

初期佛教之四念處

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提要

本文探討初期佛教典籍中的四念處，以巴利文四部與漢譯四阿含爲主要研究資料。

本文認爲四念處可能原本是一般性的通則，適用於不同的修行方法。巴利文與漢譯的各版本《念處經》雖載有許多具體的修行方法，然而各版所載修行方法的種類彼此差異頗大，本文試圖從此經的成立與發展來了解其中的問題。本文探討經中常見的以四禪爲中心的修行過程與四念處的關係。本文指出四念處中的身，受，心即爲五蘊中的色，受，識三蘊，並討論爲什麼只有此三蘊特別被聯繫到四念處。

The Four *Satipaṭṭhānas* in Early Buddhism

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I. Introduction

This essay is an attempt to explore the teachings on the four *Satipaṭṭhānas* (establishments of mindfulness or foundations of mindfulness) in early Buddhism.¹ The principle sources for this essay will be the Pali *Nikāyas* and the Chinese translation of the *Āgamas*. The *Abhidhamma*, both Pali and Chinese versions, and the Pali commentaries will be utilised in aid of the understanding of this subject in the early Buddhist texts. It is worth exploring what the four *satipaṭṭhānas* originally refer to and which accounts could be regarded as the essential or earlier teachings on the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.

II. Various Versions of the Satipaṭṭhānas Sutta

As R. M. L. Gethin (1992a:44) indicates, the *Satipaṭṭhānas Sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya* appear identical except for the addition in the latter of a detailed

¹ I would like to thank Professor Gombrich for his very helpful guidance and correcting my English. I would also like to thank Dr Sue Hamilton and Dr Eivind Kahrs for their useful suggestions. I am also grateful to the members of editing & reviewing committee of the *Satyābhisamaya: A Buddhist Studies Quarterly* for their valuable comments, which gave me an opportunity to improve this essay.

exposition of the four noble truths.² Both texts seem to be a composite of extracts from other texts. Masahiro Shimoda (1985: 545-6) shows that several passages in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* are found in other *suttas* in the *Nikāyas*. He argues that the accounts in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* are not necessarily related to the four *satipaṭṭhāna* and that they are common in early Buddhist texts. Gethin (1992a: 45) also notes:

these fourteen practices³ that can form the basis of *kāyānupassanā* draw on themes and stock passages that are found scattered throughout the *Nikāyas*. In effect, then, the various *Nikāya* elements that might constitute *kāyānupassanā* are brought together to give something of a summary account.

Gethin (1992a: 44-45) gives an account of the basic structure of the (*Mahā*)*satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* as follows:

After the initial setting of the scene the discourse opens with what I call ‘the *ekāyana* formula’:

Ekāyana, bhikkhus, is this path for the purification of beings, for passing beyond sorrow and grief, for the disappearance of pain and discontent, for the attainment of the right way, for the realization of

² T. W. Rhys Davids (1910:337) says: ‘The *Dīgha* addition is interesting as containing a fragment of Old Commentary (as old as the texts) of which other fragments are found in the *Nikāyas*, and also in the *Vinaya*’. K. R. Norman (1983: 40) states: ‘The addition uses a style of definition which is similar to that found in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, and its unusually detailed character has led to the suggestion that it is perhaps a fragment from an early commentary which has crept into the canon (referring to Rhys Davids’ statement cited above)’.

³ These refer to the practices described in the six sections of *kāyānupassanā* stated below, where the sixth section contains nine practices.

nibbāna—that is the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.⁴

This is immediately followed by the basic *Satipaṭṭhāna formula* as stated at the opening of this chapter. The remainder of the sutta consists basically of a detailed description of the practice of *kāyānupassanā*, *vedamānupassanā*, *cittānupassanā* and *dhammānupassanā*; in other words each of the four parts of the basic formula is explained by way of example and Subsequently expanded.

The basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula is:

The four establishments of mindfulness. What four Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, having removed covetousness and grief for the world. He dwells contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, having removed covetousness and grief for the world. He dwells contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, having removed covetousness and grief for the world. He dwells contemplating *dhammas as dhammas*, ardent, fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, having removed covetousness and grief for the world.⁵

The detailed descriptions of the practice of *vedanānupassanā*

⁴ MN II, 55-56; DIN II 290: *ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggio sattānaṃ visuddhiyā sokapariddavānaṃ samatikkamāya dukkhadomanassānaṃ athagāmdya nāyassa adhigamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā.*

⁵ MN I, 56; DN II, 290: *cattaro satipaṭṭhānā. katame cattāro? idha bhikkhave bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijhādomanassaṃ, vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijhādomamassaṃ, citte cittānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijhādomanassaṃ, dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijhādomanassaṃ.*

(contemplation of feelings) and that of *cittānupassanā* (contemplation of mind) are much shorter and simpler than the other two. The detailed description of the practice of *kāyānupassanā* (contemplation of the body) can be divided into six sections:

- (i) mindfulness of breathing,
- (ii) the four postures,
- (iii) full awareness,
- (iv) foulness—the bodily parts,
- (v) elements,
- (vi) the nine charnel ground contemplations.

The detailed description of the practice of *dhammānupassanā* (contemplation of *dhammas*) is composed of five sections:

- (i) the five hindrances,
- (ii) the five aggregates,
- (iii) the six bases,
- (iv) the seven enlightenment factors,
- (v) the four noble truths.⁶

Lambert Schmithausen (1976) takes the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula, which he calls ‘the short definition of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, as a standard for judging the authenticity of other parts of these two texts. He assumes that the detailed description of the practice of *vedanānupassanā* and that of *cittānupassanā* have been passed down relatively unaltered in the Pali and other versions, because they agree best with the short definition of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, and because in

⁶ These headings are given in Ñānamoli & Bodhi, 1995: 145-8, 151-4.

these two cases the divergences among different versions⁷ are limited to inessential details. Then he proposes two criteria for deciding to what extent the components of the detailed description of *kāyānupassanā* and that of *dhammānupassanā* are authentic: one is the extent to which individual components have parallel versions in the teaching passed down through other schools; the other is the extent to which individual components fit in with the detailed description of *vedanānupassanā* and that of *cittānupassanā* and the short definition. Accordingly he argues that (i) the five hindrances, (iii) the six bases and (iv) the seven enlightenment factors in the detailed description of *dhammānupassanā* and (ii) the bodily postures in the detailed description of *kāyānupassanā* are authentic. He (1976: 251-2) points out that the remaining five sections in the detailed description of *kāyānupassanā* are either found elsewhere in the Canon as an independent exercise or as a component of another particular set of teachings (i, iii, vi), or can be reworkings of older materials (iv, v).

However, Schmithausen's explanation is far too brief: 'The explanations given for contemplation of feelings and of mind agree best with the short definition (B), which says that a monk constantly follows his feelings (or mind, as object of observation) with his contemplation' (1976: 247) This explanation is insufficient to show how they agree with the short definition. In addition, the short definition, which he uses as a criterion for judging the authenticity of

⁷ He uses six versions: 1) Pali version; 2) Chinese *Madhyama Āgama* (T 1, 582b 7 ff.); 3) Chinese *Ekottara Āgama* (T2, 568a 1 ff.); 4) Pv 203,22-207, 14; 5) ŚA 612b 28-616c 7; 6) ŚrBh 291, 5 ff. ; 371,7 ff.; 203, 4 ff; 111, 11 ff.

the detailed descriptions of the four types of *anupassanā*, is not found in either of the Chinese versions of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,⁸ whereas the occurrence of similar descriptions in different versions of the text (or teachings preserved by different schools) is an important support for the authenticity of these descriptions according to his argument. Moreover, the authenticity of the detailed description of *cittānupassanā* is doubtful. Shimoda (1985: 545) indicates that the same passage in the detailed description of *cittānupassanā* is found in other *suttas*,⁹ and that in these *suttas* it is a description of how an enlightened person understands the minds of other beings, while only the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* takes it as contemplation of one's own mind. I would like to point out that this passage itself does not specify whose mind is being contemplated; it runs as follows: 'A monk understands a mind with lust as a mind with lust. He understands a mind without lust as a mind without lust...with hatred... without hatred...'¹⁰ (The same is said of other pairs of mental states). Moreover, this passage should be meant to describe a method of practice, whereas in many other *suttas*¹¹ the same passage refers to a special power as an achievement, and it is always among a list of achievements.¹² As far as I know, in all contexts

⁸ The texts in the Chinese *Madhyama Āgama* (T 1, 582b 7 ff.) and *Ekottara Āgama* (T2, 568a II ff.) mentioned above.

⁹ DNI, 79 (it should be 79-80); I, 232 (it should be 233); MN I, 34; MN I, 69.

¹⁰ MNI, 59; DN II, 299: *bhikkhu sarāgaṃ vā citaṃ sarāgam citan ti pajānāti, vītarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ vītarāgaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti... sadosaṃ... vītadosaṃ...*

¹¹ E.g. DN I, 79-80; DN I, 233; DN III, 281; MN I, 34; MN I, 69; MNIII, 12; MN III, 98; SN II, 121-122; SN II, 213; SN V, 265; SN V, 304; AN I, 255; AN III, 17-18; AN III, 280.

