

Notes on awakening

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1 Core teachings

1.1 The three marks of existence

The Three Marks of Existence are fundamental characteristics that describe conditioned phenomena and the natural law of reality and human experience.

1. **sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā** – all saṅkhāras (conditioned things) are impermanent

Definition 1.1. Anicca (Pali), anitya (Skt.) [Noun, Adjective]

Common translations: Impermanence, impermanent

Etymology: “a” meaning non- and “nicca” meaning constant, continuous, permanent.

Intuitions: Our inability to maintain things as we like. Inverse of nicca, which can be interpreted as a mental event relating to something being maintained to our satisfaction.

Quotes:

“All conditioned things are impermanent — when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering.”

(Dhammapada, verse 277)

2. **sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā** – all saṅkhāras are unsatisfactory, imperfect, unstable

Definition 1.2. Dukkha (Pali), duḥkha (Skt.) dukkha (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Unease, suffering, standing unstable, difficult emptiness

Etymology: “du” meaning bad or difficult and “kha” meaning empty, hole, commonly interpreted as the unsteady motion of a chariot caused by badly fitting axle-hole. Alternatively, duḥ-stha, with “stha” meaning stand, i.e., standing badly, unsteady. Opposite of “sukha”, meaning happiness, comfort or ease. Chinese derive dukkha translation from “bitter”.

Quotes:

“Birth is dukkha, aging is dukkha, death is dukkha; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are dukkha; association with the unbeloved is dukkha; separation from the loved is dukkha; not getting what is wanted is dukkha. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are dukkha.”

(Samyutta Nikaya, verse 56.11)

3. **sabbe dhammā anattā** – all dharmas (conditioned or unconditioned things) have no unchanging self or soul

Definition 1.3. Anattā (Pali), anātman (Skt.), annata (transl.) [Noun, Verb]

Common translations: Non-self, no-self, not-self

Etymology: “an” meaning not, and “attā” meaning self-existent essence. Synonymous with anātman, meaning no soul, i.e. “is not ātman” instead of “does not have ātman.”

Intuitions: Release from having any particular view of the self. Impersonal. Inverse of specific mental event - atta, meaning “essence”, “to take control of”, “have control of”, “have ownership of”.

Quotes:

“Any kind of form whatever, whether past, future or presently arisen, whether gross or subtle, whether in oneself or external, whether inferior or superior, whether far or near, must with right understanding how it is, be regarded thus: *This is not mine, this is not I, this is not myself.*”

(Samyutta Nikaya, verse 22.59)

Note 1.4.

Although dukkha is described in metaphors of imbalance, asymmetry, or broken symmetry to describe suffering—much of the core practices and teachings of the Buddha aim to disrupt reflexive behaviours and the habitual ways of seeing that are learned by primitive instinct, that were necessary to make us adaptive. The goal we target is not a perfect crystallized symmetry, an idealized structure, nor a final destination but is instead a continuous development and motion, a fluidity of self and the skillful application of various insight ways of seeing and strategies. Fluidity over crystallization is aligned with the other marks of existence; impermanence and no-self.

An un-ending motion that requires continuous effort to take a responsive action may seem to counter to the goal of cessation in reaching nibbāna, but the mental motions and physiological control that are purified of past and future karma can become as automatic as our original maladaptive ones. The ease of finding and applying adaptive strategies is similar to the sense of being carried by the current upon stream-entry (sotāpanna). The event of enlightenment is then more akin to the mastery of a craft and skill set, though the medium is perception and the tool set is the convolved substrate of body, mind, and environment. The arahant is comparable to an artist or technician that has reached mastery and applies the appropriate action of an appropriate instrument from their tool set with little to no hesitation, regardless if it is bold or unprecedented.

1.2 The four noble truths**1. idam dukkham** - this is pain

The truth of dukkhā or inherent “dissatisfaction” in human existence. Characteristic of the perpetual cycle or samsara of grasping at things, ideas and habits.

2. ayam dukkha-samudayo - this is the origin of pain

The truth of Samudaya or the “origin” of suffering points to attachment, desire, and ignorance as the root causes of suffering. Duḥkha arises simultaneously with taṇhā.

Definition 1.5. Taṇhā (Pali), tr̥sna (Skt), tanha (transl.) [Noun, Verb]

Common translations: Craving, thirst, grasping, fused to, welded to.

Etymology: Inherited from Sanskrit and from Proto-Indo-Iranian; thirst, desire; which derived from Proto-Indo-European dry.

Intuitions: A fast “clenching” mechanism fundamental to cognitive and kinesthetic perception that immediately follows a moment of salience or relevance realization. A

tension of the mind does not quite unclench from an object or its aspect, similar to having something you aren't finished with pulled out of your hand and the tensing of your fingers to resist. Tanha, objectification, and the "having" mode of existence all go hand-in-hand.

Quotes:

"The more desires one has, the more they will suffer. Our mere existence is suffering. In our life we distinguish pleasure from suffering and tend to cling to pleasure. This is our inherent nature. But suffering is inseparable from pleasure, for one is never found without the other. Therefore, the more we seek pleasure and avoid suffering, the more entangled we become in the duality of pleasure and suffering. Be content with our state of being. If we are not satisfied with our state of being we will be slaves to the five desires which stem from the five senses."

(Gautama Buddha's Last Sermon)

Taṇhā is closely linked to upādāna, and the subtle transition between them is important to deconstruct and understand the the formation of dukkah. Mental formations tend to chain into one another very easily, and we seek clarity around exactly how that cause and effect evolves. What are the textures of the mental images or mental talk? Observing how they are associative and the subtle ways the body reacts to them, which in turn fuels new mental formations.

Definition 1.6. Upādāna (Pali, Skt.), upadana (transl.) [Noun, Verb]

Common translations: Clinging, attachment, grasping, pulling towards self.

Etymology: Literal translation is fuel, material cause, substance and substrate that is the source and means for keeping an active process energized.

Intuitions: Upadana is a mental event that immediately follows taṇhā and can be thought of as the opposite of equanimity. In the Sutta Pitaka, the Buddha states that there are four types of clinging:

- (a) kamupadana - sense-pleasure clinging
- (b) ditthupadana - all views clinging
- (c) silabbatupadana - rites-and-rituals clinging
- (d) attavadupadana self-doctrine clinging

Quotes:

"These four kinds of clinging have craving as their source, craving as their origin, they are born and produced from craving. [...] Craving has feeling as its source. [...] Feeling has contact as its source. [...] Contact has the sixfold base as its source. [...] The sixfold base has mentality-materiality as its source. [...] Mentality-materiality has consciousness as its source. [...] Consciousness has formations as its source. [...] Formations have ignorance as their source, ignorance as their origin; they are born and produced from ignorance."

(Majjhima Nikaya, 11.16)

3. **ayam dukkha-nirodha** - this is the cessation of pain.

The truth of Nirodha or the “cessation” of suffering highlights the possibility of overcoming suffering by confinement of or letting go of taṇhā.

4. **ayam dukkha-nirodha-gamini patipada** - this is the path to the cessation of pain

The truth of Marga or the “path” to the cessation of suffering known as the Noble Eightfold Path.

1.3 The noble eightfold path

Set of ethical and mental practices that guide individuals towards liberation from suffering

1. (a) **Right View:** Developing an accurate understanding of reality.

Note 1.7.

There are two levels of right view: Mundane (Skt. laukika) and supermundane (Skt. lokottara). Mundane right views are mindsets that allow the mind to feel free of suffering and uplifted in the daily world of unenlightened beings:

- i. There is an exchange of karma based on intention
- ii. There is meaning and value in generosity, giving, offering
- iii. There is reason to feel gratitude toward our parents for bringing us into world
- iv. There is this mundane world and the other supermundane world. This can be interpreted various ways: in a platonic sense, as a comparison between sensual phenomena and jhanas, as spontaneous rebirth, or as simply the arising and passing away of all entities
- v. There are teachers that can guide you in the path toward awakening

In contrast, supermundane right views happen at the level of stream-entry where you understand the four noble truths, i.e. you understand suffering, abandon causes and conditions, experience and realize the cessation of suffering, cultivate the path leading to cessation.

- (b) **Right Intention:** Cultivating intentions of goodwill and non-harm.

Definition 1.8. Prajñā (Pali), pañña (Skr.), prajna (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Wisdom, discernment, insight.

Etymology: “Pra” is an intensifier which can be translated as higher, greater, supreme or being born or springing up, referring to a spontaneous type of knowing. “jñā” meaning consciousness, knowledge, or understanding.

Intuitions: Intuitive apprehension, non-discriminating knowledge, participatory knowing (as opposed to propositional knowing).

