

**BUDDHIST THOUGHT AND APPLICATION:
Essays in Honour of
Professor P. D. Premasiri**

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Mindfulness “internally”, “externally”, and “internally and externally”, by Professor Lambert Schmithausen

Bhikkhu ANĀLAYO*

Abstract

This paper offers a translation of a study by Professor Lambert Schmithausen, originally published in German in 2012. The study takes up the internal and external dimensions of *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation, based on surveying relevant textual passages.

Introduction

It is my great pleasure to offer a contribution to this felicitation volume in honour of Professor P. D. Premasiri, under whom I conducted my PhD research on *satipaṭṭhāna*.¹ I still remember vividly our first meeting, which happened after Godwin Samararatne had taken me along for one of the meditation-classes he regularly conducted on the University of Peradeniya campus. When the class was over, Godwin disclosed his plan for me to enrol at the University and do a PhD research on mindfulness. Professors Premasiri and Witanachchi, who were both present, were immediately very supportive. Only I needed some convincing of this unexpected development, as I had been envisaging my life as a monk to be a predominantly meditative one. This is how I got started on my academic career in Buddhist Studies.

In the course of the ensuing meetings with P. D. Premasiri during my research, after patiently answering the many questions I had on various aspects of the early Buddhist teachings and philosophy, he would often take out his German language study book and ask me questions in turn regarding the grammar and proper understanding of phrases in my native language. In view of his interest in German writings as well as in the practice of mindfulness, I felt I might best honour the present occasion by translating a paper on mindfulness from German into English, written by another eminent scholar to whom I am indebted for guidance, Professor Lambert Schmithausen of the University of Hamburg. The paper was

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1 A revised version of the thesis was published in 2003 under the title *Satipaṭṭhāna, the Direct Path to Realization*, Birmingham: Windhorse.

originally given at a conference on mindfulness held in 2011 at the University of Hamburg.² We were on the same panel and had commented on each other's papers beforehand, so it is a natural extension of that collaboration that I here present an English rendering of his paper.

At the time of conducting my PhD research, I did not have sufficient knowledge of the different Buddhist languages to allow me access to the whole range of sources that Lambert Schmithausen marshals in his study, hence I only surveyed relevant Pāli material and secondary sources. It is therefore by way of completing my earlier PhD study, undertaken under the guidance of P. D. Premasiri, that I here render into English Lambert Schmithausen's survey of various Buddhist texts on the topic of what it actually means to practice *satipaṭṭhāna* "internally" or else "externally", as well as both.

Translation

In the Pāli canon, the four-fold presence of mindfulness is usually only found in a short formula, which indicates that one should follow the particular object of observation continuously with contemplation (*anupassī viharatī*), namely: the body (*kāya*), feelings (*vedanā*), states of mind (*citta*), and *dhammas*. Often this formula then leads on to the additional information that the practitioner undertakes this diligently, consciously and mindfully in such a way that desire and discontent in regard to what is worldly are eliminated.³ Yet at times, and with noticeably greater frequency in the canons of other schools, the short formula on the four-fold presence of mindfulness has an expansion according to which contemplation of the four objects of observation should be undertaken in a threefold manner: internally (*ajjhataṃ*, i.e., in relation to oneself), externally (*bahiddhā*), and internally as well as externally (*ajjhatabhiddhā*).⁴

2 The paper was published under the title "Achtsamkeit 'innen', 'außen' und 'innen wie außen'" in *Achtsamkeit, Ein buddhistisches Konzept erobert die Wissenschaft, mit einem Beitrag S. H. des Dalai Lama*, M. Zimmerman et al. (ed.), Bern: Hans Huber Verlag, 2012: 291–303.

