

ĀNĀPĀNASATI.

Ānāpānasati practice differs from other forms in that the complete practice is concerned in one way or another with the breathing. Hence there's no need for us to go anywhere, no need to make any unnecessary changes to anything, we practise with the breathing from beginning to end, that is, until we attain the path, its fruit, and *nibbāna*.

It's thus a convenient form of meditation practice, because we don't need to lug anything around with us, we can sit down anywhere and the breathing will be right there with us, so there's no need for us to meditate in dependence on anything external, like a *kasina* device, or a dead body, or whatever. We depend on the breathing in the body so wherever we are it can be convenient for practise.

It's also subtle, a refined, delicate matter, not frightening or exciting, turbulent or confusing, it's not like the *asubha* (foulness) meditations, or anything of that sort, and, further, it's not in any way dangerous, there's no danger of insanity, for instance. If anyone says that through practising *ānāpānasati* they've gone mad, then it's not true. They may well be mad, but it will have happened because they've misunderstood and practised *ānāpānasati* in some way other than that laid out by the Buddha, which is what we take as our basis. There's no way that this type of *ānāpānasati* can lead to madness - it cannot! If madness does result then it's probably happened because it was already developing, and someone already becoming insane can, through practising, all the more easily go that way. Then again, there's sometimes madness because people practise to get a result other than the *Dhamma* - like practising to develop supernatural powers, to be able perform miracles, or whatever, rather than to make the mind peaceful. So, two ways that meditation practice can lead to insanity: having impure intentions, ignoring the *Dhamma* and peacefulness of mind, someone practises to acquire miraculous powers, to become mighty, to have authority, etc., and can go insane because of that, or, there's the

sort of person who's already almost insane, or else is already crazy and doesn't know that they are, so that when they try to control the mind they can quite easily go berserk. A normal person who practises *ānāpānasati* according to the Buddha's model has no way of becoming insane.

Now, consider the complete form of *ānāpānasati*. This form, as it appears in the *Pali*, contains sixteen steps. There may well be other forms of *ānāpānasati* which originate from someone other than the Buddha, but *ānāpānasati* as it occurs in the *Pali* texts is of the sixteen step variety, and no matter where it's being taught it will contain these sixteen steps.

The first section, or tetrad, steps 1 – 4 are for making the mind *samādhi*; practising in the first four steps adjusts the breathing, refines it and results in *samādhi*. The second four steps go further and contemplate the feelings of *pīti* and *sukha* which come with the successful development of *samādhi*. The feelings are what stimulate the arising of thinking, causing the mind to be distracted, to be agitated, hence we begin to know that which 'concocts' the mind. The third section looks especially at the mind, at all the ways the mind can 'be,' and is where we attempt to control it completely. The final four steps consider impermanence, which is a matter of wisdom, and isn't about the mind only. In the final four steps impermanence is contemplated until the mind becomes bored with its usual playthings and lets go - until the mind escapes, becomes free. This happens in the final section, or tetrad of *ānāpānasati*. A more detailed explanation will follow.

The first tetrad: *kāyānupassanāsati*pathāna.

The first section, or tetrad is about managing the breathing in order to control the body thereby allowing the mind to attain stillness. They call this 'calming the body conditioner' - calming the breathing – in order to allow *samādhi* to arise along with its

fruit, its result, happiness. If the body conditioner is properly calmed then the mind will be *samādhī* and we'll experience happiness of the kind associated with *nibbāna*, although it won't be a lasting experience, as it would be with true *nibbāna*.

Step one: know all about the long forms of breathing.

Step two: know all about the short forms of breathing.

Step three: know all about how the breathing continually concocts, or conditions the physical body.

Step four: make the breathing, which is the conditioner of the physical body, calm down, refine, until *samādhī* arises.

We study these four steps until we know them with our eyes closed.

In step one we study the long breathing until we know all about it – how the long breathing is, what its characteristics are, how it influences the body. This is the first step. In step two we observe the short breathing to know how it is, what are its characteristics, how it influences the body. How is the short different from the long breathing? We compare the two forms of breathing to find this out. For a time we fix on the long breathing – how is it, what result does it have etc.? Then we fix on the short breathing - how short is it, what result does short breathing have, and so on - until we gain a comprehensive understanding of in and out breathing: we know the breathing; know the cause of breathing; we know the influence that the different forms of breathing have; we become completely familiar with the in and out breathing.

At present we aren't familiar with it, so we need to become so. We practise the first two steps until completely familiar with the long and short breathing.