Quotes:

“Wisdom is purified by morality, and morality is purified by wisdom: where one is, the other is, the moral man has wisdom and the wise man has morality, and the combination of morality and wisdom is called the highest

thing in the world.”

(Sonadanda Sutta, 22.131)

2. (a) **Right Speech:** Practicing truthful and compassionate communication.

Note 1.9.

Noble silence is often a good fallback when unsure of what to say. A simple mnemonic to contemplate the compassionate quality of your speech is to, “*Think* before you speak”:

- **Timeliness:** Consider the appropriate timing for your words, ensuring that they are expressed at a moment that is conducive to understanding and empathy.
- **Honesty:** Emphasize the importance of truthfulness in your communication, promoting sincerity and transparency to build trust and connection.
- **Intention:** Reflect on the motives behind your words, aiming for positive and constructive communication that aligns with your values and promotes understanding.
- **Necessity:** Evaluate whether your words are necessary and contribute meaningfully to the conversation, avoiding unnecessary or potentially harmful remarks
- **Kindness:** Prioritize the use of gentle and compassionate language, fostering a caring and supportive environment in your interactions with others.

- (b) **Right Action:** Engaging in ethical and harm-free actions.

- (c) **Right Livelihood:** Choosing a livelihood that doesn’t harm others.

Definition 1.10. Śīla (Pali, Skr.), sila (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Ethical conduct, morality, moral character

Intuitions: Can be understood as the actions and lifestyles that are the result of a strong cultivation of wisdom (prajñā). Ethics in Buddhism differs from much of western ethics in their output approach which focuses on what one does or what actions they take (with some exceptions from stoicism, Hume and Buddhist sentimentalist like Adam Smith). Buddhist ethics are more focused on how we see and experience ourselves and the world, i.e. perception itself.

Definition 1.11. Pañcasīla (Pali), pañcaśīla (Skt.) [Noun]

Common translations: Five Precepts or five rules of training

- (a) Prohibition of killing, both humans and all animals.
- (b) Prohibition of theft and related activities such as fraud and forgery.
- (c) Prohibition of sexual misconduct.

- (d) Prohibition of falsehood spoken or committed to by action, as well as malicious speech, harsh speech and gossip.
- (e) Prohibition of intoxication through alcohol, drugs, or other means.

3. (a) **Right Effort:** Cultivating wholesome states of mind and letting go of unwholesome ones.

Note 1.12.

Right effort is the heart of the eightfold path. The entire eightfold path, i.e. the path to deplete old karma, can be abbreviated as right effort.

Definition 1.13. Upacāra-samādhi (Pali, Skt.)

Common translation: Access concentration, threshold concentration

Intuition: This stage of samadhi follows the stage of preliminary concentration (parikamma-samādhi); it arises when the five hindrances are no longer present, and is signified by the appearance of the counterpart sign (paṭibhāga nimitta).

Access concentration involves a gentle efforting. Similar to application of pressure to shuffle a pack of cards. Enough control that the cards don't fly everywhere, enough effort to bend and snap the cards, but enough relaxation and lack of rigidity to give the cards the room and ability to freely flow out of your hands, and enough sensitivity to feel the sensations and adjust the energy of this shuffling. Imagine you are gently shuffling an endless deck of cards - now apply this sustained mental motion to your meditation object, i.e. to awareness of the texture and sensation of breathing.

- (b) **Right Mindfulness:** Developing awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- (c) **Right Concentration:** Cultivating focused and meditative awareness.

Definition 1.14. Samādhi (Pali, Skt.), samadhi (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Meditative concentration, absorption, profound or abstract meditation, intense contemplation of any particular object.

Etymology: "sam" meaning to bring together, Alternatively, "sama" meaning the same, equalized, the convergence of two distinct things. adhi meaning "the obscure and hidden become clear objects of cognition" or "the skillful unification of mind and object". sam-ā-dhā, with dhā meaning "to collect", "to bring together", "to hold together", "to concentrate upon".

Intuitions: State of deep tranquility and concentration. State of harmonious well-being of and agreement within the mind and body. Non-dualistic state of consciousness, broad field of awareness. Samādhi is more about open-heartedness than focus, more about increasing refinement and subtlety than concentration and holding attention. Elements of being (energy, mind, and desire) are in agreement or harmony, and have integrity or collected-ness.

Stages of samādhi:

- (a) Preliminary concentration (parikamma-samādhi) - is cultivated at the beginning of a meditation session, and is directed towards being mindful of the object, noticing when a distraction or other hindrance has arisen, and applying the antidote
- (b) Access concentration (upacāra-samādhi) - arises when the five hindrances are no longer present, and is marked by the appearance of the counterpart sign (paṭibhāga nimitta).
- (c) Absorption concentration (appanā-samādhi) - arises when the meditator enters the first jhāna, and is marked by full, stable development of the five absorption factors (dhyānāṅga).

1.4 The five skandhas

The Five Skandhas, also known as the Five Aggregates, are the components that make up the human experience and are crucial to understanding the nature of self and our sense of reality.

These aggregates are interdependent and constantly changing, illustrating the impermanent and empty nature of perceptual phenomena.

1. **Definition 1.15.** Rūpa (Pali, Skt.), rupa (transl.) [Noun]
Common translations: Form, figure, material form
Intuitions: Any outward appearance or phenomenon or colour, form, shape, figure perceived by one of the six external sense bases (āyatana). rūpa-khandha – material forms, rūpa-āyatana – visible objects, āma-rūpa – name and form or mind and body, which in context of dependent origination arises from consciousness and leads to the sense bases.
2. **Definition 1.16.** Vedanā (Pali, Skt.), vedana (transl.) [Noun]
Common translations: Feeling, sensation
Intuitions: The distinct valence or hedonic tone of an emotion, which can be pleasant (sukhā), unpleasant (dukkhā), or neither. There are six classes of vedanā, corresponding to sensations arising from contact (Skt: sparśa; Pali: phassa) between an internal sense organ (āyatana), i.e. the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind, with an external sense object and the associated consciousness (Skt.: vijñāna; Pali: viññāna).
3. **Definition 1.17.** Saṃjñā (Pali, Skt.), samjna (transl.) [Noun]
Common translations: Conceptualization, recognition, cognition, perception
Intuitions: The function of saṃjñā is to generate a sign or label to perceive objects as members of the same category, or recognizing continuity in what has been previously perceived. Saṃjñā is akin to representation learning.
4. **Definition 1.18.** Saṅkhāra (Pali), saṃskāra (Skt.), sankhara (transl.) [Noun, verb]
Common translations: Mental formations,

Etymology: Saṃskāra is not a Vedic Sanskrit term, but found extensively in classical and epic era Sanskrit.

Intuitions: Conditioned things. “that which has been put together” or “that which puts together.” Fuses “object and subject” as interdependent parts of each human’s consciousness and epistemological process. If Upadana is a seed, then Sankharas are the warped houses we build out of the twisted lumber that grows. A collection of mental events put into a story or belief about how the world is. Those with especially bad maladaptive strategies misinterpret signs explaining how to escape suffering as tricks, attacks, etc.

An intense interpersonal encounter that you don’t fully experience and express (resolve), will become part of your sense of self and or world view instead of something that happened to you

Note 1.19.

In alchemecal psychology, trauma is considered prima materia or raw material which may be used in transmutation to develop the philosopher’s stone. In this sense it is considered valuable and essential to have prima materia to initiate the alchemical process:

- (a) Nigredo, the blackening or melanosis
- (b) Albedo, the whitening or leucosis
- (c) Citrinitas, the yellowing or xanthosis
- (d) Rubedo, the reddening, purpling, or iosis

5. **Definition 1.20.** Vijñāna (Pali, Skt.), vijnana (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Consciousness, life force, mind, discernment

Etymology: Vijñāna is mentioned in many early Upanishads, where it has been translated by terms such as understanding, knowledge, and intelligence.

