INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

As we have seen in Part One, the most influential philosophical currents within the Hindu and Buddhist traditions have fundamentally the same ultimate objective - the attainment of the unconditioned reality which is eternal and the highest bliss. Part Two, will examine methods of meditation that have been taught as the means of approaching this goal. The following are some of the topics that will be discussed: ethics and karma; postures and breathing techniques; one-pointed meditation, including meditation on the breath; meditation on visual objects; meditation through the medium of the other senses; meditation with no specific object; mindfulness; devotion and loving kindness; Self Enquiry and other methods of enquiry into the Self; meditation in action and, finally, Tantra. I have uploaded some of these chapters and will upload the rest when they have been fully checked.

MEDITATION DEFINED

Before proceeding any further, it would perhaps be helpful to decide on a working definition for the term 'meditation'. One way of defining meditation is that it is 'any practice in which the practitioner trains his or her mind to induce a mode of consciousness in order to realise some benefit.'

THE WIDER USES OF MEDITATION

While the prime aim of meditation is as has been described, one of its effects is also the relaxation of the body. By stilling the mind through meditation, muscle tension is reduced and the heart and breathing rates decrease. Thus, the average person can be helped to reduce his or her level of stress considerably by this means. Meditation can also be utilised as a therapeutic tool in the treatment of the wide range of physical illnesses that are caused partly or wholly by psychogenic factors. In the same way, many severe mental health problems can be ameliorated by the correct use of meditative techniques.¹ These uses of meditation will be discussed in later chapters.

REFERENCES

Chapter One

Ethics, Karma and Meditation

Ethical conduct is regarded as an important precondition for the practice of most systems of meditation. An illustration of this can be found in the Yoga-Sūtra attributed to Patañjali (see Part One Chapter 5). The first stage of practice described in this work is adherence to a number of basic precepts listed under the headings of yama (self-control) and niyama (self-discipline). These include nonharming (ahimsā); truthfulness (satya); not stealing (asteya); chastity (brahmacharya); noncovetousness (aparigraha) and asceticism (tapas).

Similar ethical rules form part of the Eightfold Path in the Buddhist tradition (see the appendix to Chapter Two in Part One). Those following a Buddhist path are encouraged: to live simply, to free themselves from ill will and to avoid harming other beings; to abstain from lying, slander and harsh or frivolous speech; to refrain from taking life, from taking what is not given and from misconduct in sensual pleasure; and to avoid professions that are harmful to other beings or oneself.

To the majority of readers the value of most of these principles will be self-evident with perhaps the exception of celibacy. The reasoning behind this particular precept is that sexual activity saps physical energy and distracts the aspirant from his or her practice. Some may find the idea of celibacy a daunting prospect. However, it is not necessary to postpone learning to meditate because one does not feel able to practise this ideal. Indeed, it can be argued that, except for the most advanced aspirants, there is a danger of repressing sexual energy which may eventually surface in an even more destructive manner. For the majority of aspirants, therefore, a better plan may be to let sexual activity diminish of its own accord as, gradually, a greater satisfaction is found in inner experience than in worldly pleasures.

THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA

Underpinning the belief in the importance of ethical conduct is the theory of karma. Both Hindus and Buddhists believe that each individual reaps the fruits of his or her thoughts and actions. Thus, positive and negative thoughts and actions lead to positive and to negative results respectively. Actions which are not driven by attachment to ego-centred desire or to fear lead
to positive results. Normally, action of this kind is devoted to the welfare of other sentient beings, either directly or indirectly. On the other hand, attached action leads to negative results.

A person may not reap the consequences of his or her deeds immediately. Indeed, these may take lifetimes to manifest. According to many parts of the Hindu tradition, this is possible because the results of all that one has thought or done are said to be stored in the form of samskāras or latent mental tendencies. A soul, when it transmigrates into a new body, carries these with it. Similarly, in Buddhism, while there are a variety of views about the exact mechanisms involved, there is an equally strong belief that the actions of one life will influence what happens in the next. Thus, as there is no escaping the consequences of one's actions, a wise person will be careful to act in a humane and compassionate manner.

**DISCUSSION**

What evidence is there to support the theory of karma? As we discussed in Part One, seeking lasting happiness in a world subject to continual change is doomed to failure. Thus, it is evident that attached action of this kind will result in an individual experiencing negative mental states such as disappointment, insecurity and stress.

Similarly, when actions are motivated by emotions such as fear and anger, these alone are enough to cause suffering for the person concerned. Anyone who has felt fear or who has been angry will know how unpleasant these feelings are. However, there will also be other repercussions. For example, if someone has vented their anger against someone else, that person is likely to become angry in turn and direct their anger towards the first person causing him or her even more suffering.

It is also apparent that the results of attached actions may be delayed. For example, dictators may amass great power over quite a length of time, seemingly with impunity. However, usually this cannot be achieved without antagonizing a large number of people. As a result, eventually the tide is likely to turn so that they are overthrown and cast into ignominy. Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler are good illustrations of this.

So far it is quite easy to see how the law of karma works. It is more difficult, though, to prove the existence of reincarnation and that the results of one's actions may appear in a future life. There is not space here to examine this subject in depth. However, a number of books have been written looking at the evidence for reincarnation. One book often referred to is Dr Ian Stevenson’s Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation.1

**REFERENCES**

1) Ian Stevenson, Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1974
PREPARING FOR MEDITATION AND ONE-POINTED FOCUSING ON THE BREATH

PREPARING FOR MEDITATION

While with practice it is possible to meditate under almost any circumstances, the beginner is best advised to choose a quiet place, free from distractions. If necessary, it may even be worthwhile investing in a pair of ear plugs or ear defenders. The ambient temperature should be comfortable and preferably one should not have eaten within the previous two or three hours. Some may find it helpful to practise amongst natural surroundings.

We have already looked at some sitting postures suitable for meditation in the last chapter. However, in some circumstances it may be more appropriate to meditate standing up. This is particularly useful if one is feeling drowsy. It is also possible to meditate lying down, although there is a greater danger of going to sleep in this position. When sitting or standing the spine should be kept erect, though not rigidly so. The shoulders should be level and it may help to bend the neck slightly. In sitting positions the hands can be rested separately on the thighs, the index fingers and thumbs forming a circle, the other fingers stretched out. Alternatively, the hands can be cupped slightly and brought together in the lap, one on top of the other, palms uppermost.

One position recommended for the tongue is that it should rest gently against the palate, just behind the teeth. There should be a slight gap between the teeth so that they do not grind together. This is supposed, amongst other things, to help control the saliva in the mouth. There should be a slight gap between the teeth so that they do not grind together.

One can meditate with one's eyes open, half-closed or completely closed. If one is easily distracted it may be better to keep them completely closed. If, however, a feeling of drowsiness occurs, it will often help to open the eyes for a while, though care should be taken not to strain them.
MEDITATION ON THE BREATH

There are an infinite number of objects that the mind can be taught to concentrate on. However, simple concentration on the natural flow of the breath is one of the methods most commonly suggested for beginners. The reason for this is that the breath is easily perceptible and always available. Moreover, for many, experience of the breath is more direct and immediate than is the use of, for example, visual imagery.

It can be argued that there will never be completely one-pointed concentration on the breath because there will always be a difference of sensation between the in and the out breaths. The former will feel cooler than the latter. On the other hand, as the attention of the meditator is concentrated to such a considerable degree in this method it has seemed reasonable to include it under this heading.

Meditation on the breath is an important element of many Buddhist systems of meditation. It consists of simply observing the flow of the breath without trying to alter it in any way. For some, it may be most effective to concentrate on the sensation of the breath in a small area, for example just inside the nose or on the upper lip. In this method, one should observe exactly where this sensation arises: whether it is in the right or left nostril or both, in one or several spots, etc. Others may prefer to concentrate on the flow of the breath in and out of the nostrils in a more general way without too much precision. The rise and fall of the abdomen, particularly in the area of the navel, can also be focussed upon.

REMEDIES FOR PROBLEMS IN MEDITATION

Until the practitioner is highly experienced in meditation, the mind will inevitably wander away from its focus on the breathing. When this happens, after noting the distraction simply bring the attention gently back again to the breath. As an aid to concentration, one can count the number of breaths mentally either on the inhalation or on the exhalation up to ten and then start over again.

(i) If this does not work and one is overpowered by distracting or disturbing thoughts, it is possible to counter these by thinking the opposite thought to the one that is causing the problem. For example, if the thought of ending the meditation in order to attend to other activities arises, this can be countered by remembering that meditation is the most important thing that one can be doing at that time.

(ii) Often, however, the meditator is disturbed by physical rather than mental distractions. These may take the form of pain, stress or itching sensations in different parts of the body. One remedy is to identify precisely the area of discomfort and observe it closely in a detached manner. This should be done as if the sensation were some external object and without any
attempt to remove it. In many cases the problem will then disappear and the meditator can turn his or her attention once again to the breath.

(iii) If this approach does not succeed the practitioner can imagine s/he is breathing through the affected area in time with the natural rhythm of breathing.

(iv) Alternatively, the exact location of the sensation can be pinpointed and light can be visualised as covering it. This visualisation should be continued until the sensation goes away.

(v) Yet another method is to visualise three letters of the alphabet (for example a, b and c) forming the corners of a triangle which contains the affected part of the body within it. This visualisation is held until the sensation has gone.

(vi) However, perhaps the simplest approach to discomfort in the body is to first tense the affected area and then to relax it.

(vii) Sometimes problems arise as a result of trying to keep the body rigidly still during meditation. For beginners especially, attempting to do this can cause serious difficulties. The reason is that in normal life the body is used to moving. As a result, there are strong mental habits that resist sudden immobility. If there is an attempt to impose this by force of will a conflict will result leading in turn to physical pain or stress. Therefore, if one feels the need to do so, it may be better to allow the body to move to some extent during meditation until, as the mind calms down, it becomes still of its own accord. One may wish to move the trunk, legs, arms or head slightly every now and then. In some cases it may be useful to move one part of the body continuously. For example, the fists can be opened and closed or an arm raised and lowered, etc., until the need to do this subsides. Each individual will have different needs.

Further methods of tackling the problems that commonly arise in this and other forms of meditation will be discussed later.

With practice one will find that the breath may subside of its own accord and a pleasant feeling of mental and physical relaxation may result. On some rare occasions, when the mind is particularly concentrated, the breath may stop altogether for a short while. The meditator should not become concerned. The breathing will start again automatically when the body needs more oxygen. In the meantime, according to the Buddhist Visuddhi Magga, the meditator should focus the mind on the place normally touched by the breath and on which he or she has been concentrating. The Visuddhi Magga goes on to say that if one continues to practise in this way what it calls the learning sign and also the jhānas or higher states of concentration will eventually arise. These terms will be explained in detail later in Part Two.

Whether or not one follows the particular approach recommended by the Visuddhi Magga, concentration on the breath is a highly effective method of meditation. As a consequence of calming the mind and body in this way, the meditator may experience feelings of energy and upliftment and become aware of realms of great beauty. He or she may even become aware of the faint glimmer of the veiled light of the higher Self, of the Buddha Nature. Such experience is difficult to express adequately in words. This is why, in instructing their disciples, the great sages of the past have often communicated their teachings in silence, mind to mind rather than through speech.
Chapter Four

INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL MEDITATION

CHOOSING AN OBJECT

As almost any visual object can become the focus of this type of practice, there are more forms of meditation in this category than in any other. There are a variety of factors that may influence which is the most suitable object for a particular meditator. For example, someone who has difficulty in visualising will be best advised to start with a simple, well-defined and familiar form. Letters of the alphabet or simple geometric shapes are especially appropriate in this case.

Some meditators may be aided by choosing objects with which they associate beauty, sacredness or tranquillity. These might include the images of saints or deities, or scenes from nature. Other examples of objects that have been suggested for meditation include anything from sticks, pebbles, pieces of wood and small balls to Buddha statues, the sky, mandalas and bright objects such as candle flames. The object may also be one conjured up wholly within the imagination. At first, it may be necessary to experiment to find the object that suits one’s needs best. However, having found an appropriate object to focus on, it is advisable to concentrate on this alone.

THE BASIC PRACTICE

If an object is visualised which is non-imaginary and which occurs in the external world, the practitioner should examine it closely. S/he should then try to form a mental image of it. This may soon fade so that it will be necessary to re-examine the object and try again to visualise it. This process may continue for some time until the meditator is able to hold the image, to a greater or lesser degree, in the mind’s eye. In order not to interrupt the flow of concentration,
the meditator should then try to learn to counter the fading of the image without having to re-examine the original object. Methods of achieving this will be discussed in detail when we examine the Tibetan Mahāyāna system of shamatha.