¹² This passage in the Chinese versions can also be found at other places in the *Āgamas* where it refers to a special power among a list of achievements. E.g. T 1, 553b; T 2, 776b.

except for the (*Mahā*) *satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, this passage is preceded by the sentence ‘He understands (or ‘May I understand’ or ‘I understand’ or ‘Do you understand’) the minds of other beings, of other persons, having encompassed them with [his (my, your) own] mind’,¹³ which makes it clear that this passage indicates the ability to understand others’ minds. Without this sentence the meaning of this passage would be very vague in that we cannot tell whose mind this passage refers to. The frequent occurrence of this passage preceded by the above sentence¹⁴ shows that the complete stock passage must include this sentence. Since different *Nikāyas* were handed down orally, and probably redacted, by different *bhāṇakas* (‘reciters’ or ‘preachers’),¹⁵ the fact that this complete stock passage’ is found at so many places in all the four primary *Nikāyas* suggests that this ‘complete stock passage’ could belong to a very early stratum, or at least that it was accepted as essential by *bhāṇakas* of all these four *Nikāyas*. Therefore, the passage in the detailed description of *cittānupassand* must originally refer to a special power as found at many other places, where it is always preceded by the foregoing sentence ‘He understands (or ‘May I understand’ or ‘I understand’ or ‘Do you understand’) the minds of

¹³ *paras attānaṃ parapuggalānaṃ cetasā ceto paricca pajānāti (or)pajāneyyaṃ, or pajānāmi, or pajānātha).*

¹⁴ E.g. all the passages cited in note 11.

¹⁵ K. R. Norman (1983: 9) states: ‘We may deduce from the fact that versions of one and the same sutta or utterance in different parts of the canon sometimes differ, that the *bhāṇakas* responsible for the transmission of each text were quite independent, and were not influenced by the the traditions of the *bhāṇakas* of other *nikāyas*’. Norman(1989: 34) says: ‘the *bhāṇakas* did not merely recite texts, but also added to their collections’. Oskar von Hinüber (1997: 25) also states that *bhāṇakas* may have been the redactors of the texts.

other beings, of other persons, having encompassed them with his (my, your) own mind'. The compilers of the *(Mahā)satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* borrowed this passage from the 'complete stock passage' in older texts, using it as a detailed description of *cittānupassanā*.

Therefore, Schmithausen's argument about judging the authenticity of components of the *(Mahā)satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* seems untenable. I will deal with this problem using a different approach in the next section.

III. A General Guideline for the Buddhist Practices

1

Just as the MN and DN contain the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* respectively, the SN too has a part called *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*. Since different *Nikāyas* were transmitted by different *bhāṇakas*, ideas occurring in both the *(Mahā) satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* are most likely to be earlier teachings on the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. Let us compare the contents of the *(Mahā) satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* with those of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*. Only the following points are common to the *(Mahā) satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*:

- 1) the *ekāyana* formula as stated by Gethin (1992a: 44) above. (e.g. MN I, 55-56; SN V, 141)
- 2) the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula as stated by Gethin (1992a: 45) above. (e.g. MN I, 56; SN V, 141)

- 3) the *samudayavaya* formula: he dwells contemplating the nature of arising in the body; he dwells contemplating the nature of vanishing in the body; he dwells contemplating the nature of arising and vanishing in the body...(The same is said of feelings, mind, and *dhammas*).¹⁶
- 4) the *sampajāna* formula, i.e. the Section about full awareness in the detailed description of *kāyānupassanā*: he acts in full awareness when going forward and going backward; he acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking behind; he acts in full awareness when bending back and stretching out (his limbs); he acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; he acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, chewing and tasting; he acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; he acts in full awareness when going, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, speaking and keeping silent.¹⁷

We can find that the first three formulae are all general guidelines without any detailed explanation of the practice of the four *Satipaṭṭhānas*. The fourth will be discussed later. In fact, neither in the Pali *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* nor in its equivalent in the Chinese

¹⁶ E.g. MN I, 56, 59, 60 ; SN V, 183; *samudayadhammānupassī (vā) kāyasmim viharati, vayasānupassī(vā) kāyasim viharai, samudayavayadammānupassī(vā) kāyasmim viharati...*

¹⁷ E.g. MN I, 57; SN V, 142: *abhikkante paṭikkante sampajānakārī hoti, ālokite vilokite sampajānakārī hoti, sammūjite pasārites. h., saṅghāṭipattacāvaradhāraṇe s.h., asite pīte khāyite sāyite s.h., uccārapassāvakamme s.h., gate thite nisinne suite jāgarite bhāsīte tuṅhībhāve sampajānakārī hoti.*

translation of the *Samyukta Āgama* (Chapter 24) is there any detailed explanation of the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* except the above-mentioned 4) *sampajāna* formula and the following *suttas*:

- a) *sutta* 10 (sūtra 615), which will be discussed later
- b) *sutta* 35

The contents of other *suttas* (*sūtras*) are mostly comprised of the benefits of the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, its importance, its attributes and its relation with *sīla*. Consequently, an examination of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta* and the possibly earlier teachings preserved in the (*Mahā*) *satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* shows that almost all the statements concerning the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are general guidelines or information other than how to practise them. As indicated by Gethin and Schmithausen, many of the detailed and concrete methods of practice described in the (*Mahā*) *satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* are borrowed from other contexts. Not all of them are originally meant for the four *Satipaṭṭhānas*.¹⁸

2

The *ekāyana* formula is found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the first, eighteenth and forty-third *suttas* of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta*. As Gethin (1992a: 59) points out, in the

¹⁸ E.g. the detailed description of *cittānupassanā* discussed above, and the practice ‘with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the palate, restraining mind with mind’ found in the detailed description of *kāyānupassanā* in the Chinese *Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra* (T 1, 582c). J. Bronkhorst (1993: 1) points out that the latter is one of the practices which the Buddha, before his enlightenment, tried out and then discovered to be fruitless (MN 1, 242).

four primary *Nikāyas* the formula describing the *ekāyana-magga* is only applied to the *satipaṭṭhānas*.¹⁹ He also discusses the possible meanings of *ekāyana* in this context. He is in favour of interpreting it as ‘going al one’ and ‘going to one’ (Gethin, 1992a: 64). Although he has already considered the passage in the Bṛh 2.4.11 (Gethin, 1992a: 61), I would like to suggest an alternative interpretation of *ekāyana-magga* based on that passage. Here *ekāyana* means a ‘point of convergence’ (Olivelle, 1998: 68-69). Likewise, the *ekāyana-magga* could imply that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* constitute the path which is a converging point for various types of practice. This interpretation is actually in accordance with his statement that ‘As for the *Nikāyas*, there is a sense in which, of the seven sets, the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are the most versatile and universally applicable.... with the four *satipaṭṭhānas* we have the nearest thing in the four *Nikāyas* to basic general instruction in Buddhist “[meditation] practice” or yoga’ (Gethin, 1992a: 65-66). This interpretation of *ekāyana-magga* can also explain why the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* and the possibly earlier teachings found in the *(Mahā)satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* only contain general guidelines with very limited concrete descriptions of how to practise. As a guideline, the four *Satipaṭṭhānas* are to be applied to various sets of practices, or cover these practices.

¹⁹ However, in the Chinese *SĀ* this formula is found to refer also to other sets of practice such as the four *iddhipadas* (T2, 147b), and mindfulness of the *Buddha*, *dharmā*, *sangha*, morality, giving and gods (T 2, 143c-144a).

3

In Chapter 24 of the Chinese SĀ, which is equivalent to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* of the SN, a *sūtra* says ‘all *dharmas* are termed the four *satipaṭṭhānas*’ (T 2, 175c). I will explain that in this case the context shows that ‘*dharmas*’ should refer to the teachings on practice. This *sūtra* (No. 633 of the SĀ according to the Taisho edition) is among a series of *sūtras* (No. 628-No. 636) beginning with the words: ‘Thus have I heard. Once the Buddha was staying at Kukkuṭārāma in Pāṭaliputra’. In this series the four *sūtras* preceding the *sūtra* in question (No. 629-632) have the same pattern, i.e. the venerable Bhadra asked the venerable Ānanda a question like this: ‘Is there a *dharma* (or ‘are there *dharmas*’) which, being cultivated and intensely cultivated, can.....?’²⁰ Ānanda’s answer in each of the above *sūtras* is the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. The *sūtras* in question and the next three *sūtras* all have ‘the Buddha told the monks...’ (No. 633-636). The *sūtra* in question says ‘the Buddha told the monks: “All *dharmas* that have been preached....All *dharmas* are termed the four *satipaṭṭhānas*...”’²¹ and

²⁰ In No. 629 the question is: ‘Is there a *dharma* which, being cultivated and intensely cultivated, can make a practitioner attain the stage beyond relapse?’ In No. 630 the question is: ‘Is there a *dharma* which, being cultivated and intensely cultivated, can make an impure being obtain purity, and further increase his radiance?’ In No. 631 the question is: ‘Is there a *dharma* which, being cultivated and intensely cultivated, can make one who has not reached the opposite shore reach the opposite shore?’ In No. 632 the question is: ‘Is there a *dharma* which, being cultivated and intensely cultivated, [makes one] achieve arahantship?’

²¹ This passage is a bit odd. It might have to be translated as ‘the Buddha told the monks about all *dharmas* that have been preached...’

in the following two *sūtras* the Buddha told the monks to ‘cultivate and intensely cultivate the four *satipaṭṭhānas*’. Therefore, from the context of this series of *sūtras*, ‘*dhammas*’ can mean nothing but the Buddhist practices, or the Buddha’s teachings on practice. This echoes the *ekāyana* formula if we take the *ekāyana-magga* as the path which is the point of convergence of various practices.