Intuitions: Mental force that animates the otherwise inert material body. Discussed in different contexts: as a derivative of the sense bases (āyatana), as one of the five aggregates (skhandha) of clinging (upadana) at the root of suffering (dukkha), as one of the twelve causes (nidānas) of “Dependent Origination” (paticcasamuppāda)

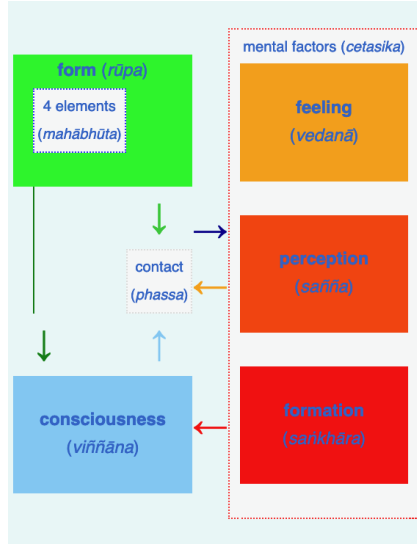


Figure 1: The five aggregates (Skandhas)

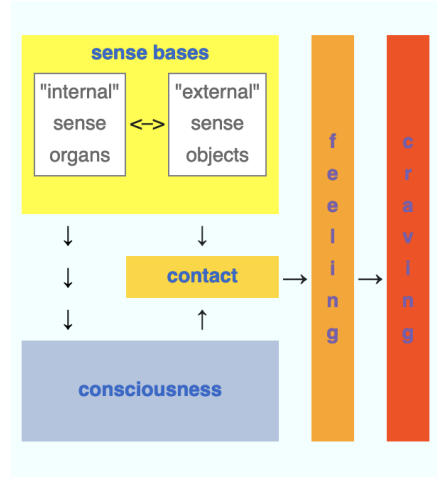


Figure 2: The six internal-external pairs of sense bases (Āyatana)

The 12 Nidānas:



Figure 3: The 12 Nidānas

Definition 1.21. Papañca (Pali), prapañca (Skt.) papanca (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Mental proliferation, Conceptual proliferation, conceptual elaboration

Etymology: pra+pañc to spread out; meaning “expansion”, “diffuseness”, “manifoldedness”

Intuitions: The tendency for attention to get dragged into associations, reactivity, and stories from a simple stimulus (any sight, sound, smell, taste, body sensation thought, or emotion, for instance). This movement, the escalation of such complicating mental activity, and the entanglement of the attention therein, are all ingredients of a grosser level of manifestation of papañca. The word papañca might also be translated as ‘amplification’. In contrast, when we practise mindfulness, we are usually trying to ‘stay at contact’ – that is, to hold or return the attention to the ‘initial’ or ‘basic’ experiences that arise at the contact of the sense doors with the sense objects. If we seriously want to learn how our thoughts become impure and how to keep our mental purification unadulterated from defilements, we should figure out how mental purification can be tainted through papañca.

Quotes:

“People delight in proliferation, the Tathagata in nonproliferation”
(Dhammapada verse 254)

Note 1.22.

Our cognitive functions developed to increase survival rate as our species evolved through various environments and stages of complexity. It has been immensely successful in our species survival but results in reflexive suffering in many people as they go about daily life. Through careful deconstruction of subtle sensory and cognition mechanisms, we find entry points to intercept, contain, or diffuse the generation of reflexive dukkha.

First an external sensory stimuli (rupa) makes contact (sparśa) with one of our sense doors (āyatana). On first impression, the form is encoded in terms of immediate physiological valence or hedonic tone by our sense door; pleasant, unpleasant or neither (vedana). It's then encoded into a reduced representation which is non-specific to the sense door and does not possess extrinsic context (saṃjñā). To embed this representation into an appropriate context in our world model of previously experienced representations in order to predict/infer an appropriate reaction, we need enrich the representation with features from various systems in our body that also exert minimal energy. This final step can be broken down into three physiological stages, which we can imagine as exertion of energy to pass through some gap junction or else is diffused and dissipates. The fast-clenching mechanism of tanha is a learned, bodily or physiological computation, likely occurring in the shared and evolutionary earliest developed circulatory or vascular system. Upadana is relevance or salience realization, which can be thought of as an enrichment of information that weights signals from multiple systems (muscular, respiratory, digestive, endocrine, immune, reproductive, integumentary, etc.) depending on the content of the sensory representation and a trained attention mechanism. As enriched signals are sent back from various systems through the central nervous system into the brain (the central processing unit), the pure representation is enriched with residues, eventually converging and being embedded into a world model dependent on previous experiences (saṅkhara). With an enriched embedding, inference or reaction occurs, often causing dukkha in the form of further proliferation at the level of mental abstractions (papanca).

The most fundamental meaning of avijjā is ignorance of emptiness. Avijjā also implies a way of looking at your situation that is ignorant of and ignores this process of the arising and the possible ceasing of dukkha.

1. With delusion (avijjā) as condition, there are concoctions (saṅkhārā);
2. With concoctions as condition, consciousness;
3. With consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa);
4. With mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense spheres;
5. With the six sense spheres as condition, contact;
6. With contact as condition, vedanā;
7. With vedanā as condition, craving;
8. With craving as condition, clinging;
9. With clinging as condition, becoming (bhava);
10. With becoming as condition, birth;
11. With birth as condition, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and tribulation.

12. Such is the origin of the whole mass of suffering (dukkha).

Note 1.23.

The process of objectifying mental formations can be described as reification. Reification is involved in the process of our fabrication of reality which naturally leads to our suffering. Conversely, mindful objectification of body sensations, feeling-tones, mind states, thoughts, and the self can lead to insights into the three marks of existence within the phenomena. Finding gaps in reification and fabrication allows us to deconstruct the phenomenon into its empty nature.

A deep understanding of the emptiness of a phenomenon, liberates us from the suffering it causes. From here, we may engage in skillful fabrication and personal myth making, i.e. the healing process of developing a revised story of our experience and self. Beyond serving a simple pragmatic purpose, these imaginal fabrications can provide scaffolding to discover “true” form beyond limits of normative and consensus forms within culture. The individual has responsibility for exploring and mapping this uncharted territory in their own terms.

Definition 1.24. Paṭiccasamuppāda (Pali), pratītyasamutpāda (Skt.) [Noun]

Common translations: Dependent origination, dependent arising

Etymology: Pratītya meaning “having depended”, and samutpāda meaning “arising”, “rise”, “production”, “origin”.

Intuitions: Variable phenomena - dependently arisen processes. There are only ways of looking, there are no privileged entities that exist independent of a way of looking. An invariant principle of nature, dependent origination is at play in all conditioned phenomena independent of our discovery, similar to the laws of physics which are also described with invariants (Lorentz, Noether). An application of the insight of the middle way to reality in general, from atomic interactions, to sensual perception, to cosmology.

The notion of existence being eternalism as it maintains that the physical world exists forever and the notion of nonexistence is annihilationism as it maintains that the entire world does not exist forever but will deplete. The Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma by way of the middle path without veering to either of these extremes, this is emptiness.

Dependent origination is the machinery through which the storehouse of old karma flows into new karma through asavas.

Quotes:

“The instructed disciple of the noble ones, however, attends carefully & appropriately right there at the dependent co-arising. When this is, that is. From the arising of this comes the arising of that. When this isn’t, that isn’t. From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that. In other words: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness. From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form. From name-&-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media. From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact. From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling. From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. From craving as a requisite condition comes

clinging/sustenance. From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming. From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth. From birth as a requisite condition, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is fully released. With full release, there is the knowledge, 'Fully released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

(Samyutta Nikaya 12.61)

Definition 1.25. Nibbida (Skt.), Nibbidā (Pali) [Noun]

Common translations: Disenchantment; aversion; disgust; weariness

Intuitions: The skillful turning away of the mind from the conditioned samsaric world towards the unconditioned, the transcendent. Metaphor: enjoying a slice of cake vs. being disgusted and sickened by having eaten too much from greed or politeness. Being thoroughly tired of the world leads to being dispassionate, then the destruction of egoism, then perfect wisdom and Nibbāna. Although the initial intellectual understanding of the emptiness of a phenomena may feel nihilistic, the experiential understanding of its emptiness, often by seeing the three marks within it, brings about a joyful sense of rapture and liberation. (known as transcendental dependent arising). The chachakkasutta can be understood as a guided meditation for awakening to non-self through contemplation of disenchantment with the sense bases.

Quotes:

“ The six internal bases should be understood. The six external bases should be understood. The six classes of consciousness should be understood. The six classes of contact should be understood. The six classes of feeling should be understood. The six classes of craving should be understood. [...]

Seeing thus, bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple becomes disenchanted with the eye, disenchanted with forms, disenchanted with eye-consciousness, disenchanted with eye-contact, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with craving. He becomes disenchanted with the ear...He becomes disenchanted with the

nose...He becomes disenchanted with the tongue...He becomes disenchanted with the body...He becomes disenchanted with the mind, disenchanted with mind-objects, disenchanted with mind-consciousness, disenchanted with mind-contact, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with craving

Being disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, his mind is liberated. When it is liberated, there comes the knowledge: 'It is liberated.' He understands: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words. Now while this discourse was being spoken, through not clinging the minds of sixty bhikkhus were liberated from the taints."

(MN 148: Chachakkasutta)

1.5 The five hindrances and five jhanic mental factors

Definition 1.26. Nīvaraṇāni (Pali), nīvaraṇa (Skt., Sinhala) [Noun]

Common translations: Hindrance

Etymology: the Pali term nīvaraṇa means covering, i.e. hindrances cover over the clarity of our mind, and our ability to be mindful, wise, concentrated, and stay on purpose. Also may refer to an obstacle or hindrance only in the ethical sense.