3 See, S.V.141 (S.47.1), etc. (SĀ 606–607, 622 [174a16–20], 623 [174c9f]); S.V.298 (S.52.3), etc. (SĀ 535 only!); cf. also D.II.94f and 100 (regarding the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* cf. note 4), D.III.58, 77 (cf. MĀ 524c15); 141; 221; 276 (cf. also *Saṅgītīsūtra*, ed. Stache-Rosen 1968, IV.1; *Daśottarasūtra*, ed. Mittal 1957: IV.2; regarding DĀ cf. note 4); M.I.340; M.II.11; cf. M.III.83 (*ānāpānasati*) and 136 (MĀ 758b3–5, etc.); S.IV.211; 363f; S.V.75; A.I.39; A.I.296; A.II.256; A.IV.300f; A.IV.458.

4 S.V.143 (S.47.3); S.V.294–297f (52.1–2); D.II.216 (only "intern" und "extern", as is also the case for An Shigao's translation of the *Daśottarasūtra*: T vol. 1 no. 13, 234a19–21; cf. Zaccchetti 2003: 270); cf. A.III.450 (A.6.118); more frequently in SĀ, no. 536 etc.; no. 610; no. 624 (175a8–11); no. 636 (176b15–17), etc.; cf. also the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, Wogihara 1971: 531,18–21. Furthermore *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* # 10.14 and 14.25 as well as the corresponding passages in the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, as well as DĀ 13c27–14a1 and 15b9–12, T vol. 1 no. 6, 179a8–14, T vol. 22 no. 1421 (*Vinaya* of the Mahīśāsakas): 135b18–20 and no. 1428 (*Vinaya* of the Dharmaguptakas): 856a19–22; in DĀ also at the places corresponding to D.III.58 etc. (cf. note 3): 39a28–b1; 50c9–13; 53b10–14; 76b7–11.

To find further details regarding what these three modes of contemplation are about, one would naturally first of all turn to the comprehensive ‘Discourse on the Presence of Mindfulness’ (*Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, *Smṛtyupasthānasūtra*),⁵ which concretely describes the fourfold exercise in mindfulness. In the Pāli version and in one of the Chinese versions, however, this discourse sets out with the simple version of the short formula, and does not expand this with the categories “internal” and “external”.⁶ Although these categories are built into the formulaic refrain after the individual sections of the exercise, there is no explicit indication regarding how the differentiation of “internal”, “external”, etc., should be concretely undertaken in the case of the individual exercises.⁷ About half of the individual exercises are explicitly formulated in such a way (and only in such a way) that the practitioner contemplates the respective phenomenon in relation to himself.

This is the case for contemplation of the breath (*dīghaṃ ... assasanto dīghaṃ assasāmīti pajānāti*, etc.); contemplation of bodily postures (*gacchanto ... gacchāmīti pajānāti*, etc.); contemplation of feelings (*sukhaṃ ... vedanaṃ vediyamāno sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vedayāmīti pajānāti*, etc.); contemplation of the hindrances (*santaṃ ... ajjhataṃ kāmacchandaṃ atthi me ajjhataṃ kāmacchando ti pajānāti*, etc.); and contemplation of the limbs to awakening (*santaṃ ... ajjhataṃ satibojjhaṅgaṃ atthi me ajjhataṃ satibojjhaṅgo ti pajānāti*, etc.).

Further information can be gathered from the *Janavasabha-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the ‘Collection of Long Discourses’.⁸ Here the short formula is explicitly related to “internal” contemplation, i.e., in relation to oneself. The discourse continues by indicating, however, that once a condition of deep concentration has been reached with the help of this exercise, one develops intuitive knowledge (*ñānadassana*) regarding the particular object of contemplation “externally”, which according to this text means in relation to other people. This holds not only for the case of mindfulness in relation to the body, but also in regard to feelings, states of mind, and *dharmas*.

An interesting parallel can be found in the “Discourse on the Twelve Doors” (*Shi’er men jing*),⁹ extant only in an ancient Chinese translation by An Shigao (active about 147 to 168). Here as well the contemplation of

Cf. also S.V.294f (S.52.1) (expanded short formula).

