theme that underlies each of the four satipatthānas and indicates which of them is particularly appropriate for dispelling the illusion of beauty, happiness, permanence, or self. Although the corresponding insights are certainly not restricted to one satipatthāna alone, nevertheless this particular correlation indicates which satipatthāna is particularly suitable in order to correct a specific distortion (vipallāsa).

In the end, however, all four satipatthānas partake of the same essence. According to the satipatthāna commentary, each of them is capable of leading to realization, like different gateways leading to the same city (MA I, 239). As the commentary to the Vibhaṅga points out, the fourfold division is only functional and can be compared to a weaver splitting a piece of bamboo into four parts to weave a basket. (VibhA 222).

According to a set of verses in the Satipatthāna Samyutta, these four satipatthānas form the direct or only path (ekāyana maggo) for crossing the flood in past, present, and future times (S.V. 168 and S.V. 186). The Satipatthāna Sutta also uses the same expression in order to introduce satipatthāna as the path for the purification of beings and for the realisation of Nibbāna (M.I, 55). Satipatthāna is indeed a necessary requirement for awakening, since whoever have escaped, are escaping, or will escape from this world, all of them do so by way of well developing the four satipatthānas (A.V. 195). That is, only with Satipatthāna is awakening possible, not without it.

Satipatthāna stands, however, in necessary interdependence with the other factors of the noble eightfold path, so that it would be a misunderstanding to believe that by practicing only satipatthāna, awakening can be gained. Rather, for satipatthāna to yield its potential fruits, right view and good standards of morality are the indispensable foundations (see S.V. 143; S.V. 165; S.V. 187; and S.V. 188).

Another important requirement for successful satipatthāna practice is that it should lead to insight into the arising and passing away of phenomena. This importance is highlighted in the Vibhaṅga Sutta of the Samyutta Nikāya (S.V. 183), according to which it is this insight which marks the distinction between mere establishment of satipatthāna and its complete and full "development" (bhāvanā). This passage indicates that mere awareness of the various objects listed under the four satipatthānas may not suffice for the task of developing penetrative insight. What is additionally required is to move on to a comprehensive vision of impermanence, to contemplating the arising and passing away of all events, a requirement explicitly mentioned in the Satipatthāna Sutta after each of the exercises.

In this way, based on right view and moral conduct and aimed at an understanding of the impermanent and therewith unsatisfactory and selfless nature of reality, satipatthāna forms the path leading to the realisation of the goal supreme, of Nibbāna.

See also ĀNĀPĀNA-SATI, ANUPASSANĀ, ASUBHĀ BHĀVANĀ, CONTEMPLATION, DHAMMĀNUPASSANĀ, KĀYAGATĀSATI, KAYANUPASSANĀ, SATI, SUKKHAVIPASSAKA.

Analayo.

SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA is the title of the tenth discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya (M.I, 55-63). Precisely, the same discourse recurs as the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta in the Digha Nikāya (D.II, 305-315), the only difference being that this discourse offers a more extensive treatment of the four noble truths, the last of the satipatthāna contemplations. Apart from these two, there are also three smaller Satipatthāna Suttas at S.IV, 360, S.IV, 363 and A.III, 142. The first two of these three just briefly point out that the four satipatthānas lead to the unconditioned. The third, in some editions also called the Satipatthāna Sutta, declares that being mindful of five things, namely the rise and fall of phenomena, the lack of beauty of the body, the lack of appeal in food, the unattractive nature of the whole world, and the impermanent nature of all conditioned phenomena, will enable one to become an arahant or a non-returner. In addition to these discourses, there is also a Satipatthāna Samyutta at S.V, 141-192: a Satipatthāna Vagga at A.IV, 457-462; a Satipatthāna Vibhaṅga at Vibh. 19-207; and a Satipatthāna Katha at Kh. 155-159 and at Ps.II, 232-235. Evidently the topic of Satipatthāna has received ample treatment in the Pali Canon.

Not only the Pali Canon offers descriptions of Satipatthāna, but the Chinese āgamas have also
preserved two parallels to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. These come as the ninety-eighth sutra in the Chinese *Madhyama Āgama* (Taishō 1 no. 26 p. 582b) and as the first sutra in the twelfth chapter of the *Ekottara Āgama* (Taishō 2 no. 125 p. 568).

The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* takes place at Kammasathamma in the Kuru country, a location corresponding to the area of modern Delhi. Thus the setting of this discourse is somewhat removed from the Ganges valley, suggesting that the discourse was probably delivered at a comparatively later period of the Buddha’s life, at a time when his sphere of influence had spread to distant areas such as the Kuru country. The commentary (MA. I, 228) draws specific attention to the ability of the inhabitants of the Kuru country to understand deep teachings and their willingness to engage in the practice of meditation, this being the reason why the Buddha chose to explain the topic of *satipaṭṭhāna* in such detail at this location.

