Right Mindfulness

In

Early Buddhism

Contemplation of the 4 elements

Comparison of sources

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

Contemplation of the 4 elements

“Again, a monastic examines their own body, whatever its placement or posture, according to the elements:

‘In this body there is the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’

It’s as if a deft butcher or butcher’s apprentice were to kill a cow and sit down at the crossroads with the meat cut into portions.”

Contemplation of the 4 elements

“And what is the interior earth element?

Anything hard, solid, and appropriated that’s internal, pertaining to an individual.

This includes: head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, or anything else hard, solid, and appropriated that’s internal, pertaining to an individual.

Contemplation of the 4 elements

The interior earth element and the exterior earth element are just the earth element.

This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the earth element, detaching the mind from the earth element.” (MN 28)

Charnel ground contemplations

Comparison of sources

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

Charnel ground contemplations

“Again, suppose a monastic were to see a corpse discarded in a charnel ground. And it had been dead for one, two, or three days, bloated, livid, and festering.

They’d compare it with their own body: ‘This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.’

That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.”

Body contemplation: summary

Emphasis on letting go of the body

This is a support for breath meditation

The weaker the attachment to the body, the easier the breath meditation

Eventually breath meditation takes over.

Contemplation of feelings

“When a monastic feels a pleasant feeling they know: ‘I feel a pleasant feeling.’ When they feel a painful feeling, they know: ‘I feel a painful feeling.’ When they feel a neutral feeling, they know: ‘I feel a neutral feeling.’

When they feel a worldly pleasant feeling, they know: ‘I feel a worldly pleasant feeling.’ When they feel a spiritual pleasant feeling, they know: ‘I feel a spiritual pleasant feeling.’

When they feel a worldly painful feeling, they know: ‘I feel a worldly painful feeling.’ When they feel a spiritual painful feeling, they know: ‘I feel a spiritual painful feeling.’

When they feel a worldly neutral feeling, they know: ‘I feel a worldly neutral feeling.’ When they feel a spiritual neutral feeling, they know: ‘I feel a spiritual neutral feeling.’” (MN 10)

Contemplation of feelings: Comparison of sources

	Pali	Sarvāsti-vāda	Ekāyana Sūtra	Prajñā-pāramitā	Vibhaṅga	Dharma-skandha	Śāriputr-ābhidharma
Pleasant	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Painful	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Neutral	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Pleasant worldly	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Pleasant spiritual	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Painful worldly	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Painful spiritual	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Neutral worldly	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Neutral spiritual	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=

Contemplation of feelings

“When a monastic feels a pleasant feeling they know: ‘I feel a pleasant feeling.’

When they feel a painful feeling, they know: ‘I feel a painful feeling.’

When they feel a neutral feeling, they know: ‘I feel a neutral feeling.’

Contemplation of feelings

When they feel a worldly pleasant feeling,
they know: ‘I feel a worldly pleasant feeling.’
When they feel a spiritual pleasant feeling,
they know: ‘I feel a spiritual pleasant feeling.’
When they feel a worldly painful feeling,
they know: ‘I feel a worldly painful feeling.’
When they feel a spiritual painful feeling,
they know: ‘I feel a spiritual painful feeling.’
When they feel a worldly neutral feeling,
they know: ‘I feel a worldly neutral feeling.’
When they feel a spiritual neutral feeling,
they know: ‘I feel a spiritual neutral feeling.’”

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta vs. Ānāpānasati Sutta: contemplation of feelings

Satipaṭṭhāna (MN 10)		Ānāpānasati (MN 118)
Pleasant	≈	
Painful	≠	
Neutral	≠	
Pleasant worldly	≠	
Pleasant spiritual	=	Rapture
Painful worldly	≠	Bliss
Painful spiritual	≠	These emotions
Neutral worldly	≠	Calming these emotions
Neutral spiritual	≈	

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta vs. Ānāpānasati Sutta: contemplation of feelings

Satipaṭṭhāna (MN 10)		Ānāpānasati (MN 118)
Pleasant	≈	
Painful	≠	
Neutral	≠	
Pleasant worldly	≠	
Pleasant spiritual	=	Rapture
		Bliss
		These emotions
		Calming these emotions
Painful worldly	≠	
Painful spiritual	≠	
Neutral worldly	≠	
Neutral spiritual	≈	

Contemplation of feelings

“When they feel a spiritual pleasant feeling (*nirāmisa sukha*), they know: ‘I feel a spiritual pleasant feeling.’”

“It’s when a monastic, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption (*jhāna*) … in the second absorption.”
(SN 36.31)

Contemplation of feelings

“When they feel a spiritual painful feeling (*nirāmisa dukkha*), they know: ‘I feel a spiritual painful feeling.’”

“When you’ve understood the impermanence of sights—their perishing, fading away, and cessation—you truly understand through right understanding that both formerly and now all those sights are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Upon seeing this, you give rise to yearning for the supreme liberations: ‘Oh, when will I enter and remain in the same dimension that the noble ones enter and remain in today?’ When you give rise to yearning for the supreme liberations like this, sadness arises because of the yearning. Such sadness is called renunciate sadness. ” (MN 137)

Contemplation of mind

“A monastic understands mind with desire as with desire, and mind without greed as without desire. They understand mind with hate as with hate, and mind without hate as without hate. They understand mind with delusion as with delusion, and mind without delusion as without delusion. They know constricted mind as constricted, and scattered mind as scattered.

They know expansive mind as expansive, and unexpansive mind as unexpansive. They know non-supreme mind as non-supreme, and supreme mind as supreme. They know a stilled mind as stilled, and an unstilled mind as unstilled. They know a freed mind as freed, and an unfreed mind as unfreed.” (MN 10)

Contemplation of mind: Comparison of sources

	Pali	Sarvāsti-vāda	Ekāyana Sūtra	Prajñā-pāramitā	Vibhaṅga	Dharma-skandha	Śāriputr-ābhidharma
Desire	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Hate	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Delusion	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Constricted	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Scattered	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Expansive	=	≈	=	≠	=	≈	=
Supreme	=	≈	=	≠	=	≈	=
Stilled	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=
Freed	=	=	=	≠	=	=	=

Contemplation of mind

“A monastic understands mind with desire as with desire, and mind without desire as without desire.

They understand mind with anger as with anger, and mind without anger as without anger.

They understand mind with delusion as with delusion, and mind without delusion as without delusion.

Contemplation of mind

They know constricted mind as constricted, and scattered mind as scattered.

They know expansive mind as expansive, and unexpansive mind as unexpansive.

They know non-supreme mind as non-supreme, and supreme mind as supreme.

They know a stilled mind as stilled, and an unstilled mind as unstilled.

They know a freed mind as freed, and an unfreed mind as unfreed.”

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta vs. Ānāpānasati Sutta: contemplation of mind

Satipaṭṭhāna (MN 10)		Ānāpānasati (MN 118)
Desire	≠	
Hate	≠	
Delusion	≠	
Constricted	≠	
Scattered	≠	
Expansive	≈	Experiencing the mind
Supreme	≈	Gladdening the mind
Stilled	=	Stilling the mind
Freed	=	Freeing the mind

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta vs. Ānāpānasati Sutta: contemplation of mind

Satipaṭṭhāna (MN 10)		Ānāpānasati (MN 118)
Desire	≠	
Hate	≠	
Delusion	≠	
Constricted	≠	
Scattered	≠	
Expansive	≈	Experiencing the mind
Supreme	≈	Gladdening the mind
Stilled	=	Stilling the mind
Freed	=	Freeing the mind

THE END