5 See, M.10 and D.22. For parallels cf. Anālayo 2011: 73(ff.).

6 Whereas the version in the Chinese *Ekottarikāgama* (T vol. 2 no. 125, 568a1–569b12) does have the extended short formula, it also does not offer any concrete help. Regarding the partial version in the *Great Prajñāpāramitā* cf. below.

7 On this problem cf. also Gethin 1992: 53f.

8 D.II.216 (DĀ 35c25–36a4); cf. Anālayo 2003: 95 with note 10.

one's own body is contrasted with the body of another person. Attention is then to be directed to the body as an aggregation of impure substances, to prevent the arising of lust. Of the other type of mindfulness practices, this text apparently only explicitly differentiates the objects of practice of contemplation of mental states into one's own mental states and those of other persons.

A corresponding understanding of the categories “internal” and “external” can also be found in two Abhidharma works, the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Dharmaskandha*.¹⁰ The *Vibhaṅga* pertains to the Theravāda tradition and the *Dharmaskandha* to the tradition of the Sarvāstivādins; both are based on a common source.¹¹ The section in the respective works regarding the fourfold mindfulness, in as much as it consists of both a quotation of the expanded short formula¹² and a detailed explanation,¹³ clearly stems in its essence from a common source. The three categories of “internal”, “external” and “internal as well as external” are in both works applied systematically to concrete exercises in the case of all four objects of mindfulness. They are understood in the sense of a contemplation of the respective phenomenon in relation to oneself,¹⁴ in relation to another person,¹⁵ and in relation to both at the same time or else independent of both, in and of itself.¹⁶

9 Zacchetti 2003: 255f and 263.

10 Vibh.193–202 (or 207); *Dharmaskandha*, T vol. 26 no. 1537, 475c24–478b15.

11 Frauwallner 1964: 73–80; corresponding to Frauwallner 1995: 15–21.

12 In the *Dharmaskandha* (cf. note 10) this is obviously the case with SĀ no. 610 (with *nidāna*). The explanation doubtlessly starts immediately after the quotation of the short formula, i.e., the Abhidharma text. The first part of the formula is quoted to start with and then receives step by step explanations (first *adhyātmaṃ kāye*, then *kāyānu- paśyin* or °*darśin*, after that *viharatī*, etc.), then the second part, and so on. This is also the case in the *Śāriputrābhidharma*, where first even the *ekāyana*-passage (as in S.47.1 (S.V.141f) and at the beginning of the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*) is quoted (which is missing in the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Dharmaskandha*) and then commented upon (T vol. 28 no. 1548, 612b28ff), the quotation follows only after this (613a11–14), followed in turn with the explanation (613a14–616c7) of the expanded short formula of the four *smṛtyupasthānas*.

13 This is not the case for the sections in the *Vibhaṅga* that are designated as *Abhidhammabhā- janīya* and *Pañhāpucchaka* (Frauwallner 1971: 109; id. 1995: 45). These also do not have a counterpart in the corresponding section (T vol. 28 no. 1548: 612b27–616b28) of the related *Śāriputrābhidharma* of the Dharmaguptakas (Frauwallner 1972: 133ff; 1995: 97ff.).

14 The *Dharmaskandha* reduces, in line with the doctrine of the existence of past and future (*sarvāstivāda*), the category “internal” to the contemplation of a phenomenon present within oneself *at present*; what is in the past or in the future falls under “external”, even when this concerns oneself.