Intuitions: The five hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇāni) are:

1. kāmaccanda (sensory desire): seeking for pleasure through the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and physical feeling.
2. vyāpāda; also spelled byāpāda (ill-will): feelings of hostility, resentment, hatred and bitterness.
3. thīna-middha (sloth-and-torpor): half-hearted action with little or no effort or concentration.
4. uddhacca-kukkucca (restlessness-and-worry): the inability to calm the mind and focus one's energy.
5. vicikiccha (doubt): lack of conviction or trust in one's abilities.

Definition 1.27. Cetasika (Pali), caitasika (Skt.), [Noun]

Common translations: Mental factor, absorption factors, jhāna factors

Intuitions: Also known as the Dhyānāṅga or constituents of meditative absorption. The relationship between the mind (Sanskrit: citta) and the mental factors can be described with the following metaphor: The main mind is like screen in a cinema, and the mental factors are like the images projected on the screen.

The five mental factors in meditation are:

1. pīti (rapture)
2. sukha (non-sensual pleasure)
3. ekaggata (one-pointedness)

4. vitakka (applied thought)
5. vicāra (sustained thought)

Note 1.28.

Five mental factors can be interpreted as antidotes to five hindrances:

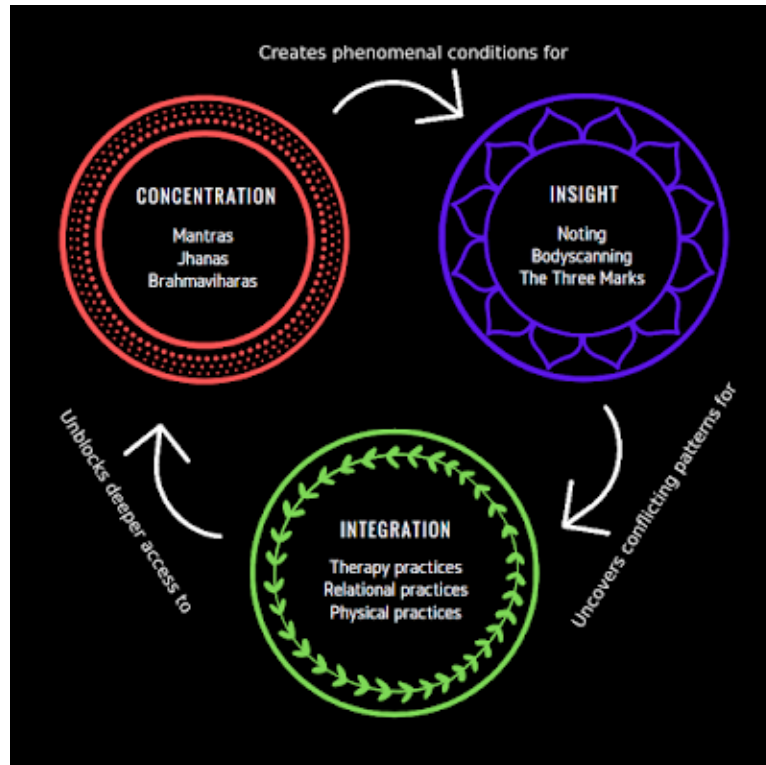
- Pīti (“rapture”) counteracts ill-will (vyapada) and also sensory desire
- Sukha (“non-sensual pleasure”) counteracts counteracts restlessness-worry (uddhacca-kukkucca) and also ill-will
- Ekaggata (“one-pointedness”) counteracts sensory desire (kāmacchanda) and also sloth-and-torpor
- Vicāra (“sustained thought”) counteracts doubt
- Vitakka (“applied thought”) counteracts sloth-torpor (thina-middha) and also restlessness-and-worry

2 Practices

2.1 Meta-skills

(Stevens) **Threefold training, deliberate practice, and skill-trees**

<http://neuroticgradientdescent.blogspot.com/2021/03/threefold-training.html>



(Folk) Quick start guide

<https://kennethfolkdharma.com/quick-start-guide/>

First Gear

1. Objectify body sensations. If you can name them, you're not embedded there. Notice sensations and note to yourself: "Pressure, tightness, tension, release, coolness, warmth, softness, hardness, tingling, itching, burning, stinging, pulsing, throbbing, seeing, tasting, smelling, hearing." If I am looking at something it is not "I".
2. Objectify feeling-tone. Are sensations pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral? If you can sit quietly and attentively for five minutes and note pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral every few seconds, you are not embedded at that layer of mind.
3. Objectify mind states. Investigation, curiosity, happiness, anxiety, amusement, sadness, joy, anger, frustration, annoyance, irritation, aversion, desire, disgust, fear, worry, calm, embarrassment, shame, self-pity, compassion, love, contentment, dullness, sleepiness, bliss, exhilaration, triumph, self-loathing. Name them and be free of them. These mind states are not "you;" we know this because if there is a "you" it is the one who is looking, not what is being looked at. Below, we will challenge the notion that there is any "you" at all.
4. Objectify thoughts. Categorize them: planning thought, anticipating thought, worrying thought, imaging thought, remembering thought, rehearsing thought, scenario spinning thought, fantasy thought, self-recrimination thought. Come up with your own vocabulary

and see your thoughts as though they belong to someone else. The content of your thoughts is not relevant except to the extent that it helps you to label and therefore objectify them.

Second Gear

6. Objectify the apparent subject. Who am “I”? Turn the light of attention back on itself. Who knows about this experience? Are you causing this experience in this moment? To whom is this happening?

Third Gear

7. Surrender entirely. This moment is as it is, with or without your participation. This does not mean that you must be passive. Surrender also to activity.

2.2 Concentration and tranquility

Practice 2.1. Ānāpāna-sati

Practice this if the mind is dull or agitated, if it is difficult to feel sensations or difficult not to react to them. You can begin with Anapana and then switch to Vipassana or, if needed, continue observing the breath for the entire hour. To practice Anapana, keep the attention in the area below the nostrils and above the upper lip. Remain aware of each breath as it enters or leaves. If the mind is very dull or very agitated, breathe deliberately and slightly harder for some time. Otherwise, the breathing should be natural.

Practice 2.2. Satipatthana (mindfulness)

“Mindful” (satima) literally means being able to remember or recollect. Here it means keeping one’s task in mind. The task here is a dual one—remaining focused on one’s frame of reference [satipaṭṭhāna], and putting aside the distractions of greed and distress that would come from shifting one’s frame of reference back to the world. In other words, one tries to stay with the phenomenology of immediate experience, without slipping back into the narratives and world views that make up one’s sense of the world. In essence, this is a concentration practice, with the three qualities of ardency, alertness, and mindfulness devoted to attaining concentration. Mindfulness keeps the theme of the meditation in mind, alertness observes the theme as it is present to awareness, and also is aware of when the mind has slipped from its theme. Mindfulness then remembers where the mind should be focused, and ardency tries to return the mind to its proper theme—and to keep it there—as quickly and skillfully as possible. In this way, these three qualities help to seclude the mind from sensual preoccupations and unskillful mental qualities, thus bringing it to the first jhana.

Practice 2.3. 6 Rs

Remembering to observe how mind’s attention moves moment-to-moment and remember-

ing what to do with any arising phenomena

1. Recognise (janati): Acknowledge and identify the arising thoughts or phenomena, bringing awareness to their presence in the mind.
2. Release (vineyya): Let go of any attachment or clinging to the recognized thoughts or phenomena, allowing them to pass without becoming entangled.
3. Relax (passambhaya): Cultivate a state of relaxation in the mind, promoting a calm and open mental space for greater clarity and understanding
4. Resmile (pasannen): Approach the observed phenomena with a positive and friendly attitude, fostering a sense of goodwill and acceptance towards the experiences of the present moment.
5. Return (punarapi): Bring the attention back to the chosen point of focus or the present moment, redirecting the mind from distractions to enhance mindfulness.
6. Repeat (bahulikaritva): Engage in a repetitive practice of these steps, creating a consistent and intentional approach to observing and managing the fluctuations of the mind's attention.

Note 2.4.

Transparency-opacity shift in mindfulness - make translucent sensory and mental framing opaque in order to examine it. Akin to removing one's glasses, checking them for marks, wiping the glasses, then putting them back on and inspecting for improved vision. In this metaphor the inspection of improved clarity relates to later contemplation practices.

Practice 2.5. Jhāna

The eight jhanas (1-4 are rūpa or form, 5-8 are arūpa or formless). The formless jhanas are also considered ayatanas and can be understood as extensions of the fourth jhana.

