas, and emphasizing rapture, one then contemplates its mental formations as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. That is how one breathes in and out gladdening the mind in vipassana.
- 3) Then The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out concentrating the mind. All jhanas have the factor one-pointedness: it makes one's mind concentrate on the patibhaga-nimitta. That is how one breathes in and out concentrating the mind in samatha. Emerging from jhana, and emphasizing one-pointedness, one then contemplates its mental formations as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Doing so, one's mind concentrates on any of the three characteristics. That is how one breathes in and out concentrating the mind in vipassana.
- 4) Lastly, The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out liberating the mind. In the first jhana, one's mind is liberated from the five hindrances; in the second jhana, one's mind is liberated from initial- and sustained application; in the third jhana, one's mind is liberated from rapture; and in the fourth jhana, one's mind is liberated from bliss. That is how one breathes in and out liberating the mind in samatha. Emerging from any of the four jhanas, one contemplates its mental formations as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. In doing so, one's mind is liberated from the perverted perceptions of permanence, pleasure, and self. That is how one breathes in and out liberating the mind in vipassana.



We have now explained the third set of instructions given by The Buddha in the '*Anapanassati Sutta*'.

### **The Fourth Set of Four**

The fourth set of instructions by The Buddha are:

- [1] **'I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence': thus he trains.**
- [2] **'I shall breathe in contemplating fading away': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out contemplating fading away': thus he trains.**
- [3] **'I shall breathe in contemplating cessation': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out contemplating cessation': thus he trains.**
- [4] **'I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment': thus he trains;**  
**'I shall breathe out contemplating relinquishment': thus he trains.**

Here, mindfulness of breathing fulfils dhammas contemplation (*dhammanupassana*), the fourth foundation of mindfulness. Here, it is only vipassana meditation.

- 1) The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out contemplating impermanence. One emerges from any of the four anapana jhanas, and discerns the arising and passing away of ultimate materiality, ultimate mentality and their causes, and contemplates them as impermanent. That is how one breathes in and out contemplating impermanence.
- 2) Then The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out contemplating fading away. There are two kinds of fading away: fading away as destruction and absolute fading away. Fading away as destruction is the momentary destruction of formations. Absolute fading away is Nibbana. When one's vipassana knowledge has become sharp, one contemplates the momentary passing away of formations as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. That is how one breathes in and out contemplating the fading away of formation as destruction. When one attains a Noble Path and Noble Fruition, one realizes the absolute fading away, Nibbana. That is how one breathes in and out contemplating the fading away of formations as absolute fading away.
- 3) Then The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out contemplating cessation. As with fading away, contemplating cessation means either that one breathes in and out contemplating the momentary cessation of formations as impermanent, suffering and non-self, or it means one breathes in and out contemplating the absolute cessation of formations, Nibbana.
- 4) Lastly, The Buddha said the bhikkhu breathes in and out contemplating relinquishment. Relinquishment is also of two kinds: relinquishment as giving up and relinquishment as entering into Nibbana. When, in developing vipassana meditation, one attains to the Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhanganana*), one's perception of impermanence is very strong and suspends conceit; one's perception of suffering suspends attachment; and one's perception of non-self suspends wrong view. That is how one breathes in and out contemplating relinquishment as giving up defilements. Doing so, however, one is at the same time contemplating relinquishment as entering into Nibbana, because one's vipassana knowledge inclines the mind towards Nibbana.

Then, when one's vipassana knowledge matures, and one realizes Nibbana, one's Path Knowledge gives up defilements completely, and enters into the Nibbana by making it as its object. That is how, again, one breathes in and out contemplating relinquishment.

We have now explained the fourth set of instructions given by The Buddha in the '*Anapanassati Sutta*'.

### **Path and Fruition**

To realize Nibbana is also to realize the Four Noble Truths. How?

- 1) Ultimate materiality and ultimate mentality, the five aggregates, are the First Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkhasacca*).
- 2) The causes for ultimate materiality and mentality, their dependent origination, is the Second Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Samudayasacca*).
- 3) Nibbana is the Third Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Nirodhasacca*).
- 4) The Noble Eightfold Path that is the Path Knowledge is the Fourth Noble Truth: the Noble Truth of the Path (*maggasacca*).