15 Cf. also the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* 187,37–188,2.

16 The formulation in the *Vibhaṅga* suggests the last: Unspecified “with the body” (*kāye*) in the case of “internal as well as external” in contrast to “in this [my] body” (*imasmiṃ kāye*: “internally”) and “with the body of that [other person]” (*assa kāye*: “externally”); furthermore “he knows a pleasant feeling as pleasant feeling” (*sukhaṃ vedanaṃ sukhaṃ vedanā ti pajānāti*) in contrast to “if he has a pleasant feeling [himself], he consciously notices: ‘I have a pleasant feeling’” (“internal”) and “if [another being] has a pleasant feeling, he knows: ‘he/she/it has

In the case of body contemplation, the *Vibhaṅga* exemplifies the threefold contemplation exclusively with contemplation of the body as a conglomeration of (predominantly) impure parts (hair, skin, flesh, bones, entrails, bodily secretions, etc.). The same holds for the Discourse on the Twelve Doors. The *Dharmaskandha* exemplifies the same moreover with contemplation of the body as a conglomeration of the four (or rather, here the six) elements.¹⁷

The two Abhidharma texts apply the threefold division explicitly, as already noted, to the other three mindfulness exercises, i.e. to feelings, states of mind, and *dharmas*.¹⁸ Here the last of these exercises refers to those psychological factors that prevent absorption and spiritual progress as well as those that facilitate awakening. In other words, according to this explanation the exercise of mindfulness is not only concerned with one’s own feelings, states of mind, and spiritually relevant psychological factors, but also with those of others.

This can appear problematic, as long as one understands the exercise of mindfulness as a contemplation of immediately given events. Feelings, states of mind, and the spiritual condition of others can not normally be directly observed, unless one is in the possession of supernormal abilities (*abhiññā*). Notably, the description of the supernormal ability of recognizing the mental condition of others (*cetopariyañña*, *cetaḥparyāyajñāna*) lists exactly the same states of mind as those found in the context of mindfulness of states of mind.¹⁹ In the above-mentioned passage in the *Dīgha-nikāya* an intuitive knowledge (*ñānadassana*) of the body, feelings, and states of mind of others comes about only after entry into right absorption. This is similar to another passage, according to which supernormal intuitive knowledge of consciousness (*viññāna*, in the sense of the basis for a form of life that is capable of experiencing) in one’s own body is only reached with the fourth absorption.²⁰

Bhikkhu Anālayo (2003: 96f.) on the other hand has made the sensible suggestion to understand mindfulness in relation to the feelings, states of mind, etc., of others in the sense of an indirect recognition, which

a pleasant feeling” (“external”). According to the *Sammohavinodanī*, Vibh-a 260 (similarly 268 for *vedanā*), however: “He directs the mind at times to the own body, at times to the body of others” (*kālena attano kālena paresaṃ kāye cittaṃ upaṭṭhapeti*); cf. also Anālayo 2003: 98.

17 This is followed in the *Dharmaskandha* (476b4–10, etc.) by adding a contemplation of the evil consequences (*ādīnava*) of the body: it is [like] a disease, an ulcer, etc., impermanent, unsatisfactory, etc. (cf. M.I.435,33–35).

18 Similarly the *Jñānaprasthāna* (T vol. 26 no. 1544) 989a5–15 and the *Vibhāṣā* (T vol. 27 no. 1545) 714a7–b18.

19 Cf., e.g., D.I.79–81.

20 D.I.76.

can result from observing the bodily posture, facial expression, etc., as indicators of such feelings, etc. Such mindfulness would in fact be of considerable practical importance in daily life in a monastic community and in the context of the relationship between teacher and disciple, and it would make sense even in the case of the category of contemplating the bodily motions of “another”. As Anālayo shows, some passages in the canon do envisage the possibility, although in a context that is not related to mindfulness practice, to apprehend the mental condition of other persons based on external indicators.²¹

However, the interpretation of the categories “internal”, “external”, and “internal as well as external” in relation to the fourfold exercise of mindfulness, sketched above, has certainly not been generally accepted. Part of the Buddhist tradition testifies to quite a different way of understanding in relation to the body as well as mental factors.

Regarding the body, a partial version of the ‘Discourse on the Presence of Mindfulness’, transmitted in the *Great Prajñāpāramitā*,²² is particularly interesting. Although the text is based on the expanded version of the short formula, unfortunately it only gives a full presentation of mindfulness related to the body. Here all contemplations, beginning with the bodily postures up to the contemplation of the body as a conglomeration of impure parts, are applied exclusively to oneself. Only contemplation of corpses in different stages of decay is assigned to the category “external”.