I have not found any similar statement in the Pali Canon except one passage in the *Kathāvathu*, where the opinion that ‘all *dhammas* are the *satipaṭṭhānas*’ (*sabbe dhammā satipaṭṭhānā*) is refuted (Kv 155ff.). But here *sabbe dhammā* refers to all cognizable things (Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, 1915: 105). The commentary (KvA 52) attributes this view to the Andhakas, who held that the objects (*ārammaṇadhamma*) of mindfulness were themselves mindfulness on the ground of a passage in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*: ‘Monks, I shall show you the arising and the cessation of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*’²². Similarly, the Mahāvibhāṣā, a Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma text, offers three interpretations of the term *satipaṭṭhāna* (**smṛtyupasthāna*), and each of the three is said to be based on a quotation from the *sūtra*. The third is ‘the *satipaṭṭhāna* as objects’ (**ālambana-smṛtyupasthāna*), which is said to be supported by the words ‘all *dhammas* are the four *satipaṭṭhānas*’ as found in the SĀ (*sūtra* No. 633) cited above.²³ Here the Sarvāstivādins interpreted ‘all *dhammas*’ as ‘all cognisable objects’

²² SN V, 184: *Catunnam bhikkhave satipaṭṭhānānam samudayaṃ ca atthagamaṃ ca desissāmi*.

This is in *Sutta* 42, which will be discussed in section V.

²³ T 27, 936c.

and this is exactly the opinion held by the Andhakas which is criticised in the *Kathāvatthu*. Therefore, the Andhakas could also have based their argument on the same passage as found in *sūtra* No. 633 of the *SĀ*, which is considered to be a work of the Sarvāstivāda tradition or of a school related to it.²⁴ Moreover, the aforementioned explanation given by the commentary on the *Kathāvatthu* for the reason why the Andhakas held this view does not seem very plausible,²⁵ and it is more likely that they resorted to a passage like that in *sūtra* No. 633 and twisted the meaning of *dhammas* as the Sarvāstivādins did. If this is the case, the Buddhist Canons of at least two traditions contained the passage that all *dhammas* are the *satipaṭṭhānas*, and thus it is more likely that this passage is early although it is missing in the Pali Canon. However, it is also possible that this passage is a later addition by the Sarvāstivādins, and even the Andhakas, to support their own argument, as noted by Collett Cox (1992: 94): ‘the possibility cannot be excluded that the scriptural collections as currently extant have been influenced and modified by doctrinal and sectarian concerns usually considered characteristic of Abhidharma’.

4

Some passages in the Canon also imply that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* serve as a guideline for all the Buddha’s teaching. In *Sutta* 9 of the

²⁴ According to Lü (1963: 242), Kumoi (1963: 248), Ui (1965: 136) and Prasad (1993: 51).

²⁵ Commenting on ‘Monks, I shall show you the arising and the cessation of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*’, Bodhi (2000, 1928) indicates that “here *satipaṭṭhāna* (sic) obviously refers to the four objects of mindfulness’. There is no mention of ‘all objects’.

Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta (SN V, 152-154) and the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN II, 100; T 1, 15b) the Buddha gives the following instruction when he knows he will pass away before long: ‘Dwell with yourselves as your island, with yourselves as your refuge, with no other refuge; [dwell] with the dhamma as your island, with the *dhamma* as your refuge, with no other refuge’²⁶, and how to dwell in this way is explained by the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula. The Buddha gives the same instruction on the occasion of Sāriputta’s death in *Sutta* 13 of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* (SN V, 161-3, equivalent to *sūtra* 638 in the Chinese SĀ, T 2, 176b ff) and on the occasion of Sāriputta’s and Moggallāna’s deaths in the next *sutta* (SN V, 163-5; T 2, 177a-b). In these *suttas* the Buddha shows that even though good examples for the monks no longer exist, they can still rely on themselves and the *dhamma* by practising the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. This implies that the *satipaṭṭhānas* are the essence of the *dhamma*, the Buddha’s teaching, or they serve as a guideline that covers all the Buddha’s teaching. Similarly, according to an account in *Sutta* 22 of the the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*, Ānanda told Bhadda:

It is, friend, because the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are not cultivated and not much practised that the true *dhamma* does not last long after a Tathāgata has attained final Nibbāna. And, friend, it is because the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are cultivated and much practised that the true *dhamma* lasts long after a Tathāgata has attained final Nibbāna.²⁷

²⁶ *attadīpā viharatha atlasaraṇā anaññsaraṇā, dhammadīpā dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā.*

In this case, the true *dhamma* must refer to the Buddha's essential teaching. This implies that the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* is tantamount to the maintaining of the true dhamma, i.e. the Buddha's essential teaching.

5

As Gethin (1992b, 157-8) points out, divergence can be found between the Pali *Dasuttara Sutta* and the corresponding versions of the *Daśottara sūtra* that survive in Buddhist Sanskrit and Chinese translation. Commenting on this, he said:

This seems to me a very good illustration of why we should not think in terms of an “original” or “correct” version of such a text. Rather, what we have here is a mnemonic technique and system of arrangement...; this technique and system...yielding a structure within which, provided one knows what one is doing, it is perfectly legitimate to improvise as one feels appropriate.

A similar principle may be applied to the case where we find considerable differences between the Pali (*Mahā*)*satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the corresponding Chinese versions.²⁸ As shown above, the four

²⁷ SN V, 172: *catunnaṃ kho āvuso satipaṭṭhānāṃ abhāvitattā abahulīkatattā tathāgate parinibbute saddhamma na ciraṭṭhitiko hoti. catunnaṃ ca kho āvuso satipaṭṭhānāṃ bhāvitattā bahulīkatata tathāgate parinibbute saddhamma ciraṭṭhitiko hoti*

²⁸ Here the Chinese versions refer to both the *Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra* in the *Madhyama Āgama*, which is attributed to the Sarvāstivāda school (Bhikṣu Thich Minh Chau, 1991: 18-27; Uī, 1965: 136) and the first *sūtra* of the *Ekāyana Chapter* of the *Ekottara Āgama*, which is attributed to the Mahāsāṅghika school (Lü, 1963: 242; Kumoi, 1963: 248, Uī, 1965: 137-138). For a comparison between the Pali and Chinese versions, see appendix.

Satipaṭṭhānas occupy an important position in the Buddhist teaching, and so compilers of the Canon may have thought it necessary to compile a *sutta* (*sūtra*) dedicated to this practice. Therefore, it is possible that the compilers of the Canon, within the basic framework of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, improvised as they felt appropriate the detailed descriptions for each of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* and thereby formed an independent *sutta* (*sūtra*). Consequently, even descriptions that are originally irrelevant to the four *satipaṭṭhānas* were included into it. Since early Buddhist literature was an oral one, the improvising and ensuing modification of this *sutta* (*sūtra*) may have continued for centuries until the Canon became fixed in the form of written texts.²⁹ Before this point schisms had occurred, so different schools may have developed this *sutta* (*sūtra*) in different ways during the period of oral tradition. Therefore considerable divergences exist between the Pali and Chinese versions of the (*Mahā*) *satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* that have come down to us.

The possibility cannot be excluded that the Buddha may have illustrated the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* by using various concrete methods of practice au examples, perhaps on different

²⁹ Mark Allon (1997: 366-367) sums up the possible reasons for change to occur in the transmission of memorised texts. One of them seems to fit this case quite well: ‘For example, the insertion of another list of, say, “five good things” in a text containing a parallel list of fives would not be a violation of *buddhavacana* (the Buddha’s words), because the Buddha had in fact spoken of these “five good things” on another occasion. It is still the Dhamma and their inclusion could be seen to improve, rather than corrupt, the text’.

occasions.³⁰ Different versions of the (*Mahā*)*satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* might have been formed by bringing these methods together. However, as far as I know, very few of these methods of practice³¹ are explicitly related to the *satipaṭṭhānas* in other parts of the *Nikāyas* or *Āgamas*; many of them are stock passages found in several other contexts. If they were meant to be the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, this would be mentioned in other parts of the *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas*, perhaps more than once,³² as the *satipaṭṭhāna* is a teaching of great importance in Buddhism.

To sum up, these methods of practice may have been gradually subsumed in the list of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* through the process of improvisation. On the other hand, as the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are general guidelines which can apply to various Buddhist practices, from the viewpoint of the compilers it may not be wrong to arrange these concrete methods of practice under the headings of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. Therefore, we might not be able to find which components of these concrete descriptions of practices are authentic, or to re-establish an

³⁰ The narrative framework could be arbitrarily set up in the compilation of the Canon, as Richard Gombrich (1990, 22) points out: ‘In its account of how the Canon came to be compiled, at the First Council, the introduction to the *Sumāṅgalavilāsinī* frankly says that words of the narrative portions were inserted on that occasion, and thus clearly distinguishes between the words attributed to the Buddha and their settings.’

³¹ E.g. the mindfulness of breathing and the *sampajāna* formula, which will be discussed later.

³² As indicated by L.S. Cousins (1983, 2): ‘the great four nikayas often read as if they were simply different performances of the same material. Many of the episodes of a composition such as the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* are to be found scattered over the other three nikayas, often more than once.’

‘original’ version of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*; nevertheless we can attempt to find the reasons why certain practices were included in any of the different versions of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. For example, sutta 1 of the *Ānāpāna Saṃyutta* (SNV, 311-312) lists sixteen aspects in the practice of mindfulness of breathing. *Sutta* 10 (V, 323-324) divides them into four tetrads, which are correlated with the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.

³³ The first tetrad, which is connected to *kāyānupassanā*, is the same as the mindfulness of breathing found in the detailed description of *kāyānupassanā* in different versions of the (*Mahā*) *satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,
³⁴ and thus the compilers of these versions of the (*Mahā*) *satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* may have borrowed this tetrad from a context like that in *sutta* 10. Other practices such as the *sampajāna* formula and perception of light will be discussed in the following sections.

