

Right Mindfulness

In

Early Buddhism

Comparison: Theravāda with Sarvāstivāda

“The sections on feelings and mind in the Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra are similar to the Theravāda Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, but slightly more elaborate.”

(HoM, p.286)

“From here to the end the text refers to ‘*bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs*’, both as the audience of the discourse, and as the meditator in the discourse itself.”

(HoM, p.287)

Theravāda Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: contemplation of mental qualities

1. Five hindrances
2. Five aggregates
3. Six internal and external sense bases
4. Seven factors of awakening
5. Four noble truths

Comparison: Theravāda with Sarvāstivāda

Contemplation of mental qualities

| Theravāda | Sarvāstivāda |
|--|--|
| 1. Five hindrances | 2. Five hindrances |
| 2. Five aggregates | ≠ |
| 3. Six internal and external sense bases | 1. Six internal and external sense bases |
| 4. Seven factors of awakening | 3. Seven factors of awakening |
| 5. Four noble truths | ≠ |

Comparison: Theravāda with Sarvāstivāda

“... for the Sarvāstivādins this [the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta] was a *samatha* manual, while for the Theravādins it was a *vipassanā* manual.”
(HoM, p.288)

The Ekāyana Sūtra

Preserved in Chinese in the
Ekottara Āgama

Possibly belongs to the
Mahāsaṅghika school

Stems from a Prakrit original

Differs significantly from
other versions of the *sutta*

Comparison: Theravāda with Ekāyana Sūtra

Body contemplation

| Theravāda | Ekāyana Sūtra |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Mindfulness of breathing | ≠ |
| 2. Four postures | ≠ |
| 3. Full awareness of daily activities | ≠ |
| 4. 31 parts of the body | Parts of the body |
| 5. Four elements | Four elements |
| ≠ | Observing the openings of the body |
| 6-14. Charnel ground contemplations | Charnel ground contemplations |

Comparison: Theravāda with Ekāyana Sūtra

“The contemplations of feeling
and mind are similar in their
content to the other versions ...”
(HoM, p.292)

Comparison: Theravāda with Ekāyana Sūtra

Contemplation of mental qualities

| Theravāda | Ekāyana Sūtra |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Five hindrances | ≠ [but found at beginning] |
| 2. Five aggregates | ≠ |
| 3. Six internal and external sense bases | ≠ |
| 4. Seven factors of awakening | 1. Seven factors of awakening |
| ≠ | 2. The four <i>jhānas</i> |
| 5. Four noble truths | ≠ |

Comparison: Theravāda with Ekāyana Sūtra

“While the Theravāda changed the *samatha* aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna* into *vipassanā*, the Ekāyana Sūtra changed the *vipassanā* aspects into *samatha*.”

(HoM, p.293)

Abhidhamma

One in Pali and two in Chinese:

- Vibhaṅga
- Dharmaskandha
- Śāriputrābhidharma

Comparison: Sutta with Abhidhamma

Body contemplation

| Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta | Vibhaṅga | Dharma-skandha | Śāriputr-ābhidharma |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Mindfulness of breathing | ≠ | ≠ | = [3.] |
| 2. Four postures | ≠ | ≠ | = [1.] |
| 3. Full awareness of daily activities | ≠ | ≠ | = [2.] |
| 4. 31 body parts | = | = | = [4.] |
| 5. 4 elements | ≠ | 6 elements | = [5.] |
| ≠ | ≠ | ≠ | Food + space + orifices |
| 6-14. Charnel ground contemplations | ≠ | ≠ | = |

Comparison: Sutta with Abhidhamma Refrain

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

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.

Vibh.

Dhar.

Śārip.

=

=

=

≠

≈ [not
same]

≈

≠

≠

≠

Comparison: Sutta with Abhidhamma Contemplation of feelings and mind

The contemplation of feelings and mind are largely the same in the Abhidhammas as in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. The differences are not significant in a *samatha/vipassanā* context.

Comparison: Sutta with Abhidhamma

Contemplation of mental qualities

| Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta | Vibhaṅga | Dharma-skandha | Śāriputr-ābhidharma |
|--|----------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Five hindrances | = | = | = |
| 2. Five aggregates | ≠ | ≠ | = |
| 3. Six internal and external sense bases | ≠ | = | = |
| 4. Seven factors of awakening | = | = | = |
| 5. Four noble truths | ≠ | ≠ | = |

Comparison of all sources: Body contemplation

| Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta | Sarvāstivāda | Ekāyana | Vibhaṅga |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------|----------|
| 1. Mindfulness of breathing | = | ≠ | ≠ |
| 2. Four postures | = | ≠ | ≠ |
| 3. Full awareness of daily activities | = | ≠ | ≠ |
| 4. 31 body parts | = | = | = |
| 5. 4 elements | ≈ [6 elements] | = | ≠ |
| 6-14. Charnel ground contemplations | ≈ | = | ≠ |

Comparison of all sources: Refrain

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

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.

Sarvāstiv.

=

≠

≈

Ekāyana

=

≈

=

Vibh.

=

≠

≠

Comparison of all sources:
Contemplation of feelings and mind

The contemplation of feelings and mind are largely the same in all sources. The differences are not significant in a *samatha/vipassanā* context.

Comparison of all sources: Contemplation of mental qualities

| Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta | Sarvāstiv. | Ekāyana | Vibh. |
|--|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Five hindrances | = | ≈ [intro.] | = |
| 2. Five aggregates | ≠ | ≠ | ≠ |
| 3. Six internal and external sense bases | = | ≠ | ≠ |
| 4. Seven factors of awakening | = | = | = |
| 5. Four noble truths | ≠ | ≠ | ≠ |

Root Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

| Body | Feelings | Mind | Mental qualities |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 31 parts of the body | [same as Pali] | [same as Pali] | Five hindrances |
| | | | Seven factors of awakening |

Root Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

Introduction:

- Purpose of *satipaṭṭhāna* [... in order to purify sentient beings ...]
- Internal + external + internal-external

No refrain

Conclusion:

- Last part of refrain [“... They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.”]
- Repeats purpose from introduction

What is probably inauthentic in the Pali version

| Body | Feelings | Mind | Mental qualities |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Four postures | | | Five aggregates |
| Daily activities | | | Six senses |
| Mindfulness of breathing | | | Four noble truths |
| Elements | | | |
| Charnel ground contemplations | | | |

What is probably inauthentic in the Pali version

| Introduction | Refrain | Conclusion |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | Arising + passing away + arising-passing away | Guarantee of awakening within 7 days |

Summary

- *Satipaṭṭhāna* is mainly about bringing the mind to *samādhi*
- Contemplation is a secondary aspect of *satipaṭṭhāna*
- The main way of practicing *satipaṭṭhāna* in the *suttas* is breath meditation:
“Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”

A grey, textured stone marker with a rounded top and a rectangular base. The words "THE" and "END" are engraved in a serif font on the front face. The stone has a porous, granular texture. The background is white, with black bars on the left and right sides.

THE
END