When we come to the third step then we look at the two categories of breathing as they connect to the physical body. The breathing is referred to as the *kāyasankāra*, the conditioner of the physical body, it's connected with the body, hence, if the breathing is rough then the body will be rough too, it will be restless, agitated, if the breathing is refined, the body will be refined, will be peaceful and calm. Long breathing happens when the body is normal, therefore when the breathing is made to be long the body will

become normal. Short breathing occurs when the body is abnormal, for example: when there is anger, or fatigue, when mind is abnormal then the breathing will be short, abnormal breathing too, which will cause the body to be abnormal also. We need to know the secrets of the breathing, to know that it conditions the body all of the time.

This is the third step which, in the *Pali* text, is known as ‘experiencing all bodies,’ so, know all bodies, that is, know the breathing and the body it conditions in every which way. The breathing is referred to as a ‘body,’ the physical, fleshly organism is called a ‘body’ too. We need to know about both kinds, how they condition each other. Know the matter of the breath body and the fleshly body in detail; understand completely how they’re connected, how they concoct together, how they condition each other; make this clear understanding in the mind with every in and out breath: experience the truth of this - see the breath body as it conditions the flesh body. This is how to practise the third step of *ānāpānasati*.

Now that we can do this we can continue on and make the mind *samādhi* in the fourth step. The fourth step is about making the body conditioner, that is, the breathing, calm down while breathing in and out, in and out. The breathing calms down, calms, calms, calms, so that the flesh body calms down too, and the mind then experiences *samādhi*. In this step there are tricks, techniques – in this step only, not in the other steps - methods that we can call ‘tricks,’ or ‘techniques’ that will make the breathing calm down - we play a trick on the breathing to make it calm down, to refine it. Now, the first method, or trick is to fix on the breathing in and out, in and out as if following, or chasing it. Mindfulness ‘chases’ the breathing as it enters and leaves, enters and leaves the body. So establish two points of reference: one, outside at the tip of the nose, and two, inside at the navel. The breath begins at the nose, passes in, and, we can conjecture, ends in the vicinity of the navel - further than that we’re not interested in. If breathing out, then feel the disturbance caused by the out-breath at the navel, feel the breathing beginning at the navel, and then feel it as it comes out at the nose and stay with it until it comes to an end. Then we have two kinds of knowledge: where the in-breathing begins and ends, and where the out-breathing begins and ends. The breathing runs in and mindfulness fixes on it from the nose to the navel; the breathing runs out and mindfulness fixes from the navel to the tip of the nose. Imagine that there’s a canal, a conduit from the nose to the navel,

which will allow the mind to fix on the breathing more easily: the breathing comes and goes and the mind follows it along the canal. We need to practise in this way to avoid sleepiness. If we feel uninterested, lethargic, then make the breathing stronger, more forceful which will allow the mind to more easily fix on it, and will drive away the lethargy. If necessary, breath strongly until the breathing makes a noise, make a noise while following breathing, then the ears will help the mind to fix on the breathing too, which will also make the job easier. In the beginning practise breathing strongly, making a noise, like a constant, soft whistling sound as we breathe in and out so that the person sitting next to us can hear it too. If someone has lived an undisciplined life then this kind of thing might be necessary. The technique is called 'following,' or 'chasing' the breathing, in that *sati* fixes on the process of breathing as it passes in and out of the body by way of steadily following or chasing it.

Now, continuing on we reach the point where we begin to 'guard' and no longer follow, or chase the breathing. The most appropriate place to do our guarding is at the nostrils where the air enters and leaves the nose - *sati*, mindfulness guards right at that place, fixes and guards right there. Feel the breath touching there, don't follow the sensations down to the navel and back out again - when breathing in guard at the nose, when breathing out guard at the nose, if we're guarding properly there won't be any opportunity for the mind to run away - but know that, when the in-breathing comes to an end, there's a space, a tiny interval before it begins to come back out, and at that time nothing's happening, so mindfulness must fix on that point, on the end of the in-breathing, if we don't fix on it the mind might run away. Likewise, when the out-breath comes to an end, before it turns around and goes back in, there's an interval of time when nothing is happening and where the mind might also escape. If we've practised the first technique, the following technique properly then the mind won't run away, so it's most necessary, most important that we practise to the best of our ability in every step. If the first step isn't done well the subsequent steps won't be done well either. Anyway, here we stop following the breathing and we just sit and guard at the nostrils: we practise to have mindfulness so that mind doesn't run away anywhere and the breathing goes on continuously, so: when the breathing is rough, know it as rough, when it's refined know it

as refined, when there's an in-breath know the in breath, when there's an out-breath, know the out breath, and so on.