IV. The Four *Satipaṭṭhānas* and the Path to Liberation

Some scholars³⁵ have indicated different meditational schemes or types of path to liberation found in the Buddhist Canon. A scheme of the path to liberation, with some differences, is found at several places in the *Nikāyas*.³⁶ It is composed of the four *jhānas*, the preparation for *jhānas*, and the achievements after the fourth *jhāna*. I will show that some passages concerning the four *satipaṭṭhānas*

³³ Precisely speaking, they are linked with the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula.

³⁴ MIN I, 56; DIN III, 291; T 1, 582c.

³⁵ E.g. Lambert Schmithausen (1981) and Tilmann Vetter (1988: xxi-xxii).

³⁶ E.g. DN 2, 10; MN 27, 38, 39, 51, 112.

correspond to the descriptions of the four *jhānas* and the preparation for *jhānas*, and some descriptions of this path imply the application of the *satipaṭṭhānas*.

The preparation for *ghanas* contains the following steps:

1. practising morality (*sīla*)
2. restraining the Senses
3. mindfulness and full awareness
4. finding a solitary place and starting meditation in a sitting posture
5. abandoning the five hindrances³⁷

This does not mean that each step occurs after the previous step has been finished, but rather each step, after having been taken, remains throughout the following steps. Each step could serve as a basis for the following ones, and the *ghanas* are based on these preparatory practices.

1

According to *Sutta* 3 of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* (SNV, 142-144), when being requested by a monk to teach him the *dhamma* in brief, the Buddha says:

Well then, monk, purify the very starting point of wholesome states. And what is the starting point of wholesome states? Morality that is well purified and view that is straight. Then, monk, when your morality is well purified and your view straight, based on morality (*sīla*), established on morality, you should develop the four *satipaṭṭhānas* in a

³⁷ Tilmann Vetter (1988: 24-25) describes this as ‘A rather old, but perhaps not dating from the most ancient period...’.

threefold way.³⁸

This brief teaching may imply that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* correspond to (some of) the practices that are based on the first step, i.e. practising morality. I will show that this is likely.

Step 2 of the preparation for the *jhānas* is as follows:

On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at its signs or details (*na nimittaggāhī hoti nānubyañjanaggāhī*). Since evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him if he dwelt leaving the eye faculty unguarded, so he practises its restraint, guards the eye faculty, and undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty... (The same is said of the other five faculties.)³⁹

In *Sutta 6* and *Sutta 7* of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* (SNV, 146-149) the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, which are explained by the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula, are said to be a monk's resort, his own paternal domain, while the five cords of sensual pleasure (*pañica kāmagaṇā*) are said to be the domain of others. Māra will get a hold on those who stray outside their own resort into the domain of others; he will not get a hold on

³⁸ SN V, 143: *tasmā ita tvam bhikkhu ādim eva visodehi* (sic; it should be *visodhehi*) *kusalesu dhammesu. ko cādi kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ? sīlaṃ* (sic; it should be *sīlañ*) *ca suvisuddhaṃ dīṭṭhi ca ujukā, yato kho te bhikkhu sīlañ ca suvisuddhaṃ bhavissati dīṭṭhi ca ujukā, tato tvan bhikkhu sīlaṃ nissaya sīle patiṭṭhāya cattāro satipaṭṭhāne tividhena bhāveyyāsi*. My translation mostly follows that of Bodhi (2000: 1629).

'A threefold way' refers to contemplating internally, contemplating externally, and contemplating both internally and externally.

³⁹ E.g. MN I, 180: *so cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimittaggāhī hoti nānubyañjanaggāhī, yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhundriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhādomanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyuṃ tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṃ, cakkhundriye saṃvaraṃ āpajjati...*

those who move in their own resort, in their own paternal domain. Therefore a monk's resort, his own paternal domain, seems to refer to the restraint of the senses. In other words, the practice of four *satipaṭṭhānas* can be applied to step 2 of the preparation for the *jhānas*. The basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula may imply that one should contemplate the body 'as a body' without further grasping at its signs or details such as attractive or repulsive features,⁴⁰ which may cause desire or aversion. The same applies to contemplation of other objects. Therefore one would not be invaded by 'evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief', which is paraphrased as 'having removed covetousness and grief for the world' in the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula.

2

The description of step 3 is the same as the *sampajāna* formula mentioned above. This formula serves as an explanation for the term 'sampajāna' in *Sutta 2* of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta* (SNV, 142),⁴¹ and the term 'sampajāna' is contained in the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula. Therefore step 3, which is called the '*satisampajañña*' in the path to

⁴⁰ A similar expression is found in the *Cullaniddesa* (p. 272): Here someone sees a beautiful woman or girl. Having seen her he grasps at the sign in details (*anubyañjanaso nimittaṃ gaṇhāti*): beautiful hair, beautiful mouth...

⁴¹ However, in *Sutta 35 sampajāna* is explained as: 'Feelings are understood as they arise in a monk, understood as they remain present, understood as they vanish. Thoughts are understood as they arise, understood as they remain present, understood as they vanish. Apperceptions are understood as they arise, understood as they remain present, understood as they vanish. (SN V, 180-1: *bhikkhu no viditā vedanā upajanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatham gacchanti. viditā vitakka uppajanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatham gacchanti. viditā saññā uppajanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatham gacchanti.*)

liberation (e.g. DNI, 70; MN I, 181,274), can be counted as a practice of the *satipaṭṭhānas*.⁴² This may explain why the *sampajāna* formula is included in different versions of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.⁴³ Since this formula describes the full awareness of bodily activities, it is reasonable to arrange it under the heading of contemplation of the body as different versions of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* do.

3

Step 4 is: On returning from his almsround, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness (*satim upaṭṭhapetvā*) before him.⁴⁴ According to Gethin (1992a: 31-2), ‘*satipaṭṭhāna*’ may be etymologically composed of the same words as ‘*satim upaṭṭhapetvā*’, and hence this step may imply the application of the *satipaṭṭhānas* to the start of the sitting meditation.

⁴² Johannes Bronkhorst (1985:3E1) argues that there is no place for the *satisampajāñña* (which he calls ‘observation of the positions of the body’) in the four *satipaṭṭhānas* for the following reason. The stereotyped description of the path to liberation (e.g. MN I, 181, *Cūlahathipadopama Sutta*) distinguishes between preparatory exercises and ‘meditation’ proper. The former includes the *satisampajāñña*, while the first act in the latter case, in a motionless position, is ‘*satimdupaṭṭhapetvā*’, which he regards as the start of the *satipaṭṭhāna*. In my opinion, even though *satim upaṭṭhapetvā* and *satipaṭṭhāna* may be etymologically composed of the same words (Cf. Gethin, 1992a: 31-2), the former is unlikely to refer to the start of the *satipaṭṭhāna*. As I have shown, the *satisampajāñña*, which belongs to preparatory exercises, can be counted as a practice of the *satipaṭṭhānas*.

⁴³ MN I, 57; DN II, 292; T 1, 582b.

⁴⁴ E.g. MN I, 181, 274: *so pacchābhatam piṇḍapāṭapaṭikkanto nisīdati pallankaṃ ābhujitvā ujum kāyaṃ pañidhāya parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetvā*. The translation is that of Ñānamoli & Bodhi (1995, 181).

4

Step 5 is abandoning the five hindrances. In the description of abandoning one of the five hindrances it is stated that: ‘Having abandoned sloth and torpor, he dwells free from sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), perceiving light (*ālokasaññī*), mindful (*sato*) and fully aware (*sampajāno*)’.⁴⁵ Maurice Walshe (1995, 545) points out that ‘cultivation of the perception of light is given as a standard way of overcoming the hindrance of sloth-and-torpor’⁴⁶ Similarly, at AN IV, 85-87 the Buddha gave Mahāmoggallāna several pieces of advice on how to abandon torpor (*middha*), one of which is ‘Attend to the perception of light, concentrate on the perception of day: “as by day, so at night; as at night, so by day”. Thus, with your mind uncovered and unenveloped, develop a mind that is full of brightness’⁴⁷; another of them is “Lie down on your right side in the lion’s posture, with one leg laid on the other, mindful and fully aware, having attended to the perception of rising...’.⁴⁸ The Chinese counterpart, which is in the *Madhyama Āgama*, combines these two pieces of advice as ‘Lie down on your right side, with one leg laid on the other, [let your] mind make’⁴⁹

⁴⁵ E.g. MN II, 181, 275: *thīnamiddhaṃ pahāya vigatathīnamiddho viharati ālokasaññī sato sampajāno*.

⁴⁶ The phrase ‘*ālokasaññī sato sampajāno*’ is found at many places in a similar context, e.g., DN I, 71; D I, 207; DN III, 49; MN I, 269; MN I, 275; MN I, 347; MN II, 162.

⁴⁷ AN IV, 86: *ālokasaññaṃ manasikareyyāsi divāsaññaṃ adhiṭṭheyyāsi yathā divā tathā rattiṃ yathā rattiṃ tathā divā, iti vivaṭeṇa cetasā aparīyonaddhena sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ bhāveyyāsi*.

⁴⁸ AN IV, 87: *dakkhiṇeṇa passena sīhaseyyaṃ kappeyyāsi pādeṇa pādaṃ accādhāya sato sampajāno uṭṭhānasaññaṃ manasikarivā*.