The *Śāriputrābhidharma*, a text of the Dharmaguptaka tradition that (at least in this part) is related to the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Dharmaskandha*, proceeds similarly. Here, too, all body contemplations, except for contemplation of corpses, are applied just to oneself. Only contemplation of corpses is counted as “internal as well as external”, without further explanation.²³

21 Cf. Anālayo 2003: 96 note16, mentioning D.III.103 and A.I.171 as well as M.I.318 and II.172.

22 *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Dutt 1934: 204,1–207,14; *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Gosh 1902: 1427,1ff; cf. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Bendall 1957: 120,11–16.

23 *Śāriputrābhidharma* (T vol. 28 no. 1548) 613a20–b21 and 614a18–b13. Strangely enough, in this work the traditional contemplation of feelings (614c27–615a2), states of mind (615b17–21) and psychological factors relevant to salvation (616a25–b7) are also assigned to the category “internal as well as external”, even though at least in the case of feelings and psychological factors relevant to salvation only one’s own feeling and psychological factors are the object (614c28: “when feeling a pleasant feeling, he knows: I feel a pleasant feeling.”). The main concern of the *Śāriputrābhidharma* is the contemplation not only of the objects of the exercise (internal, external and internal as well as external), but in the end the contemplation of *all dharmas* from the perspective of impermanence, suffering, not-self and as being a product of conditions. The specific objects of the old mindfulness practice appear here like relics.

Such a characterisation is, however, not without some sense if one considers further sources. Kumārajīva’s commentary on the *Great Prajñāpāramitā* (attributed to Nāgārjuna), for example, indicates that if a yogin first contemplates corpses in a condition of decay and then contemplates his own body, aware that it will invariably be subject to the same fate, then the corpse is the external body and his own body is the internal body.²⁴ Thus with this contemplation the body is contemplated “internally as well as externally”.

A similar understanding is proposed in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, where the category “internal” is assigned to contemplation of one’s own living body, the category “external” to contemplation of corpses, and the category “internal as well as external” to the insight that the dead body was earlier alive and that (one’s own) living body sooner or later will also become a corpse.²⁵ This can take place by way of the yogi visualizing himself as passing away, being dragged to the cemetery and dropped there, and then going through the various stages of decay.²⁶ An alternative explanation in the *Śrāvakabhūmi* in a way combines this interpretation with the one given in the *Vibhaṅga*: Under the heading of “internal” one contemplates one’s own living body as it were from the inside as a conglomeration of more or less impure parts; under the heading of “external” one does the same with the living body of another (for example with the body of an attractive woman, as indicated in the commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā*). Thereupon a further step follows here as well, which is a contemplation of the similarity of both bodies, under the heading “internal as well as external”, a contemplation also extended to dying and the subsequent process of decay.²⁷

The commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā* as well as the *Śrāvakabhūmi* know further possibilities for distinguishing the categories “internal”, “external” and “internal as well as external” in the case of body contemplation. For example, “internal” are the intestines and bodily secretions, “external” skin, hair, etc.²⁸ Or else, “internal” is one’s own body, designated as a ‘living being’, “external” is inanimate matter, “internal as well as

24 *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa* (T vol. 25 no. 1509, 202a9–11), Lamotte 1970: 1172.

25 *Śrāvakabhūmi*, Śrāvakabhūmi Study Group 2007: II.192,10ff.; similarly (specifically in a context related to *aśubhā*) *Śrāvakabhūmi*, Shukla 1973: 422,9–423,12.

26 Shukla 1973: 423,7–11.

27 *Śrāvakabhūmi* 2007: II.192,20–194,3. Cf. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa*, T vol. 25 no. 1509, 202a11–13, Lamotte 1970: 1172,14–17.