1. First jhana: piti, rapture, pleasantness that is not coming from sensual pleasure. happiness.

Separated (viviceva) from desire for sensual pleasures, separated (vivicca) from other unwholesome states (akusalehi dhammehi, unwholesome dhammas), a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhana, which is [mental] pīti ("rapture," "joy") and [bodily] sukha ("pleasure") "born of viveka" (traditionally, "seclusion"; alternatively, "discrimination" (of dhamma's)), accompanied by vitarka-vicara (traditionally, initial and sustained attention to a meditative object; alternatively, initial inquiry and subsequent investigation of dhammas (defilements and wholesome thoughts); also: "discursive thought".

2. Second jhana: with stilling of directed thought, rapture and happiness born of composure, tranquility, unification of awareness, confidence, nothing in body remains untouched

Again, with the stilling of vitarka-vicara, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the sec-

ond jhana, which is [mental] pīti and [bodily] sukha “born of samadhi” (samadhi-ji; trad. born of “concentration”; altern. “knowing but non-discursive [...] awareness,” “bringing the buried latencies or saṃskaras into full view”), and has sampasādana (“stillness,” “inner tranquility”) and ekaggata (unification of mind, awareness) without vitarka-vicāra;

3. Third jhana: with fading of pīti, remain alert in equanimity, mindful, joyful abiding

With the fading away of pīti, a bhikkhu abides in upekkhā (“equanimity,” “affective detachment”), sato (mindful) and [with] sampajañña (“fully knowing,” “discerning awareness”). [Still] experiencing sukha with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhana, on account of which the noble ones announce, “abiding in [bodily] pleasure, one is equanimous and mindful”.

4. Fourth jhana: with abandoning of happiness, purity of equanimity, pure bright awareness permeates body.

With the abandoning of [the desire for] sukha (“pleasure”) and [aversion to] dukkha (“pain”) and with the previous disappearance of [the inner movement between] so-manassa (“gladness,”) and domanassa (“discontent”), a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the fourth jhana, which is adukkham asukham (“neither-painful-nor-pleasurable,” “freedom from pleasure and pain”) and has upekkhāsati-pārisuddhi (complete purity of equanimity and mindfulness)

5. Fifth jhana: infinite space (Pāli ākāśānañcāyatana, Skt. ākāśānantyāyatana)

complete transcendence of perception of physical form, disappearance of perception of resistance or solidity, not heeding perceptions of diversity, sphere of infinite space

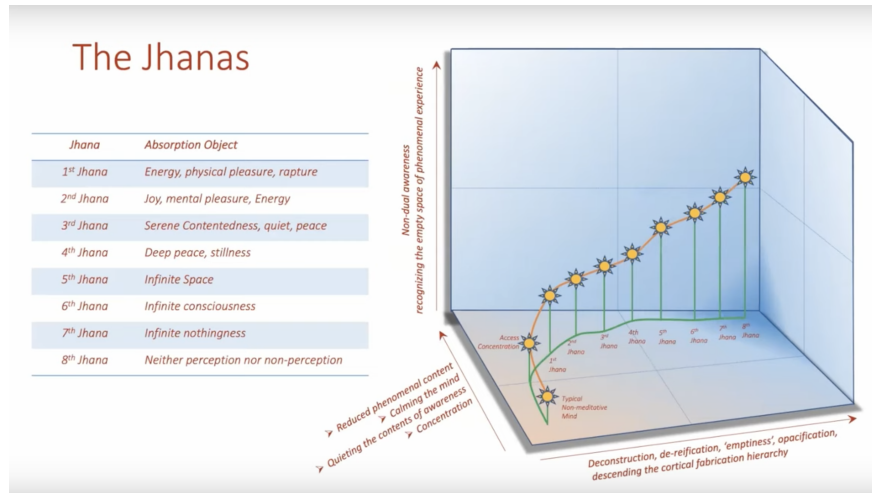
6. Sixth jhana: infinite consciousness (Pāli viññāṇañcāyatana, Skt. vijñānānantyāyatana)

transcending sphere of infinite space, focus on infinite consciousness

7. Seventh jhana: infinite nothingness (Pāli ākiñcaññāyatana, Skt. ākiṃcanyāyatana)

realm of nothingness

8. Eighth jhana: neither perception nor non-perception (Pāli nevasaññānāsaññāyatana, Skt. naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eg3cQXf4zSE&t=101s&ab_channel=ShamilChandaria

2.3 Insight and ways of seeing

Practice 2.6. Śamatha-vipassanā

Move your attention systematically from head to feet and from feet to head, observing in order each and every part of the body by feeling all the sensations that you come across. Observe objectively; that is, remain equanimous with all the sensations that you experience, whether pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, by appreciating their impermanent nature. Keep your attention moving. Never stay for more than a few minutes at any one place. Do not allow the practice to become mechanical. Work in different ways according to the type of sensations you experience. Areas of the body having different gross sensations should be observed separately by moving the attention part by part. Symmetrical parts, such as both arms or both legs, having similar subtle sensations, may be observed together simultaneously. If you experience subtle sensations throughout the physical structure, you may at times sweep the entire body and then again work part by part.

At the end of the hour relax, letting any mental or physical agitation subside. Then focus your attention for a few minutes on subtle sensations in the body, and fill your mind and body with thoughts and feelings of goodwill for all beings.

Practice 2.7. Noting

To note a sensory event means to clearly acknowledge its presence and then to briefly focus on it, potentially using a label to help with clarity. After this brief moment of being fully present to the sensation, another sensation can be noted, either the same or a new one.

Shinzen Young's See Hear Feel noting technique is a mindfulness practice that involves noting sensory events in terms of three modalities: visual experience, auditory experience, and body experience

Examples of things you might see include: physical sights, mental images, visual rest states

(blank mental screen, defocused gaze ...), visual flow states (pixilation, swirling, twinkling in your visual field...), Visual spaciousness (the openness around and/or thinness within a visual experience)

Examples of things you might hear include: physical sounds, mental talk, auditory rest states (physical silence, mental quiet,...), auditory flow states (a background hum in the silence around you, a sense of subtle stirring underneath surface mental talk...), auditory spaciousness (the openness around and/or thinness within an auditory experience)

Examples of things you might feel include: physical body sensations, emotional body sensations, smells and tastes, body rest (physical relaxation, emotional peace...), body flow states (tingling, pulsation, undulation, vibration, expansion, contraction ... in part or all of your body), body spaciousness (the openness around and/or thinness within a somatic experience)

Note 2.8.

Dharma can be thought of as a project in understanding and modifying perception. Intercept fast-clenching reactionary mechanism to reduce cravings and aversion. Improve baseline equanimity, continue purification of mind. Convolutional interpretation of body-scanning. Disruption of subtle body schemas to induce altered states.

2.4 Integration and relating

Practice 2.9. Forgiveness Meditation

<https://www.dhammasukha.org/forgiveness-meditation>

Begin by repeating the phrase, “I forgive myself for not understanding.” Put this sincere wish for forgiveness for yourself, in your heart, and stay with that. If nothing comes up, you could try another phrase like, “I forgive myself for causing myself and others pain.”

This wish of forgiveness is your object of meditation. Any sort of a feeling of forgiveness can be there, but the feeling is not the object – just the wish for forgiveness.

Now, when any hard feeling or painful experience comes up in your mind, the first thing you do is to forgive that, then relax and soften into that painful feeling allow it to be there, without reacting, and return to forgiving yourself.

You are removing any trapped negativity, bit by bit. Your objective is to keep forgiveness going until you feel like there is nothing more to forgive.

Practice 2.10. Mettā

Metta is first practiced toward oneself, since we often have difficulty loving others without first loving ourselves. Sitting quietly, mentally repeat, slowly and steadily, the following or similar phrases: May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease. While you say these phrases, allow yourself to sink into the intentions they express.

Loving-kindness meditation consists primarily of connecting to the intention of wishing ourselves or others happiness. However, if feelings of warmth, friendliness, or love arise in the body or mind, connect to them, allowing them to grow as you repeat the phrases. This is analogous to trying to start a fire of love within us or our benefactor, where thoughts and mental imagery are kindling. As an aid to the meditation, you might hold an image of yourself in your mind's eye. This helps reinforce the intentions expressed in the phrases.

After a period of directing loving-kindness toward yourself, bring to mind a friend or someone in your life who has deeply cared for you. Then slowly repeat phrases of loving-kindness toward them: May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease. Imagine benefactor or spiritual friend in a happy state, smiling, and at peace. As you say these phrases, again sink into their intention or heartfelt meaning. And, if any feelings of loving-kindness arise, connect the feelings with the phrases so that the feelings may become stronger as you repeat the words. 'loving-kindness' isn't necessarily the best translation of Metta, instead it's closer to the feeling that remains after all needs are met and you feel secure. Metta practice can be used to bootstrap into Jhana practices as it often helps to reduce hindrances.