Inevitably, the aspirant’s attention, distracted by thoughts or input through the senses, will wander from the image. Every time this happens the mind should be brought back gently to the image again. The same kind of antidotes as those recommended in the chapter on one-pointed focussing on the breath can be used to counter other problems that may arise.

As with other forms of one-pointed meditation, the aim of visual concentration is to still the mind and the senses so that it is possible to attain a greater awareness of more subtle levels of reality. In the following chapter we will discuss visual meditation in greater detail by examining the practice of shamatha in the Tibetan tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

REFERENCES


Chapter Five

CALM ABIDING IN THE TIBETAN MAHĀYĀNA TRADITION

Within some parts of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions there are detailed descriptions of the stages that each meditator is believed to pass through as his or her practice progresses. Sometimes an account of the problems that may be encountered by the meditator and possible remedies are also discussed. A good example of a system that covers both these areas is the method of shamatha meditation found within Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhism. Shamatha (called ‘shinay’ in Tibetan) is a Sanskrit term meaning ‘dwelling in tranquillity’ or ‘calm abiding’. The form taught in the Tibetan tradition has its origins in the teachings of the Yogāchāra School of Buddhism. These were brought to Tibet from India around the eighth century CE by sages such
as Shāntaraksita and Kamalashīla. In the present day, shamatha is still regarded as a central part of the practice of Tibetan Buddhism.

**PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE**

According to the shamatha system, before starting practice it is advisable to look for a favourable environment. Tranquillity and the company of wholesome companions are amongst the supports for meditation that are recommended. However, there should be no delay in learning to meditate if a suitable place cannot be found. The practitioner should also have few desires and an ethical approach to life.

**CHOOSING AN OBJECT**

Any of a large number of objects may be chosen for the purposes of meditation. However, the Tibetan tradition places some importance on taking into account the personality of the meditator when making such a choice. It is evident that it would be a mistake, for example, for someone with a tendency to anger to meditate on something that is likely to provoke this emotion because of its negative associations. Equally, if the meditator has strong sexual desires it would not be very useful to focus on an image that had some erotic significance for him or her. In neither case would the object of contemplation help the meditator achieve tranquillity.

This kind of problem can, of course, be avoided by focussing on a neutral object. Examples of this kind of object include a pebble, a small ball, a flame or a stick of wood. However, Tibetan teachers also sometimes recommend forms of meditation that directly counter the meditator’s negative personality traits. For example, someone who feels a lot of anger might be advised to make loving kindness or compassion central to their practice. This type of approach will be discussed in detail later in the book. In general, however, any wholesome object may be chosen.

Not surprisingly, the image of the Buddha is a popular choice amongst those in this tradition. Although in this chapter the main focus is on working with visual objects, shamatha can also be practised by concentrating on the breath or on the physical sensations in other parts of the body.

**DURATION OF THE MEDITATION SESSION**

Tibetan meditation teachers recommend that, at least initially, it is better to divide one's practice into a large number of shorter sessions than to try to meditate for one or two long periods. The meditator should aim for quality rather than quantity. If a session is too long, he or
she may get fatigued and bad habits may arise. A beginner may wish to start with a session of as little as fifteen minutes in duration and then gradually extend the time period.

BEGINNING THE PRACTICE

Having taken up a comfortable sitting position (see Pt.2 Chapter 2), the meditator is instructed to examine the meditation object closely. Then an attempt is made to form a mental image of the object without looking at it. Initially, this need not be made too precise. Instead, the meditator should be like the small child who looks at the murals of a temple and is satisfied with just a superficial perusal of them. In the same way, the meditator should be content with a rough perception of the meditation object.

It may be necessary to look at the object quite a number of times before even an approximate mental image appears. When this is finally accomplished, it is usually recommended that the meditator should concentrate on the image with the eyes half open and gently focussed on a point on the floor at a distance of two-thirds of a metre or so. Alternatively, the eyes can be focussed on an imaginary point four to eight fingers-widths beyond the nose. If the eyes are left open in this way care should be taken not to strain them. The image in one’s mind’s eye can be placed (mentally) in a number of different positions according to the meditator’s prevailing state of mind. If there is mental agitation the image should be placed lower down, perhaps at the level of the heart or navel. If, on the other hand, the meditator is feeling drowsy it may be better to place it higher up, for example at the level of the eyebrows. The image should be about the size of the top joint of the thumb or smaller.

ANTIDOTES TO PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN MEDITATION

(A) MENTAL SCATTERING AND MENTAL EXCITEMENT

When someone first starts to meditate there is a strong tendency for the mind to wander away from the image upon which it is trying to focus. The general term that is used to denote the straying of one’s attention toward an external object is 'mental scattering' (Tibetan: ‘phrọ ba). When the mind is distracted by something it finds attractive and which may act as an obstacle to calm abiding this is called 'mental excitement' (Tibetan: rgod pa). Thoughts and memories about possessions, status, sex and food, for example, may all lead to mental excitement. They can stir up emotions which make it difficult to continue to concentrate. Mental excitement is seen as a greater danger than other forms of mental scattering as it is more difficult to direct one’s attention away from an object to which one is attached.
Therefore, mental excitement is listed as one of the major potential faults in the cultivation of calm abiding while mental scattering is not. For this reason, there will be reference mainly to remedies for the former mental state. However, many of the techniques used to remedy mental excitement can equally be used to combat mental scattering in general.\footnote{7}

Mental excitement is divided into two categories: subtle and gross. Subtle mental excitement occurs when, as a result of the attraction of a desirable object or thought, one's attention wanders to some extent but without the meditational object being completely lost. If the meditational object vanishes from consciousness entirely, however, this is called gross mental excitement.\footnote{8}

\textbf{ANTIDOTES TO MENTAL EXCITEMENT}

(a) The most important means of countering this state of mind is continual vigilance and alertness. In this way, if a fault in one's practice arises it can be recognised and the appropriate remedy applied immediately before it gains too much influence. However, a balance needs to be struck. There is a danger that if too much energy is used examining the quality of one's meditation and looking for potential problems, awareness of the meditation object will deteriorate or be lost entirely. One should be careful to avoid this happening.\footnote{9}

(b) Sometimes when the mind has become distracted the only remedy necessary is to direct the attention back to the meditation object every time this happens. Then, with practice, the meditator's ability to concentrate will slowly grow in strength.

(c) It may be, however, that the meditator is trying to mentally grasp the object too tightly. In this case, he or she should slightly reduce the amount of effort used to concentrate on it. In this way, while in the short term the image may become less clear, there is not so much likelihood of the mind jumping away from the object entirely.\footnote{10}

(d) Another problem that can arise is that the visualised object may not remain still. When this happens it can be imagined as very heavy. This method often helps to stabilise the image.\footnote{11}

(e) When the mind is subject to gross mental excitement and the object is lost entirely, simple breath awareness is especially useful (see Pt.2 Chapt 3). This relaxes the mind and body and aids the meditator to regain concentration before returning to the principal focus of the meditation.\footnote{12} It can also be helpful, on occasions, to begin with this practice before moving on to the main part of the session.

(f) Another method is just to watch the thoughts passing through the mind without trying to stop them and then, when they subside, to gently return the attention back again to the object.

(g) Alternatively, a small black sphere can be visualised at the navel and sent into the ground beneath one. It should then be visualised as dissolving there. This helps to calm the mind.
(h) If the meditator is frequently subject to gross mental excitement, he or she should contemplate death and the impermanent nature of the world. This will help to counter the attraction of the external object concerned. It will seem less desirable when it is remembered that it can only be possessed for a relatively short period of time.\(^1\)

(i) It may also be useful to darken the meditation room in order to cut down the amount of external stimulation.

Of course, all these techniques should be used in moderation and as a means to return to the meditation object. Otherwise, they could become distractions in themselves.

Amongst other things, mental excitement can be caused by not restraining the senses enough in everyday life; by too much or too little food and even by an excess of enthusiasm for the practice. The appropriate remedies (i.e. restraining the senses, moderating food intake, etc.) should be applied to overcome these obstacles.

**B) MENTAL LAXITY**

While it is relatively easy to understand the nature of mental excitement and scattering, the experience of mental laxity (Tibetan: *bying ba*, Sanskrit: *laya*) is harder to recognise and to describe. Indeed, it appears that this subject was not always treated very clearly in earlier Buddhist literature.\(^1\) This may account for the somewhat varying descriptions of this mental state given by present day teachers. Mental laxity is not to be confused with lethargy as it only appears in the process of meditative stabilisation.\(^1\) It is said to occur when, as a result of internal distraction, the intensity of the mind’s clarity is significantly diminished. This results in a kind of mental dullness or darkness. Lack of clarity of mind is accompanied by a lack of clarity of the image being focussed upon and a looseness in the way it is held.

As with mental excitement, there are different degrees of mental laxity. Gross laxity occurs when there is neither clarity of mind nor clarity of the image of meditation. There may be some stability in that there is a continuity of mindfulness of the object; however the latter is not held very tightly. The analogy used to illustrate the quality of 'tightness' referred to here is that of a cup held tightly rather than loosely.

Subtle laxity occurs when there is stability and a bit more subjective and objective clarity but still a significant degree of looseness in the way the object is held. For the sake of simplicity, laxity is often spoken of as if there were only two degrees of this mental state. There are, however, many gradations in between.
ANTIDOTES TO MENTAL LAXITY

(a) As with mental excitement, it is important to cultivate continual vigilance so that any tendency of the mind to slip into mental laxity can be spotted immediately and the appropriate remedies applied. However, as before, a middle path should be taken.

(b) To counter subtle laxity one should tighten one's concentration on the meditation object. This will not only increase the clarity of the image but also enhance clarity of mind. Care should be taken, however, not to overdo this. If the level of concentration is increased too quickly, there is a danger of this leading to mental excitement. The tuning of the strings of a lute is often used as an analogy to illustrate this point. To obtain a pleasant sound the strings should be neither too tight nor too loose. In the same way one should not tighten or loosen one's concentration too much.

© Another remedy for subtle laxity is to try to make the image brighter. In addition, one can study the details of the image. For example, if the object that is being focussed on is of the Buddha, the meditator can concentrate his or her attention on first the arms then the legs, then the torso, etc. Having looked at every detail of the Buddha's body, it will be easier to imagine it as a whole. Alternatively, if one part of the image is fairly vivid, one can give special attention to this while keeping a general awareness of the rest. Gradually, clarity will spread to the remainder.

(d) Once a clear picture of the object of meditation has been achieved, one should avoid letting any change in its size or shape occur. It is quite easy to fall into bad habits and settle for a distorted version of the original. There should be continual vigilance in order to guard against this.

(e) If gross mental laxity is present it may be possible to remedy this fault by re-examining the object and remembering its various features from top to bottom. However, it may instead be necessary to shift one's attention away from the meditation object and to revivify the mind. A variety of methods can be used. For example, the meditator can imagine the whole body as being filled with light. Bright objects like the sun, stars and fire can also be visualised.

(f) Alternatively, the mind can be meditated upon as clear white light. In this method, if thoughts arise, one should place one's full attention on them. In particular, one should try to perceive their essential clarity.

(g) A more elaborate technique is to visualise the mind as a small sphere of radiant light at the heart. Then, with a vigorous exhalation from the diaphragm, the meditator sends this up through the body and out through the crown of the head. At the same time one utters the sound 'pé'. As it leaves the head, the meditator should imagine the light merging into space.

(h) Other methods of countering laxity involve focussing on wholesome thoughts. For example, one can meditate on loving kindness and compassion for others.

(i) If these approaches do not work it may be necessary to use more physical remedies. As was mentioned earlier, it is normally recommended that the eyes should be partially open during the practice of shamatha meditation. Some may find it difficult to maintain concentration on
the image if their eyes are not shut. However, keeping the eyes at least partially open is certainly one of the best aids to producing a vivid mental picture of the object and achieving greater clarity of mind.

(j) If, in spite of this, mental laxity continues, the meditator can increase the amount of light in the meditation room or look at a bright object of some kind. Alternatively, he or she can look around the room or, if outside, gaze into the distance towards the horizon. It may be helpful to reduce the ambient temperature or splash water on one's face. The meditation posture can also be changed, perhaps to a standing position. If all else fails, the meditator can go for a walk.