The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* starts with the Buddha’s declaration that *satipaṭṭhāna* constitutes the direct or only path (ekāyano maggo) for the purification of beings, for realizing Nibbāna. The next section of the discourse offers a short definition mentions four *Satipaṭṭhānas* for contemplation: body, feelings, mind, and phenomena. The definition, also specifies the mental qualities that are instrumental for *Satipaṭṭhāna*, one should be diligent (iddhi), clearly comprehending (sampajñāna), mindful (sati) and free from desires and discontent (vīteyya lokeabhijñāsuddhassa).

The main body of the discourse then describes the four *Satipaṭṭhānas* (q.v.) in detail. Each of the exercises described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* is followed by a particular formula, according to which *Satipaṭṭhāna contemplation* should cover internal and external phenomena, and is concerned with their arising and passing away. The same formula also points out that mindfulness should be established merely for the sake of developing bare knowledge and for achieving continuity of awareness, and that proper *Satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation takes place free from any dependency of clinging.

The discourse rounds off this description of the four *Satipaṭṭhānas* with a prediction about the time period within which realization can be expected and ends by reporting the monks being delighted by the Buddha’s exposition.

A comparison of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* of the Pali canon with its two parallel versions in the Chinese Āgamas reveals that all versions agree on the basic scheme of the *Satipaṭṭhānas*. The basic scheme occurs also in numerous discourses in the *Sānghavīra Nikāya* and the *Abhivottara Nikāya*; the *Abhivottara Nikāya*, which usually mention only the bare outline of this scheme, without going into the details of their possible applications as found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Mahānāma Nikāya*. Since one of these brief discourses took place right after the Buddha’s awakening (S. V, 167), it becomes clear that this basic scheme must have been a direct outcome of his realization. The details of their practical application, however, were only expounded at a later stage during the Buddha’s sojourn in the Kuru country, and thus could represent the outcome of this teaching experience.

In regard to the various meditations detailed in each area, the Chinese version from the *Madhyama Āgama* describes a total of eighteen body contemplations, against only six types of body contemplations found in the Pali version. Some of the contemplations listed in the *Madhyama Āgama*, however, seem to belong rather to contemplation of mental states. Thus various ways of dealing with unwholesome thoughts are found as the third and the fourth of the body contemplations in the discourse, instructions which parallel the first and the last of the antedotes to unwholesome thoughts mentioned in the *Vitakkasatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (M. I., 120).

Body contemplations six to nine in the *Madhyama Āgama* offer a detailed description of the development of the four jhūnas together with the same set of similes as found in the Pali discourses. The positioning of the four jhūnas under body contemplation does have a parallel in the *Kāyatātāvati Sutta* of the Pali canon, which directs awareness to the effect that these absorptions have on the physical body (M. III, 92).

The tenth and eleventh of the body contemplations in the *Madhyama Āgama* version are concerned with developing a brilliant perception and with remembering the contemplation image, expressions which could
SATIPATTHANA SUTTA

Another interesting finding is that the Madhyama Āgama version places mindfulness of breathing after the development of awareness of postures and clear comprehension of activities, whereas in the Pali version mindfulness of breathing occupies the first position among the body contemplations. This shift in the position of mindfulness of breathing is a meaningful alternation of the sequence of the body contemplations, since awareness of the four postures and clear comprehension of activities are simpler and more rudimentary forms of contemplation. Thus it seems reasonable to place them at the beginning of a cultivation of satipatthana, as convenient ways of building up a foundation in sati. Moreover, awareness of postures and clear comprehension of activities are predominantly concerned with the body in action, whereas mindfulness of breathing and the remaining body contemplations would probably be carried out predominantly in the stable sitting posture. The proper sitting posture is in fact described in detail only in the instructions for mindfulness of breathing, indicating that its position could fit in well after awareness of postures and clear comprehension of activities.

In the Chinese version found in the Ekottara Āgama, however, mindfulness of breathing is not mentioned at all. In this particular exposition contemplation of the body covers only four exercises: contemplation of the anatomical parts, of the four elements, of the various bodily orifices together with the impure liquids discharged by them and of a corpse in decay. The first two and the last of these four are also found in the Satipatthana Sutta, whereas the third has parallels elsewhere in the Pali canon, namely in the Canda Sutta (A. IV, 386) and in the Vijaya Sutta (S Farmer 197-198).

Thus what is common among the Pali version of body contemplations found in the Satipatthana Sutta and its Chinese parallels are the contemplation of anatomical parts, of the four elements and of its decay after death. This agreement among the different versions clearly indicates that a central theme of contemplating the body as a Satipatthana is to gain an insight into its true nature and constitution.

Concerning the next two satipatthana, there is little disagreement between the Chinese and the Pali versions. In addition to the types of feelings listed in the Satipatthana Sutta, the Madhyama Āgama version has feelings connected with desire and feelings related to food; while the Ekottara Āgama version directs awareness to the fact that the presence of one type of feeling excludes the presence of the other two, a statement found also in the Mahānidānasutta (D. II, 66). In addition to the states of mind found in the Satipatthana Sutta, the Madhyama Āgama version also instructs to contemplate a state of mind with or without blemishes, while the Ekottara Āgama version has craving and mastery of the mind as additional categories.

