

Ānāpānasati II Session 3 Home Practice

This week, we tried to finish summarizing the third and fourth tetrads of the sutta to complete our initial review. If this seems like a bit much, it's probably because we rushed through it. The first Ānāpānasati practice group takes eight weeks to go through the sixteen steps. If you are attending this practice group for the first time, you may want to go back and take the Ānāpānasati I to have more time to practice the sixteen steps in detail.

The focus of this practice group is to take what we have learned from practicing the steps of the sutta and to explore how the breath can be used in our everyday life. We will also use it as an aid to gratitude, present moment awareness, and compassion practices. Next session, we will move more clearly in that direction.

This week, we reviewed the classical definition of mindfulness, which consists of three components: diligence, clear seeing, and remembering to be present.

We talked more about the “seclusion”, Viveka in Pali, and how it's talked about in the teachings as being a threefold physical-seclusion, mental-seclusion, and seclusion from all attachments.

We tried out the “Tibetan tools”, supplemental material from the Mahayana tradition, which came much later than the practices in the sutta. We discussed how they form an extension of “applied and directed thought”, used to create mental seclusion and develop one-pointedness of mind. A guided audio is provided.

Practice:

1. Continue to work through the steps of the sutta, remembering that the main point is setting up the conditions that will allow you to experience the resting spots in each tetrad.
2. Try the optional Tibetan visualization. If it helps, use it for the first tetrad. If not, just drop it. Finish the first tetrad with a sense of spacious awareness of the whole-body breathing: “Full body breath awareness”.
3. As you reach the third tetrad, settle into steps 11-12. Steadying the awareness and noticing what we are attaching to in this flow of experience. Practice Vipassana. The breath can move more to the background as we are with whatever arises in the mind. In the fourth tetrad notice the coming and going of things more than the detail of each mind object that arises.
4. Lastly, don't forget to take the breath with you on a walk!

The supplemental material includes.

[The third and fourth tetrad in English and Pali](#)

[Different translations for Piti and Sukha, steps five and six.](#)

[A description of the resting places \(abodes\) in the sutta.](#)

[Other words or phrases to use if and when you drop the counting](#)

[A description of the Tibetan tools](#)

A guided audio practice using the full Tibetan tools.

Third Tetrad

9. Citta-paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Citta-paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe sensitive to the mind'.

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out sensitive to the mind'.

10. Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe in gladdening the mind'.

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out gladdening the mind'.

11. Samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe in steadying the mind'

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out steadying the mind'.

12. Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe in liberating the mind'.

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out liberating the mind'.

Fourth Tetrad

13. Aniccānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Aniccānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence'.

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence'.

14. Virāgānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Virāgānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating dispassion'.¹

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating dispassion'.

15. Nirodhānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Nirodhānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating cessation'²

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating cessation'.

16. Paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati

Paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating letting go'.³

One trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating letting go'.

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¹ Or sometimes translated as “fading away of passions”

² Nirodhā can also mean “Stilling, or Stillness”

³ Sometimes translated as “Relinquishment”. Patinissaggā has a connotation of “throwing something that you borrowed back on the heap”

Different Translations for Pīti and Sukha

Pīti	Sukha	From
Joy	Happiness	Anālayo
Joy	Bliss	Thich Nhat Hanh
Rapture	Pleasure	Thanissaro
Rapture	Happiness	Buddhadāsa, Larry Rosenberg
Zest		
Bliss	Contentment	
Happiness	Ease	

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The Resting Places (abodes) in Ānāpānasati

Begin to read this from the lower left-hand corner and follow the steps up the path to the last abode

Development of wisdom, true knowledge and deliverance						
		16. Contemplating Letting go	15. Contemplating cessation			
				14. Contemplating dispassion	13. Contemplating impermanence	
					Choiceless awareness. With a mind that has been gladdened and calmed, observing when the mind is free or fettered	
			11. Steadying the mind	12. Liberating the mind		
	9. Sensitive to mind	10. Gladdening the mind				
A calm abiding, with joy and ease. The beginning of vipassana, noticing thoughts, releasing thoughts and returning to the pleasant breath						
		8. Calming the mental formations	7. Sensitive to mental formations			
				6. Sensitive to Sukha	5. Sensitive to Pīti	
					A calm and relaxed body with a secluded mind, secluded from gross levels of hindrances	
			3. Sensitive to the whole body	4. Calming the body formations		
	1. Knowing a long breath	2. Knowing a short breath				

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Using Directed thought (vitakka) to create seclusion without counting

The first two steps of the Sutta imply measuring or estimating the length of the breath. The sutta is not detailed enough to explain *how* to know the long and short breath. Different commentaries have suggested using counting or estimating. However, the kind of close attention to the breath that the measuring process entails may not work for everyone, in the same way that the breath may not be the ideal object of attention for everyone.