Trick one – following, or chasing the breathing.

Trick two – guarding the breathing at one point along its track.

Now, if we've guarded well enough then we can continue on to the trick known as 'fixing,' or 'creating the *nimitta*,' A *nimitta* is an image, or 'sign' which can arise at the guarding point, and which will be something visible to both the mind's 'eye,' and, should they be open, the physical eyes too. Before this we observe the passing in and out of the breathing at the nose tip until it becomes constant, it's then that the '*nimitta*' can arise, it's then that an image, like a disk, or whatever, can appear for the mind to fix on instead of the in and out-breathing. Now something new, a *nimitta*, arises at the guarding point. This is just an imagination, a mind-made image - of a jewel, or of the sun, or of the sort that will be easiest for us to observe and use - it won't be the same for everyone – which will still be there when our eyes are closed. We'll see something light in the midst of the darkness at the guarding point, like a disk, a colour, anything at all depending on how the mind inclines, it might be like a dewdrop sparkling in the sun, or like a thread, as in a spider's web, glistening in the sun's rays, or a cloud, a drift of white clouds, or a small moon, but whatever it is it won't be a reality, it's just the mind creating a more refined point to fix on, that's all. If we can fix like this it will mean that breathing will be more refined and that the body calms even more. We can compare the three stages: when we practice chasing the breathing the body calms down to a certain level, then, when we guard at one place it calms the body and mind even more, and when we practise until the *nimitta* arises it calms things down yet further. These are the tricks we use to cause the mind to calm down more and more, culminating in the creation of the *ugahanimitta* at the guarding point.

Next we practise to change the *nimitta* according to our wishes, to refine it into a *patibhāganimitta*. Suppose that we create a jewel or a drop of water hanging, transparent in the sunlight at the guarding point, and we're able to contemplate it all the time, then the *ugahanimitta* has been successfully accomplished in the step called 'creating an

image.’ Now, continuing on, we’ll incline the mind and change the *nimitta* according to our wishes, which is known as developing the *patibhāganimitta*. Here we control and refine the mind to the utmost by, for instance, allowing the *nimitta* to change from a small drop of water to a big drop, and then reducing it in size again, by causing it to change colour, to change its characteristics, its appearance, by letting it float here and there. The trick, or technique of controlling the mind to get the *patibhāganimitta* to arise involves managing the image by causing it to change in whatever way we please, every time we breathe in and out.

Thus far the fourth step has these four parts. If we accomplish all four then we can say that we’ve been successful in controlling the mind, the body, and breathing. In reality we control the breathing which has the result of controlling the body and the mind, thus in this step the mind calms down, the body calms down, and the breathing calms down, everything calms down and all that’s left for us to do is to cause the arising of the thing called ‘*jhāna*.’

Continuing on: to cause *jhāna* to arise we need to deal skilfully with the *patibhāganimitta*. Hence, we stop changing the *nimitta* and fix on one final, clear image. When we come to this step we’re then ready to cause the arising of the *jhāna*, which means that so far we’ve trained the mind well, now we can let the *jhāna* arise, and we can meet with the five components of *jhāna*: *vitaka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekagattā* (applied and sustained thought, satisfaction, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind.) *Vitaka* is the mind fixed on the image; the mind dwelling with the image, with the *patibhāganimitta*. Mind comprehensively absorbed with the image is called *vicāra*. Observe the feeling called *pīti*, which is a feeling of satisfaction - *pīti* is different for different people, some experience it strongly, some experience just a little – and the feeling of happiness - *sukha* – extreme happiness. And see that the mind has come together at one point, so that it isn’t distracted in any way at all, this is called *ekagattā*. Meet with these five characteristics: *vitaka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekagatta*, all five mean that mind is calmed down, stilled, that it’s reached the level of the first *jhāna*. We can experience them at the same time: the mind being fixed on the object, mind absorbed with the object, the satisfaction, the happiness, and the one-pointedness of the mind. The

first absorption, or *jhāna* is composed of these five elements. So, breath in, breathe out and experience this with every breath.