Although there are quite a large number of methods which can be used to counter gross mental laxity, one should avoid interrupting the meditation session for too long. The object should be returned to as soon as possible.

If laxity is a major problem it may be that certain elements of one's general lifestyle are at fault. These might include sleeping too long, not eating in moderation and not restraining the senses sufficiently. Many of the techniques that have been recommended for overcoming laxity are also suitable for counteracting the tendency towards sleepiness that can often arise while trying to practise shamatha. 20

THE NINE STAGES

According to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, there are nine stages through which the meditator passes on the way to the state of calm abiding. 21

1. Mental Placement

During this first stage, the meditator finds it very difficult to keep the mind on the object. Indeed, it may seem that distracting thoughts actually increase rather than diminish. This is not the case. What is occurring is an increase of awareness of what is happening in the mind.

2. Continual Placement

In this, as in the previous stage, there is much mental scattering. However, whereas in the first stage there was hardly any continuity of awareness at all, in the second there are some brief periods of successful concentration on the object.

3. Patch-like placement

The problem of mental scattering and excitement is recognised more quickly. As a result, as soon as the mind wanders, the meditator gains the ability to bring it immediately back to the object. It is called 'patch-like' placement because, when the mind wanders, the flow of concentration is 'patched up' by gently returning the attention to the object.

4. Close placement
At this stage, the mind does not lose the object during the period of meditation. Nevertheless, the meditator is still bothered by subtle mental excitement and by laxity to which the appropriate remedies should be applied.

5. Controlled Mind

At this stage laxity in particular is a problem. This should be countered with the methods discussed earlier.

6. Pacified Mind

In stage five it was necessary to invigorate the mind in order to counter mental laxity. However, as a result of doing this, there may be a danger of subtle excitement arising. Appropriate measures should be taken to overcome this problem.

7. Complete Pacification

At this stage, there is no longer so much danger that laxity or excitement will arise. If they do arise, however, it is possible to counter them relatively easily by further cultivating the strength of effort used in meditative practice.

8. Single-pointedness

When the stage of single-pointedness is attained, one can maintain concentration on the object of meditation through the whole session with very little effort. There is no danger of any form of mental laxity or mental excitement appearing. One’s attention is uninterrupted.

9. Placement in equipoise

Previously, effort was required to hold a clear image of the object. This stage, however, is characterised by one’s practice becoming completely effortless.

After the ninth stage of development has been achieved, there are various states of mental and physical suppleness and bliss which are passed through before the actual state of shamatha or calm abiding is reached. Physical suppleness is a pleasant sensation associated with subtle energy in the body. Mental suppleness is a mental event that renders body and mind fit for action and serviceable. In these states, energy pervades the body which feels as light as cotton. The mind is filled with delight.

Calm abiding is finally attained when the meditator achieves complete stability with respect to the object conjoined with the experience of a steady, 'special' form of suppleness. According to tradition, besides great strength and clarity of mind, certain supernormal powers are associated with the attainment of this state.
CONCLUSION

The Tibetan Buddhist description of the cultivation of shamatha is one of the most detailed accounts of the early stages of meditation to be found in any tradition. It is a system which clearly has a firm empirical foundation and can be readily understood even by those who have not practised before. The precision which is applied to identifying problems in meditation and to providing solutions to them is impressive. While this system may not provide an answer to every difficulty that arises, the active approach to problem-solving in meditation that it demonstrates can serve as an important aid to skilful practice.

REFERENCES

1. See, for example, Asanga’s *The Shrāvakabhūmi*. See Part One, Chapter Three, Section Two for discussion on the Yogāchārins.


8. See, for example, Lamrimpa, Šamatha Meditation, p.91.

9. See ibid., p.74.

10. See ibid., p.74.

11. See, for example, His Holiness the Dalai Lama: *The Dalai Lama: Policy of Kindness*, Ithaca New York, Snow lion, 1993, Chapter 8 – Meditation

12. See, for example, Lamrimpa, Šamatha Meditation, p.99 and pp.106-7.
Chapter Eight

MEDITATION WITH THE AID OF THE OTHER SENSES

One-pointed concentration need not be confined to visual objects and the breath. It is also possible to focus the attention on sound and odour, and even on taste.

MEDITATION ON SOUND

(A) MEDITATION ON EXTERNAL SOUNDS
One of the problems with this form of meditation is locating sounds in the environment that are fairly constant. Bird song, traffic noise, the wind, etc., come and go and are not always accessible. Possible external sounds to focus on which are more constant include the ticking of a clock, the ebb and flow of the sea, the rush of a river, the roar of a waterfall or the splashing of a fountain.

When meditating on such sounds follow a similar approach to that used in other forms of meditation. Focus on the sound and when, as is inevitable, the mind strays, gently return it again to the object of meditation.

(B) THE SCIENCE OF MANTRA

Mantras are sacred words and syllables used as objects of concentration. Both the Hindu and the Buddhist traditions have evolved highly sophisticated and complex methods of mantra meditation which we will look at only briefly in this chapter. Later, in the chapters on Tantra, we will examine the subject in greater depth.

Mantras are used for a large number of different purposes. Besides their role in Hindu and Buddhist soteriology, it is claimed that, amongst other things, they can cure illness and control natural forces through magic.

They also vary greatly in how they produce their intended results. The effectiveness of some mantras depends largely on the surface meaning of the words they contain. Examples of this type are *Om Namah Shivāya* (Om Homage to Shiva), dedicated to the god Shiva and *Om Namah Bhagavate Vāsudevāya* (Om, homage to Lord Vāsudeva). The repetition of mantras of this sort help the practitioner to focus the mind on the deity to which he or she is devoted and in this way internalize some of its qualities.

Other mantras, while often having hidden associations or meanings, depend for their efficacy largely on the sounds produced when they are chanted. *Bīja* (seed) mantras fall into this latter category. The most famous of these, and indeed of all mantras, is *om*, which is said to be the root mantra out of which all others arise. Om features prominently in the meditative practices of both Hindus and Buddhists. Other examples of bija mantras include *hrīm, srrīm, krīm, hām*, *hrām* and *hūm*

One approach to mantra practice which is often taught is to progressively reduce the volume of sound made while chanting. So, for example, if *om* is the chosen mantra, the first stage would be to chant it out loud. The next stage, when greater concentration is achieved, would be to whisper it. Finally, when greater concentration still is attained om would be repeated only mentally.

At each of these stages, the practitioner will need to judge the optimum rate of repetition. It is often helpful, as concentration increases, to gradually reduce the number of repetitions. This makes the mind more one-pointed and therefore calmer. It is not useful, as some have
suggested, to try to repeat a mantra as many times as possible within a certain time period. It is not quantity but the quality of concentration which is important.

(C) NĀDA YOGA

According to the yoga tradition, besides the categories of sound already referred to, there are also internal sounds (nādas) which appear spontaneously when the attention is turned inwards. By listening to these, the practitioner is drawn inwards and experiences extremely subtle levels of consciousness.

Swami Satyananda recommended that, before attempting to listen to the internal sounds, the meditator should practise the bee breath (see section on prānāyāma). This is performed for up to five minutes. Having completed this preparatory stage, the practitioner becomes completely silent, closes the ears and listens for any inner sounds that may appear. Traditionally, the ears are closed by using the thumbs. However, it is less tiring on the arms to close them with ear plugs or ear defenders. Ear defenders should not be used when performing the bee breath as this may upset the intra-cranial vibrations made by the humming sound.

If an internal sound appears, the meditator gently turns his or her attention to this sound and concentrates on it. According to the Hatha Yoga Pradīpikā (HYP), the first sounds that one will hear are 'surging, thundering, like the beating of kettle drums'. The next sounds that are heard are like those produced by a conch or by bells. Then, sounds that are similar to those produced by tinklets or flutes arise.

The HYP suggests that the way to develop this practice is to actively listen out for more subtle sounds in the background of the predominant sound occupying one’s attention. The mind should then be focused on these. After having achieved this, the mind can be redirected to the grosser sounds again and then back to the subtler sounds and so on.

Both the HYP and the Gheranda Samhitā refer to the anāhata nāda ('unstruck sound') arising from the heart centre. According to the Gheranda Samhitā, this is the last internal sound to arise. It is extremely subtle and some have referred to it as the ‘sound’ of silence. The Gheranda Samhitā says that in the resonance of this nāda there is light in which the mind should be immersed. By practising in this way, the aspirant achieves success in meditation.

The ancient texts do not always agree about the exact sequence in which the internal sounds arise. Also, their descriptions of nāda yoga are often somewhat limited. However, there is enough information to provide the reader a starting point from which to explore this fascinating form of meditation.
MEDITATION USING THE SENSES OF TOUCH, SMELL AND TASTE

Concentration on the breath, which has already been discussed, is the most popular form of meditation using the sense of touch. There are, however, relatively few teachings on meditation with the aid of the senses of smell and taste.

THE SENSE OF SMELL

Meditation with the sense of smell is performed best on natural scents like those of flowers. To practise this method find a quiet spot out of doors, preferably at night, where there are strong natural scents. Use simple breath meditation as already described but, instead of concentrating purely on the tactile sensation of the breath, use your sense of smell to focus on the scent you have chosen. As before, if the mind becomes distracted, after noting the distraction the attention should be gently turned back to the object of meditation.

This form of practice can have a very powerful effect in a short space of time and is a good preparation for a peaceful night's sleep.

TASTE

To a limited extent one can utilize the sense of taste in meditation by focusing on the taste of the food one eats. This method is, of course, very much time-limited unless one has a large appetite!

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The term mantra is a notoriously difficult one to define, however this is a reasonable working definition. See the discussion in Harvey P. Alpert, *Understanding Mantras*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1989, p.3f


3. See Chapter Four, v.83f.

4. See Chapter Four, v.86-87
Chapter Ten

THE FACULTY OF MINDFULNESS IN MULTIFOCAL MEDITATION

When examining the jhāna states earlier in this book, we saw how sati, or mindfulness, is featured in the practice of one-pointed meditation. However, this faculty of mind can also be used in multifocal or field focussed meditation involving a broader range of experience. In other words, mindfulness can be used to help meditation where there is more than one object of attention. For example, when meditating on walking, practitioners will need to focus on a large range of sensory impressions in their bodies rather than upon just one focal point.

This chapter will first introduce some practical exercises and then examine the Satipatthāna Sutta. This is the major textual source in early Buddhism, which describes the faculty of mindfulness. Later we will look at the practice of mindfulness in the present day. Although an examination of mindfulness in multifocal meditation will be centre stage, there will also be further references to how mindfulness supports one-pointed meditation.

EXERCISE ONE

This preliminary exercise is designed to provide a heightened awareness of everyday experience.

Sit in a comfortable position, either on the floor or on a chair, with the spine relaxed and erect. Simply direct your attention to whatever is the most prominent part of your experience. This could be the barking of a dog outside, an itch in your arm, a pain in your leg, a thought about something you urgently need to do later in the day, or a feeling of anxiety, happiness or tiredness in your brain. On occasions, you may also become aware of subtle feelings of great beauty and uplift. These are feelings/mental states that exist beyond the senses and the ordinary mind.

Gently focus your attention on whatever arises until something else arises in its place. When thoughts come into awareness, just focus on the individual thought. However, do not start actively thinking about the subject with which the thought is concerned. If this first thought does cause the arising of other thoughts, just focus in a detached manner on the thoughts that come up. In this way, you are not putting energy into creating new thoughts but are instead only observing thoughts that arise automatically.
Watch all of these phenomena in an impartial manner, whether they appear pleasant, unpleasant or merely neutral. Do this as though they were happening to another person.

**EXERCISE TWO: MINDFULNESS DURING EVERYDAY ACTIVITY**

In this exercise, mindfulness is employed while performing a simple physical task like cooking a meal. Pay careful attention to all the different elements and details of the task. These might include how you move around the kitchen; the fine motor movements you make when you chop the vegetables; the movement of your hands when you wash the pans; thoughts about how to do elements of the task, etc. View all of this with close but detached interest. It is likely that thoughts unconnected with the task, or unconnected physical or mental feelings may arise. Try to recognise these as soon as they appear, and then gently turn your attention back to the task at hand.

The object of this exercise is to use mindfulness to spot distractions and turn the mind back to the primary focus of attention. This process will be discussed in greater depth later in the chapter.

**EXAMINING WHAT WAS EXPERIENCED IN THESE EXERCISES**

Now examine what you experienced during the different exercises. The initial results of Exercise One will differ greatly from person to person. However, with practice most people find that a greater sense of calm arises. This happens because the activity of the mind is greatly reduced.

