

Right Mindfulness

In

Early Buddhism

Myths/misconceptions

1. *Satipaṭṭhāna* develops mindfulness
2. You are either mindful or you are not
3. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is “the one and only way”
4. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is all about direct observation: *anupassanā/vipassanā*
5. Breath meditation belongs to body contemplation
6. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is to be practiced in everyday life
7. *Satipaṭṭhāna* includes watching pain.

(1) *Satipaṭṭhāna* develops mindfulness

Right view >

right aim >

right speech >

right action >

right livelihood >

right effort >

right mindfulness >

right stillness (AN 45.1)

Satipaṭṭhāna develops mindfulness

“It’s when a monastic meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and **mindful**, rid of desire and aversion for the world.”

*Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye
kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī
sampajāno **satimā**, vineyya loke
abhijjhādomanassaṃ.*

Satipaṭṭhāna develops mindfulness

Still, it is true that mindfulness develops when one practices *satipaṭṭhāna*.

But this is really a by-product of the development of stillness. It is stillness, *samādhi*, that is real purpose of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

(2) You are either mindful or you are not

If this were so, you could gain full insight once *sati* is established.

Sati comes in different degrees, depending on the strength of one's *samādhi* and wisdom. (SN 48.12)

Mindfulness needs the power and brightness of *samādhi* to gain deep insight.

(3) *Satipaṭṭhāna* is “the one and only way”

Ekāyano ayaṃ maggo (MN 10)

“This is the sole way”

“This is a path that goes in one way only”

“This is the direct path”

Only one contextual meaning:

“This is a path going in one direction only.” (MN12)

(3) *Satipaṭṭhāna* is “the one and only way”

After a study of pre-Buddhist Brahmanical texts, Bhante Sujato arrives at the following translation for *ekāyano maggo*:

“This is the path to convergence” (“This is the path going to one”)

Convergence here refers to convergence of mind, that is, *samādhi*, “stillness”

Ekāyano maggo > (*satipaṭṭhāna* is) the path to *samādhi*.