This is difficult to achieve because it's a refined, an extremely subtle matter. If there's anything troubling us, disturbing us, then this can't be done; however that's not a certainty, so if we have the chance then we should try. Even at home, if we have a private room and we can be alone for a time, then we can try to do this. If there's a lot of disturbance, as there usually is for a householder, then we probably won't be successful. Hence it's more appropriate to do this in a forest, or some place where we can retreat - in a peaceful place of some kind. If we can reach the first absorption then we've made the bodily formation, that is, the breathing, calm down fully. At the time that we have the first *jhāna* there'll be the feelings of happiness and satisfaction along with the feeling of the mind being firmly fixed on its object. The mind adhering to its object is one; mind absorbed in and knowing all about it's object is another, and, when we can do that successfully, there's the satisfaction of *pīti*, and, with that *sukha*, happiness arises - from satisfaction comes happiness. The mind steady with these objects is called *ekagattā*, one-pointed. We should remember these five words: *vitaka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekagatta*. The fourth step: making the *kāyasankhāra* calm down has *jhāna* as its fruit, we get *samādhi* which is firm, constant to the level of the first *jhāna*, the first 'absorption.'

We'll review it once more: step one - fix on the long breathing until we're familiar with it, that is, until we know everything concerning the long breathing through observing it continuously. Step two - know all about the short breathing in the same way. Now, step three - know how all the kinds of breathing condition the physical body, how they're related: how they're rough together, refined together, restless together, calmed together, etc. Step four is where we start to calm the breathing by controlling it, where we calm it down by using the techniques of 'chasing,' 'guarding,' 'creating the image,' the '*ugahānimitta*' in the mind, and then controlling and manipulating it. When we can do this the mind will be fixed on all five factors of *jhāna*, the first absorption will have arisen.

These are the first four steps, or first tetrad of *ānāpānasati*, called '*kāyanupassanāsatipathāna*.' From this platform the second, third, and fourth *jhānas* can be achieved without too much trouble; it's just a matter of reducing the number of *jhānic*

components, hence the second, third, and fourth *jhānas* being deeper are more refined as to content. But we don't need to go into that, just to provide an outline.

Why is it called '*kāyanupassanā*' ? Because the breathing is a 'body' - the flesh body is obviously a body, but the breathing is also a body related to it in such a way that they can't be separated. We cause the breathing to calm down to allow the body to calm down to the utmost and there is full mindfulness. The first tetrad is completed.

The second tetrad: *vedanānupassanāsatipathāna*.

Now, the second tetrad, or section - '*vedanānupassanāsatipathāna*.' This section has four steps and concerns itself with the feelings, the *vedanā*. Which feelings? The feelings of *pīti* and *sukha* occurring in the first absorption. If we remember, in the calming the body conditioner stage the first *jhāna* was achieved with its constituents, *vitaka*, *vicāra*, applied and sustained thought, *pīti*, *sukha*, the feelings of satisfaction and happiness, and *ekagattā*, one-pointedness of mind, we now bring *pīti* and *sukha* to use in the practise of the second tetrad. When we reach this step then we don't consider anything other than *pīti* - *pīti* that we get from completing the first tetrad. Bring *pīti* and feel it in the mind every time that we breathe in and out: breathe in and out experiencing the feeling called *pīti* – experience the comfort, the happiness, get used to *pīti*, come to know it comprehensively just as we did with the long breathing in the first tetrad. Now we come, by paying meticulous attention to detail, to know *pīti* fully, comprehensively: what is *pīti*? what characteristics does it have? what causes it? what influence does it exert? This is called step number five overall, step one in the second section or tetrad.

When we've fully experienced *pīti* in the fifth step then it's time to move on to the sixth, which is to fix our attention on *sukha*. *Pīti* is satisfaction, and is still somewhat coarse, now we fix on *sukha*, happiness, which is a calmer experience. Compare them, because satisfaction, *pīti*, and happiness, *sukha*, aren't one and the same feeling. Ordinarily when we do anything successfully we feel satisfied, and might even tremble a little, hence *pīti*, which is still quite a coarse, a rough experience, might cause us to shiver and shake, or display some other disturbing physical effects. When at step six we move on to contemplate *sukkhā*, happiness - when there's satisfaction there must also be

happiness following on. *Pīti*, satisfaction is thus swept away by *sukha*, should they mix together we might have problems knowing which is which. *Sukha* is calm, refined, is thus a more comfortable, more peaceful experience. This step fixes on *sukha*, happiness with every in and out breath until we're experienced in and familiar with it: what is *sukha*; what characteristics does it display, what is its cause, what result does it bring, what is its influence like? Know *sukha* in the same way that we came to know the long and short breathing.