Mental activity ranges from that which is conscious and under the control of the will to that which is unconscious and habitual. For example, towards one end of the spectrum there is active everyday problem solving, like thinking about what one should have for dinner. At a less conscious level there is the semi-conscious thinking that often takes place during the performance of other activities and which has little or no relevance to the task at hand. An example of this might be thinking going on in the background of one’s mind about a decision one has to make later in the day.

Further still towards the other end of the spectrum of mental activity are habitual thoughts that spring into the mind unbidden. They often arise as a result of our fears and desires and are commonly provoked by associations with previous events. For example, it is a common occurrence to feel self-conscious and embarrassed in certain social situations. Often people do not investigate in any depth why such feelings arise. However, when this is examined, perhaps in the context of psychotherapy, it is frequently found that, prior to the arising of these feelings, there have been thoughts of inadequacy. These have usually arisen without the client’s awareness of them. They are often found to have been provoked by associations with past
situations in which the client felt that he or she had performed badly. Thoughts of this kind may not even be fully formed but more in the nature of proto-thoughts.

In Exercise One the aim was solely to observe and not to put energy into thinking or any other form of activity. It is almost certain, however, that while you were practising, thoughts of one kind or another did arise. Moreover, it is likely that the majority of the thoughts to arise were from the less conscious end of the spectrum. You may also have noticed, however, that as soon as you became aware of your thoughts they stopped, at least for a time. This happens not just because you have remembered not to put energy into thinking but also because, by focussing on the thoughts that have already arisen, your attention is less able to stray to new thoughts. With less mental activity the mind will automatically tend to feel calmer, although it may take quite a bit more practice before this becomes evident.

Besides the reduction in the amount of mental activity, there may be another reason for the greater sense of tranquillity that results from this form of meditation. This is that this practice may lead to a clearer sense of our real nature.

Very often we are overwhelmed by our experiences and become almost identified with them. For instance, perhaps our boss criticises us and we are worried that we may even be dismissed. As a result, we may be engulfed by emotions such as anger, stress or anxiety. These emotions swirl around in our brains and bodies to such an extent that this is all we are aware of and our sense of ourselves as the observer gets overwhelmed. If, on the other hand, we make a conscious effort to become fully aware of every aspect of these emotions, we also become aware that there is an observer who is aware and who is separate. In other words we become aware that the observer is separate from the observed emotions. This in turn can lead to detachment. By becoming more detached we become less affected by the situation. We also have a greater opportunity to explore the nature of our true identity. All this, of course, is often more easily said than done. However, even a small step in this direction can have positive results.

In addition, it may be that you were able to direct your attention to subtle feelings of beauty and uplift beyond the senses and the ordinary mind. As we shall see later, these are referred to in the Satipatthāna Sutta but may be more difficult to experience.

In the present day, the type of meditative approach practised in Exercise One would be seen by many as an example of mindfulness practice. Later we will discuss to what extent it reflects mindfulness as practised in early Buddhism.

Exercise Two is different from Exercise One because it requires the conscious input of effort into activity. This will remove to some extent the first cause of the level of greater calm attained in Exercise One, which was achieved by the reduction of mental and physical activity. Nevertheless, it is probable that you will have experienced less stress than normally. This is because, with the use of mindfulness, your mind is likely to have been more focussed on the task at hand and less dragged about by numerous extraneous foci of attention. Once more it needs to be emphasised that it may take some practice before a major difference becomes evident.
Before discussing what mindfulness is or is not, it is helpful to look at the earliest records we have of the Buddha’s teachings. As mentioned in Part One, these were originally in Sanskrit and in Pali. However, as the Pali tradition is the more readily accessible, we will mainly look at this.

The Satipatthāna Sutta

The teachings of the Satipatthāna Sutta (‘The Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness’) are found in the Majjhima Nikāya in the Suttapitaka and repeated with a few additional passages in the Dīgha Nikāya. They are regarded by many as the major source of instruction featuring the use of mindfulness in multifocal meditation.

The beginning of the sutta refers to four foundations of mindfulness which lead to the realisation of Nibbāna. The four foundations are contemplation of: ‘the body in the body’, ‘feelings in the feelings’, ‘mind in the mind’ and ‘mental objects in the mental objects’, while being, ardent, fully aware (sampajañño) and mindful.

1) Contemplation of the body in the body:

The Satipatthāna Sutta examines six main areas concerning contemplation of the body: (i) breathing; (ii) the postures and movements of the body; (iii) continuous awareness in activity; (iv) parts of the body; (v) the elements that form the body; (vi) the Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations.

(i) Breathing: The first area that is examined is how the practitioner should contemplate the breath:

Here a monk, having gone to the forest, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty place, sits down cross-legged, holding his body erect, having established mindfulness before him. Mindfully he breathes in, mindfully he breathes out. Breathing in a long breath, he knows [pajānāti] that he breathes in a long breath, and breathing out a long breath, he knows that he breathes out a long breath. Breathing in a short breath, he knows that he breathes in a short breath, and breathing out a short breath, he knows that he breathes out a short breath.²

In addition, a monk should breathe in and out experiencing the ‘whole body’ and should breathe in and out ‘tranquillizing the bodily formation.’
There has been some difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of experiencing the ‘whole body’. According to the Theravādin view, this phrase signifies the whole body of air involved in a complete in-breath or out-breath. Thus, the practitioner becomes aware of the different phases of the breath: that is of the beginning, the middle, and the end of a complete breath.

Others such as the Sarvāstivādins, however, say that when mindfulness of breathing is accomplished, the breath is observed as passing through all the pores of the body - not just the nose. Therefore, they interpret the ‘whole body’ as meaning the entire physical body that has pores everywhere.3

In the same way there are several interpretations of the meaning of ‘tranquilizing the bodily formation.’ Some feel that this signifies the calming of the breathing process alone. Others feel that what is referred to is the calming of the whole body. Some arguing from this latter perspective suggest that the body does not become calmer because the practitioner sees this as his or her main aim. Instead, this is only a by-product of the process of observation.4

Kuan, quoting a number of ancient sources, suggests that ‘tranquilizing the bodily formation’ means gradually stilling the breath up to and including the breath actually stopping altogether. When the breath stops completely, the meditator can continue to focus by bringing to mind the memory of the flow of the breath.5

At the end of this passage, there is a summary of the essential elements of the method of contemplation of the body. This is repeated throughout the sutta except that in the sections describing contemplation of the feelings, of the mind, and of mental objects, references to these are substituted for reference to the body. This will be referred to from now on as ‘the summary’. It is as follows:

He dwells contemplating the body in the body internally or externally or both internally and externally. He dwells contemplating arising phenomena in the body, or contemplating vanishing phenomena in the body, or both arising and vanishing phenomena in the body. Or the mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. He dwells independent, clinging to nothing in the world. Thus, indeed, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body.6

The reference in this passage to the contemplation of the body ‘internally, or externally, or both internally and externally,’ has again been interpreted in different ways. Some believe that ‘externally’ refers to the observation of the surface of the body and ‘internally’ to the internal bodily sensations. The older commentaries, however, put forward the view that ‘internally’ refers to the observation of the practitioner’s own body and ‘externally’ refers to the observation of someone else’s.7

In spite of the different interpretations placed on these passages, the general message is clear. This is simply that the (skilful) monk contemplates the body in a concentrated manner. Moreover, he contemplates how bodily phenomena either arise or vanish or both arise and vanish from consciousness. This is the basis of much modern day vipassanā practice.
It needs to be added that the phrase contemplating 'the body in the body' is not a literal translation of the Pali original. A literal translation would be: 'He dwells as a body-contemplator (kāyānupassi) in relation to the body.' However, as this sounds awkward in English, most translators prefer 'the body in the body,' or something similar. The Pali is phrased in the same way when the summary follows the other sections except that it refers to the subject of contemplation for that section. For example, there is reference to a 'feeling-contemplator'.

(ii) The Four Postures:

Again, a monk, when walking, knows [pajānāti] that he is walking, when standing, knows that he is standing, when sitting, knows that he is sitting, when lying down, knows that he is lying down. In whatever way his body is disposed, he knows that is how it is.

(iii) Continuous Awareness in Activity.

The passage describing this area of contemplation of the body states that a (skilful) monk has full awareness (sampajañña) of: going forward and returning; looking ahead and looking away; flexing and extending his limbs; wearing his robes and carrying his outer robes and bowl; eating, drinking, defecating, urinating, walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking, speaking and in keeping silence.

(iv) The Parts of the Body:

This passage suggests that the parts of the body be examined in great detail. Thus, the practitioner should identify the head-hairs, the body-hairs, nails, heart, liver, etc., that make up the body and in this way become aware of its impure nature.

(v) The Elements:

The next passage encourages monks to see how the body is made up of the different elements: that is of earth, water, fire and air.

(vi) The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations:

In the first of these monks should contemplate:

...a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter....

One should then realise that one's own body is of the same nature and is not exempt from the same fate. There are eight other contemplations which are equally graphic in character.

It can be argued that this latter form of contemplation of the body differs from the previous ones, as it does not include direct observation of the practitioner's own body. In this context, it is interesting to note that, in the Sarvāstivāda version of the Satipatthāna Sutta (contained in one of the Sanskrit Āgamas), there is a description of the jhānas. It seems quite possible, therefore, that originally the Pāli Satipatthāna Sutta (or one of its antecedents) described a
number of meditative approaches. These were not confined to the practice of mindfulness and contemplation in multifocal meditation and everyday activity.

Each of the exercises in contemplation of the body mentioned above is followed by the summary of the essential elements of contemplation.

(2) Contemplation of Feelings in Feelings

The section on the contemplation of feelings is considerably shorter than that on the body. It follows a verbal format similar to that of the passages about breathing and the postures. A (skilful) monk when experiencing pleasant or unpleasant feelings, or feelings that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant knows (pajānāti) he is experiencing those feelings. The categories of feelings just referred to are subdivided into those that are worldly and those that are unworldly. Worldly feelings are those that arise in connection with the experiences of everyday life. Unworldly feelings are those caused by the pursuit of meditation. The monk knows these in their different forms – pleasant, unpleasant and neither pleasant nor unpleasant. The summary follows.

(3) Contemplation of the Mind in the Mind

This section states that a (skilful) monk knows (pajānāti) when his mind is affected or unaffected by lust, hate, or delusion. He also knows when he experiences a variety of other states of mind. These are the contracted, the distracted, the exalted, the unexalted, the surpassed, the unsurpassed, the concentrated, the unconcentrated, the liberated, and the unliberated mind.

Some of these terms are self-explanatory; others can be understood as explained in the old commentaries. Thus, according to these, 'contracted mind' is a state of lethargy. According to an ancient commentary, 'exalted mind' and 'unsurpassed mind' refer to the states of mind attained at the level of the jhānas and the formless realisations. The 'unexalted mind' and 'surpassed mind' refer to the state of mind at the level of sense-sphere (i.e. ordinary) consciousness. ‘Liberated mind’ may mean a mind freed through the jhānas or other approaches.

The summary follows.

Awareness of the ‘exalted’ and ‘unsurpassed’ minds is an area of experience rarely mentioned by modern teachers of mindfulness and vipassanā.

(4) Contemplation of Mental Objects in Mental Objects

The Satipatthāna Sutta includes in this category the Five Hindrances; the Five Aggregates; the Six Sense-Bases; the Seven Enlightenment Factors and the Four Noble Truths. The sections
describing the mental objects will be paraphrased below in the same way as previously. The wording of the descriptions of what a (skilful) monk knows is mostly a direct translation of that used in the full text but with much of the repetition omitted.

The Five Hindrances are sensual desire; ill will; sloth and torpor; agitation and worry; doubt. A (skilful) monk knows (pajānāti) if any of these are present or not present in his mind. A monk will also know about the arising of hindrances that have previously not arisen into awareness, about the getting rid of hindrances and about how there comes to be no arising of those hindrances that have been abandoned.

Similarly, a monk knows the five aggregates. These are material form, feeling, perception, mental formations and sensory consciousness. The aggregates make up the psycho-physical nature of an individual. He knows if they rise up into his awareness and if they disappear from his awareness.

The six internal and external sense bases are the six sense faculties and their respective objects. (In this tradition the mind and its objects of awareness are regarded as the sixth internal and external bases). A monk knows these and the fetters that arise dependent on them. He also knows how fetters that have not risen before arise, how the abandoning of these fetters comes about and how in the future the non-arising of the fetters that have been got rid of comes about.