⁴⁹ Mind make’ (心作) is obviously translated from a word equivalent to *manasikareyyasi* in the Pali version.

the perception of light, mindful and fully aware, constantly stick to the perception of rising’ (T1, 560a). The Chinese version is closer to ‘perceiving light, mindful and fully aware’ in step 5 than the Pali. Statements at these three places are all related to abandoning torpor (or ‘sloth and torpor’) in a similar way; they may have come from the same material, which was either expanded or contracted as the compilers felt appropriate. A similar statement is also found in the detailed description of contemplation of the body in the Chinese translation of the *Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra* (T 1, 583a):

A monk is mindful of the perception of light, and he well grasps, well holds and well memorises what he is mindful of. As before, so after, as after, so before; as by day, so at night; as at night, so by day; as below, so above; as above, so below. Thus [he] is not reversed; [his] mind is free from entanglement⁵⁰. [He] develops a bright mind, and in the end [his] mind is not covered by darkness.

This passage apparently corresponds with the above Statements, and the Sarvāstivādin compilers of the *Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra* must have regarded it as describing a practice of the *satipaṭṭhānas*, and thus included it in this *sūtra*. Accordingly, it is likely that the statement ‘perceiving light, mindful and fully aware’ in step 5 can be regarded as a practice of the *satipaṭṭhānas*.

The above argument may be reinforced by comparing this statement in step 5 with a passage in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*. As mentioned above, Maurice Walshe points out that ‘cultivation of the

⁵⁰ Free from entanglement’ could be translated from a word like *aparyutthana* (Pali *apariyutthāna*), which is read as *apariyonaddha* (unenveloped) at AN IV, 86.

perception of light is given as a standard way of overcoming the hindrance of sloth-and-torpor'. Sutta 10 of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*, which is among the limited detailed descriptions of how to practise the four *Satipaṭṭhānas* found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna -saṃyutta*, has a similar idea as follows:

When he dwells contemplating the body as a body, there arises in him, based on the body, either a fever in the body or sluggishness (linatta) of mind, or his mind is distracted outwardly, That monk should then direct his mind towards some inspiring sign (pasādaniya nimitta).⁵¹

The Chinese counterpart is (T2, 172b):

A monk dwells contemplating the body in the body.⁵² Having dwelt state (literally, mind *dharma*) is slothful, the monk should arouse purified confidence and take a purified sign (**nimitta*).

'The body is drowsy and the mental state is slothful' in the Chinese version, which may correspond to 'sluggishness of mind' in the Pali version,⁵³ is similar to 'sloth and torpor' in step 5. 'Taking a purified sign', which corresponds to 'directing his mind towards some inspiring sign' in the Pali version, functions as a way of overcoming sluggishness of mind just as does 'perceiving light' in step 5. Therefore the idea in

⁵¹ SN V, 156: *tāssa kāye kāyanupassino viharato kāyārammaṇo vā uppajati kāyasmim pariāho cetaso vā līnattam bahiddhā vā cittaṃ vikkipati. tenānanda bhikkhunā kismiñcid eva pasādaniye nimitta (sic, it should be nimitte) cittaṃ paṇidahitabbam*. This translation mostly follows that of Bodhi (2000: 1638).

⁵² 比丘於身身觀念住.

⁵³ 'A fever in the body' and 'his mind is distracted outwardly' in the Pali version are *missing* in the Chinese.

step 5 may be implied in the foregoing passage in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*. In addition, the fact that both passages are followed by a description of *jhāna* meditation also suggests a parallel relation between them. Step 5 is followed by either of the two types of descriptions of *jhāna* meditation. Type A is:

When he perceives the abandoning of the five hindrances in himself, gladness is born. When he is gladdened, joy is born. When the mind is uplifted by joy, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body experiences happiness. The mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated. Being secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and dwells in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by *vitakka* and *vicāra*, with joy and happiness born of seclusion...⁵⁴

Type B is:

Having abandoned these five hindrances, defilements of the mind that weaken wisdom, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and dwells in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by *vitakka* and *vicāra*, with joy and happiness born of seclusion...⁵⁵

The above-mentioned passage in Sutta 10 of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*

⁵⁴ E.g. DNI, 73ff, 207ff.: *tass' ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīne attani samanupassato pāmujaṃ jāyati pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pīmanassa kāyo passambhati. passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti. sukhiṇo cittaṃ samādhiyati, so vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekaṃ pītiskhaṃ paṭhamam jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati...*

⁵⁵ E.g. MN I, 181ff., 270ff.: *so ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahāya cetaso upakkilese paññāya dubbalīkaraṇe vivicc'eva kānehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamam jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

is followed by:

When he directs his mind towards some inspiring sign, gladness is born. When he is gladdened, joy is born. When the mind is uplifted by joy, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body experiences happiness. The mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated.⁵⁶

This description is very close to the words in type A. If we compare *sutta* 10 with step 5 followed by type A, we will find that step 5 seems to be replaced by the passage in question in *Sutta* 10. This suggests that the practice containing ‘directing the mind towards some inspiring sign’ (or ‘taking a purified sign in the Chinese version’) is related to the step of abandoning the hindrances. As this practice is incorporated in the four *satipaṭṭhānas* in this *sutta*, the corresponding practice of ‘perceiving light’ in step 5 can also be regarded as a practice of the *satipaṭṭhāna*. This could explain why the passage about ‘perception of light’ is included in the Chinese translation of the *Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra*.

5

The *Dantabhūmi Sutta* of the MN contains this type of path to liberation with a difference as follows. Following step 5, it is stated:⁵⁷

(A) Having abandoned these five hindrances, defilements of the mind that weaken wisdom, he dwells contemplating the body as a body, ardent,

⁵⁶ SN V, 156: *tassa kismiñcid eva pasādaniye nimitte cittam pañidahato pāmuijaṃ jāyati. pamuditassa pīti jāyati. pīṭimanassa kāyo passambhati. passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedayati. sukhino cittam samādhīyati.* My translation mostly follows that of Bodhi (2000: 1638).

⁵⁷ My translation below mostly follows that of Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi (1995: 995), which misses out many words in paragraph B.

fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, having removed covetousness and grief for the world....feelings...mind...He dwells contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas*, ardent, fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, having removed covetousness and grief for the world.

(B) Just as, Aggivessana, the elephant tamer plants a large post in the earth and binds the forest elephant to it by the neck in order to subdue his forest habits, to subdue his forest intentions, to subdue his forest distress, fatigue and fever, to make him delight in the village, and to inculcate in him habits congenial to human beings, so these four *satipaṭṭhānas* are the bindings for the mind of the noble disciple in order to subdue his habits based on the household life, to subdue his intentions based on the household life, to subdue his distress, fatigue and fever based on the household life, and in order that he may attain the true way and realise *Nibbāna*.

(C) Then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: ‘Come, monk, dwell contemplating the body as a body, but do not think thoughts connected with the body; dwell contemplating feelings as feelings, but do not think thoughts connected with feelings; dwell contemplating mind as mind, but do not think thoughts connected with mind; dwell contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas*, but do not think thoughts connected with *dhammas*.

(D) With the stilling of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, he enters upon and dwells in the second *jhāna*, which has internal tranquility and oneness of mind, without *vitakka* and *vicāra*, with joy and happiness born of concentration...⁵⁸

Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (1995:1333) point out that the above passage on the four *satipaṭṭhānas* prior to the exposition of the second *jhana* must have implicitly covered the first *jhana*.

In my opinion, paragraph A and B belong to a description of the first *jhāna*, while paragraph C belongs to a description of the second *jhāna*. Paragraph A and C imply that the body, etc. are taken as the objects of the *jhāna* meditation. Paragraph B shows that just as the post binding the elephant tames him and makes him delight in the village, in seclusion from the forest, so the four *satipaṭṭhānas* make one enjoy seclusion from the household life. This is related to one of the first *jhāna*'s characteristics: joy and happiness born of seclusion.

In paragraph C 'not thinking (*vitakketi*) thoughts (*vitakka*)

⁵⁸ MN III, 136: (A) *so ime pañca nīvarane pahāya cetaso upakkilese paññāya dubbalīkaraṇe kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijhādomanassaṃ, vedanāsu pe cite... dhāmesu(sic) dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijhādomanassan.*

(B) *seyyathāpi, aggivessana, hathidamaka mahantaṃ thambhaṃ paṭhaviyaṃ nikkhaṇṭvā āraññakassa nāgassa gīvāya upanibandhati āraññakānañ c'eva silānaṃ abhinimadanāya āraññakānañ c'eva saṃkappānaṃ abhinimadanāya āraññakānañ c'eva darathakilamathapariḷāhānaṃ abhinimadanāya gāmante abhiraṃpanāya manussakantesu sīle su samādapanāya, evaṃ eva kho, aggivessana, ariyasavakassa ime cattāro satipaṭṭhānā cetaso upanibandhanā honti gehasitānañ c'eva silānaṃ abhinimadanāya gehasitānañ c'eva saṃkappānaṃ abhinimadanāya gehasitānañ c'eva darathakilamathapariḷāhānaṃ abhinimadanāya ñāyassa adhigamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya.*

(C) *tam enaṃ tathāgato uttarim viṇeti: ehi tvaṃ, bhikkhu, kāye kāyānupassī viharāhi mā ca kāyūpasamhitāṃ vitakkaṃ vitakkesi, vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharāhi mā ca vedanūpasamhitāṃ vitakkaṃ vitakkesi, citte cittānupassī viharāhi mā ca cittūpasamhitāṃ vitakkaṃ virakkesi, dhammesu dhammānupassī viharāhi mā ca dhammūpasamhitāṃ vitakkaṃ vitakkesī ti.*

(D) *so vitakkawicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyajjhānaṃ, tatiyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati...*

connected with the body, etc.’ seems to indicate one of the second *jhāna*’s characteristics, ‘without *vitakka* and *vicāra*’. PED (s.v. ‘*vitakka*’) states that:

Looking at the combination **vitakka+vicāra** in earlier and later works one comes to the conclusion that they were once used to denote one & the same thing: just thought, thinking, only in an emphatic way (as they are also semantically synonymous), and that one has to take them as one expression, like **jānāti passati**, without being able to state their difference.