Practice 2.11. Core Transformation

1. Select a part to work with: Experience the part, acknowledge it as belonging to you and welcome it.
2. Discover the intention / the first intended result: Ask the part: "What do you want?"
3. Discover the results chain: Ask your part: "If you have fully achieved [the intended result of the previous step], what do you want to achieve by doing something even more important? Repeat as often as necessary.]
4. The core state: Reaching the inner source: Take a moment to enjoy your core state.
5. Revise the chain of results with the help of the core state.
 - (a) General: Invite your part to consider: "If you have [the core state] as a beginning, as a way of being in the world, how does this change the situation?"
 - (b) Specifically: "How does the [core state] already established as a state of being transform, enrich and radiate the [intended result]? (Repeat with all intended results.)
 - (c) Transforming the original context: "How does the [core state], already established as a state of being, transform your experience of [the context in which you have been living]?"
6. Let one part grow up.
 - (a) "How old are you?"
 - (b) "Would you like to enjoy the benefits of developing through time to your present age, with [Core State] fully present?"
 - (c) Develop the part from its age through time to your present age, with [Core State] present at every moment of time.

7. Integrate the part completely into your own body: Pay attention to where your part is now and let it flow into your body and flow through it completely so that [core state] penetrates every cell.
8. Revise the results chain with the help of the adult part. The part is completely in your body (general, specific, original context).
9. Look for opposing parts: "Does any part of me object to having [core state] as a way of being in the world now? (Guide any opposing parts, and any parts that are also connected to the current problem, through the first eight steps of the process before you go any further).
10. Generalisation of the Time Line.
 - (a) Visualise your timeline and let yourself drift back into your past until just before your conception. As your core state shines through your being, move forward through time and let [core state] colour and transform every moment of experience to the present.
 - (b) Visualise that you are moving along the same path into the future, and note that this too is coloured by the presence of the [Core State].
 - (c) Complete this generalisation of the timeline several times, each time faster.

Note 2.12.

Liberation is the result of integrating awakening. No final completion of awakening, liberation can reach a point where one sees through all finite sankharas.

3 Meditation objects

3.1 40 subjects of meditation

The seven categories of the forty meditation subjects (enumerated in the Visuddhimagga) are:

1. The ten kasinas (dasa kasinani)
2. The ten kinds of foulness (dasa asubha)
3. The ten recollections (dasa anussatiyo)
4. The four divine abidings or four illimitables (catasso appamannayo)
5. The four immaterial states (cataro aruppa)
6. The one perception (eka sanna)
7. The one defining (or one analysis) (ekam vavatthanam)

These various meditation subjects that the Buddha prescribed for the development of serenity or calmness (samatha) have been collected in the commentaries into a set called the forty kammatthana.

1. Earth. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (paṭhavī kaṣiṇa, pṛthivī kṛtsna)
2. Water. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (āpo kaṣiṇa, ap kṛtsna).

3. Fire. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (tejo kasiṇa, tejas kṛtsna)
4. Air, wind. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (vāyo kasiṇa, vāyu kṛtsna)
5. Yellow. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (pīta kasiṇa, pīta kṛtsna). See also the three treasures where yellow represents the Buddha, or taking shelter and protection in oneness, the absolute, unconditioned nature of all things
6. Blue. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (nīla kasiṇa, nīla kṛtsna). See also the three treasures where blue represents the Dharma or Dhamma (teachings).
7. Red. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (lohita kasiṇa, lohita kṛtsna). See also the treasures jewels where red represents the Sangha (the supportive community).
8. White. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (odāta kasiṇa, avadāta kṛtsna).
9. Enclosed space, holes or apertures. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (ākāsa kasiṇa, ākāśa kṛtsna).
10. Bright light or consciousness. Kasina (things that one can behold directly). (viññāṇa kasiṇa, vijñāna kṛtsna).
11. Swollen or bloated corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Uddhumātaka). One of the ten kinds of foulness from which mediation on these is aimed at reducing sensual lust by gaining a clear perception of the repulsiveness of the body.
12. Discoloured, bluish, or livid corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Vinilaka). One of the ten kinds of foulness from which mediation on these is aimed at reducing sensual lust by gaining a clear perception of the repulsiveness of the body.
13. Festering corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Vipubbaka).
14. Fissured or cut up corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Vichiddaka).
15. Gnawed corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Vikkhayittaka).
16. Dismembered, or hacked corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Hatavikkhittaka).
17. Scattered, corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Vikkhittaka).
18. Bleeding corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Lohitaka).
19. Worm infested corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion). (Puluvaka).
20. Skeleton stage of a corpse. Asubha (objects of repulsion).
21. Buddha. Anussati (recollections).
22. Dharma. Anussati (recollections).
23. Sangha. Anussati (recollections).
24. Morality. Śīla. Anussati (recollections).
25. Liberality cāga. Anussati (recollections).
26. The wholesome attributes of Devas. Anussati (recollections).
27. The body kāya. Anussati (recollections).
28. Death. Anussati (recollections).

29. The breath or breathing ānāpāna. Anussati (recollections).
30. Peace. Anussati (recollections).
31. Unconditional kindness and goodwill mettā. Brahmavihāra (Four sublime qualities or divine abidings).
32. Compassion karuna. Brahmavihāra (Four sublime qualities or divine abidings).
33. Sympathetic joy over others success mudita. Brahmavihāra (Four sublime qualities or divine abidings).
34. Evenmindedness, equanimity, calm and composure upekkha. Brahmavihāra (Four sublime qualities or divine abidings).
35. Infinite space. Āruppa (formless or immaterial states).
36. Infinite consciousness. Āruppa (formless or immaterial states).
37. Infinite nothingness. Āruppa (formless or immaterial states).
38. Neither perception nor non-perception. Āruppa (formless or immaterial states).
39. Perception of disgust of food aharepatikulasanna. Saññā perception. Or the one perception.
40. Analysis of the four elements earth catudhatuvavavatthana (pathavi), water (apo), fire (tejo), air (vayo). Vavatthāna analysis of the four elements. Or the one defining.

Practice 3.1. Sit spotting

Pick a spot where you feel comfortable being for at least 15 minutes. Try and get outside if possible, under a tree, on a park bench, or looking out a window. The important thing is that you can return to this spot repeatedly. Take some time to settle into your spot. What do you see, hear, and smell? How do you feel? Take 5 minutes just to be in your spot and notice. Notice if anything has changed from the beginning to the end of your 15 minutes. How do you feel?

3.2 Physiological meditation objects

Senses

Definition 3.2. Āyatana (Pali), ayatana (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Sense base, sense-media, sense sphere

Intuitions: There are six internal sense bases (Pali: ajjhakkikāni āyatanāni; also known as, “organs”, “gates”, “doors”, “powers” or “roots”) and six external sense bases (Pali: bāhirāni āyatanāni or “sense objects” also known as vishaya or “domains”). These correspond to the five familiar to traditional Western psychology (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch) with cognition of mental objects (thoughts, images, and mental perceptions) as the sixth. Less standard translations of āyatana better capture the sixth sense base: ‘stretch’, ‘extent’, ‘reach’, ‘compass’; ‘region’, ‘locus’, ‘occasion’; ‘doing’, ‘working’, ‘performance’; ‘sphere of perception or sense’, ‘object of thought’, ‘sense-organ and object’; ‘relation’, ‘order’.

It may be useful to contemplate the cessation of senses, particularly how they devolve during the dying process:

1. Taste — cessation can decline relatively early in the process of dying. People may lose their appetite as their bodily functions deteriorate
2. Smell — cessation occurs when breathing begins to fail
3. Sight — cessation occurs when blood flow into the head begins to cease
4. Touch and muscular proprioception — cessation occurs when blood drains from the skin and limbs
5. Hearing — cessation only occurs after the brain loses function

Systems of human biology

Although the order of evolutionary development of our biological systems is not known, and many likely evolved in tandem, it may be useful to hypothesize on what systems are involved in the earliest and most unconscious levels of our reactive mechanisms.