After the arising of the path consciousness that takes the Nibbana object, two or three fruition consciousnesses arise that also take the Nibbana object. Then has one realized the Four Noble Truths, and the first stage of enlightenment, stream-entry (*sotapatti*). And as one continues to practise vipassana based on anapanassati, one may attain the higher stages of enlightenment. Eventually, one destroys all defilements and become an arahant, a Worthy One, a Perfect One.

## The Requisites of Enlightenment in Path and Fruition

When one attains the Path and Fruition Knowledges, and realizes Nibbana, one is also developing and cultivating the thirty-seven constituents of enlightenment including the seven enlightenment factors. How?

- One's Path Knowledge destroys the delusion that concealed the true nature of the body, of feelings, of mind, and of dhammas. That is to develop and cultivate the four foundations of mindfulness (*cattaro satipatthana*).
- Furthermore, one's Path Knowledge removes defilements (which are unwholesome things), and develops the Path Dhammas that realize Nibbana (which are wholesome things). That is to develop and cultivate the four right efforts (*cattaro sammappadhana*).
- Furthermore, the first time one's Path and Fruition Knowledges arise, and whenever one later enters into the Fruition attainment, one's Fruition Knowledges are associated with either predominantly zeal, or predominantly effort, or mind, or investigation. That is to develop and cultivate the four bases of spiritual power (*cattaro iddhipada*).
- Furthermore, when one attains the first Noble Path, one becomes fully confident that The Buddha was fully enlightened, that Nibbana exists, and that there exists a Noble Sangha, disciples of The Buddha. In other words, when one attains the Noble Path, one gains unshakeable faith in The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. And one will have made effort to realize Nibbana; one is mindful of Nibbana; one is concentrated upon Nibbana; and one comprehends Nibbana. That is to develop and cultivate the five controlling faculties (*panca indriyani*). To develop and cultivate them in this way is also to develop and cultivate the five powers (*panca balani*).
- Furthermore, to be mindful of Nibbana; to investigate Nibbana; to make effort to realize Nibbana; to be rapturous upon realizing Nibbana; to tranquillize one's mind upon Nibbana; to concentrate upon Nibbana; and to look upon Nibbana with equanimity, is to develop and cultivate the seven enlightenment factors (*satta bojjhanga*).
- Lastly, to understand Nibbana is Right View; to apply one's mind to Nibbana is Right Thought; with one's Path Knowledge to destroy all the defilements that cause wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood means one's realization of Nibbana is associated with Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood; to make effort to realize Nibbana is Right Effort; to be mindful of Nibbana is Right Mindfulness; and lastly, to concentrate on Nibbana means one has attained either the first jhana or a higher jhana with Nibbana as object, which is Noble Right Concentration. To develop and cultivate those eight things is to develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyo atthangiko maggo*): now the factors are supramundane, which means they are Noble.

That is how to develop and cultivate anapanassati (mindfulness of breathing) is to develop all thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment including the seven enlightenment factors.

## Conclusion

In this talk we explained how one develops anapanassati, up to the attainment of arahantship. First one develops the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment with samatha meditation: they are mundane, having the paribhaga nimitta as object. The samatha meditation gives one the light of wisdom, which enables one to cultivate the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment with vipassana meditation: they are mundane, having formations as object. The samatha and vipassana requisites of enlightenment then enable one to develop and cultivate the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment with the Path Knowledge: they are supramundane, having Nibbana as object. That is what The Buddha was referring to, when He in the beginning of the 'Anapanassati Sutta' said:

**When, bhikkhus, mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated,  
it is of great fruit and great benefit.**

If we practise anapanassati (mindfulness of breathing) according to The Buddha's instructions, we are sure to reap great fruit and great benefit. That is what The Buddha was referring to when He said:

**When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated,  
it fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness.**

**When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated,  
they fulfil the seven enlightenment factors.**

**When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated,  
they fulfil True Knowledge and Liberation.**

True Knowledge and Liberation is to realize Nibbana, the Unformed Element.

The Buddha explains that it is the Deathless, and the Supreme Happiness.

May you all attain the Supreme Happiness, the highest in the Buddha's teaching: for your own great benefit, and for the great benefit of all beings.

*Idam me punnam Nibbanassa paccayo hotu.*

*May this merit be a contributing cause for the realisation of Nibbana.*

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