In this case ‘thinking’ or ‘thought’ may refer to distorted thoughts. It is stated in the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*:

Depending on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The combination of the three is contact. With contact as condition, feeling [arises]. What one feels (*vedeti*), one apperceives (*sañjānāti*), What one apperceives, one thinks about (*vitakketi*). What one thinks about, one makes manifold (*papañceti*). With what one makes manifold as condition, apperception and naming in terms of manifoldness’ (*papañcasaññāsariikhā*) beset a person with regard to past, future and present forms cognised by the eye.⁵⁹

However, the *Sakkapañha Sutta* gives a sequence in reverse order: ‘thought (*vitakka*) has “apperception and naming in terms of manifoldness” (*papañcasaññāsankha*) as condition’ (DN II, 277).

⁵⁹ MN I, III-2: *cakkhuñ c’ āvuso paṭicca rūpe cauppajati cakkhuvīññānaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi, yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti, yaṃ papañceti tatonidānaṃ purisaṃ papañcasaññāsariikhā samudācaranti atītānāgatapaccuppannes’u cakkhuvīññeyye su rūpesu.*

As Rune E. A. Johansson (1979: 185) notes, *papañica* (manifoldness) and *vitakka* (thought) are closely related. Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda (1971:25) states: ‘there is a curious reciprocity between “*vitakka*” and “*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*”- a kind of vicious circle, as it were. If this is the case, *vitakka* inevitably involves *papañica-saññāsaṅkhā*, and vice versa. According to Sue Hamilton (1996: 56), ‘manifoldness implies our mistaken imposition of separateness upon things that are in reality dependently originated’. As thought (*vitakka*) also involves this function, ‘not thinking thoughts connected with the body, etc.’ implies that one is not projecting separate independent existence to the objects one contemplates. One is just mindful and aware of the objects objectively without thinking manifoldly.

6

The fact that the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula contains both *satimā* (possessing *sati*, i.e. mindfulness) and *sampajāna* (being fully aware) shows that the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* subsumes *sampajāna* as well as *sati*. In *sutta* 2 of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* mentioned above, ‘*sata*’ is explained by the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula, and thus ‘to be mindful’ (*sata*) is to practise the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, which include *satimā* and *sampajāna*. This can be expressed by the following equation:

$$Sata = satipaṭṭhāna = satimā + sampajāna + \dots$$

Similarly, the description of the third *jhāna* runs as follows (e.g. MN I, 182):

...bhikkhu pītiyā ca virāgā upekhako ca viharati sata ca sampaiāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti yan taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti:upekhako Satimā sukhavihārī ti tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. (...with the fading away of joy, a monk dwells in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body, of which the noble ones say: ‘Being in equanimity, possessed of mindfulness, he dwells in happiness’. Thus he enters and dwells in the third *jhāna*.)

Here we have an equation:

$$satimā=sata+sampajāna$$

We can see the similarity between this equation and the previous one. Both equations indicate that mindfulness (or being mindful) can be expressed by ‘being mindful and also fully aware (etc.)’. This expression is typical of the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula, and so it is very likely that *sato sampajāno* in this passage implies the *satipaṭṭhānas*. It is also possible that *satimā* (or *sata*) and *sampajāna* were originally synonyms, or virtually synonyms, later differentiated by scholasticism.⁶⁰

The fourth *jhāna* is described as *upekhāsatipārisuddhi*, which seems to mean a further purification of *upekhā* and *sati* that already exist in the third *jhāna*. Thus mindfulness (*sati*), an important element of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, also applies to the fourth *jhāna*.

7

The Buddha's teaching can be classified into three aggregates:

⁶⁰ I am grateful to Professor Gombrich for this suggestion.

the aggregate of morality, the aggregate of concentration and the aggregate of wisdom. In *Subha Sutta* of the DN the aggregate of concentration is elaborated by the same descriptions of the four *jhānas* and of the preparation for the *jhānas* except step 1, practising morality (DN I, 207-8). In *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* of the MN, after the nun Dhammadinā explained to the lay follower Visākha the relationship between these three aggregates and the Noble Eightfold Path, he asked: ‘What is concentration? What are the *nimittas* of concentration?...’. Her answer is: ‘One-pointedness of mind is concentration; the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are the *nimitas* of concentration...’.⁶¹ Therefore the four *satipaṭṭhānas* can be connected to the path to liberation from step 2 of the preparatory practices to the fourth *jhāna*. *Nimitta* can mean cause or sign (PED, s.v., ‘nimitta’). Here it seems to mean that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are either employed as methods or serve as characteristics in the aggregate of concentration. This also supports my argument that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* may apply to the path to liberation from step 2 of the preparatory practices to the fourth *jhāna*.

V. The Four Aspects of the Satipaṭṭhānas

The four *satipaṭṭhānas* may imply contemplation of the five *khandhas* in terms of the dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) principle. *Sutta* 42 (equivalent to *sūtra* 609 in SĀ, T2, 171 a-b) of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* says:

⁶¹ MN I, 301: *cittassa ekaggatā ayaṃ samādhī, cattāro satipaṭṭhānā samādhinimittā*. I am grateful to Alexander Wynne for this reference.

a1) By the arising of food comes the arising of the body. By the ceasing of food comes the ending of the body.

a2) By the arising of contact comes the arising of feeling. By the ceasing of contact comes the ending of feeling.

a3) By the arising of name-and-form comes the arising of mind (*citta*). By the ceasing of name-and-form comes the ending of mind.

a4) By the arising of attention (*manasikāra*) comes the arising of *dhammas*. By the ceasing of attention comes the ending of *dhammas*.⁶²

This passage may be regarded as very early since its meaning corresponds with that of the *samudayavaya* formula, which is common to the (*Mahā*) *satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* as stated above. It is an analysis into causal facts, a typical way the Buddha explained the world: by the dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) principle. Words similar to the above passage are found scattered in both *Sutta 56* and *Sutta 57* of the *Khandha Saṃyutta*⁶³ as follows:

⁶² SN V, 184: *āhāra samudayā kāyassa samudayo, āhāranirodhā kāyassa atthagamo. phassa samudayā vadanānaṃ sa muda yo. phassanirodhā vedanānaṃ atthagamo. nāmarūpasamudayā citassa samudayo. nāmarūpanirodhā citassa atthagamo. manasikārasamudayā dhammānaṃ samudayo. manasikāranirodhā dhammānaṃ atthagamo.*

⁶³ The Chinese *Saṃyukta Āgama* has an equivalent passage as follows (T 2, 15b):

1) [Through] the arising of craving is the arising of form (**rūpa*). [Through] the ceasing of craving is the ceasing of form.

2) [Through] the arising of contact is the arising of feeling (**vedanā*), apperception (**saṃjñā, saññā*) and volitional activities (**saṃskārā, saṃkhārā*). [Through] the ceasing of contact is the ceasing of feeling, apperception and volitional activities.

3) Through the arising of name-and-form is the arising of consciousness (**vijñāna, viññāna*). [Through] the ceasing of name-and-form is the ceasing of consciousness.

Although the first item in the Chinese version is a bit different from that in the Pali, i.e. craving is in the place of food, there is a close relation between them according to a passage in the *Mahātāṇhāsānikhaya Sutta* of the MN as follows (MN I, 261): ‘These four foods have craving as their source, craving as their origin; they are born and produced from craving’.

b1) By the arising of food comes the arising of form. By the ceasing of food comes the ceasing of form...

b2) By the arising of contact comes the arising of feeling. By the ceasing of contact comes the ceasing of feeling... By the arising of contact comes the arising of apperception. By the ceasing of contact comes the ceasing of apperception... By the arising of contact comes the arising of volitional activities. By the ceasing of contact comes the ceasing of volitional activities...

b3) By the arising of name-and-form comes the arising of consciousness. By the ceasing of name-and-form comes the ceasing of consciousness.⁶⁴

The conditions for the arising and ceasing of the body, feelings and mind as stated in *sutta* 42 of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* are exactly the same as the conditions for the arising and ceasing of the five aggregates (*khandha*) found in the *Khandha Saṃyutta*. This suggests a connection between the five *khandhas* and the first three of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. The relation between the four *satipaṭṭhānas* and the five *khandhas* was indicated by Buddhaghosa in his commentary on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (MA I, 280-281) in the following way:

1. *kāyānupassanā* ————— *rūpa*
2. *vedanānupassanā* ————— *vedanā*
3. *cittānupassanā* ————— *viññāṇa*
4. *dhammānupassanā* ————— *saññā, saṃkhārā*

⁶⁴ SN III, 59-61 and 62-64: *āhārasamudayā rūpasamudayo. āhāranirodhā rūpanirodho... phassasamudayā vedanāsamudayo. phassanirodhā vedanānirodho... phassasamudayā saññāsamudayo. phassanirodhā saññānirodho... phassasamudayā saṃkhārasamudayo. phassanirodhā saṃkhāranirodho... nāmarūpasamudayā viññāṇasamudayo. nāmarūpanirodhā viññāṇanirodho.*

Similarly, the *Dharmaskandha*, a Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* text extant in Chinese translation,⁶⁵ identifies ‘*dharmas*’ in contemplation of *dharmas* with ‘the aggregates of apperception and volitional activities’ (T 26, 478b ff.), but it makes no mention of three other aggregates in the passages dealing with contemplation of the body, feelings and mind, Neither the *Dharmaskandha* nor Buddhaghosa gives any reference to the *Sutta-piṭaka* I will put forward below a possible connection between the *satipaṭṭhānas* and the *khandhas* according to the Canon on the presumption that this practice is meant to imply contemplation of the *khandhas*.