In steps five and six we practise to know *pīti* and *sukha* well. Now, we move on to step seven, and come to know the mind conditioner, that which concocts or conditions the mind. The mind conditioners are the feelings of *pīti* and *sukha*. The feelings condition the mind, cause it to think in whatever way. When happiness arises it conditions thinking of a particular kind - like wanting, desiring, wanting to get, to take possession of something, and so on, then there's suffering, because it's defiled thinking. We thus watch these feelings condition the mind in these ways. All feelings are mind-conditioners, they concoct the mind into the many and various states. The feelings of happiness condition the mind in one way, those of suffering in another. This step is called experiencing the mind conditioners because feeling naturally concocts, conditions the mind. In the seventh step we look just at the *vedanā* as they condition the mind, at *pīti* and *sukha* as they concoct the mind in this and that way. We come to a comprehensive understanding of the mind conditioners with every in and out breath, so that we can know how to cut their power in the last step of this section.

Step eight is about calming the mind conditioners, that is, making them lose their ability to concoct the mind in unskillful ways. Don't let them concoct the mind as they would normally do or they'll concoct in a defiled manner - as when happiness arises and the mind is concocted into clinging by it. Here, we'll lessen their power to concoct by considering that, for instance, *sukha*, happiness is impermanent, is something delusive, is *māyā*, is illusory, then the power of *sukha* will decrease of its own accord, that is, the mind won't experience satisfaction in response to something which would normally deceive it into doing that, to something which is really a *māyā*, an illusion. If we went on as usual we'd find satisfaction and pleasure in experiencing *pīti* and *sukha*. But if we know that the fruit that will arise from that will be the defilements, will be suffering, then

we won't allow them to condition the mind, and their power, their ability to concoct, will thus lessen of its own accord. If we know truly that the thinking that will arise will be defiled thinking then it will cause us to lessen the energy of the mind which would otherwise have been disturbed, disordered, which would have fallen into clinging. We lessen the energy by practising to make the mind peaceful and calm with every in and out breath. Here, the eight step is accomplished, and with it the second tetrad in which the feelings, the *vedanā*, are fully controlled. The second tetrad is called '*vedanānupassanāsatipathāna*.'

The third tetrad: *cittanupassanāsatipathāna*.

Now, in the third tetrad, called *cittanupassanāsatipathāna*, we practice with the mind itself. We begin with step nine, then ten, eleven, and twelve, these four steps make up the third tetrad which is concerned with the mind directly. Step nine fixes on the mind itself with every breath we take. How is the mind? As we breath in and out, breath in and out, how is the mind? Here, we know how the mind is as, for instance it experiences *pīti*, or *sukha*, as it has the defilement of greed, *loba*, or as it's without greed, as it has ill-will, *bhaya*, or as it's free from ill-will, as it has fear, or is without fear, and so on. Here we develop a detailed knowledge of how our mind is at any one time, good or not good, elevated or base, we sit and observe. This is step nine.

We practise until expert, until completely familiar with our mental environment, then we go on to step ten. OK mind! Now, I'm going to control you! Step ten is about controlling the mind to allow *Dhamma* gladness to arise; it's about making the mind happy, cheerful, making it 'glad' in the *Dhamma* way. With every in and out breath we control the mind so that it can sustain the feeling of gladness; we practise until we can do this - which isn't easy. Step ten: exercising power over the mind, bringing it under control, making it experience sustained *Dhamma* gladness.

Now, in step eleven we change to controlling the mind so that it stops, becomes firmly established, steady, secure. We don't let the mind experience *Dhamma* gladness anymore so that it becomes still – it stops. We cause the mind to be firm, cause it to be *samādhi* - not because it's *jhānic*, absorbed, or anything like that – we simply cause the

mind to stop, to become still. Practising until we can do this constitutes the eleventh step. Then, all the time that we're breathing in and out the mind remains still: breathing in the mind is stilled, breathing out the mind is stilled; all the time the mind is still, silent. If we can do this then we've been successful in this step of the practice, we've controlled the mind so that it can stop, can become still, become firmly established. Now, we change to step twelve.

In this step we make the mind 'let go,' that is, we cause it to be unblemished, spotless. This requires that, when anything comes to stick, or attach to the mind we make the mind remove it, or we take the mind away from it - it comes to the same thing. Anything that comes to stick to the mind we remove it, or we pull the mind away from it. We can use these words when we talk about making the mind let go, causing it to be free from some object. With each in and out breath we practise to control the mind, to remove it from, to cause it to be clear, free from anything that would stick to it. This is the last step of the third tetrad, step twelve overall.