28 *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa* (T vol. 25 no. 1509, 202,7–9), Lamotte 1970: 1172,3–5. Similarly perhaps also *Theragāthā* 172 (despite the commentary, which gives the standard Theravāda explanation: *attano santāne parasantāne ca*). Compare also the differentiation between the parts of the body, which are suitable, *upāta*, i.e., able to experience, (such as bones, flesh and intestines), and those that are not suitable (such as hair, nails and the teeth, except for their roots, as well as for excretions and excrements), in the *Vibhāṣā* (T vol. 27 no. 1545, 712c26–713a2).

external” are the bodies of other living beings.²⁹ Or else, “internal” are the sense organs in one’s own body, “external” is all matter that does not pertain to any living being, and “internal as well as external” is matter pertaining to one’s own body that does not belong to the sense organs. According to another text, the last category also includes the material inner *āyatanas* (i.e., the sense organs) of other living beings (*pārasāṃtānikāni ādhyātmikāni rūpīṇy āyatanāni*).³⁰ Such attempts seem hardly convincing as applications of the categories “internal”, “external”, etc., in the context of contemplation of the body as a conglomeration of impure substances and of contemplation of corpses.

By the way, in the *Śrāvakahūmi* the four-level mindfulness is an element that under the aspects of being “internal”, “external”, etc., accompanies all five exercises which, according to this work, lead to absorption in *dhyāna*. Besides contemplation of repulsiveness and contemplation of the body as consisting in elements, these also include the practice of benevolence (*maitrī*) and the contemplation of dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*).

Regarding the mental analysis of the body into elements, contemplation is undertaken “internally” when one contemplates the particular element within oneself, “externally” when one contemplates it in inanimate things, and “internally as well as externally” when one contemplates it in other living beings.³¹ Alternatively, the last category could also be applied when the yogin visualizes his own body as passing away and undergoing decay and then imagines the pus flowing out as a constantly increasing stream. Or else, in the case of fire burial, the yogin imagines body and cremation fire as huge, followed by the ashes of the extinct fire being dispersed by the wind in all directions, so that in the end only empty space remains.³²

In the case of mindfulness of breathing, contemplation in relation to oneself is obviously the mindful registering of one’s own breathing. An external contemplation of the breath, however, is not contemplation of the breath of others, but contemplation or visualization of the absence of breathing in the case of corpses. Both aspects are contemplated together when one imagines oneself as passing away or dead and bereft of respiratory activities.³³

29 Śrāvakahūmi Study Group 2007: II.188,10–15.

30 Śrāvakahūmi, Śrāvakahūmi Study Group 2007: II.190,5–9; *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, Pradhan 1950: 71,21–72,2, Gohkale 1947: 34,11–14.

31 Cf. Kimura 1992: 921,11–13 (text loss in Shukla, 1973: 432,3/4): *yady ātamaṇḥ pratyātmikaṃ dhātuṃ adhimucyate, so dhīyātmaṇḥ smṛtyupasthāneṣu carati, atha pareṣāṃ asatvasaṃkhyātānām, evaṃ bahīrdhā. atha pareṣāṃ sattvasaṃkhyātānām, evaṃ adhyātma-bahīrdhā.*

32 Kimura 1992: 921,14–24.

33 Kimura 1992: 920,17–2.

In the case of interpreting the categories “internal”, “external” and “internal as well as external” in the context of mindfulness directed to feelings, states of mind, and spiritually relevant psychological factors, the *Śrāvakabhūmi* (as well as the commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā*)³⁴ takes quite a different position compared to the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Dharmaskandha*. Here this mode of differentiation is consistently applied to various types of one’s own mental factors.³⁵ Thus the *Śrāvakabhūmi* indicates in one place that mindfulness is applied to feelings “internally” when it takes those of (one’s own) feelings as objects that have arisen in relation to one’s own living body.³⁶ Mindfulness is applied to feelings “externally” when it takes those of (one’s own) feelings as objects that have arisen in relation to inanimate matter. It is applied to feelings “internally as well as externally” when it takes those of (one’s own) feelings as objects that have arisen in relation to the living bodies of others. In the case of contemplation of corpses, “external” feelings would be those that have arisen when contemplating decaying corpses, and feelings that are “internal as well as external” are those that arise when one realizes that one’s own body will sooner or later be in the same condition.³⁷

