

MN 10: *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, Mastery-Attentiveness Discourse

DRAFT (02/25/24)

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Kuru country where there was a town of the Kurus named Kammāsadhamma.

There he addressed the *bhikkhus*, “*Bhikkhus*.”

“Venerable sir,” they replied.

The Blessed One said this:

This is the one way, *bhikkhus*, a path for the purification of beings [i56], for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of *Nibbāna*—namely, the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.

What are the four? Here, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body, ardent, comprehending, and masterful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides sensation-contemplating among the sensations, ardent, comprehending, and masterful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides mind-contemplating in the mind, ardent, comprehending, and masterful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides dhamma-contemplating among the *dhammas*, ardent, comprehending, and masterful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

[1st *satipaṭṭhāna*, contemplation of body] And how, *bhikkhus*, does a *bhikkhu* abide body-contemplating in the body?

[**Breathing exercise.**] Here a *bhikkhu*, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, sets his body erect, masterful, attending to what is in front. Masterful, he breathes in, masterful he breathes out. Breathing in long, he comprehends: “I breathe in long”; or breathing out long, he comprehends: “I breathe out long.” Breathing in short, he comprehends: “I breathe in short”; or breathing out short, he comprehends: “I breathe out short.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the bodily fabrication”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the bodily fabrication.” Just as a skilled lathe-operator or his apprentice, when making a

long turn, comprehends: “I make a long turn”; or, when making a short turn, comprehends: “I make a short turn”; so too, breathing in long, a *bhikkhu* comprehends: “I breathe in long”...he trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the bodily fabrication.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, or he abides body-contemplating in the body externally, or he abides body-contemplating in the body both internally and externally. He abides contemplating in body the nature of origination, or he abides contemplating in body the nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in body the nature of both origination and vanishing. Recollection that “the body exists” is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mastery. He abides independent. He doesn’t cling to anything in the world. That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Posture exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, when walking, a *bhikkhu* comprehends, “I am walking.” When standing, he comprehends, “I am standing.” When sitting, [i57] he comprehends, “I am sitting.” When lying down, he comprehends, “I am lying down.” Or he comprehends accordingly however his body is disposed.

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Bodily action exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* is one who acts with comprehension when going forward and returning, who acts with comprehension when looking ahead and looking away, who acts with comprehension when flexing and extending his limbs, who acts with comprehension when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl, who acts with comprehension when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts with comprehension when defecating and urinating; who acts with comprehension when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Bodily component exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, bounded by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: “In this body there are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow,

kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, contents of the stomach, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, oil of the joints, and urine.”

Just as though there were a bag with an opening at both ends full of many sorts of grain, such as hill rice, red rice, beans, peas, millet, and white rice, and a man with good eyes were to open it and review it thus: “This is hill rice, this is red rice, these are beans, these are peas, this is millet, this is white rice”; so too, a *bhikkhu* reviews this same body... as full of many kinds of impurity thus: “In this body there are head-hairs ... and urine.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Elements exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, by way of elements thus: “In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.” [i58]

Just as though a skilled butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at the crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, a *bhikkhu* reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, by way of elements thus: “In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 1.] Again, *bhikkhus*, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter, a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 2.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms, a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ...
That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 3.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews, a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ...
That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 4.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, held together with sinews, a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ...
That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 5.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews, a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ...
That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 6.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, disconnected bones scattered in all directions—here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, here a hip-bone, there a back-bone, here a rib-bone, there a breast-bone, here an arm-bone, there a shoulder-bone, here a neck-bone, there a jaw-bone, here a tooth, there the skull—a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ...
That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 7.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, bones bleached white, the color of shells, a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 8.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, bones heaped up, more than a year old [i59], a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[Corpse exercise 9.] Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, rotted and crumbled to dust, a *bhikkhu* compares this same body with it thus: “This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides body-contemplating in the body internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides body-contemplating in the body.

[2nd *satipaṭṭhāna*, contemplation of sensations] And how, *bhikkhus*, does a *bhikkhu* abide sensation-contemplating among the sensations?

