



FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

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Mindfulness means dissimilar things at different stages. Constant consciousness is mindfulness. However, if one does not know what kind of consciousness, of what and how, then there is motionless a lot to experience in order to comprehend it. He needs extra explanation, as he has not realized things. Mindfulness will be understood through practice. It really means paying bare consideration to an object without any pre- conceived impression, prejudices or valued judgment. It also means being conscious of the existence of something here and now, and at later stage mindfulness is a spiritual state of flexible and investigative nature. Being flexible, being receptive, not responding but acting, being heedful, being in harmony with oneself, being actively watchful, straight experience of the present object and being at the present moment are some popular explanation of the functions of mindfulness.

Foundation of mindfulness was first introduced by the Buddha in India more than two and a half millennium ago. It is a practice aimed, firstly, at the establishing and progress of mindfulness, the mental issue that is most crucial to the Buddha's path of liberation from *Samsāra* the rounds of sorrow. When mindfulness is firmly established through the practice of mindfulness it serves as a powerful tool for the investigation of mind-body processes uncovering their conditioned nature as temporary, unsatisfactory and non-self. Such insight into the conditioned nature of mind-body processes, when sufficiently developed will effect in the mind of the meditator a disenchantment with, a letting go of and turning away from all things conditioned. His/her mind will then incline and finally plunge into the unconditioned

element called *Nibbāna*, the acme of the Buddhist path of mental culture. All satisfactoriness or suffering entailed by the conditioned world of *Samsāra* will be brought to an end once *Nibbāna* is attained.

The Buddha then goes on to give a summary of the method for the establishing of mindfulness with reference to body, feeling, consciousness and *dhamma*. These four collectively called the Four Foundations of Mindfulness are the four objective domains for contemplation with mindfulness establish on four foundations practice. In the summary the Buddha listed out the mental factors such as energetic effort, mindfulness, etc. that the meditator must bring to bear in his work of mindfulness meditation. He also stated very concisely how mindfulness meditation is to be carried out. Due to its conciseness the meaning of this passage may not be at once clear or apparent. An exposition of its meaning is therefore helpful to uncover its meaning.

To training meditation, one must have study resolution, attempt and tolerance. Urgent consequences should not be guessed. We must recollect that it takes numerous years for a person to be capable as a lawyer, doctor, mathematician, scientist or a historian. Likewise to be a good meditator, someone will take some time to restrict the subtle mind and tranquil the senses. Practicing meditation is similar swimming against the current in a river. One must not misplace tolerance if one is not able to attain fast consequences during the initial stages.

At the present time, there are various kinds of meditation, numerous systems, and a lot of attention methods, which used bulk of people. Even though there are lots, to put it in a husk, according to the *MahāSatipatthāna sutta*, found in the Theravada Buddhist *Pāli* canon, here in the Buddhist method to meditation are only four kinds to classify exactly as follows.

- Contemplation of the mindfulness on the body.
- Contemplation of the mindfulness on the feeling.
- Contemplation of the mindfulness on the mind (consciousness).
- Contemplation of the mindfulness on the mind-matter. (*Dhamma*)

According to the Theravada *Pāli* texts, the meditative methods are one of these four types only. So the learning of *MahāSatipatthāna Sutta* is necessary and meditative techniques are so important, for those who want to training meditation, according to the Theravada tradition.

Speaking about Buddhist meditation, it is not accomplished without *MahāSatipatthāna Sutta*, it is a must. Presently, what I actually fancy to present here, are not

only to be able to look for actual harmony and peace from within ourselves instead of external of ourselves, but also to be able to get rid of misuse and misapprehension of meditation, according to the ‘*Kāyānupassanā Satipatthāna*’ and ‘*Vedanānupassanā Satipatthāna*’ of this *sutta*.

As a concluding point, it is to present , to point up the value of “Meditation” specifically in this *sutta*.. Selection of this *sutta* is to put in writing toward the lay who are acknowledging Buddhist meditation deeply. This is the main fact of *MahāSatipatthānaSutta*, which I would like to engrave, in consonance with the ‘*Cittānupassanā Satipatthāna*’ and ‘*Dhammānupassanā Satipatthāna*’ of this *sutta*.

Having reviewed the *Sutta*, we turn to the assurance of achievement, which was given by the Buddha himself. But, before learning this assurance, let us review what we have studied so far.

In this *Sutta*, the Buddha preached the four foundations of Mindfulness in twenty-one dissimilar ways. The four foundations of Mindfulness are the contemplation of the body, the contemplation of feelings, the contemplation of consciousness and the contemplation of the *Dhammas*.

The contemplation of the body is described in fourteen ways: mindfulness of breathing, the attitudes of the body, clear understanding of actions, and reflection on the revoltingness of the body, on the physical elements, and the training of the nine cemetery contemplations.

The contemplation of feelings is described only in one way, because although there are three basic feelings, as feelings they are only one; they express the quality of atmospheres acknowledgeable with respect to an object.

The contemplation of mind and consciousness is also described only in one way, because although there are consciousness accompanied by desire –*raga* and others, as the alertness of the object they are only one.

The contemplation of the *Dhammas*, however, is described in five ways: the contemplation of the five hindrances, the five aggregates of clinging, the six internal and six external sense-bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the four noble truths.

Among the twenty-one ways of *Satipatthāna* meditation, mindfulness of breathing, reflection on the repulsiveness of the body, and the nine cemetery contemplations can lead to the attainment of *jhānas*.

Let alone one year, *Bhikkhus*, should any person practice these four foundations of mindfulness in this manner for 7- months... 6- months... 5- months ... 4- months ... 3- months ... 2- months... 1- month... for half a month, then he may expect one of two results highest knowledge here and now, or, when there be yet a remainder of clinging, the state of non-returner.

Let alone half a month, *Bhikkhus*, should any person practice these four foundations of mindfulness for 7- days, he may expect one of two results: highest knowledge here and now, or when there be yet a remainder of clinging, the state of non-returner.

This statement is made for people of average intelligence. For people whose intelligence is not so keen, it will take longer and for people who have keen intelligence and quick understanding, it will take less time. Such meditators may not even need 7- days to become enlightened.

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- AnamataggaSamyutta, ii, of SamyuttaNikaya, page 179.*
- An Arahat is one who has cut himself off from all fetters of existence (samsara) and attained perfect purity and peace and realized Nirvana through comprehending the Dhamma, the Truth.*