According to another passage, “internal” are those mental factors that pertain to tranquillity (*samatha*); “external” those that arise before the time of meditative contemplation or that interrupt it due to lack of attentiveness, and “internal as well as external” are those that pertain to discriminative contemplation (*vipaśyanā*).³⁸

As already mentioned, according to the *Śrāvakabhūmi* the exercises that pertain to absorption proper also comprise contemplation of dependent arising and the development of benevolence (*maitrī*). In these cases, too,

34 The remark by Gethin 1992: 54 that contemplation of the feelings, etc., of others is also taken into account in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa* does not seem to be supported by the text; perhaps he bases himself on note 2 in Lamotte 1970: 1175, which has no support in the original. To prove this by way of example, I give what the text has to say on *citta* (“mind”, i.e. perceptions and thoughts) as an object of contemplation: *citta* is “external” when it takes external *dharma*s as object, “internal” when it takes internal *dharma*s as objects; mental (i.e., non-sensory) processes (*manovijñāna*) are “internal”, sense perceptions are “external”; when the mind is collected and enters absorption it is “internal”, distracted mind, in contrast, is “external”; states of mind associated with “external” hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) or *bodhyaṅgas* are “external”, associated with “internal” are “internal” (in which case obviously hindrances and *bodhyaṅgas* are considered as “external” or “internal” according to the object to which they are related; cf. S.V.108ff (S.46.52), discussed below; there is no reference to mental factors of another person).

35 Perceiving the mental condition of another person through supernormal mental abilities (*abhijñā*) is not taken into consideration in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, since here the fourfold mindfulness in its three modes is already undertaken during the initial phases of practice. An awareness of the feelings, etc., of others based on observing bodily or verbal activities is also not mentioned.

36 *Śrāvakabhūmi* Study Group 2007: II.188,16–190,3.

37 *Śrāvakabhūmi* Study Group 2007: II.192,17f.

38 Shukla 1973: 423,12–424,6.

the fourfold mindfulness in its three modes finds its application. In what follows, I limit myself to the practice of benevolence (*maitrī*). Since the object of this practice are living beings as a whole, that is, all of the five *skandhas*, body plus mental factors, the four forms of mindfulness are also an integrated whole. They are directed “internally” when contemplating oneself as someone who wishes for happiness and is averse to suffering, “externally” when contemplating another person like this, and “internally and externally” when empathy is generated in line with the Golden Rule (“as I am, so are others”).³⁹

The diversity of various attempts at interpretation in the texts, of which the present survey has only scratched the surface, goes to show that the differentiation of the fourfold practice of mindfulness according to the categories “internal”, “external”, and “internal as well as external” was evidently already a problem for tradition itself. For a solution from a historical perspective, I can therefore at best offer hints for further reflection.

In the context of mindfulness related to the body, it seems to me that the employment of these categories in relation to contemplating the body as a conglomeration of impure substances and in relation to contemplation of corpses is quite obvious.⁴⁰

For an application to mental factors, I see two points of departure: on the one side there is mindfulness in relation to one’s own states of mind side by side with knowing the states of mind of others as a supernormal ability. On the other side there are passages like *Suttanipāta* 738 and 1111,⁴¹ according to which all feelings are unsatisfactory, independent of whether they are “internal” or “external”, so that desire for them should be given up. Here one would certainly think of one’s own feelings:⁴² those that come from the inside and those stimulated by contact with other persons or external things. Another passage is *Theragāthā* 337, where “internal” and