[Sensation exercise.] Here, when experiencing a pleasant sensation, a *bhikkhu* comprehends: “I experience a pleasant sensation”; when experiencing a painful sensation, he comprehends: “I experience a painful sensation”; when experiencing a neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation, he comprehends: “I experience a neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation.” When experiencing a worldly pleasant sensation, he comprehends: “I experience a worldly pleasant sensation”; when experiencing an unworldly pleasant sensation, he comprehends: “I experience an unworldly pleasant sensation”; when experiencing a worldly painful sensation, he comprehends: “I experience a worldly painful sensation”; when experiencing an unworldly painful sensation, he comprehends: “I experience an unworldly painful sensation”; when experiencing a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation, he comprehends: “I experience a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation”; when experiencing an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation, he comprehends: “I experience an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant sensation.”

[Refrain.] In this way he abides sensation-contemplating among the sensations internally, or he abides sensation-contemplating among the sensations

externally, or he abides sensation-contemplating among the sensations both internally and externally. He abides contemplating among the sensations the nature of origination, or he abides contemplating among the sensations the nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating among the sensations the nature of both origination and vanishing. Recollection that “the sensations exist” is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mastery. He abides independent. He doesn’t cling to anything in the world. That is how a *bhikkhu* abides sensation-contemplating among the sensations.

[3rd *satipaṭṭhāna*, contemplation of mind] And how, *bhikkhus*, does a *bhikkhu* abide mind-contemplating in the mind?

[Mind exercise.] Here a *bhikkhu* comprehends mind affected by lust as mind affected by lust, and mind unaffected by lust as mind unaffected by lust. He comprehends mind affected by hate as mind affected by hate, and mind unaffected by hate as mind unaffected by hate. He comprehends mind affected by delusion as mind affected by delusion, and mind unaffected by delusion as mind unaffected by delusion. He comprehends attentive mind as attentive mind, and scattered mind as scattered mind. He comprehends distinguished mind as distinguished mind, and undistinguished mind as undistinguished mind. He comprehends superior mind as superior mind, and unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed mind. He comprehends composed mind [mind in *samādhi*] as composed mind, and uncomposed mind as uncomposed mind. He comprehends liberated mind as liberated mind, and unliberated mind as unliberated mind.

[Refrain.] In this way he abides mind-contemplating in the mind internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides mind-contemplating in the mind. In this way he abides mind-contemplating in the mind internally, or he abides mind-contemplating in the mind externally, or he abides mind-contemplating in the mind both internally and externally. He abides contemplating in the mind the nature of origination, or he abides contemplating in the mind the nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in the mind the nature of both origination and vanishing. Recollection that “the mind exists” is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mastery. He abides independent. He doesn’t cling to anything in the world. That is how a *bhikkhu* abides mind-contemplating in the mind.

[4th *satipaṭṭhāna*, contemplation of dhammas] And how, *bhikkhus*, does a *bhikkhu* abide *dhamma*-contemplating among the *dhammas*?

[Five hindrances exercise.] Here a *bhikkhu* abides *dhamma*-contemplating among *dhammas* in terms of the five hindrances. And how does a *bhikkhu* abide *dhamma*-contemplating among *dhammas* in terms of the five hindrances?

Here, there being sensual desire in him, a *bhikkhu* comprehends: “There is sensual desire in me”; or there being no sensual desire in him, he comprehends: “There is no sensual desire in me”; and he also comprehends how there comes to be the origination of unoriginated sensual desire, and how there comes to be the abandoning of originated sensual desire, and how there comes to be the future nonorigination of abandoned sensual desire.”

There being ill will in him...

There being sloth and torpor in him...

There being restlessness and remorse in him...

There being doubt in him, a *bhikkhu* comprehends: “There is doubt in me”; or there being no doubt in him, he comprehends: “There is no doubt in me”; and he comprehends how there comes to be the origination of unoriginated doubt, and how there comes to be the abandoning of originated doubt, and how there comes to be the future non-origination of abandoned doubt.

[Refrain+.] In this way he abides *dhamma*-contemplating among the *dhammas* internally, or he abides *dhamma*-contemplating among the *dhammas* externally, or he abides *dhamma*-contemplating among the *dhammas* both internally and externally. He abides contemplating among *dhammas* the nature of origination, or he abides contemplating among the *dhammas* the nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating among the *dhammas* the nature of both origination and vanishing. The recollection that “there are the *dhammas*” is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mastery. He abides independent. He doesn’t cling to anything in the world. That is how a *bhikkhu* abides *dhamma*-contemplating among the *dhammas* in terms of the five hindrances.

