Right Mindfulness

In

Early Buddhism

Overview of the Pali Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

Introduction

1. Contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassī*)
2. Contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassī*)
3. Contemplation of mind (*cittānupassī*)
4. Contemplation of mental qualities or principles (*dhammānupassī*)

Conclusion

Body contemplation (MN 10)

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

Breath meditation

Comparison of sources

Pali Satip. Sutta	Sarvāsti-vāda	Ekāyana Sūtra	Prajñā-pāramitā	Vibhaṅga	Dharma-skandha	Śāriputr-ābhidharm
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Breath meditation

“It’s when a monastic—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, with their body straight, and focuses their mindfulness right there. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out.

When breathing in heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ When breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’

When breathing in lightly they know: ‘I’m breathing in lightly.’ When breathing out lightly they know: ‘I’m breathing out lightly.’

Breath meditation

They practice breathing in, experiencing the whole body. They practice breathing out, experiencing the whole body.

They practice breathing in, stilling the body's motion. They practice breathing out, stilling the body's motion.

It's like a deft carpenter or carpenter's apprentice. When making a deep cut they know: 'I'm making a deep cut,' and when making a shallow cut they know: 'I'm making a shallow cut.'

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally …"

The four postures

Comparison of sources

Pali Satip. Sutta	Sarvāsti-vāda	Ekāyana Sūtra	Prajñā-pāramitā	Vibhaṅga	Dharma-skandha	Śāriputr-ābhidharm
=	=	≠	=	≠	≠	=

The four postures

“Again, when a monastic is walking they know: ‘I am walking.’

When standing they know: ‘I am standing.’

When sitting they know: ‘I am sitting.’

When lying down they know: ‘I am lying down.’

Whatever posture their body is in, they know it.”

The four postures

Source of four posture contemplation:

"In this case, a monastic goes out mindfully, returns mindfully, stands mindfully, sits mindfully, lies down mindfully, and applies themselves to work mindfully."
(AN 6.29)

Kāyagatāsatisutta, "Mindfulness of the body *sutta*" (MN 119)

Full awareness

Comparison of sources

Pali Satip. Sutta	Sarvāsti-vāda	Ekāyana Sūtra	Prajñā-pāramitā	Vibhaṅga	Dharma-skandha	Śāriputr-ābhidharm
=	=	≠	=	≠	≠	=

Full awareness

“Again, a monastic has full awareness in regard to
going out and coming back;
in regard to looking ahead and aside;
in regard to bending and extending the limbs;
in regard to bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes;
in regard to eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting;
in regard to urinating and defecating;
in regard to walking, standing, sitting, sleeping,
waking, speaking, and keeping silent.”

Contemplation of the 31 parts of the body

Comparison of sources

Pali Satip. Sutta	Sarvāsti-vāda	Ekāyana Sūtra	Prajñā-pāramitā	Vibhaṅga	Dharma-skandha	Śāriputr-ābhidharm
=	=	=	=	=	=	=

Contemplation of the 31 parts of the body

“Again, a monastic reviews (*paccavekkhati*) their own body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the tips of the hairs, wrapped in skin and full of many kinds of filth (*asuci*): ‘In this body there is head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.’

It’s as if there were a bag with openings at both ends, filled with various kinds of grains, such as fine rice, wheat, mung beans, peas, sesame, and ordinary rice.
And someone with good eyesight were to open it and review the contents:

‘These grains are fine rice, these are wheat, these are mung beans, these are peas, these are sesame, and these are ordinary rice.’”

Contemplation of the 31 parts of the body

Why this contemplation?

To overcome attachment to the body, the main obstacle to meditation.

Can be done as stand-alone meditation or as a preliminary part of breath meditation.

31 or 32 parts of the body?

Suttas vs. commentaries

THE END