39 Shukla 1973: 427,12–428,8; Maithrimurthi 1999: 282 and 301f #3.

40 Cf. Sn.v.203 (context: 193 bodily motions; 194–199 impure bodily parts; 200f corpses; 202f giving up attachment to the body, be this one’s own or that of another person, based on the insight that the dead body was earlier as much alive as these, and that this will sooner or later be as dead as that one: *yathā idaṃ tathā etaṃ, yathā etaṃ tathā idaṃ | ajjhataṃ ca bahiddhā ca kāye chandaṃ virājaye*, etc.). In this context cf. also *Theragāthā*, Th.v.396 with commentary (cf. Norman 1969: 188) and *Therīgāthā*, Thī.v.83. Cf. also S.V.263f and 277f. I am indebted to M. Maithrimurthi for drawing my attention to these and several other passages.

41 Sn.v.738 (= S.IV.205,1ff): *sukhaṃ vā yađi vā dukkhaṃ | adukkha-m-asukhaṃ saha || ajjhataṃ ca bahiddhā ca | yaṃ kiñci atthi veditaṃ || etaṃ dukkhaṃ ti ñatvāna ...* Sn.v.1111: *ajjhataṃ ca bahiddhā ca vedanaṃ nābhinandato evaṃ satassa carato ...*

42 Despite the commentary, Spk.III.74: *ajjhataṃ ca bahiddhā ca ti attano parassa ca.*

“external” ‘influxes’ (*āsava*) are mentioned, i.e., unwholesome emotions, which the liberated one has overcome, where the differentiation can only refer to the factors that act as a trigger.⁴³

This fits also with *Samyutta-nikāya* 46.52,⁴⁴ where the five ‘hindrances’ (*nīvaraṇa*) and the seven ‘limbs of awakening’ (*bojjhaṅga*), which in the ‘Discourse on the Presence of Mindfulness’ form the objects of mindfulness directed to *dharmas*, are doubled to 10 or 14 by distinguishing two variants in each case. With some, but not at all with each of them, this takes place by distinguishing between “internal” and “external”, such as in the case of sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*).⁴⁵ Whereas in the ‘Discourse on the Presence of Mindfulness’ the appearance of such a hindrance is only mentioned in concrete terms as ‘internally’ (*ajjhataṃ*, i.e. in oneself), now there is a distinction between desire for sensual pleasures “internally” (*ajjhataṃ*) and desire for sensual pleasures “externally” (*bahiddhā*), both of which function as a hindrance, obviously for one’s own absorption or spiritual perfection. Here the distinction between “internal” and “external” can only refer to the objective domain of the desire. This is not only confirmed in the commentary,⁴⁶ but also holds for the remaining cases, where this distinction is made. An example is the hindrance of doubt, where it is explicitly indicated that this refers to “internal” events (i.e. the nature and destiny of one’s own five *skandhas*) or else to “external” events (i.e. the trustworthiness of the master, namely the Buddha).

Part of the tradition has apparently take up the first notion (“external” = mental conditions of others), another part the second notion (“external” = one’s own mental condition with relation to the external world). The respective sources suggest that the first tradition might be found more among systematic exegesis (i.e., the Abhidharma), whereas the second could be found more among yoga-practitioners (the *Śrāvakabhūmi* is a fairly practice-oriented work of the *Yogācāras*). But this is only a conjecture.

43 So also Th-a.II.142: *ajjhataṃ ajjhata-vatthukā, bahiddhā ca bahiddhā-vavakaṭṭha-vatthukā ca āsavā*.

44 S.V.110f; corresponding to SĀ 713 (esp. 191b11–c13).

45 See also in SĀ, but only in the case of *kāmacchanda* and *smṛti*, whereas in the Pāli version the distinction “internal” and “external” is also applied to ill-will (*byāpāda*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), discernment of [wholesome or unwholesome?] factors of existence or teachings (*dhammavicaya*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

46 Spk.III.170,2–4.

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