Reviewing the third tetrad: step nine – observe the various characteristics of the mind. Step ten – control, or make the mind glad. Step eleven – control the mind so that it's steady, firm. Step twelve – make the mind let go, liberate it. This tetrad is called *cittānupassanāsatipathāna*. Do we see why? Mindfulness is on top of the mind all of the time, hence it's called '*cittānupassanāsatipathāna*.'

The Fourth Tetrad: *Dhammanupassanasatipathāna*.

Now we arrive at the fourth tetrad, the tetrad called '*Dhammanupassanāsatipathāna*,' which is where we study the *Dhamma*. There are four steps. The first step of this section is the thirteenth overall. Step thirteen carries the injunction: *aniccānupassī asassīsamītisikhati*, *pasassīsamītisikhati*: see clearly into the *aniccaṇ* quality of all *sankhāras* (all conditioned things – everything that arises in dependence on a cause) with every in and out breath. Where are we to experience *aniccaṇ*? We need to experience it within the components of the practice of *ānāpānasati*; there's no need to look outside at another person, or at any other things, rather 'see' impermanence, 'see' *aniccaṇ* in the various steps of the practice. See it in a detailed and

quite wonderful way, see that the long forms of breathing are impermanent, the short forms of breathing are impermanent, the concocting of the body by the breathing is impermanent, the calming down of the breathing is impermanent, anything concerned with the body is *aniccaṇ*, impermanent. Now, come to see impermanence in the factors of the second tetrad: *pīti* is impermanent, *sukha* is impermanent, the mental conditions concocted by *pīti* and *sukha* are impermanent, the calming down of the mind is impermanent. See impermanence in every step, and then go on to the third tetrad to see that the many and various states of the mind are impermanent: the mind with gladness is impermanent, the mind with stillness is impermanent, the liberated mind is impermanent. There's no need to look outside, look inside, at the things we practise, the contents of each step that we practise are impermanent. *Jhāna*, *samādhi* are impermanent – isn't that funny? We say that we make the mind firm and steady, then when we observe it we find that it's still impermanent. There's no need to look outside, take a detailed look inside at everything we're practising and meet with impermanence. This is the practice in step thirteen; it's called *aniccānupassī* – 'seeing' impermanence. This is the most important step of all; it's here that we either succeed or we fail to save ourselves; if we fail to see truth here then there won't be a result, a reaction, if we see it there will be.

If we really see impermanence then there'll be the fruit - step fourteen arises: *virāgānupassī*, experience the 'fading away,' the unravelling of clinging. *Virāga* means 'fading way' – 'fading away' as when, for instance, the colour fades out of a piece of cloth, here too the defilements are said to 'fade away.' When we see impermanence strongly enough there arises the fading away of clinging, experiencing the fading out of clinging is known as *virāgānupassī*, so sit and clearly see *virāgā*, the fading out of clinging, as it occurs in the mind with every in and out breath - see the fading away of clinging, watch it decrease, decrease. The fourteenth step, seeing fading away, is the fruit of seeing *aniccaṇ* in step thirteen, so, how effective the fading away process is will depend on how well we've experienced impermanence. 'Fading away' refers to the quenching of the defilements, the quenching of clinging, and thus to the quenching of suffering.

The next step, step fifteen, *nirodhānupassī*, is to experience the quenching of the defilements, of clinging, and of suffering with every breath we take. Sit and observe how

they quench. This is known as *nirodhānupassī*. In reality this much would be enough, to accomplish the fifteenth step would be enough, because the path and its fruit are attained between the fourteenth and fifteenth steps of the practice: there's the fading away of desire to whatever extent, and then there's the concomitant quenching - the 'fading away' part represents the path, and the resulting quenching is its fruit.

But step sixteen remains to be experienced – meeting with success in our endeavours is called *patinissaganupassī*, seeing 'giving back' with every in and out breath. This is like seeing the escape from, the end of our ignorant involvement with the various things that can cause suffering, that can cause clinging - that's finished with. Compare this to a 'giving back.' Before this we took possession of things and that caused suffering; we did this continually until at last feeling the need to end our suffering. Hence it's like a 'giving back,' a 'throwing back' to nature of that which always belonged to nature. We were like thieves, stealing the things of nature, taking them to be ours, and, when the consequent suffering became heavy enough we then sought out the way to quench it, that is, to give those things back to their original owner. *Aniccaṇ, virāga, nirodhā, patinissaga* are the *Dhamma*; there are four *dhammas*, and this section fixes on and considers these, hence it's known as '*Dhammanupassanāsatipathāna*.' It's the final tetrad and with it's completion the matter is at an end. The defilements are finished with, *dukkha* is gone, and we thus achieve the culmination of the *brahmacariya*, the holy life.