1

‘Form’ (*rūpa*) normally refers to the body (*kāya*) when it is referred to as one of the five *khandhas* in the Canon. Sue Hamilton (1996: 3ff.) indicates two main kinds of description of the *rūpakkhandha* in the *Sutta Piṭaka*: the simple and general description, and the detailed and specific description. The simple descriptions are two, the first of which obviously refers to *rūpa* as the body:

And why, monks, do you call it form? It ‘suffers’, monks, so it is called ‘form’. Suffers from what? Suffers from cold, suffers from heat, suffers

⁶⁵ Some Sanskrit fragments of this text have been discovered, but they do not include the part discussed below. (Tsai, 2000: 2). I am grateful to the members of editing & reviewing committee of the *Satyābhisamaya: A Buddhist Studies Quarterly* for this reference.

from hunger, suffers from thirst, suffers from contact with flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun-heat and serpents.⁶⁶

The second of the simple descriptions analyses *rūpa* into the four great elements and the form derived from them.⁶⁷ The detailed and specific description gives a comprehensive explanation of the four great elements; here the term *rūpa* explicitly also refers to ‘external’ elements (e.g. MN 1, 185ff), i.e. things outside oneself. But it is shown here that the internal and external elements are equally impermanent, Subject to destruction, and thus the body (*kāya*), i.e. the internal elements, cannot be seen as ‘I’ or ‘mine’ or ‘I am’. As Hamilton (1996: 4) states, ‘both types of analysis of *rūpa* indicate that the term primarily refers to the body, in accord with the Buddha's central concern with the human being’. Moreover, according to passage b1 in *sutta* 56 and *sutta* 57 of the *Khandha Saṃyutta*, form (*rūpa*) is dependent on food, which implies that food maintains the body, so in this case form is likely to refer only to the body, not the external elements. Therefore all can be seen to correspond to b1, in other words, contemplation of the body is related to the *rūpakkhandha*.

⁶⁶ SN III, 86: *kiñ ca bhikkhave rūpaṃ vadetha? ruppattī kho bhikkhave tasmā rūpan ti vuccati. Kena ruppati? sītena pi ruppati uñhena pi ruppati jigghiaccāya pi ruppati pipāsāya pi ruppati ḍaṃsa-makasa-vātātapa-siriṃsapa-samphassena pi ruppati.*

⁶⁷ E.g. SN III, 59: *cattāro ca mahābhūtā catunnaṃ ca mahābhūtānam upādāya rūpaṃ idaṃ vuccati bhikkhave rūpaṃ.*

2

The meaning of a2 exactly conforms to that of the first part in b2; even the wording is almost identical. Therefore contemplation of feelings is related to the *vedanākhandha*.

3

‘Mind’ (*citta*) in a3 and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in b3 are likely to refer to the same thing. Firstly, in the SN (V. 95) *citta* and *viññāṇa* are referred to as synonyms. Secondly, they are both described as being conditioned by name-and-form.⁶⁸ This phrase indicates a link in the *patīccasamuppāda* formula, i.e. name-and form and consciousness condition each other, according to the *Mahanidāna Sutta* in the DN (II, 62-63).

4

In the Pāli Canon the Buddha often says ‘*manasikarohi*’ or ‘*manasikarotha*’ before he starts a discourse (e.g. DN, I, 124; 157; DN II, 2; 76). Thus a4 might mean that the understanding of teachings (*dhmma*) is conditioned by attention (*manasikāra*). A passage in *Sutta 37* of the *Satīpaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* runs as follows: ‘When he dwells contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas*, whatever

⁶⁸ In his translation of the SN, Bodhi (2000: 1928) comments that ‘in this passage *citta* is taken to be synonymous with *viññāṇa*; *nāmaūpa*, being the condition for the latter, is the condition for the former as well’.

desire he has for *dhammas* is abandoned'.⁶⁹ In this case the term *dhammas* seems to refer to any mental objects rather than the teachings. In fact, there is no contradiction here, as Richard Gombrich (1996: 35-36) points out, according to the *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Suttas*, the meditator 'learns to be aware of *dhammā* (plural). This has been rendered as "his thoughts". But the *dhammā* that the text spells out are in fact the teachings of the Buddha... The Buddha's teachings come to be the same as (any) objects of thought, because anything else is (for Buddhists) unthinkable'.

5

It is worthwhile trying to find out why the Buddha chose these four aspects (body, mind, feelings and *dhammas*) as the objects of mindfulness. They must have a close relation with the essential Buddhist doctrines.

The scheme of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* is composed of two subjects: one is contemplation of the *khandhas* in terms of the dependent origination principle; the other is contemplation of the Buddha's teachings as objects of thought. An individual is analysed by the Buddha into five constituent parts, the *khandhas*, whereas the first subject of the scheme of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* seems to involve only three *khandhas*, with *saññākhandha* and

⁶⁹ SN V, 182: *tassa dhammesu dhammānupassino viharato yodhammesu chando sopahīyati.*

Samkhārakkhandha being ruled out. The reason could be that an enlightened one has neither *saññā* nor *saṃkhārā*. As Alexander Wynne (2000: 22) indicates, liberation is a state devoid of *saññā* according to the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, where the Buddha gives a summary of his doctrine to Daṇḍapāṇi as follows:

Friend, I preach and proclaim such a doctrine that one does not quarrel with anyone in the world with its gods, *māras* and *brahmās*, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, with its gods and human beings, and Such a doctrine that apperceptions do not remain in that brahmin who dwells detached from sensual desires, without doubt, with worry cut off, free from craving for existence and non-existence.⁷⁰

Similarly, a verse in the *Sutta Nipāta* reads:

There are no ties for one who is devoid of perceptions (*saññā*). There are no illusions for one who is released through wisdom. But those who have grasped perception and view wander in the world, causing offence. (translated by K R. Norman, 1992: 98)⁷¹

These two passages clearly indicates that one who is liberated has no *saññā*, whereas those who have *saññā* are not liberated.⁷²

⁷⁰ MN I, 108: *Yathāvādī kho āvuso sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiṃ pājāyā sadevamanussāya na kenaci loke viggayha tiṭṭhati, yathā ca pana kāmehi viṣaṇyuttaṃ viharantaṃ taṃ brāhmaṇaṃ akathaṃkathiṃ chinnakukkuuccaṃ bhavābhava vītataṇhaṃ saññā nānuseti, evaṃvādī kho ahaṃ āvuso evamakkhāyī ti.* Cf. T 1, 603b.

⁷¹ Sn 847: *saññāvirattassa na santi ganthā, paññāvimuttassa na santi mohā, saññaṇ ca dīṭṭhiṃ ca ye aggahesum te ghaṭṭayantā vicaranti loke ti.*

⁷² However, Sue Hamilton (1996: 60) points out a passage in the Canon which shows that ‘the destruction of the asavas (which does represent liberation) can take place in one who has

In *Sutta* 51 of the *Nidāna Saṃyutta* the Buddha taught:

Monk, when a monk has abandoned ignorance and knowledge has arisen in him, then with the fading away of ignorance and the arising of knowledge, he does not generate a meritorious volitional activity, or a demeritorious volitional activity, or an imperturbable volitional activity.

⁷³One who does not generate volitional activities or have intentions does not cling to anything in the world. One who does not cling is not agitated. One who is not agitated personally attains Nibbāna.⁷⁴

This passage shows that one who has achieved liberation no longer generates any volitional activities. One might argue that this *sutta* from this passage onwards describes the cessation of all the twelve links of the dependent origination formula rather than singling out

conceptions', and 'the experience is described as being the highest activity of *saññā*', (AN III, 202: *yathā saññissa anantarā āsavānaṃ khaya hoti, idaṃ saññānaṃ aggaṃ.*) This passage apparently contradicts the above two passages. Based on this, she makes an important point: '*saññā* not only apperceives and conceives all our *samsāric* experiences, sensory and abstract, but is also instrumental in identifying the liberating experience'. She indicates that: 'The textual passages which describe the Buddha's insight clearly state that he knows that he knows the Truth he has been seeking (Hamilton 2000: 31). This is a process of identifying, which belongs to apperception, *saññā*. Therefore, there arises a contradiction between different passages in the Canon regarding the existence of *saññā* in a liberated one. I hope to explore this problem in the future.

⁷³ Here 'volitional activity' is translated from *abhisamkhāra*, which is obviously a synonym of *saṃkhāra* since *puññābhisamkhāram*, etc. in this passage are expressed by *puññam saṃkhāran*, etc. in the previous one.

