

Right Mindfulness

In

Early Buddhism

## *Samatha and vipassanā*

- *Samatha* and *vipassanā* are results, not processes, not kinds of meditation
- Both are achieved by reducing the defilements, thus they grow together
- Reducing defilements is done by practicing the N8P, including meditation and contemplation
- There is not much support in the *suttas* for the modern *vipassanā* idea of watching experience, such as feelings, arise and pass away.
- Why, then, is “*vipassanā* meditation” so dominant?

## Authenticity of the *suttas*

- What do we mean by authenticity?
- How authentic are the Pali *suttas*?
- What are typical issues?
- What about the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta?

## The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

- Modern *vipassanā* meditation relies in large part on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*
- A big problem with this is that this *sutta* may be one of the least authentic in the Pali Canon
- Lack of authenticity does not necessarily mean wrong, but it may mean a certain bias
- To discover if there is a bias, we need to do a historical analysis of this *sutta*

## The versions of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

There are seven existing versions of this *sutta*:

1. Theravāda Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta
2. Sarvāstivāda Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra
3. Ekāyana Sūtra
4. Vibhaṅga
5. Dharmaskandha
6. Śāriputrābhidharma
7. Prajñāpāramitā

# Sarvāstivāda Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra

Preserved in Chinese in the Madhyama  
Āgama, translated into Chinese in 389 CE

Stems from a Sanskrit original

Probably arrived via the Silk Road

It differs in a number of ways from the Pali  
version.

# Theravāda Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: body contemplation

1. Mindfulness of breathing
2. Four postures
3. Full awareness of daily activities
4. 31 parts of the body
5. Four elements
6. Charnel ground contemplations

# Comparison: Theravāda with Sarvāstivāda

## Body contemplation

Sarvāstivāda	Theravāda
1. Four postures	= [2.]
2. Full awareness of daily activities	= [3.]
3. Cutting off thoughts	≠
4. Suppressing thoughts	≠
5. Mindfulness of breathing	= [1.]
6. First <i>jhāna</i> simile	≠
7. Second <i>jhāna</i> simile	≠
8. Third <i>jhāna</i> simile	≠
9. Fourth <i>jhāna</i> simile	≠
10. Perception of light	≠
11. Basis for reviewing	≠
12. 32 parts of the body	= [4.]
13. Six elements	= [5.]
14-18. 5 charnel ground contemplation	= [6-14.]

## Theravāda Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: refrain

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body [feelings/mind/mental qualities] internally, externally, and both internally and externally.

They meditate observing the body [feelings/mind/mental qualities] as liable to **originate**, as liable to **vanish**, and as liable to both **originate and vanish**.

Or mindfulness is established that the body [feelings/mind/mental qualities] exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness.

They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

# Comparison: Theravāda with Sarvāstivāda refrain

## Theravāda

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally, externally, and **both internally and externally**.

**They meditate observing the body as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish.**

Or mindfulness is established that the body exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

## Sarvāstivāda

In this way one contemplates the body as body internally [or] externally.

≠

He sets up mindfulness of the body and is endowed with knowledge, vision, understanding, and penetration.