‘Fetters’ in Buddhist terminology are those states of mind and attitudes that hinder our progress toward enlightenment. For example, attachment to sensual pleasures is a fetter. This arises because we perceive attractive objects through the senses.

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment are mindfulness; investigation of reality; energy; ecstatic joy; tranquillity; concentration; and equanimity. A monk knows whether or not an enlightenment factor is present within him, how a factor that has not arisen before comes to arise and how perfection in its development comes about. Each of these factors is an important element in the development of skill in meditation.

The Four Noble Truths are the Truth of Suffering; the Truth of the Origin of Suffering; the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering; and the Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering (see appendix to Chapter Two in Part One).

A monk knows these truths as they really are.

The summary follows each category of mental object.

SOME OTHER REFERENCES TO MINDFULNESS IN THE SUTTAPITAKA

Amongst other references to mindfulness are the following.

Dhammadinnā a revered disciple of the Buddha in his life time is quoted as saying:
“Unification of mind (cittass’ekaggatā), friend Visākha, is concentration (samādhī)\(^{17}\); the four foundations of mindfulness are the basis of concentration;\(^{18}\)

There are frequent references to the establishing of mindfulness before the practice of the jhānas. For example, in the Kandaraka Sutta, there is a detailed account of how someone becomes an ascetic monk. The following is a brief summary. After hearing the dhamma from an enlightened person, the aspirant leaves home and follows a strict ethical code, develops full awareness of his actions and, possessing mindfulness, he lives a secluded life. When meditating he sits down ‘setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him.’ He abandons the hindrances and then starts to cultivate the jhānas.

Mindfulness is also compared to the gatekeeper of a fortress:

> Just as the gatekeeper in the king’s frontier fortress is ... one who keeps out strangers and admits acquaintances, for the protection of its inhabitants and for warding off outsiders, so too a noble disciple is mindful, possessing supreme mindfulness and prudence (nepakka), one who remembers and recollects what was done and said long ago. With mindfulness as his gatekeeper, the noble disciple abandons the unwholesome and develops the wholesome, abandons what is blameworthy, and develops what is blameless ....\(^{19}\)

INTERPRETING THE MEANING OF SATI IN THE SUTTAPITAKA

In the Suttapitaka, the ordinary, non-meditative meaning of sati is remembrance, the memory of past events.\(^{20}\) However, sati clearly has somewhat different connotations when used in a meditative context. Working from the original texts of the Suttapitaka we see that Dhammadinnā, the Buddha’s close disciple, said that the four foundations of mindfulness are the basis of concentration. This is confirmed by passages in the Satipatthāna Sutta. For example, it states that a monk: ‘abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware and mindful….\(^{21}\) So we can deduce that mindfulness is a support for contemplation and concentration. This is further illustrated by the Kandaraka Sutta referred to above (and many other suttas) in which the development of mindfulness is a prelude to the development of the jhānas.

As to the type of support, we can get clues from the ordinary meaning of sati which is remembrance. So we can deduce that sati is both a support for contemplation and this support may have something to do with remembrance.

Further evidence comes from the commentarial tradition. As we saw in the chapter on the jhānas, Buddhaghosa regarded mindfulness as characteristic of remembering, of not forgetting and of ‘guarding’. In a commentary on the Satipatthāna Sutta, Buddhaghosa differentiates mindfulness from concentration as follows: ‘[the purpose of] mindfulness, [is] to attend to the object;[the purpose of] concentration, [is] to be non-distracted….\(^{22}\) Similarly, in the Mahāyāna tradition, one definition of mindfulness (Tibetan: dran-pa) is that it is the mental factor that keeps the mental hold (’dzin-cha) on an object. It is seen like a “mental glue”. It prevents the attention from losing its object and holds the attention on its object with ‘endurance’.\(^{23}\)
In addition, mindfulness, as in the analogy of the gatekeeper, serves to protect the mind from unwholesome and distracting thoughts and perceptions. (We will look at this function of mindfulness in greater detail later).

These sources seem to support the following conclusion about what the term mindfulness meant in early Buddhism in a meditative context. This is that sati/mindfulness was seen as the mental faculty which recognises distractions that arise during meditation and redirects attention back towards a meditation object or experiential field. In this way, close to its non-meditative meaning (i.e. remembrance), this mental faculty recalls the meditation object or experiential field to the mind. In addition, mindfulness, as we can see from the gatekeeper analogy, helps to protect the practitioner from what is ‘unwholesome’ in his or her experience.

In the process of mindfulness, greater awareness of distractions from the focus of the task not only allows the practitioner to regain concentration but also creates a sense of detachment from the sources of these distractions. The latter may include the practitioner’s thoughts and emotions.

THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN THE SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA

The quotations from and references to the Satipatthāna Sutta included earlier are fairly representative. However, the reader may have noticed that, although this sutta is named after the faculty of mindfulness, references to other key terms feature more often. An example of this is the frequent reference to ‘contemplation’, or, more literally, to the monk as someone who contemplates (anupassi). Another phrase that is frequently used is that ‘A monk knows (pajānāti)….’… The fact that these terms are mentioned considerably more often than sati/mindfulness seems to fit with the view that mindfulness is a means to an end rather than the end in itself.

SAMPAPAJAÑÑA

There is another term, which is often associated with sati. This is sampajañña. For example, as we have seen, at the beginning of the Satipatthāna Sutta it is stated that a monk abides contemplating the body in the body, ardent, sampajañño (an adjective derived from the noun sampajañña) and mindful. Sampajañña has been variously translated as full awareness, clear comprehension, clear knowledge, clear consciousness, clear understanding, full alertness, etc. However, not only have there been a number of translations of this term but also there have been different ideas about its meaning.

Buddhaghosa believed that there were four types of sampajañña. These are clear comprehension of purpose, of suitability, of resort, and of non-delusion. For example, clear comprehension of suitability would be understanding whether a certain action would lead to positive result. However, as Kuan points out, there is little canonical justification for Buddhaghosa’s view.
A number of other writers believe that mindfulness and sampajañña have very similar functions. Yet others, including Dreyfus, seem favourably disposed to the Tibetan Buddhist view that this faculty has the function of the recognition of distractions. After these have been recognised by sampajañña, the mind is returned to the meditation subject with the aid of mindfulness.

Of course, it is also possible that the meaning of sampajañña is different in different parts of the Suttapitaka. For example, sometimes it may have a meaning distinct from sati and at others the difference may be blurred.

It is difficult to come to any definite conclusion about this issue. So for the purposes of this book, which is primarily aimed at practice, I am going to assume that implicit in the general process of mindfulness/sati is the recognition of distractions. It is necessary to recognise that the mind has been distracted before it can be recalled to the meditation subject. For practical purposes it is not so important whether the former process has a different name to the latter.

**HOW MINDFULNESS CAN PROTECT AGAINST UNWHOLESOME STATES OF MIND**

In *Mindfulness in Early Buddhism*, Kuan discusses in detail how mindfulness, as described in the Suttapitaka, can protect against unwholesome states of mind. In the *Madhupindika Sutta*, Mahā Kaccāna, a disciple of the Buddha, succinctly explains how thoughts can proliferate from the basis of a simple perception:

Friends, depending on the eye and visible forms, eye-consciousness arises. The combination of the three is contact. With contact as condition feeling [arises]. What one feels one apperceives. What one apperceives one thinks about. What one thinks about one conceptually proliferates. With what one conceptually proliferates as the source, apperception and naming [associated with] conceptual proliferation assail a person with regard to past, future and present visible forms cognized by the eye.

The same is said of the other senses and of the mind.

In another passage, the Buddha says that when an uninstructed man comes into contact with a painful feeling, there can be two feelings. There can be a bodily one and a mental one, which he compares to two stabs by a dart. The second stab is the subjective unskilful reaction to the original feeling.

The problem is that we make unpleasant feelings and perceptions worse by the reaction of our minds to them. So what is the solution? It is the practice of mindfulness. In Sutta 95 of the *Salāyatana Samyutta*, Buddha exhorts Mālunkyaputta as follows:

Regarding things seen, heard, thought of and cognized by you: in the seen there will merely be the seen, in the heard there will be merely the heard; in
what is thought of there will be merely what is thought of; in the cognized there will be merely the cognized.\textsuperscript{32}

In other words, the practitioner, with the aid of mindful awareness, focusses on the bare perception or conception alone and does not allow the mind to go down the path described by Mahā Kaccāna in the Madhupindika Sutta.

Therefore:

On seeing a visible form, being mindful one is not attached to visible forms. One feels it with a detached mind and does not cling to it. One lives mindfully in such a way that when one sees a visible form and even experiences a feeling, [suffering] is exhausted, not accumulated.\textsuperscript{33}

The same is said of the other five senses.

One is not attached to or upset by agreeable or disagreeable forms or by the other five sense objects.\textsuperscript{34}

In the Indriyabhāvanā Sutta,\textsuperscript{35} the Buddha contrasts this approach with that of another teacher - Pārāsariya. According to one of his disciples, Pārāsariya believed that, in order to progress, one needed to cut off the senses and go into a trance. The Buddha criticises this approach, asking how this differs from being deaf or blind. Instead, the Buddha suggests that one can perceive the world and act in it, and still be detached and equanimous.

MINDFULNESS USED IN COMBINATION WITH CONCEPTIONS

Mindfulness is sometimes used in combination with conceptions. In the Samyutta Nikāya there is a reference to how one can use mindfulness and the contemplation of impermanence to reduce desire and aversion.\textsuperscript{36} For example, through mindfulness one can become aware one has a pleasant feeling and then can ask oneself whether it is dependent or independent. It can be seen to be dependent if it arises in the body. But the body is impermanent and therefore the pleasant feeling is impermanent. By contemplating its impermanence, the underlying tendency towards desire for the pleasant feeling will be abandoned. The same process can be applied to painful feelings and the aversion to them.

MEDITATION IN ACTIVITY

One of the most significant aspects of the Satipatthāna Sutta is that it shows how it is possible to contemplate/meditate, with the aid of mindfulness, while in activity. It demonstrates how one can meditate upon the varied experiences of the body, feelings and mind states, etc. These are all phenomena that arise naturally and it is not necessary to use a specially created object in order to meditate. Moreover, it is not necessary to sit in a formal meditation session.
MINDFULNESS IN WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY

The classical view of mindfulness is to some degree at odds with mindfulness as understood by Western Psychology. For example, Bishop states that ‘Broadly conceptualized, mindfulness has been described as a kind of nonelaborative, non-judgmental, present-centered awareness in which each thought, feeling, or sensation that arises in the attentional field is acknowledged and accepted as it is’. However, as we have seen, mindfulness in the Suttapitaka involves an active recalling of a meditation object/field of experience to mind. Therefore, early Buddhist mindfulness is not always present-centred because, when there is a distraction, it involves bringing the mind back to what it was focussing on in the past. On the other hand, the practitioner does try to focus in the present on the meditation object.

In addition, mindfulness is not non-judgemental if one defines the term non-judgemental as denoting an approach that is open and not incorporating a judgment one way or the other. When the mind is distracted, mindfulness recognises this and turns the attention back to the meditation subject. A judgement is made that this is a correct course of action. Even where there is no specific reference in a particular passage to concentration on a meditation subject, mindfulness has a goal and is making judgements. The goal is to protect the mind from unwholesome states and the proliferation of thoughts and perceptions which are judged to be unskilful.

Therefore, while Exercise One above is close to the approach of mindfulness within Western Psychology, Exercise Two is closer to early Buddhist practice. However, it is also possible to argue that one still needs to use mindfulness in Exercise One. The actual practice of directing one’s attention to the most prominent part of one’s experience and then directing one’s attention to what arises in its place may not be mindfulness in the early Buddhist sense. On the other hand, mindfulness is needed to prevent one being distracted from this practice. Therefore, as in early Buddhism, mindfulness is the means to the goal of practice not the goal itself. Although this may all seem academic, understanding what mindfulness is, and strengthening it is essential to developing meditative practice. The quicker the mind can be recalled to the meditation object the more effective the meditation will be.

We will be looking at mindfulness in Western Psychology in more depth later in the chapter.

POSSIBLE ORIGINS OF THE PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS

The origins of teachings about the use of mindfulness to support meditation upon everyday activity may predate the Buddha. There are references in Jainism, a religion that existed before the life of the Buddha, to the samii or forms of ‘vigilance’ or ‘carefulness’. These concern care being taken in the everyday activities of walking, speaking, accepting alms, picking things up and putting them down and answering the calls of nature. Interestingly, the first two of these activities and the last one are also featured in the section on Continuous Awareness in Activity in the Satipatthāna Sutta.