1. Basic Cellular Functions: The earliest forms of life were likely single-celled organisms that carried out basic functions such as metabolism, reproduction, and response to stimuli. These functions laid the foundation for the development of more complex systems.
2. Circulatory System: Simple circulatory systems evolved early to transport nutrients and gases within multicellular organisms. Over time, more complex circulatory systems with specialized vessels and pumping structures like hearts evolved to support larger and more active animals.
3. Nervous System: Basic nervous systems evolved to allow organisms to respond to their environment. Nerve cells (neurons) allowed for communication and coordination between different parts of the body. Over time, nervous systems became more centralized, leading to the development of brains and more complex sensory and motor functions.
4. Muscular System: As organisms evolved to move more efficiently, the need for specialized muscles arose. Initially, simple contractile cells allowed for basic movement, but as organisms became more complex, specialized muscle tissues developed to enable more precise and powerful movement.
5. Skeletal System: The need for structural support and protection led to the development of simple skeletal structures in early organisms. Over time, these structures became more complex, evolving into the bones and cartilage found in modern vertebrates.
6. Respiratory System: As organisms grew larger and more active, they required more efficient ways to exchange gases with the environment. Simple respiratory structures, such as gills and tracheae, evolved into more complex systems like lungs.
7. Digestive System: Early organisms likely absorbed nutrients directly from their environment. As organisms grew larger and more complex, specialized structures for breaking down and absorbing nutrients evolved, leading to the development of digestive systems with specialized organs.
8. Endocrine System: Basic hormonal signaling likely evolved early to regulate essential processes like growth, metabolism, and reproduction. As organisms became more complex,

specialized endocrine glands developed to secrete hormones that regulate a wide range of functions.

9. Immune System: Simple defense mechanisms against pathogens and injuries evolved early. Over time, these mechanisms became more sophisticated and specific, leading to the development of immune systems capable of recognizing and responding to a wide range of threats.
10. Urinary System: The need to regulate internal fluid balance and eliminate waste products became more crucial as organisms evolved. Simple excretory structures evolved into more complex urinary systems, including specialized organs like kidneys.
11. Reproductive System: Early organisms reproduced asexually through simple cell division. As organisms became more complex, sexual reproduction evolved, leading to the development of specialized reproductive organs and systems for producing and delivering gametes.
12. Integumentary System: Basic protective coverings, like cell membranes, evolved early to shield organisms from the environment. Over time, more complex integumentary structures, including skin, hair, and nails, developed to provide further protection, insulation, and sensory functions.
13. Sensory System: Early organisms likely had basic sensory structures to detect changes in their environment. As organisms evolved, specialized sensory organs, such as eyes and ears, developed to gather more detailed information from the environment.

3.3 Cognitive meditation objects

Brahmavihārā and Pīti

Definition 3.3. cattāri brahmavihārā (Pali), catvāro brahmavihārāḥ (Skt.), brahmavihara (transl.)

Common translations: sublime attitudes, four immeasurables, four divine abodes, four divine emotions, four sublime attitudes, four divine dwellings

Etymology: Literal translation is “abodes of brahma”, Brahmavihārā may be parsed as “Brahma”, and “vihāra” which is often rendered into English as “sublime” or “divine abodes”. **Intuition:**

The brahmavihārā are:

1. Loving-kindness or benevolence (Pāli: mettā, Sanskrit: maitrī) is active good will towards all. Attitude that takes others wellness as a motive.
2. Compassion or care (Pāli and Sanskrit: karuṇā) results from mettā, it is identifying the suffering of others as one’s own. Commitment to work to alleviate suffering.
3. Sympathetic or empathetic joy (Pāli and Sanskrit: muditā): is the feeling of joy because others are happy, even if one did not contribute to it.
4. Equanimity or impartiality (Pāli: upekkhā, Sanskrit: upekṣā): is even-mindedness and serenity, treating everyone impartially. View of all sentient beings as meriting our concern.

Intuitions: A wholesome state of mind is one without any tensions or constrictions. The

collection of brahmavihārā leave one with the sense that all sentient beings are of equal importance and there should be no focus on self. Perceiving things in this way lead one to better moral engagement with the world.

Definition 3.4. Pīti (Pali), prīti (Skt.), piti (transl.)

Common translations: joy, rapture, delight, pleasure

Etymology: Inherited from Sanskrit, from Proto-Indo-Iranian priHtīš (“pleasurable sensation”), from Proto-Indo-European préyHtis, from preyH- (“to please”). Cognate with Avestan (friti, “prayer”)

Intuition: Piti is a joyful saṅkhāra (conditioned formation) that is associated with no object, so the practitioner is not attaining it by desire. Pīti is a stimulating, exciting and energizing quality, as opposed to the calmness of sukha. Both pīti and sukha are born of bodily seclusion and mental quietude in first jhāna, then are born of focused concentration (samādhi) in the second jhāna but only sukha is sustained in the third jhāna while pīti fades away in the course of cultivating pure, mindful equanimity (upekkhāsatipārisuddhi).

Quotes:

“And wherever the two are associated, happiness (pīti) is the contentedness at getting a desirable object, and bliss (sukha) is the actual experiencing of it when got. Where there is happiness there is bliss; but where there is bliss there is not necessarily happiness. Happiness is included in the formations aggregate; bliss is included in the feeling aggregate. If a man exhausted in a desert saw or heard about a pond on the edge of a wood, he would have happiness; if he went into the wood’s shade and used the water, he would have bliss....”

(Vsm. IV, 100)

Five remembrances

1. I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.
2. I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness.
3. I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death.
4. I will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me.
5. I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.

Modes of attention: probing vs receiving

Note 3.5.

Attention as a pinball machine, galton board, generative flow network

Energy is constantly being dispensed at certain mental locations that are abstractly associated to thoughts, concepts, people, entities, etc. The interaction and configuration of active regions generates a mixture of essences which influences perception and thoughts. There are many parameters to consider in this model of attention:

1. The number of active pinballs at a given moment.
2. The mental location that pinballs are habitually, reflexively, or intentionally being dispensed.
3. The size or energy of different pinballs being dispensed at certain mental locations.
4. The frequency of pinballs being dispensed at certain locations or in general.
5. The background awareness of the board and the multiple moving pinballs.
6. How the different pinballs are interacting, mixing, and effecting perception of each other. What is the generative effect of attending to these different mental locations.

After introspection, we may choose to dispense more energy, more frequently at locations of concepts for anicca, fabrication, emptiness, equanimity, or compassion, and less frequently at specific people, worries or concerns. We can even enrich a single concept, like 'awakening', with all the sub concepts it encompasses, then habitually feed that singular concept with a steady stream of energy.

The doctrine of the two truths, particulars vs. universals

The doctrine of the two truths is a framework that distinguishes between two levels of reality, providing insights into the nature of existence. These two truths are known as conventional truth (*samvrti-satya*) and ultimate truth (*paramartha-satya*). The conventional truth involves the way things appear to ordinary perception and language. In this realm, concepts such as individual entities, phenomena, and experiences are valid and serve practical purposes. However, they are considered to be provisional and not reflective of the ultimate nature of reality. The ultimate truth transcends the limitations of ordinary language and conceptualization and reveals the interconnected, interdependent, and transient nature of all phenomena, emphasizing the absence of inherent existence.

Particulars refer to individual phenomena, specific instances, or discrete elements. In contrast, universals encompass general principles, overarching truths, or shared characteristics that extend beyond individual instances. - The engaged bodhicitta masters perceptual skills on particulars, the aspirational bodhicitta masters inferential skills on universals

The subtle body and the energy body

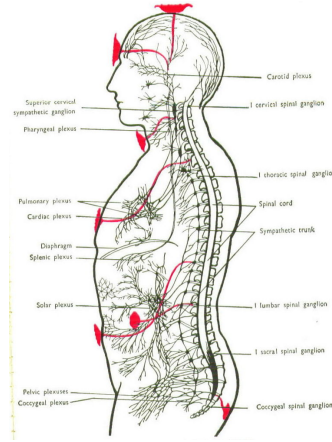
A subtle body is a "quasi material" aspect of the human body, being neither solely physical nor solely spiritual. The subtle body, often referred to as the "mental body" or "mindstream," signifies the continuum of consciousness that persists through various lifetimes. According to Buddhist teachings, the subtle body carries the imprints of past actions (*karma*) and experiences, shaping the individual's trajectory across the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (*samsara*).

The energy body, in the Buddhist context, is closely associated with the understanding of vital energy or life force, often referred to as "prana" or "chi." While not explicitly defined in anatomical terms, the concept implies the subtle flow of energy within the body that influences mental and physical well-being. Practices such as meditation and mindfulness aim to harmonize and cultivate this energy, fostering a balanced and healthy state of being.

Note 3.6.