[Five aggregates exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* abides *dhamma*-contemplating in *dhammas* [i61] in terms of the five appropriation-aggregates. And how does a *bhikkhu* abide *dhamma*-contemplating in *dhammas* in terms of five appropriation-aggregates? Here a *bhikkhu* comprehends: “Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance, such is sensation, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance,

such are the fabrications, such their origin, such their disappearance, such is cognizance, such its origin, such its disappearance.”

[Refrain+.] In this way he abides dhamma-contemplating in *dhammas* internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides dhamma-contemplating in *dhammas* in terms of the five appropriation-aggregates.

[Sixfold sphere exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* abides dhamma-contemplating in *dhammas* in terms of the six internal and exterior spheres. And how does a *bhikkhu* abide dhamma-contemplating in *dhammas* in terms of the six internal and exterior spheres? Here a *bhikkhu* comprehends the eye, he comprehends forms, and he comprehends the fetter that originates dependent on both; and he also comprehends how there comes to be the origination of the unoriginated fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the originated fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-origination of the abandoned fetter.

He comprehends the ear, he comprehends sounds...

He comprehends the nose, he comprehends odors...

He comprehends the tongue, he comprehends flavors...

He comprehends body, he comprehends tangibles...

He comprehends mind, he comprehends *dhammas*, and he comprehends the fetter that originates dependent on both; and he also comprehends how there comes to be the origination of the unoriginated fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the originated fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-origination of the abandoned fetter.

[Refrain+.] In this way he abides dhamma-contemplating in *dhammas* internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides dhamma-contemplating among the *dhammas* in terms of the six internal and exterior spheres.

[Seven awakening factors exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* abides dhamma-contemplating in *dhammas* in terms of the seven awakening factors. And how does a *bhikkhu* abide dhamma-contemplating in *dhammas* in terms of the seven awakening factors?

Here, there being the mastery awakening factor in him, a *bhikkhu* comprehends: “There is the mastery awakening factor in me”; or there being no mastery awakening factor in him, he comprehends: **[i62]** “There is no mastery awakening factor in me”; and he also comprehends how there comes to be the

origination of the unoriginated mastery awakening factor, and how the originated mastery awakening factor comes to fulfillment by development.

There being the investigation-of-*dharmas* awakening factor in him, ...

There being the energy awakening factor in him, ...

There being the rapture awakening factor in him, ...

There being the tranquility awakening factor in him, ...

There being the *samādhī* awakening factor in him, ...

There being the equanimity awakening factor in him, ... comes to fulfillment by development.

[Refrain+.] In this way he abides *dharmā*-contemplating in *dharmas* internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides *dharmā*-contemplating among the *dharmas* in terms of the seven awakening factors.

[Four noble truths exercise.] Again, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* abides *dharmā*-contemplating in *dharmas* in terms of the Four Noble Truths. And how does a *bhikkhu* abide *dharmā*-contemplating in *dharmas* in terms of the Four Noble Truths? Here a *bhikkhu* comprehends as it actually is: “This is suffering”; he comprehends as it actually is: “This is the origin of suffering”; he comprehends as it actually is: “This is the cessation of suffering”; he comprehends as it actually is: “This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.”

[Refrain+.] In this way he abides *dharmā*-contemplating in *dharmas* internally, ... That is how a *bhikkhu* abides *dharmā*-contemplating among the *dharmas* in terms of the Four Noble Truths.

[Conclusion.] *Bhikkhus*, if anyone should develop these four *satipaṭṭhānas* in such a way for seven years, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return. Let alone seven years, *bhikkhus*. **[i63]** If anyone should develop these four *satipaṭṭhānas* in such a way for six years...for five years...for four years...for three years...for two years...for one year, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return. Let alone one year, *bhikkhus*. If anyone should develop these four *satipaṭṭhānas* in such a way for seven months...for six months...for five months...for four months...for three months...for two months...for one month...for half a month, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return. Let alone half a month, *bhikkhus*. If anyone should develop these four

satipaṭṭhānas in such a way for seven days, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.

So it was with reference to this that it was said: “*Bhikkhus*, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of *Nibbāna*, namely, the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The *bhikkhus* were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

This paper is part of a series on *Rethinking Satipaṭṭhāna*. Please go to <http://sitagu.org/cintita/satipaṭṭhāna/> for references and for access to other papers in the series.