However, in Jainism, the intention behind the practice is somewhat different. Jains increase awareness of their physical actions in order to prevent an increase in negative karma on the
physical plane, especially karma concerned with the harming of other life forms. Jains regard karma as a subtle physical substance. In Buddhism, on the other hand, much attention is paid to mental states and there is an emphasis on the intention behind action.

Probably some centuries lapsed between the earliest Jain teachings and those of the Buddha. Moreover, many of the teachings of the Indian spiritual tradition of this period have been lost. Therefore, it may be that in the intervening centuries a meditative tradition incorporating the use of mindfulness in activity developed. This may have been a tradition that focussed more on mental states and intention, similar to that taught by the Buddha. On the other hand, it may be that the Buddha developed his approach to mindfulness completely independent of any other tradition. A third possibility is that that the Buddha adapted the approach taught in the Jain tradition. At present, there is no way of determining which view is correct.

SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES

Many scholars and practitioners continue to believe that the term mindfulness should only be used to describe multifocal meditation on a wide field of experience. They differentiate the practice of mindfulness from that of one-pointed meditation. However, as we have seen, according to the Suttapitaka, this faculty is also used in the practice of the jhānas.

In this context, another issue that needs to be addressed is that of the meaning of the term vipassanā. This is a term that, in the Theravādin tradition, is frequently linked to the practice of mindfulness. Although vipassanā meditation is seen in the present day as one of the central practices of Buddhism, the word vipassanā appears relatively sparsely in the Suttapitaka. There are, for example, about a dozen pages in the whole of The Middle Length Discourses where there is even a bare mention of this term. Where it is mentioned, there is little explanation as to its meaning. In the passages where it is referred to, it and samatha (serenity) are very frequently coupled together. In the Suttapitaka, the term samatha is strongly associated with the jhānas.

The strong implication is, therefore, that vipassanā, and the method of jhāna and serenity, complement each other. Interestingly, however, vipassanā is not mentioned as having a special relationship with sati/ mindfulness. This all contrasts with the way vipassanā and mindfulness, on the one hand, have often been separated from jhāna practice on the other by some Buddhist teachers in modern times.

Later, in the Theravāda tradition, vipassanā became associated with the understanding and mindful observation of the ‘three marks of existence’ (tilakkhana), namely: suffering or unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), impermanence (anicca), and non-self (anattā). In this interpretation of the practice of vipassanā, the meditator observes phenomena and comes to realise in this way that they are a source of unsatisfactoriness, are impermanent and are nonself. Many Theravādins would go further to say that, as far as the last mark is concerned, one should be observing that there is no self at all. However, this does not seem to be congruent with the Buddha's teachings. (See Part One).
PART TWO

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MEDITATION INSPIRED BY EARLY BUDDHISM

By the nineteenth century, for a number of reasons, Buddhism had become largely extinct in India. Nevertheless it continued to be a major force elsewhere in South East Asia. Theravāda Buddhism continued to play a central role in nearby countries such as Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka. However, the practice of meditation seems to have declined dramatically. For example, at the end of the 19th century, Angarika Dharmapala scoured Sri Lanka for a meditation teacher but failed to find one.\(^{41}\)

It is difficult to be sure to what extent the practice of meditation continued in Burma and Thailand. But, by the eighteenth century it appears to have declined to a very low ebb. Thereafter, a number of attempts were made to revive meditation practice in these countries.\(^{42}\) There was also a promotion of the teaching of meditation to the laity, when previously meditation had been a preserve mainly for monks.

Efforts were made by modern Buddhist teachers to understand the teachings about meditation in the *Suttapitaka* and in exegetical texts such as the *Visuddhi Magga*. However, almost inevitably, forms of meditation evolved that often were different from those of early Buddhism, or that had different emphases. The following section looks at a few of the most influential modern teachers.

SOME INFLUENTIAL EXPONENTS OF BUDDHIST INSPIRED MEDITATION IN RECENT TIMES

MAHASI SAYADAW’S METHOD OF MENTAL NOTING

In the twentieth century, one of the most influential teachers in the revival in Buddhist meditation was the Burmese monk Mahasi Sayadaw (1904-1982). Mahasi encouraged lay people, as well as monks, to meditate. Numerous centres were set up by his disciples to enable this. Mahasi encouraged those who wished to learn his style of vipassanā meditation to commit themselves to continuous and intensive practice in a retreat setting.

In this environment, secluded from the distractions of the outside world, the beginner is taught to develop vipassanā by first observing the movement of the abdomen during breathing. As an aid to achieving this, each time the abdomen rises or falls, the student is advised to make the gentle mental note 'rising ' or 'falling'. These mental notes are not repeated out loud and should not be allowed to divert attention from the main goal of the practice. This is to perceive the movement of the abdomen and other phenomena precisely and directly. The student should also remember that no attempt is to be made to alter the breathing pattern. This is allowed to continue as normal.
While the mind is occupied with observing the movements of the abdomen, other thoughts may arise. These are not to be ignored but should be followed up as soon as they occur:

If you imagine, make a mental note such as 'imagining'. If you are thinking of something, make a mental note such as 'thinking'. If you reflect - 'reflecting'; intend - 'intending'; understand - 'understanding' and so on. If you find that your mind wanders from the object of meditation - 'wandering'. If in your imagination you go to a place - 'going', reach the place - 'reaching'; meet a person - 'meeting'; speak to him - 'speaking'; argue with him - 'arguing'. If you have a vision of image, light, colour etc., - 'seeing'. Such mental vision should be noted repeatedly until it passes away. After their disappearance you proceed with the first lesson of knowing the 'rising' and 'falling' [of the abdomen] regularly and without relaxation. While being occupied with this exercise if you intend to swallow saliva make a mental note - 'intending', 'intending'; while in the act of swallowing - 'swallowing';... Then go back to your original exercise of knowing 'rising' and 'falling'. If you intend to bend your neck - 'intending', 'intending'; while in the act of bending - 'bending'....After these actions you should proceed with the exercise of knowing 'rising' and 'falling'.

As the student is advised to stay in one meditative position for long periods of time, intense tiredness, stiffness or other unpleasant feelings may arise. In such cases the mind should be kept on the place where the feeling occurs and this should be noted as 'tired', 'stiff' etc. According to Mahasi, the feeling will normally become feeble and gradually cease altogether. However, sometimes it may grow stronger and stronger until it becomes unbearable. If this happens and the student intends to change his position, a mental note should be made of the intention - 'intending'. The student should then proceed to change position, mentally noting each movement in succession. For example, if the leg is moved, the sequence of mental noting might be 'intending', 'intending'; 'lifting'; 'lifting'; 'stretching', 'stretching'; 'bending', 'bending'; 'putting down', 'putting down', etc.

These movements should all be carried out slowly. The mental noting that accompanies them must be made in a steady manner - neither too slowly nor too quickly. As soon as the student is settled in the new position, the contemplation of the rising and falling of the abdomen is resumed.

**BASICS WALKING EXERCISE**

In retreats in which Mahasi’s method is taught, periods of formal sitting practice are interspersed by periods of walking meditation. This practice acts as a good antidote to drowsiness and stiffness of the limbs.

Walking meditation can be done on a quiet stretch of ground or in a room, if there is enough space. The student should walk slower than usual but in as natural a manner as possible. Mahasi suggested that, while performing walking meditation, the student should break down each step
into three parts: lifting, pushing forwards and putting down. For convenience, these actions can be noted as ‘lifting’, ‘moving’, and ‘placing.’

Shortly before it becomes necessary to turn to walk back in the opposite direction, the intention to turn will arise in the mind. This is noted as ‘intending’. As the body begins to turn, this is noted as ‘turning’. Then as the foot is lifted, turned and placed, these stages are noted accordingly.

As is the case during sitting meditation, all distracting thoughts and sensations are noted. For example, if the student is distracted and looks up to see someone practising nearby, he or she repeats ‘looking’.

**MEDITATION DURING THE WHOLE DAY**

Mahasi taught that the same method of mental noting used in formal sessions and during walking practice could be used to aid meditation at other times. Every mental and physical activity can be noted in detail. For example, when washing, the mental notes might be ‘looking’, ‘seeing’, ‘stretching’, ‘holding’, ‘dipping’, ‘carrying’, ‘pouring’, ‘feeling cold’, ‘rubbing’ and so on.

In everyday activity, as in walking and sitting practice, the student's thoughts may stray so that ‘thinking’, ‘reflecting’ etc., should be noted when appropriate. Likewise, if the student hears a voice or forgets to make a mental note these are noted as ‘hearing’, ‘hearing’ or ‘forgetting’, ‘forgetting’. If the student becomes lazy in his or her practice, doubtful about it, or expects a good result from it, the appropriate mental noting should take place. The same approach is taken with emotional states such as happiness and sadness. In the beginning, there may be many omissions but with practice the student will be able to note even more details than in the examples above.

**MAHASI’S SUMMARY OF THE BASIC PRACTICE**

Mahasi summarised his method by saying that students should contemplate each mental occurrence, each movement of the body, each physical sensation, each mental object or impression. If there is no special event to observe, they should be fully occupied with the contemplation of the rising and falling of the abdomen. In this way they are mindful throughout the whole of the day and night.

**PROGRESSIVE INSIGHT**

According to Mahasi, when they first learn this form of practice, students are usually only aware of the arising of new objects of observation but not of the disappearance of the objects that preceded them. As students progress, and apply mindfulness to the ‘body-mind’, they are able to observe this latter process more clearly. At this point, as students become more practiced, they perceive that, in every act of noticing, an object will appear suddenly and disappear instantly. They are therefore better able to experience directly the continually changing nature of mind and matter.
In this context, it is important to explain that Mahasi does not view objects in the conventional manner, that is as continuous entities. According to Mahasi, at this stage, all objects or phenomena appear as separate, discontinuous ‘pieces’. So, when a hand moves, for example, it is not the same hand at the end of the movement as it was at the beginning. Instead, during this apparent movement, a hand-like entity has appeared and disappeared many times. Mahasi illustrates this by saying that from a distance, a line of ants looks like a solid line, but when you come nearer, and are able to observe more precisely, you see the individual ants. In the same way, the meditator sees things in ‘broken pieces’, and the illusion of the continuity of objects cannot hide this fact.

WHEN DETAILED MENTAL NOTING MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE

Mahasi states that, at a certain advanced stage, detailed mental noting may not be possible. This may happen when the mental faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and knowledge are fully balanced leading to a quick succession of varied experiences:

... the meditator cannot possibly keep up with that quick succession of varied experiences if he attempts to notice them by name. Noticing has here to be done in a general manner, but with mindfulness. At this stage one need not try to notice details of the objects arising in quick succession, but one should notice them generally. If one wishes to name them, a collective designation will be sufficient. The important thing is to notice clearly and to comprehend what arises.

Mahasi makes the same point in *Fundamentals of Insight Meditation*. The ultimate aim is to note: ‘Every bodily movement made, every thought that arises, every feeling that comes up,...’ However, even in the sphere of thought alone:

A huge number of thought moments arise in the blinking of an eye. You have to note all these fleeting thoughts as they arise. If you cannot name them, just note “knowing, knowing.”

In Mahasi’s view, by noting phenomena, one is able to avoid clinging to them. In order to protect oneself effectively, it is important to note a perception immediately it arises. The meditator is protected from attachment because he or she sees that the perception is impermanent. This understanding of impermanence is enhanced in advanced practice because the meditator is able to watch the arising of each phenomenon separately.

Having directly experienced the impermanence of the phenomenal world, practitioners understand that no lasting peace but only suffering can result from an attachment to its transitory pleasures. Further, according to Mahasi, a student comes to comprehend that phenomena are not only transitory but are also impersonal with no core or self. He taught that these realisations and the progressive mastery of vipassanā meditation eventually enable the aspirant to attain Nibbāna.
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In Mahasi’s approach, mindfulness is used to enhance insight or vipassanā practice. The practitioner uses mindfulness, with the aid of mental noting, to keep focussed on the observation of the phenomena that arise in awareness. In advanced meditation, mindfulness can be used, according to Mahasi, to help practitioners perceive the instantaneous disappearance of objects of observation as well as their instantaneous appearance. Practitioners will eventually be able to see that the perceived continuity of objects is illusory. The goal is to directly experience the three marks of existence or *tilakkhana* – impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non self.

