

Keep Practising

The Satipaṭṭhāna practice can be applied in daily life. It is not difficult at all. People find it difficult only because they lack sufficient practice. It is important that you make a sincere effort in your practice. Through experience you will see for yourself that it is really simple. If we had the same attitude of perseverance and untiring effort towards the practice as we have towards our careers or business matters, this would come easier.

Unfortunately, most people believe that they do not have enough time to nurture and value the Dhamma; they are ever so busy making a livelihood. But you should not worry about making time to practise; simply remind yourself to be aware while you are going about your daily activities. Be patient in acquiring the right views, the right understanding, as well as the necessary skills. If you practise wholeheartedly and persistently you will sooner or later experience benefits.

Once you truly understand the benefits of the practice you will never stop practising; you will always keep it going wherever you are. When you are really able to apply the Dhamma in your life and start seeing the difference it makes, then the qualities of the Dhamma will become obvious. The qualities of the Dhamma will come alive for you, they will become really meaningful to you.

A meditation centre is just a place for learning, a kind of training camp or mindfulness workshop. Keep practising in daily life. Do not think it is difficult. Just try again and again. Developing awareness is a life long journey; there is no need to hurry or worry. It is important to learn how to practise correctly so that you can effectively apply whatever you have learned in everyday life. When you are able to apply what you have learned in any life situation, your awareness is superior to the kind of awareness you develop by just walking up and down the meditation hall.

You will be happier and get on more harmoniously with other people if you are clearly aware of whatever you do, wherever you are. This only comes easily when there is sustained momentum in the practice; it only becomes possible when there is natural awareness, when awareness becomes second nature.

When you have a new experience in the course of your practice, do not try to interpret it in the light of what you have heard or read. If the understanding you have gained through the experience is real, insight or wisdom will bring about a real change in your views, habits, ideas, even your behaviour. What is the value of insight if it does not help you change for the better?

What is the Right Attitude for Meditation?

1. Meditating is acknowledging and observing whatever happens – whether pleasant or unpleasant – in a relaxed way.
2. Meditating is watching and waiting patiently with awareness and understanding. Meditation is NOT trying to experience something you have read or heard about.
3. Just pay attention to the present moment.
Don't get lost in thoughts about the past.
Don't get carried away by thoughts about the future.
4. When meditating, both the mind and the body should be comfortable.
5. If the mind and the body are getting tired, something is wrong with the way you are practising, and it is time to check the way you are meditating.
6. Why do you focus so hard when you meditate?
Do you want something?
Do you want something to happen?
Do you want something to stop happening?
Check to see if one of these attitudes is present.

7. The meditating mind should be relaxed and at peace.
You cannot practise when the mind is tense.
8. Don't focus too hard, don't control. Neither force nor restrict yourself.
9. Don't try to create anything, and don't reject what is happening.
Just be aware.
10. Trying to create something is greed.
Rejecting what is happening is aversion.
Not knowing if something is happening or has stopped happening is delusion.
11. Only to the extent that the observing mind has no greed, aversion or anxiety are you truly meditating.
12. Don't have any expectations,
don't want anything,
don't be anxious,
because if these attitudes are in your mind,
it becomes difficult to meditate.
13. You are not trying to make things turn out the way you want them to happen. You are trying to know what is happening as it is.
14. What is the mind doing?
Thinking? Being aware?
15. Where is the mind's attention now?
Inside? Outside?

16. Is the watching or observing mind properly aware or only superficially aware?
17. Don't practise with a mind that wants something or wants something to happen. The result will only be that you tire yourself out.
18. You have to accept and watch both good and bad experiences. You want only good experiences? You don't want even the tiniest unpleasant experience? Is this reasonable? Is this the way of the Dhamma?
19. You have to double check to see what attitude you are meditating with. A light and free mind enables you to meditate well. Do you have the right attitude?
20. Don't feel disturbed by the thinking mind. You are not practising to prevent thinking, but rather to recognize and acknowledge thinking whenever it arises.
21. Don't reject any object that comes to your attention. Get to know the defilements that arise in relation to the object and keep examining the defilements.
22. The object of attention is not really important, the observing mind that is working in the background to be aware is of real importance.

If the observing is done with the right attitude, any object is the right object.

23. Only when there is faith or confidence (*saddhā*), effort will arise.
Only when there is effort (*virīya*), mindfulness will become continuous.
Only when mindfulness (*sati*) is continuous, stability of mind will become established.
Only when stability of mind (*samādhi*) is established, you will start understanding things as they are.
When you start understanding things as they are (*paññā*), faith will grow stronger.