Additional categories for these two contemplations can also be found in the Paṭissambhidāmagga of the Pali canon, which includes the six types of feelings and the six types of consciousness, differentiated according to the six senses, in the respective lists for contemplation of feelings and contemplation of states of mind (P. II, 233 and P. II, 234).

Concerning the fourth satipatthana, it is noteworthy that contemplation of the five aggregates and of the four noble truths are absent from both Chinese versions, and even contemplation of the sense spheres is found only in the Madhyama Āgama version. Thus what remains as the unanimously accepted core of the fourth satipatthana in its Pali and Chinese versions is the contemplation of the five hindrances and the contemplation of the seven factors of awakening. The same is also found in the Vibhāṅga of the Pali Abhidhamma, which lists just these two meditative practices under the fourth satipatthana (Vibh. 199). This agreement between the different sources throws into relief the importance of abandoning the hindrances and developing the factors of awakening for the path to realization. To overcome the hindrances, to practice satipatthana and to establish the factors of awakening are indeed, according to several Pali discourses, key aspects of awakening (D. II, 83; D. III, 101 and S. V, 160). This same statement forms also the introductory part of the Madhyama Āgama version of satipatthana.

In drawing to the end of this comparison it may be noted that the prediction of realization in the Madhyama Āgama version allows for even quicker
awakening than the Satiyātthika Sutta, which reports the Buddha as stating that realization may be gained within a minimum of seven days. The Chinese version, however, has him stating that realization could occur in the evening even if one had only begun to practice that same morning. The potential of satipatthāna to lead to realization within the interval of just one day or night is also recognized by the Pali commentary to the Satiyātthika Sutta (MA. I. 302), while the Bodhirajakumāra Sutta relates the possibility of such instant realization to the development of the five factors of striving (M. II. 96).

Bibliography:


Anilayo.

SAUNDARĀNANDA. In all probability the earliest extant mahākārya written in Sanskrit, attributed to Aśvaghoṣa, which together with the Buddhacarita of the same author and the Rāghuvarṣaṇī and the Kunārāśambhava of Kālidāsa, provided the model for Dandin in formulating his famous definition of a Mahākārya or poem par excellence.

The colophons to his Kāyas describe Aśvaghoṣa as a bhikṣu (Buddhist monk) hailing from Sāketa (former Ayodhya) and the son of Suvarṇākṣi (‘the golden-eyed one’, being the name of his mother). He probably lived in Puruṣapura (modern Peshawar) in the first century A.C. during the reign of Kaniska. According to tradition, he was a brahmin, an adherent of the Sarvāstivāda School, who later embraced Mahayanaism to become one of the forerunners of that school.

The Saundarānanda in 18 cantos relates the popular legend of the conversion of the reluctant Nanda, his half-brother, by the Buddha. Even after his formal conversion Nanda was not able to forget his beloved, village lass of ravishing beauty named Sundari (which affair gives the poem its title, i.e. Saundarānanda). The Buddha had to resort to a special ruse to dissuade Nanda from his passion for worldly pleasure.

Although clad in a monk’s robe, Nanda was always thinking of his beloved and finding all excuses to return to household life. The Buddha then decided to take a bolder step, that is, to take him to heaven to show him heavenly nympha who were much more beautiful than Sundari. On their way to heaven the Buddha showed him in the Himalaya a one-eyed ape of awful appearance and asked Nanda how she compared with his Sundari. For Nanda there was no comparison for the loveliness of his Sundari, but when he saw the apsaras in heaven he had to change his opinion and admit that the comparison of heavenly nympha with his Sundari was similar to that between the latter and the ape they saw in the Himalaya. He now forgets his Sundari and is infatuated with the nymphs. The Buddha then tells him that he could win heaven only by good deeds. After returning to earth he resolves to continue his ascetic life with the ultimate object of winning a nymph for enjoying sensual pleasure. But he was severely criticized by other monks for leading the life of a recluse with the ulterior motive of realizing worldly pleasure. Ven. Ānanda then had to drive home the fact that heavenly pleasures are fleeting and that one must return to earth when one’s merits are exhausted. This made Nanda realize the folly of hankering after worldly pleasure and decided to seek the assistance of the Buddha. On listening to the Buddha, Nanda resolves to tread the nobler path of seeking not only his own salvation but also of preaching the doctrine to others for their emancipation.

This story recounted in brief in the Mahāvagga and the Nīdānakathā does not warrant treatment in a mahākārya, but Aśvaghoṣa seized the opportunity and developed it into a story of absorbing interest. The first part of the poem displays the poetic skills of Aśvaghoṣa, which describes the city of Kapilavastu, King Siddhodana, the birth of princes Siddhihātra and Nanda, the latter’s love for Sundari, the forcible conversion of Nanda, the conflict of his feelings and the lament of Sundari over her lost fiance. All this is delineated in elegant Kāya style and possesses
ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BUDDHISM

Founder Editor-in Chief
G. P. MALALASEKERA, M. A., Ph. D., D. Litt., Professor Emeritus

Editor-in Chief
W. G. WEERARATNE, M. A., Ph. D.

VOLUME VIII

FASCICLE 1: Sātavāhana–Syāmopāli Nikāya

2007