Mahasi Sayadaw’s methods of meditation were controversial when he first introduced them. This was because mental noting and focussing on the abdomen do not appear as techniques in the Suttapitaka. However, mental noting in particular can be a very useful aid when first starting to practise mindfulness meditation. It helps the mind to focus and can produce a sense of greater detachment. On the other hand, it is unclear how it is possible to note mentally every cognitive and sensory event even in a general way. This is especially the case in everyday life because of the pace of activity. Moreover, if mental noting were taken to its logical conclusion, it would lead to an infinite regress with the practitioner noting mental notes and mental notes of mental notes and so on.

Initially, Mahasi’s view on the instant appearance and disappearance of objects may seem bizarre. However, on closer examination it may have some reality to it, at least from the perspective of the observer. For example, if we examine the visual sense, it is a process that depends on millions of electrochemical impulses. Therefore, vision is not static but involves continual change. Whether in practice it is possible to become aware in detail of this continuous flux in the way that Mahasi describes is, of course, another matter.

Mahasi’s approach to protecting oneself from grasping or attachment by instantly noting perceptions has its roots in the Suttapitaka. It is an important way of helping to protect the mind not only from attachment but also from fear. However, again, whether it is possible to note every perception in the way he describes is open to doubt.

Besides introducing new meditation techniques, Mahasi has influenced Buddhist meditation practice in other ways. Whereas the Suttapitaka and exegetical works such as the Visuddhi Magga emphasise the importance of the jhānas, Mahasi argued that these were potentially dangerous states to enter into. He stated that they can lead to both delusion and complacency. Therefore, the use of the faculty of mindfulness was largely restricted in Mahasi’s teaching to vipassanā practice.

Despite Mahasi’s suspicions about the jhānas, in recent times a number of Buddhist teachers have begun to reintroduce this practice as an important element of Buddhist meditation.
U Ba Khin (1899-1971), like Mahasi Sayadaw, lived and taught in Burma. However, unlike Mahasi, he was a layman whose working life was spent in government service. Although he instructed his students in a number of methods of one-pointed concentration, he became best known for his teachings on concentration on the breath coupled with his own adaptation of vipassanā meditation. This included the systematic sweeping of one’s attention through the body. He also mentioned mindfulness as part of the practice. His approach has been popularised by several of his students, including S.N Goenka.

**PRACTICE**

Ba Khin referred frequently to the Four Noble Truths in his teachings and, in particular, stressed the importance of the three parts of the Eightfold Path - ethics, one-pointed meditation and wisdom (paññā), which he equated with vipassanā. These have become the main themes of the meditation retreats in which his approach is taught.

At the beginning of a retreat, students are required to agree to the five precepts: abstention from killing; abstention from taking what is not given; abstention from sexual misconduct; abstention from telling lies; and abstention from intoxication.

The next step is the development of concentration with the aid of right mindfulness. This is achieved by first focussing attention on the breath in the area of the nose and then by focussing it more precisely on the warmth of the breath on the upper lip. According to Ba Khin, signs that the student is progressing towards greater concentration include the appearance in the mind’s eye of white visual symbols, perhaps in the form of clouds, smoke, flowers or discs. When the mind becomes more concentrated still, there will be flashes or points of light. If the student is able to focus for some time on one minute, stationary point of light at the base of the nose, access concentration is attained.

If possible the student should attain access concentration before continuing to the next stage of vipassana. However, this is not absolutely essential as long as a reasonable degree of mental focus is developed. When this has been achieved, s/he is taught to become aware of the physical sensations of the body by sweeping the attention systematically through it part by part. This can be done from head to feet or feet to head. In addition, sometimes a special effort can be made to probe into its interior. The sensations of which one may become aware include changes in temperature, tingling, itching, pain and so on. If, however, too many distracting thoughts enter the mind and disrupt the student's attention he or she should return to focussing on the breath for a while in order to regain concentration.

The aim of this practice is to become aware of the impermanence (anicca) of the phenomenal world. With close observation, it is seen that the body is continually changing. While most of us already understand this intellectually, by this method one becomes aware of this fact through direct experience. Ba Khin states that as the awareness of impermanence continues, the meditator will see how the power of his concentration and mindfulness can unblock the flow of energy in the body.
According to Ba Khin, the body is made up of innumerable kalāpas. A kalāpa is the smallest particle of matter on the physical plane and is about the size of a 1/46,656th part of a particle of dust. The life span of a kalāpa is about a trillionth of the wink of an eye, therefore these particles are in a constant state of flux. The advanced student of this method can learn to feel the kalāpas as a stream of energy. In addition to becoming aware of the changing nature of the body, the meditator can focus on the changing nature of his or her perceptions of the changes in the body. In this way, she or he can experience directly the impermanent nature of the mind. The focus of the student’s attention may vary. It may be placed solely on the changing nature of the body or solely on the transient nature of mental activity or sometimes on both. Through the experience of impermanence of the body and the mind comes the understanding that dukkha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness) is fundamental to normal existence. Also the idea that a separate substantial self can be found in the body and mind, which are in continual flux, is seen to be an illusion.

According to Ba Khin, when the truth of impermanence and of the suffering that comes from impermanence is realised, the student will seek a way of escape to a state beyond suffering. By observing impermanence more and more closely, there arises a different mode of experience which Ba Khin called ‘the nirvānic peace within.’ According to Ba Khin, this is far superior to the peace that is gained by the practice of concentration. It takes one ‘beyond the limits of all the planes of existence....’ and is the final goal of the practice.

THE TEACHINGS OF AJAHN CHAH

Ajahn Chah (1918-1992) was a well-respected teacher who lived in North East Thailand. Although ordained as a monk of the Theravādin tradition, some of his talks on meditation practice seem to strike a very different note.

Ajahn Chah discusses the practice of *sīla, samādhi*, and *pañña* (ethics, one-pointed concentration and wisdom) in *The Path to Peace*:

...sīla means watching over yourself, watching over your actions and speech.

So who will do the watching over? Who will take the responsibility for your actions? Who is the one who knows before you lie, swear or say something frivolous? Contemplate this: whoever it is who knows is the one who has to take responsibility for your sīla. Bring that awareness to watch over your actions and speech.....To keep sīla, you use the part of the mind which directs your actions and which leads you to do good and bad.... Take hold of the wayward mind and bring it to serve and take responsibility for all your actions and speech. Look at this and contemplate it. The Buddha taught us to take care with our actions. Who is it who does the taking care?
The practice involves establishing sati, mindfulness, within this 'one who knows.' The 'one who knows' is that intention of the mind which previously motivated us to kill living beings, steal other people's property, indulge in illicit sex, lie, slander, say foolish and frivolous things and engage in all kinds of unrestrained behaviour .... Focus your mindfulness (sati) - that constant recollectedness - on this 'one who knows.' Let the knowing look after your practice. Use sati or awareness to keep the mind recollecting in the present moment and maintain mental composure in this way....

If the mind is really able to look after itself, it is not so difficult to guard speech and actions, since they are all supervised by the mind..... It is with the 'one who knows' that you look after yourself, because all your actions spring from here ....When the mind makes contact with the different sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations or ideas, the 'one who knows' will arise and establish awareness of liking and disliking, happiness and suffering and the different kinds of mind-objects that you experience ..... If you are mindful, you will see the different objects which pass into the mind and the reaction which takes place upon experiencing them. The 'one who knows' will automatically take them as objects for contemplation. Once the mind is vigilant and mindfulness is firmly established, you will note all the reactions displayed through either body, speech or mind, as mind-objects are experienced. That aspect of the mind which identifies and selects the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, from amongst all the mind-objects within your field of awareness, is paññña.76

As the practitioner continues to study the mind, he or she will come to observe its natural state:

In its natural state, the mind is the same - in it, there exists no loving or hating, nor does it seek to blame other people. It is independent, existing in a state of purity that is truly clear, radiant and untarnished. In its pure state, the mind is peaceful, without happiness or suffering - indeed, not experiencing any vedanā (feeling) at all. This is the true state of the mind. The purpose of the practice, then, is to seek inwardly, searching and investigating until you reach the original mind. The original mind is also known as the pure mind. The pure mind is the mind without attachment. It doesn’t get affected by mind-objects. In other words, it doesn’t chase after the different kinds of pleasant and unpleasant mind-objects. Rather, the mind is in a state of continuous knowing and wakefulness - thoroughly mindful of all it is experiencing ....The mind knows itself as pure. It has evolved its own, true independence; it has reached its original state. How is it able to bring
this original state into existence? Through the faculty of mindfulness wisely reflecting and seeing that all things are merely conditions arising out of the influence of elements, without any individual being controlling them. This is how it is with the happiness and suffering we experience. When these mental states arise, they are just 'happiness' and 'suffering'. There is no owner of the happiness. The mind is not the owner of the suffering - mental states do not belong to the mind. Look at it for yourself. In reality these are not affairs of the mind, they are separate and distinct. Happiness is just the state of happiness; suffering is just the state of suffering. You are merely the knower of these.  

In *A Taste of Freedom*, Ajahn Chah further explains the process of mindfulness:

> Mindfulness is knowing, or presence of mind. Right now what are we thinking, what are we doing? ... We observe like this, we are aware of how we are living ....We consider and investigate at all times, in all postures. When a mental impression arises that we like we know it as such, we don't hold it to be anything substantial. It's just happiness. When unhappiness arises we know that it's indulgence in pain, it's not the path of a meditator. This is what we call separating the mind from the feeling. If we are clever we don't attach, we leave things be. We become the 'one who knows.' The mind and the feeling are just like oil and water; they are in the same bottle but they don't mix. Even if we are sick or in pain, we still know the feeling as feeling, the mind as mind. We know the painful or comfortable states but we don't identify with them. We stay only in peace: the peace beyond both comfort and pain.

In Ajahn Chah's teachings, therefore, the aim is to seek the clear and radiant 'original mind', and to cease identifying oneself as a limited individual being. This is aided by cultivating mindfulness. By observing them closely and by not reacting to them, the practitioner learns to cease identifying with states of happiness and suffering.

Although Ajahn Chah was ordained as a Theravādin monk, his teachings about the ‘original mind’ sometimes seem more like an echo of the Mahāyāna. He cannot, therefore, be neatly pigeonholed into either tradition.

**MINDFULNESS AS THERAPY**

As already mentioned, mindfulness has become an important element of Western Psychology. Indeed, it has become a widely accepted form of therapy in the caring professions in general. One of the most influential exponents of mindfulness as a form of therapeutic intervention is
Jon Kabat-Zinn. He started teaching his method of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School’s Stress Reduction Clinic in 1979.

Kabat-Zinn outlines his approach in a number of books including *Full Catastrophe Living*. Although mindfulness is an important element of MBSR, there are also a number of other important components. Moreover, Kabat-Zinn’s definition of mindfulness, like the one discussed by Bishop, differs in some respects from that of early Buddhism. He says that: ‘mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.’

FOCUSSING ON THE BREATH

Kabat-Zinn’s description of the basic technique is fairly orthodox:

**Exercise One**

1. Sit in a comfortable posture.
2. Place your attention on the breath at the abdomen or at the nostrils.
3. Every time your attention wanders from the breath, notice what it was that distracted you and then bring your attention back to the breath again.

**Exercise Two:**

Observe your breathing at different times of the day. Be aware of your thoughts and feelings at these moments.

OTHER EXERCISES

When the basic practice becomes strong enough, expand your awareness to the whole body. In other exercises you can also expand your awareness to sounds in the environment and/or to thoughts and feelings.

Kabat-Zinn makes the point that thinking in itself is not bad. What is important is to observe one’s thoughts.

Choiceless Awareness: Kabat-Zinn also suggests that, when your practice is advanced enough, you can just sit and watch whatever comes into the field of awareness.

THE BODY SCAN

This is similar in many ways to Ba Khin’s approach of sweeping the attention through the body. However, Kabat-Zinn has made a number of adaptations. His method is as follows:

1. Lie down on your back and gently shut the eyes.
2. Notice the rising and falling of the abdomen with each inbreath and outbreath.
3. Experience the sensations in the body as a whole from the toes to the head.
4. Focus on the toes of the left foot. Observe the sensations carefully here. It is most important that you do this as though you are a detached witness. Try to direct or channel your breathing to the toes, so that it feels as though you are breathing in and out from them. It may help to imagine the breath travelling from your nose down the rest of the body to the toes and then back again out through the nose. When you breathe out, let the body release its tension and relax. On each inbreath imagine you are breathing in energy, vitality and relaxation.