We'll now go over it again: the first section has four steps and deals with the breathing and it's relationship to the body. It's called *kāyānupassanāsatipathāna*. The second section is concerned with the feelings of *pīti* and *sukha* and is called *vedanānupassanāsatipathāna*. The third section deals with the mind - the mind when it's like this, or like that, or like the other, and we then control the mind like this, like that, etc. This is called *cittānupassanāsatipathāna*. The final section and its four steps is concerned with the *Dhamma* that is, with *aniccaṇ, virāga, nirodhā, and patinissaga*, these taken together make up the one *Dhamma*, hence this section is called *Dhammanupassanāsatipathāna*.

Altogether these four tetrads or sections are known as the four *satipathāna*, the four foundations, or bases of mindfulness. If these four are fully developed the result will be the ending of *dukkha*, of suffering. When we develop the four *satipathāna* the seven

bojjhanga (the factors of enlightenment) arise fully too. When the four *satipathāna* are fully developed then they're collectively called the seven *bojjhanga* – that is, there's *sati*, dhammic mindfulness, there's *dhammavicāya*, dhammic investigation, there's *viriyā*, dhammic energy, there's *pīti*, dhammic satisfaction, there's *passādhī*, dhammic happiness, there's *samādhī*, the mind ready to do its work, and there's *upekka*, dhammic equanimity - all come together when we practise the sixteen steps. Hence the Buddha said that when the four factors of mindfulness are fully developed, *vijjā*, knowledge, and *vimutti*, deliverance arise fully and completely - insight, clear seeing into the nature of things, is wisdom, is knowledge full and complete, and when the seven factors of awakening are full and complete the cutting of the defilements occurs and there's deliverance, *vimutti*, the escape from all the forms of suffering. Hence when we practise the sixteen steps of *ānāpānasati* we practise the four *satipathāna*, the four foundations of mindfulness, and the seven *bojjhanga* too - all at the same time, all together, so when we reach the end of that trail there's wisdom and deliverance from all the forms of suffering.

Do we see how refined, how subtle it all is? Do we want it? Perhaps at first we think we do, and then when we see it set out like this we don't want it anymore. If we still feel resistance towards it then take it step by step. This, then is the full version, it has these sixteen steps, take it and consider it.

The Shortcut method.

Now, we'll look at this in another way. The full form is very difficult, takes a lot of time and effort, and perhaps even hearing about it makes us feel tired, so now we'll look at a second way of practising meditation which isn't so bad, which doesn't require us to do the whole sixteen steps. What we do is to make the mind sufficiently concentrated by any method we like to use, and then go on to consider impermanence. We just do these two steps - a third step will arise when we get the result, when we experience *virāga*, fading away, and *nirodha*, the end of suffering. Find a way to make the mind comfortable and clear, safely concentrated by any method, or do just enough *ānāpānasati* to allow the mind to become comfortable, clear and concentrated, to have

enough energy and to feel contentment, and then try to see *aniccaṇ* within the body and mind: observe the body to see its impermanence; observe the feelings, pleasant and unpleasant, to see their impermanence; thinking is impermanent; perception is impermanent; consciousness is impermanent - form, feeling, perception, thinking, and consciousness (the five aggregates) are impermanent. The body itself is impermanent, the mind is impermanent, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air are impermanent, the inner sense organs, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and the mind are impermanent, and the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and mental objects they deal with are impermanent. Don't be deluded into thinking that the delicious and the undelicious are permanent, everlasting, but feel the impermanence of those things too with every in and out breath. We need the sort of mindfulness which knows immediately when anything arises into the mind, so that when we experience a form we know it as impermanent; when we taste anything we know it as impermanent, taste anything delicious or undelicious and know it as impermanent, and so on. This is called the shortcut method: with a little *samādhi*, just enough, jump to the contemplation of *aniccaṇ*, of impermanence; do the first couple of steps and then skip to step thirteen. How much we experience of impermanence will then naturally give rise to a corresponding fading away of desire and cessation of suffering. See impermanence to whatever extent and escape accordingly. This way is easier and more compact: just make the mind sufficiently *samādhi* then, second, observe the impermanence within the body and mind until there's a cooling off, a feeling of boredom with the things we normally find delight in, then a release from lustful desire will come of its own accord, and there'll be an escape from suffering to an appropriate extent. There are just two - three if we want to be complete - steps to be contemplated with each in and out breath.

Forms of *ānāpānasati* from outside Buddhism.