⁷⁴ SN II, 82: *yato kho bhikkhave bhikkhuno avijā pahīnā hoti vijjā uppunnā, so avijjāviraḡā vijjuppādā n'eya puññābhisamkhāram abhisamkharoti, na apuññābhisamkhāram abhisamkharoti, na ānejābhisamkhāram abhisamkharoti. anabhisamkharonto anabhisam cetayanto na kiñci loke upādiyati. anupādiyan na paritassati, aparitassam paccattaññ eva parinibbāyati.*

volitional activities, and hence it shows the cessation of other *khandhas*. But it is obvious that when someone attains enlightenment, his physical and mental functions still exist before he dies; in other words, his consciousness, name-and-form, and so on still exist. This statement does not deny the existence of other *khandhas* in this life. The cessation of consciousness and so on must refer to the cessation of future rebirth, i.e. the physical and mental continuum in next life. In addition, Sutta 3 of the *Vedanā Samyutta* has the following passage:

When, monks, a monk has abandoned the latent tendency to lust in regard to pleasant feeling, the latent tendency to aversion in regard to painful feeling, and the latent tendency to ignorance in regard to neitherpainfull-nor-pleasant feeling, then he is called a monk without latent tendencies, one who sees rightly. He has cut off craving, destroyed the fetters, and by fully understanding conceit, he has made an end to suffering.⁷⁵

Similar teachings on abandoning the latent tendencies are found scattered throughout the *Vedana Samyutta*. As Sue Hamilton (1996: 76) points out, volitions can lie dormant, and this is called *anusaya* (latent tendency). She states that "one can, and ultimately should, experience feelings *without* any concomitant volitions: an *arahant* is able to experience pleasant and unpleasant feelings while

⁷⁵ SN IV, 205: *yato kho bhikkhave bhikkhuno sukhāya vedanāya rāgānusayo pahīho hoti, dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo pahīho hoti. adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya avijjānusayo pahīho hoti, ayaṃ wuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu niranusayo sammaddaso accheji taṇhaṃ vivattayi saṃyojanam sammānābhisamayā antam akāsi dukkhassā ti.*

remaining entirely detached from them' (1996: 72). As an enlightened one does not even have latent tendencies to reacting to feelings, he no longer has any volitional activities.⁷⁶ In *Sutta* 4 of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta* (SNV, 144-145) the Buddha says that even those who are arahants also practise the four *Satipaṭṭhānas*. As we have seen, an arahant does not have *saññā* or *saṃkhārā*. When he practises the above-mentioned first subject of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, i.e. contemplation of the constituents of an individual, only the *khandhas* of *rūpa*, *vedanā* and *viññāṇa* can be found in himself. This could be the reason why the Buddha chose these three *khandhas*, although in different terms, as the objects of mindfulness. Although at many places in the Canon each of the four parts in the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula is combined with the words 'internally' (*ajjhataṃ*), 'externally' (*bahiddhā*) and 'both internally and externally' (*ajjhatabhiddhā*), which has been rendered as contemplating one's own body (or the other three objects of contemplation), the bodies of others and so on, the first thing to do is to contemplate one's own body, etc. as the order of the above three terms implies. The following passage in the *Janavasabha Sutta* makes this point very clear:

⁷⁶ Here 'volitional activities', which is translated from *saṃkhārā*, is a Buddhist technical term for the operation of *taṇhā*. In Buddhism *saṃkhārā* refers to those volitional activities that effect the *samsāric* existence. In normal English, however, volition is a more neutral term, and can also apply to an enlightened one. I am grateful to Professor Gombrich for this suggestion.

Here a monk dwells contemplating the body as a body internally, ardent, fully aware, possessed of mindfulness, having removed covetousness and grief for the world. As he dwells contemplating the body as a body internally, he becomes rightly concentrated on it and rightly pure. Rightly concentrated on it and rightly pure, he gives rise to knowledge and vision externally of the bodies of others.⁷⁷

The same applies to feelings, mind and *dhammas*. Therefore contemplation of one's own body, etc. serves as the basis for further contemplation of others' bodies, etc. As we can imagine, it can be very difficult to take others' bodies, etc. as objects of contemplation, So contemplating externally may just be inferential.

As mentioned above, one of the Buddha's final instructions is: 'Dwell with yourselves as your island, with yourselves as your refuge, with no other refuge; [dwell] with the *dhamma* as your island, with the *dhamma* as your refuge, with no other refuge', and how to dwell in this way is explained by the basic *satipaṭṭhāna* formula. This instruction seems to be related to the scheme of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. It may imply that the way leading to liberation consists in establishing mindfulness of oneself as an individual and of the Buddha's teachings as objects of thought. This is in accord with the Buddha's central concern with the human being.

⁷⁷ DN II, 216: *idha bho bhikkhu ajjhataṃ kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineya loke abhijhādomanassaṃ. ajjhataṃ kāye kāyānupassī viharanto tatha sammā samādhīyati, sammā vippassīdati, so tatha sammā samāhito sammā vipasanno bahiddhā parakāye ñānadassanaṃ abhinibbatteti.*

VI. Conclusion

In this essay a tentative conclusion is reached that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are general guidelines which can apply to various Buddhist practices. Different versions of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, which contain many concrete methods of practice, may have been improvised during the period of oral transmission, which involved modifications made by different Schools. Several passages in the *Nikāyas* indicate that the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are connected with the path to liberation centred on the four *jhānas*. This may help us understand the theories of salvation in early Buddhism. The scheme of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* is composed of two subjects: one is contemplation of the constituents of an individual, i.e. the *khandhas*, in terms of the dependent origination principle; the other is contemplation of the Buddha's teachings. This reflects the fact that it is designed in relation to the fundamentals of Buddhist soteriology.

Appendix

Pali: *(Mahā)satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

Ch.1: *Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra* of the *Madhyama Āgama*

Ch.2: the first *sūtra* of the *Ekāyana Chapter* of the *Ekottara Āgama*

I. Detailed description of CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY

	Pali	Ch.1	Ch.2
mindfulness of breathing	V	V	
the four postures	V	V	
full awareness	V	V	
foulness-the bodily parts	V	V	V
elements ¹	V	V	V
charnel ground contemplations ²	V	V	V
counteracting, breaking, destroying and stopping evil, unwholesome thoughts with wholesome thoughts		V	
restraining mind with mind, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the palate		V	
the body is soaked in the joy and happiness born of seclusion		V	
the body is soaked in the joy and happiness born of concentration		V	
the body is soaked in the happiness born of the absence of joy		V	
the body is pervaded by the pure mind and the liberation of mind (or “understanding by mind”)		V	
being mindful of the perception of light		V	
well grasping a sign that he contemplates and well memorising what he is mindful of		V	

¹ Ch. 1 has six elements, while Pali and Ch.2 has four.

² The descriptions in the three versions differ from one another.

II. Detailed description of CONTEMPLATION OF FEELINGS

	Pali	Ch.1	Ch.2
understanding: ‘I feel a pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) feeling’ when feeling a pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) feeling	V	V	V
understanding: ‘I feel a worldly ¹ pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) feeling’ when feeling a worldly pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) feeling	V	V	V
understanding: ‘I feel an unworldly ² pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) feeling’ when feeling an unworldly pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) feeling	V	V	V
understanding: ‘I feel a pleasant feeling’ when feeling a pleasant feeling, not feeling a painful feeling			V
understanding: ‘I feel a painful feeling’ when feeling a painful feeling, not feeling a painful feeling			V
understanding: ‘I feel a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling’ when feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, without pain and happiness			V
feeling a pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) [feeling of]body		V	
feeling a pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) [feeling of] mind		V	
feeling a pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) [feeling of] desire		V	
feeling a pleasant (painful, neither-painful-nor-pleasant) [feeling of] absence of desire		V	

¹ *sāmisa*. Both Ch. and Ch.2 translate it as ‘food’.

² *nirāmisa*, Both Ch.1 and Ch.2 translate it as ‘non-food’

III. Detailed description of CONTEMPLATION OF MIND

	Pali	Ch.1	Ch.2
understanding mind with (without) lust as mind with (without) lust	V	V	V
understanding mind with (without) hate as mind with (without) hate	V	V	V
understanding mind with (without) delusion as mind with (without) delusion	V	V	V
understanding contracted (distracted) mind as contracted (distracted) mind	V	V	V
understanding exalted (unexalted) mind as exalted (unexalted) mind	V	V	V
understanding surpassed (unsurpassed) mind as surpassed (unsurpassed) mind	V	V	V
understanding concentrated (unconcentrated) mind as concentrated (unconcentrated) mind	V	V	V
understanding liberated (unliberated) mind as liberated (unliberated) mind	V	V	V
understanding defiled (undefiled) [mind] as defiled (undefiled) [mind]		V	
understanding cultivated (uncultivated) [mind] as cultivated (uncultivated) [mind]		V	
understanding passionate (dispassionate) mind as passionate (dispassionate) mind			V
understanding disturbed (undisturbed) mind as disturbed (undisturbed) mind			V
understanding pervaded (unpervaded) mind as pervaded (unpervaded) mind			V

IV. Detailed description of CONTEMPLATION OF DHAMMAS

	Pali	Ch.1	Ch.2
the five hindrances	V	V	
the five aggregates	V		
the six bases	V	V	
the seven enlightenment factors	V	V	V
the four noble truths	V		
the four <i>jhānas</i>			V

Abbreviations

AN *Aṅguttara Nikāya*

Bṛh *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*

DN *Dīgha Nikāya*

Kv *Kathāvatthu*

KvA *Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā*

MA *Majjhima Aṭṭhakathā*

MN *Majjhima Nikāya*

SA *Samyutta Aṭṭhakatha*

PED *Pali-English Dictionary*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, 1986.

Pv *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, ed. N. Dutt, Calcutta, 1934.

- ŚA *Śāriputrābhidharma* (Taisho No. 1548)
SĀ *Samyukta Āgama*
SN *Samyutta Nikāya*
ŚrBh *Śrāvaka bhūmi*
T *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo* (大正新脩大藏經), Tokyo, reprinted:
1978.

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