5. When you are ready to move to another area, take a deeper breath, imagining it travelling down to your toes. On the outbreath imagine your toes dissolving. Stay with your breathing for at least a few breaths and then move on to the sole of the foot, letting go of the tension in the previous area. Continue in this way until you have included each area of the body. Kabat-Zinn says that as you let go of the sensations you find in each region, and of any thoughts or inner images you might have found associated with it, the muscles in that region let go too. In this way, you release much of the tension you have accumulated. 

During the body scan, each time the mind wanders, it is brought gently back to the area that is being focused upon. If you find the mind is drawn to a particular area because of pain, try to gently bring back attention to the area upon which you are focusing. If this is too difficult, attention can be put immediately on the area of greatest intensity. Breathe into and out from the pain itself. Imagine or feel the inbreath penetrating into the tissue until it is completely absorbed. Imagine the outbreath as a channel allowing the region to discharge to the outside whatever pain or disease it is capable of surrendering.

Do not struggle with pain because this will make it worse. Instead, try to relate to it in a neutral way. If it is intense, try taking each moment as it comes, rather than worrying about the pain continuing in the future.

After scanning every part of the body up to the top of the head, imagine a hole here. Imagine that you are breathing in through this hole, the breath passing through the whole body. The outbreath is seen as exiting through the toes. Then the process is reversed so that you see the breath as coming in through the toes and out through the head, and so on. Kabat-Zinn says that this process can make one’s body feel that it has dropped away or has become transparent, as if its substance were somehow erased. It can feel as if there is nothing except the breath flowing freely across all the boundaries of the body.

While finishing the body scan, let yourself rest in silence and stillness in an awareness that, according to Kabat-Zinn, may have gone beyond the body altogether. After a while, return to the body and feel it as a whole again. Then move your hands and feet and open the eyes.

In Chapter 22 and 23, Kabat-Zinn goes into more detail about the nature of pain and how to work with it. The sensations of pain can be stinging, throbbing, burning, cutting, rending, shooting, aching, etc. The different sensations may flow in rapid succession blending into each other. Kabat-Zinn says that, if your concentration is strong, you can feel a centre of calmness within yourself from which you can observe the whole episode. You can feel completely detached from the sensations, experiencing as if it were not your pain.
How pain is related to makes a difference to how pain is felt. One of the problems of pain management is that pain does not flow down exclusive and specific pain pathways. On the other hand, there are well known pathways within the brain and the central nervous system by which higher cognitive and emotional functions can modify the perception of pain.

PHYSICAL YOGA

The third aspect of Kabat-Zinn’s approach is the practice of mindful physical yoga. This involves being aware of the body and breath while performing yoga postures. One can direct the breath in to and out from the region of greatest intensity during a posture. One should rest between postures, being aware of the breath as one does so.  

RESULTS

According to Kabat-Zinn the standard eight week training period, during which patients utilise the methods described above, leads to a dramatic reduction in the average level of pain. In one study, 61 per cent of patients achieved at least a 50 per cent reduction in pain. In another study, patients showed a sharp drop in negative mood states. Kabat-Zinn says that several studies show that tuning into the sensation of pain is more effective than distracting oneself. In his view, the body scan is by far the best method to ameliorate chronic pain.

DISCUSSION

While Kabat-Zinn calls his approach ‘mindfulness based’, it is clear that it involves more than mindfulness as he defines it. For example, in the body scan, the breath is visualised moving in and out of different areas of the body. At the end of the practice, patients are encouraged to imagine that they are breathing in through a hole at the top of the head, the breath passing through the whole body. From the traditional viewpoint, it can be argued that mindfulness is being used in this approach to help bring back the practitioner’s attention to the meditation. However, this element of the practice does not seem to fit with Kabat-Zinn’s definition of mindfulness as being non-judgemental and paying attention in the present moment. This is because there is an attempt to actively use visualisation to remedy a problem in the present moment by achieving a specific goal in the future. A judgement or decision is made to visualise the body ‘dissolving’ in one’s mind’s eye in order to reduce tension and pain. This is in contrast to the approach of just observing the body in a detached and non-judgemental manner solely in the present moment. Of course, as this approach is called mindfulness based the implication is that mindfulness is not the whole story. Therefore this description is not necessarily misleading.

Physical yoga is another important part of MBSR. Besides having a purely physical aspect, this does also involve being mindful of the body sensations as one practises.

In a study carried out by researchers at Boston University School of Medicine, physical yoga was shown to raise the levels of GABA, a neurotransmitter, by 27 per cent. Although its effects
are not fully understood, GABA is widely thought to have a relaxing effect on the nervous system.\textsuperscript{91} Anyone who has practised physical yoga, however, can confirm its calming influence on the body and mind. While the approach to yoga advocated by Kabat-Zinn does involve mindful practice, clearly this is another part of MBSR in which influences other than mindfulness, according to his definition, play a large part.

While MBSR clearly has many benefits, there is a potential problem that could stem from MBSR. If one were solely to practise the ‘mindfulness’ element of it (as defined by Kabat-Zinn), it might encourage the acceptance of pain. Obviously it is better to deal with pain in a calm fashion than to panic. However, it is also possible, as Kabat-Zinn himself shows, to reduce pain through using the breath and visualisation. If one were solely to regard mindfulness as paying attention in the present moment nonjudgmentally, and were to practise this alone, this approach might discourage someone from looking for a way to reduce pain further.

The mindfulness taught in MBSR may not conform fully to the early Buddhist tradition. In fact, much of MBSR may not conform to Kabat-Zinn’s definition of mindfulness. Nevertheless, this does not diminish his major achievement of introducing effective meditative techniques into the mainstream of Western medicine and psychology. Kabat-Zinn’s success in popularising meditation owes much to his having separated it, at least partially, from its Buddhist roots. In this way, he has made it acceptable to Westerners in the scientific community who may not subscribe to the wider Buddhist belief system. Of course, there can also be a downside to this. There may not be the same level of understanding of the ultimate goal of meditative practice or of important supporting beliefs such as that of karma.

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The interpretation of the term sati (mindfulness) has changed somewhat over time within the Buddhist tradition. In early Buddhism the faculty of mindfulness was one element, albeit an important one, in the meditative process. Its function was to recognise that the mind had become distracted and return it to the meditation object or field of experience. It was used as an aid for both attaining the jhānas and for multifocal meditation during everyday activity. Later, in the Theravādin tradition, it served as a support for vipassanā meditation.

As discussed, some teachers in the last century were suspicious of jhāna practice. This did not prevent others, such as Ba Khin, from teaching one-pointed meditation alongside the use of mindfulness in vipassanā meditation. Nevertheless, mindfulness came commonly to be associated exclusively with vipassanā and multifocal meditation. It was not recognised as also having an important connection with one-pointed meditation. Moreover, an emphasis was put on defining mindfulness as ‘staying in the present moment.’ It is only recently that scholars and practitioners have started to question this latter view as well as increasing our understanding of the place of mindfulness in all forms of meditation.

Although the early Buddhist view of mindfulness may be somewhat different from some present day interpretations, this does not mean necessarily that the latter have no importance.
The approach advocated by Western Psychology, with its stress on the present moment and being non-judgemental certainly can have therapeutic value. However, care needs to be taken that this does not lead to an unnecessary acceptance of pain and distress. It would also be a mistake for this new tradition to ignore the wisdom of its early Buddhist roots.

MEDITATION DURING ACTIVITY

Most people are unable to spend a majority of their time in formal meditation sessions. It is therefore important to find a means of meditating in activity. Does the faculty of mindfulness help us to do so? It is clearly useful in reducing the tendency of our minds to wander from whichever activity we are involved with. It also helps in the development of a form of detachment from the activity itself. This includes detachment from what is perceived during the activity. Whether or not what is perceived is agreeable or disagreeable, the use of mindfulness can reduce the impact on the practitioner’s mind. This form of detachment is part of a more radical process that can enable practitioners to distinguish themselves from all phenomena, including the body and mind. In other words, it can help disentangle the observer from the observed and may lead to a clearer sense of our real nature.

One important caveat is perhaps in order, however. The way mindfulness has been practised in recent times could lead to what in Tibetan Buddhism is called the danger of ‘ordinariness’. Modern teachers of mindfulness and vipassanā have tended to stress the importance of awareness of mundane phenomena such as the body and thoughts. The problem is that, by only increasing awareness of mundane phenomena, there may be a danger of blocking out heightened, more subtle levels of consciousness that exist beyond the senses and the ordinary mind.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See the Tenth Discourse in the Majjhima Nikāya.


6. Adapted from Solé-Leris, p.81. Walshe’s slightly different translation of samudaya-dhammā and vaya-dhammā as arising phenomena and vanishing phenomena (see Walshe, 1987, p.336) has been substituted for that of Solé-Leris.

7. Ibid., p.81-82.


13. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995, p.1.192. These authors rely on an ancient commentary on the *Majjhima Nikāya* - the Majjhima Nikāya Atthakathā - for their explanation of these terms. This work was written by Buddhaghosa - author of the *Visuddhi Magga*. He in turn based his commentary on even more ancient commentaries preserved by the Sangha of Mahāvihāra at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. These are no longer extant. See p.16 of Ñānamoli and Bodhi, 1995.


15. *Dhamma-vicaya*. According to the old commentaries, this term refers to the investigation of mental and physical phenomena.

16. See the *Visuddhi Magga*, Chapter 4 (51) for more details about the Seven Factors.

17. *Samādhi* can have different connotations in the *Suttapitaka*. Here it means concentration.


[http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ltkFIVNONcC&printsec=frontcover&dq=bhikkhu+bodhi+numerical&hl=en&sa=X&ei=7wAnVOcHsnmasaqgogN&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=gatekeeper&f=false]

20. In, for example, the *Sekha Sutta*. See Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995, p.463.

21. Ibid., p.145


Accessed 9.7.14
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wayof.html#clear  
Accessed: 19.10.14


26. Ibid., p.46.


28. See ibid. The metaphor given in this tradition is that of a watchman who does not look continuously but is ready at all times to notice events as soon as they happen. This is similar to the gatekeeper analogy already quoted.

29. Kuan, 2008, Chapter Two.


32. Ibid., p. 20, (S.4 73).


34. Ibid., pp.42-43. (S. 4 189-190).

35. M. iii. 298.


37. Quoted by George Dreyfus in Chapter Three of Jon Kabat-Zinn and Mark Williams, 2013.


40. Ibid.

41. Bhikkhu Sangharakshita, Anagarika Dharmapala: A Biographical Sketch, Kandy, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Buddhist Publication Society  
42. In the 19th century an important figure in the revival of vipassanā meditation in Burma - Ledi Sayadaw - was reported to have learnt this approach in caves in the Sagaing Hills. http://www.globalpagoda.org/myanmar-maintains-the-techniques-pristine-purity


44. See ibid., p.59, and Mahasi Sayadaw, Practical Exercises....


46. Ibid., p.65f.

47. Ibid., p.74.

48. Ibid., p.70f.


50. Ibid., p.41.

51 See Kornfield, 1996, p.72.


53. Ibid., p.27.

54. Ibid., p.21.

55. Ibid., p.22.

56. Ibid., p.29.


59. Mahasi Sayadaw, A Discourse on the Sallekha Sutta


60. One of these, now deceased, was Ayya Khema.
63. Ibid., p.245.
64. Ibid., p.246. These symbols are mentioned in the *Visuddhi Magga*’s description of meditation on the breath. See Bhikkhu Ñanamoli’s translation, *The Path of Purification*, Columbo, R.Semage, 1956, p.307.
65. See Part 2, Chapter 6 for more on access concentration.
66. Ba Khin, 1991, p.68
68. Ibid., p.248.
69. Ibid., p.251.
71. Ibid., pp. 104-5.
72. Ibid., p.69.
73. Ibid., p.104.
75. Ibid., p.247.
http://fsnewsletter.amaravati.org/html/43/43.htm
accessed 31.12.13
77. Ibid., p.3.
82. See ibid., pp.73-4.

84. Ibid., p.88.

85. Ibid., p.295.

86. Ibid., p.77

87. See ibid., Chapter Six.

88. Ibid., p.288. Kabat-Zinn does not mention whether there was a control group in this study to measure the placebo effect.

89. Ibid., p.290.

90. Ibid., p.291.


Health & Medicine, News Releases, School of Medicine, May 22nd, 2007. Researchers were from the Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and McLean Hospital.