Because breathing is basic to life the body can become normal through using it in a particular way. Controlling the breathing thus has a special result, in that the body becomes comfortable, relaxed. In some places, some groups practise *ānāpānasati* in the initial stages just to attain bodily ease, and not for anything more. They don't want to

develop the mind, they just want to let the body relax, experience ease and comfort. This form of the practice is much used in India; they don't want the path, its fruit, and *nibbāna*, they want only comfort, to be free from ill-health, and, because the breathing has hidden properties, if it's done correctly then the body can be made comfortable, at ease. Hence there's another form of the practise originating outside the Buddha's dispensation in which it's explained that good, correct breathing involves something called '*prān*' - '*prān*,' or the 'life-force' exists outside of us in the air and comes in to sustain the body via the in-breathing. It's believed that in the air we breathe there is this '*prān*,' hence we need to practise breathing properly so that the *prān* outside can infiltrate the body more effectively, then we can be healthier, more at ease, more comfortable. In India some have used *ānāpānasati* in this way since ancient times. The technique is known as *prāṇayāma* and its aim is to increase health and longevity. They call it *ānāpṛāṇayāma* - this is the name of the practise concerned with controlling the in and out breathing: give it a try: make the breathing correct (make it longer, softer) and that will cause the body to be easy, comfortable, and then, perhaps, we can move on to the Buddha's form of *ānāpānasati* afterwards. Do the form of practise that renders the body at ease first, this then will help us to overcome various obstacles, like sleepiness.

***Ānāpānasati* of the mixed type.**

We might well practise *ānāpānasati* in some other way, but then there won't be the tricks, the techniques that come with the kind of *ānāpānasati* taught by the Buddha. If we have the time and the ability we should practise the sixteen step variety. If we don't have the time, and if we're not able to go so far then we can take on the three step version: make the mind sufficiently *samādhi* and then experience impermanence to whatever extent until we receive the appropriate result of that - the corresponding release from clinging - these three steps will be enough, and will be the same in essence, but, of course, they won't represent the full practice. If we can't do more than this then do just this much, and if we can't do this much then we can settle for the mindfulness only approach: being always mindful, that is, striving to be always aware before thinking, speaking, or acting, so that when anything comes to contact us we can manage things so

that our response is controlled, and anger, for instance, doesn't arise, or some form of insulting speech or violent physical response doesn't happen. If we practice *ānāpānasati* in the sixteen step form we'll certainly possess that sort of mindfulness – full mindfulness, and then we won't do anything in haste. The final fruit lies in the benefits that will arise from well-developed mindfulness, whether we practise the full sixteen step version of *ānāpānasati*, or the shortcut method, the two-step approach.

There remain one or two odds and ends to clear up: if we're sleepy and can't wake up properly then we can apply some water to our face, or to our eyes, and, if we want to be very smart about it, we can bring a stick to the meditation hall and smack ourselves over the head occasionally, as they do in Zen monasteries. In such places they sit in a line practising *samādhi* and there will be a monk with a wooden paddle who walks up and down behind the line, and if any monk is sleepy and nodding he slaps him on the shoulder. In Zen monasteries they deal with sleepiness in this way, they strike the meditator with a flat paddle, but they do it gently so that it makes a lot of noise but isn't dangerous, and it gets someone over sleepiness. This is a trick, a small device which can help. Also avoid eating too much. Don't do anything which will cause the body to be abnormal – control eating, sitting, lying down; live properly and we won't be bothered by sleepiness. When the weather is good then we're not so inclined to feel sleepy, but if it's bad, when it's close, hot and stuffy, then we are. But these problems we should already be aware of; there's no need for any teaching.

To sum up: the practice of *ānāpānasati* must always be related to the in and out breathing, to being mindful of the breathing to some extent all of the time. If we're using the physical body as the basis for practise then it's *kāyānupassanāsati*pathāna. If we take the feelings as our object then it's *vedanānupassanāsati*pathāna. If the mind is the object of contemplation, it's *cittānupassanāsati*pathāna. Taking the *Dhamma* as the

object is *Dhammanupassanāsatipathāna*, where, in the step that is *aniccānupassī*, we render ourselves safe from the abnormal problems of being alive by observing, by acknowledging the impermanence of all *sankhāras* with every breath we take.

In the end it all comes together in the one word - *sati*, mindfulness. When we can have correct mindfulness then we can save ourselves from falling into being pleased or displeased by the things that come to touch the senses, and then the defilements won't arise. If we practise mindfulness with breathing fully and correctly we can have the fullest mindfulness, the highest, the strongest, the fastest mindfulness, and all of the time.