This doesn't mean that all hope is lost. The breath can be marked by words and phrases rather than numbers. Here are a few examples:

The point is to occupy the mind to begin to create seclusion and single-minded-purpose

In Breath	Out Breath	Notes
Breathing in, sensitive to the whole body	Breathing out, calming the whole body	Use phrases from the sutta
Bud	Dho	Traditional Thai
Breathing in I am aware of my body	Breathing out I smile to my body	Thich Nhat Hanh
Arriving, Arriving, Arriving,	Home,Home,Home	Thich Nhat Hanh
Om Mani	Padme Hum	Tibetan - "The Unconditioned is the jewel in the heart of the lotus"
May I be free from anxiety	May I be at ease	Loving-Kindness Phrase

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Tibetan Tools

Around 1,000 years after the life of the Buddha, a powerful spiritual movement occurred in India that swept up both Hinduism and Buddhism at the time. It was characterized by “using whatever is available”, as a tool for liberation and spiritual opening: energy systems, visual art (yantra), sound (mantra), hand gestures (mudra), and the belief in celestial beings that could help humans manifest certain positive qualities Bodhisattvas (bodhisattva of compassion, bodhisattva of wisdom, etc.). Various chakra systems were part of that movement, as well as a lot of what we think of as yoga.

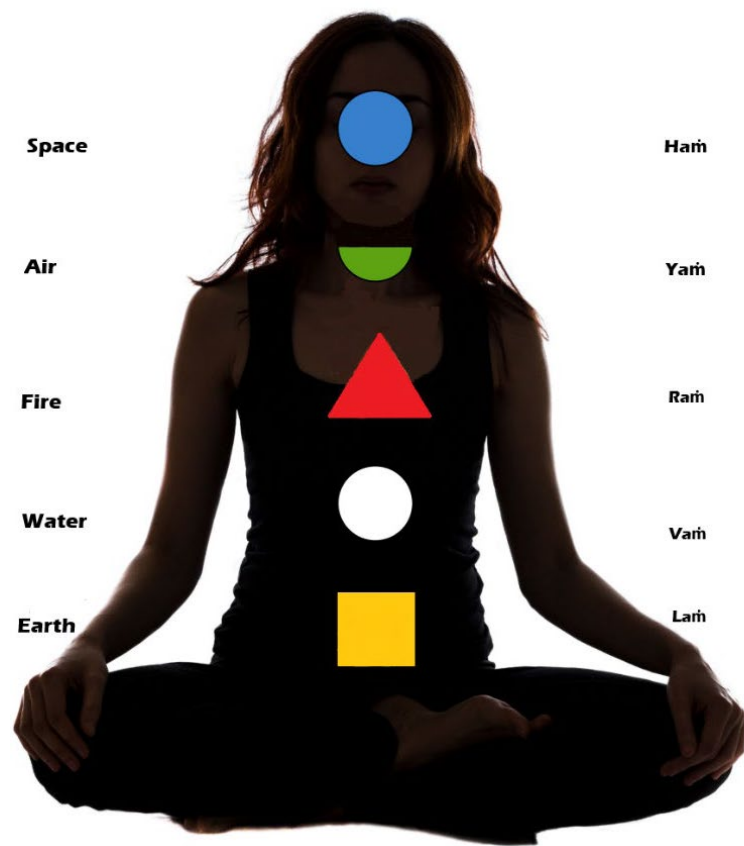
In Tibet and northern India, Buddhist practitioners began to use these tools as aids in their meditation practice. In my opinion, these are all forms of vitakka-vicara, or “directed thought and evaluation”, sometimes called “initial application and sustained attention.”

Until now we have used the breath centers, and bringing our attention to them to be with the breath energy, as a means of becoming sensitive to the whole body (at least the whole central body), relaxing each of these areas (step four, calming the body formations), and creating seclusion from the hindrances by giving the puppy dog mind something very specific to attend to.

Here are some **optional** tools that come from the Tibetan tradition. In addition to what we are already using together, knowing the length of the breath through counting and the use of a ‘map’ of where to place the attention, I will often use the sound, shape and color to help the mind settle down in the first 5-10 minutes of a sitting practice. Different systems use different numbers of chakras, different colors or shapes are associated, and different sounds (called bijimantra “seed syllables”). None of these is divinely ordained; they are mental formations created by meditators over centuries. No one system is more ‘correct’ than another. The most famous system is the 7-chakra kundalini system from the Hindu tradition.

As you breathe into each area, you can add one or more items. For example, when counting the breath as you feel it in the lower abdomen, you might just count the first breath. Then you could add the sounds: “Lam, 2,3,4,5...” on the inhale and “Lam, 2,3,4,5,6....” on the exhale. Finally, as you count, you could visualize the energy collecting around a yellow square in this area.

Location	Sound	Shape	Color	Element
5. Head	Ham	Circle	Blue	Space
4. Throat	Yam	Half Circle (flat side on top)	Green	Air
3. Heart	Ram	Triangle	Red	Fire
2. Above the navel	Vam	Circle	White	Water
1. Below the navel	Lam	Square	Yellow	Earth



**Five Tibetan Breath Energy Centers with
Elements, Shapes, Colors, and Seed Syllables**

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