Glossary of Pāli Terms

During Dhamma discussions you will hear both the teacher and the interpreter use certain key Pāli terms. They are usually left untranslated because translations can only approximately describe their meanings and can sometimes even be misleading. The explanations given should be sufficient for our purposes but they are not comprehensive. For more complete definitions please consult Buddhist dictionaries and textbooks. Also try to get a ‘feel’ for these terms when you hear them used, try to understand them in context.

abhidhamma

Buddhist canonical description of the processes and characteristics of the mind

akusala (also see *kusala*)

kammically unwholesome, unskillful, unprofitable

anatta (also see *atta*)

- a) not-self, non-ego, impersonality, there is no abiding substance (or an ego, a self, or a soul), there is no self-existing entity
- b) nothing can arise on its own or from a single cause, and nothing can exist or move on its own

c) one of the three universal characteristics of existence (see *dukkha* and *anicca*), understanding *anattā* is a liberating insight (*paññā*)

anicca

a) impermanence, all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, everything that comes into existence changes and passes away

b) one of the three universal characteristics of existence (see *dukkha* and *anatta*), understanding *anicca* is a liberating insight (*paññā*)

atta

self, ego, personality

avijjā

synonym for *moha*

bhāvanā

mental development, meditation

bhāvanāmayā paññā

wisdom or knowledge acquired through direct experience, through mental development

bhikkhu

fully ordained monk, member of the Saṅgha

cetasika

mental factor (This refers to the 52 mental factors listed in the *abhidhamma*. Some are kammically neutral, some kammically wholesome, some kammically unwholesome.)

chanda

wholesome intention, aspiration, zeal

cintāmayā paññā

wisdom or knowledge acquired by thinking and reasoning, by intellectual analysis

citta

mind

dāna

giving, offering, generosity

dhamma

object, thing, phenomena

Dhamma

- a) 'natural law', 'nature'
- b) Buddhist doctrine

diṭṭhi

view, belief, speculative opinion

micchā diṭṭhi (wrong view) / *sammā diṭṭhi* (right view)

domanassa

any kind of unpleasant mental feeling, mentally painful feeling

dosa

hatred, anger, any kind of aversion or disliking (including sadness, fear, resistance, etc.)

dukkha

- a) unsatisfactoriness, pain, suffering
- b) the suffering in change

c) the unsatisfactory nature of all existence, of all conditioned phenomena

d) one of the three universal characteristics of existence (see *anicca* and *anatta*), understanding dukkha is a liberating insight (*paññā*)

indriya

the 5 spiritual faculties: *saddhā*, *virīya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*

jhāna

meditative absorption

kamma

volitional action (of body, speech, mind)

khandha

5 aggregates or categories: *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa*

kilesa

defilements, unwholesome qualities of the mind, any manifestation of greed, anger, and delusion (see *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*)

kusala (also see *akusala*)

kammically wholesome, skilful, profitable

lobha

greed, any kind of craving or liking (synonym for *taṇhā*)

mettā

loving-kindness, selfless love, unconditional love

micchā diṭṭhi

wrong view

moha

delusion, ignorance, not understanding, not seeing reality
(synonym for *avijjā*)

nāma

mental processes, mind (collective term for *vedanā*, *saññā*,
saṅkhāra, and *viññāṇa*)

nāma-rūpa

mental and physical processes

ñāṇa

synonym for *paññā*

Pāli

name of the language in which the Buddhist scriptures (Pāli
Canon) were first recorded

paññā

wisdom, understanding, knowledge, insight (synonym for
ñāṇa)

paññatti

relative (conceptual) reality, concepts

paramattha

ultimate reality

pāramī

perfections

paṭicca-samuppāda

dependent origination, conditioned co-production, conditional-
ity

pīti

joyful interest, enthusiasm, rapture

rūpa

physical processes, corporeality

saddhā

faith, confidence, trust

samādhi

calmness, stillness or stability of mind

samatha

tranquility meditation, concentration meditations

saṃsāra

cycle of suffering

saṅkhāra

mental formations

saññā

recognition, memory, perception

sati

mindfulness, awareness

sīla

morality, ethical conduct, virtue

somanassa

any kind of pleasant mental feeling, mentally pleasurable
feeling

sukha

happiness

sutamayā paññā

wisdom or knowledge acquired through reading or hearing

sutta

discourse of the Buddha

taṇhā

synonym for *lobha*

upekkhā

a) neutral feelings and sensations (*vedanā*)

b) equanimity, a wholesome mental state (*saṅkhāra, cetasika*)

vedanā

pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feelings or sensations (see *somanassa, domanassa, and upekkhā*)

vinaya

rules of conduct and discipline for monks (*bhikkhus*)

viññāṇa

consciousness, cognition, knowing mind

vipassanā

insight, insight meditation

virīya

energy, 'wisdom' energy, 'remindfulness'

yoniso manasikāra

a) right attitude, right frame of mind, right attention

b) wise consideration