Name	Sanskrit (Translation)	Location	No. of Petals	Modern Colour	Seed Syllable	Description
Root	Muladhara (Root Support)	Base of the spine	4	Red	Lam (earth)	Grounding, stability, survival
Sacral	Svadhithana (One's Own Abode)	Root of sexual organs	6	Orange	Vam (water)	Creativity, sexuality, emotions
Solar Plexus	Manipura (City of Jewels)	Navel	10	Yellow	Ram (fire)	Personal power, confidence
Heart	Anahata (Unstruck)	Heart	12	Green	Yam (air)	Love, compassion, connection
Throat	Vishuddha (Purification)	Throat	16	Blue	Ham (space)	Communication, self-expression
Third Eye	Ajna (Perception)	Between eyebrows	2	Indigo	Om	Intuition, insight, imagination
Crown	Sahasrara (Thousand-petaled)	Crown	1000	Violet	Om or Silence	Spiritual connection, consciousness

When the feminine Kundalini Shakti rises to the crown chakra, it unites with the masculine Shiva, giving self-realization and samadhi.



4 Maps

4.1 Four stages of awakening

1. A stream-enterer (sotāpanna) is free from:
 - (a) Identity view (Pali: sakkāya-diṭṭhi), the belief that there is an unchanging self or soul in the five impermanent skandhas
 - (b) Attachment to rites and rituals
 - (c) Doubt about the teachings
2. A once-returner (sakadāgāmin) has greatly attenuated:
 - (a) Sensual desire
 - (b) Ill will
3. A non-returner (anāgāmi) is free from:
 - (a) Sensual desire
 - (b) Ill will
4. An arahant is free from all of the five lower fetters and the five higher fetters, which are:

- (a) Attachment to the four meditative absorptions, which have form (rupa jhana)
- (b) Attachment to the four formless absorptions (ārūpa jhana)
- (c) Conceit
- (d) Restlessness
- (e) Ignorance

The Four planes of liberation

(according to the [Sutta Piṭaka](#)^[note 1])

stage's "fruit" ^[note 2]	abandoned fetters		rebirth(s) until suffering's end
stream-enterer	1. identity view (<i>Anatman</i>) 2. doubt in Buddha 3. ascetic or ritual rules	lower fetters	<i>up to seven rebirths in human or heavenly realms</i>
once-returner ^[note 3]			<i>once more as a human</i>
non-returner			<i>once more in a heavenly realm (Pure Abodes)</i>
arahant	6. material-rebirth desire 7. immaterial-rebirth desire 8. conceit 9. restlessness 10. ignorance	higher fetters	<i>no rebirth</i>

Source: Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2001), *Middle-Length Discourses*, pp. 41-43.

Note 4.1.

The Buddha classified seven different kinds of people that awaken.

1. Dhamma follower. Stream enterer with path, sotthapana.
2. Faith follower. Stream enterer with path, sotthapana.
3. Liberated by view. Stream enterer with fruition, right view.
4. Liberated by faith. Stream enterer with fruition, sotthapana, satagama, aragami.
5. Body witness. First four jhanas, ayatanas, cessation, could be stream enterer or not, attains full awakening.
6. Liberated by wisdom. First four jhanas, attain nibanna, drop all fetters, attains full

awakening, arahat.

7. Liberated both ways, four jhanas, ayatanas, cessation, drops all fetters, attains full awakening, arahat.

Definition 4.2. Samyojana (Pali), saṃyojana (Skt.) [Noun]

Common translations: Fetter

Intuitions: A mental fetter, chain, or bond that shackles a sentient being to saṃsāra, the cycle of lives with dukkha. By cutting through all fetters, one attains nibbāna.

1. Belief in a self (Pali: sakkāya-diṭṭhi)
2. Doubt or uncertainty, especially about the Buddha's awakeness (vicikicchā)
3. Attachment to rites and rituals (sīlabbata-parāmāsa)
4. Sensual desire (kāmacchando)
5. Ill will (vyāpādo or byāpādo)
6. Lust for material existence, lust for material rebirth (rūparāgo)
7. Lust for immaterial existence, lust for rebirth in a formless realm (arūparāgo)
8. Conceit (māna)
9. Restlessness (uddhacca)
10. Ignorance (avijjā)

Definition 4.3. Āsava (Pali), Āsrava (Skt.) [Noun]

Common translations: Taints, mental defilements, karmic predilections or propensities

Etymology: The commentaries derive the word from a root “su” meaning “to flow.” Scholars differ as to whether the flow implied by the prefix ā is inward or outward; hence some have rendered it as “influxes” or “influences,” others as “outflows” or “effluents.”

Intuitions: inflow, influx, influence; mental bias or canker, cankers that keep one bound to the world of saṃsāra. Can be interpreted as viruses that replicate and strengthen the parasitic nature of ignorance. Āsavas are only completely destroyed after certain attainments (i.e. Kāmāsava by Anāgāmi, Bhavāsava by Arhatship), where ignorance is replaced by right view.

1. Kāmāsava - karmic propensities for sensual pleasures
2. Bhavāsava - karmic propensities for existence
3. Diṭṭhāsava - karmic propensities for a viewpoint or perspective
4. Avijjāsava - karmic propensities for ignorance

Quotes:

“When one attends wisely, unarisen taints do not arise and arisen taints are abandoned. [...] There are taints that should be abandoned by seeing. There are taints that should be abandoned by restraining. There are taints that should be abandoned by applying. There are taints that should be abandoned

by enduring. There are taints that should be abandoned by avoiding. There are taints that should be abandoned by removing. There are taints that should be abandoned by developing.”

(Sabbāsavaṣutta, verse 2)

Note 4.4.

Mental fetters (*samyojana*), taints (*āśava*), and hindrances (*nīvaraṇāṇi*) all bound us to suffering and ultimately to *samsara* but operate at different levels of our experience and psyche.

Hindrances effect us at the mundane level of habits and the daily interaction or obstacles that prevent us from pursuing our practice.

Mental fetters are intrinsic aspects of human nature, resulting from instincts that contribute to our evolutionary fitness, i.e. our survival and reproduction abilities.

Taints operate on the karmic level and stem from trauma from our current life path, generational trauma, our inherited and developed personality traits, and karma from our past lives.

Definition 4.5. Nibbāna (Pali), nirvāṇa (Skt.), nibbana, nirvana (transl.) [Noun]

Common translations: Liberation

Etymology: interpreting *nir* as a negative, and *va* as “to blow”., giving a meaning of “blowing out”, “extinguish” or “quenching”.

Intuitions: Nirvana, the quenching of the burning mind, is the highest aim of the Theravada tradition. In the Mahayana tradition, the highest goal is Buddhahood, in which the Buddha helps liberate beings from *samsāra* by teaching the Buddhist path.

Nirvana has commonly been interpreted as the extinction of the “three fires” or “three poisons”, greed (*raga*), aversion (*dvesha*) and ignorance (*moha*). Nirvana has also been claimed by some scholars to be identical with *anatta* (non-self) and *sunyata* (emptiness) states though this contested. Other interpretations were given, such as the absence of the weaving (*vana*) of activity of the mind, the elimination of desire, and escape from the woods, cq. the five *skandhas* or aggregates. Buddhist Theravada scholastic tradition identifies two types of nirvana: *sopadhishesa-nirvana* literally “nirvana with a remainder”, attained and maintained during life, and *parinirvana* or *anupadhishesa-nirvana*, meaning “nirvana without remainder” or final nirvana, achieved on death, a death which is not followed by a rebirth or reincarnation in (according to Buddhist beliefs) the usual way.

When preliminary nibbana with substrate occurs (that is, nibbana of a living being), constructive consciousness, that is, the house-builder, is completely destroyed and no new formations will be constructed. However, *sankharas* in the sense of constructed consciousness, which exists as a ‘karmically-resultant-consciousness’ (*vipāka viññāna*), continue to exist. Each liberated individual produces no new karma, but preserves a particular individual personality which is the result of the traces of his or her karmic heritage. The very fact that there is a psycho-physical substrate during the remainder of an arahant’s lifetime shows the continuing effect of karma

Quotes:

“Crosslegged he sat under a tree, which later became known as the Bodhi Tree, the “Tree of Enlightenment” or “Tree of Wisdom,” on the bank of the river Nerañjarâ, at Gayâ (now known as Buddhagayâ), making the final effort with the inflexible resolution: “Though only my skin, sinews, and bones remain, and my blood and flesh dry up and wither away, yet will I never stir from this seat until I have attained full enlightenment (sammâ-sambodhi).” So indefatigable in effort, so unflagging in his devotion was he, and so resolute to realize truth and attain full enlightenment.

Applying himself to the “mindfulness of in-and-out breathing” (ânâpâna sati), the Bodhisatta entered upon and dwelt in the first meditative absorption (jhâna; Skt. dhyâna). By gradual stages he entered upon and dwelt in the second, third, and fourth jhânas. Thus cleansing his mind of impurities, with the mind thus composed, he directed it to the knowledge of recollecting past births (pubbenivâsânussati-ñâ^a). This was the first knowledge attained by him in the first watch of the night. Then the Bodhisatta directed his mind to the knowledge of the disappearing and reappearing of beings of varied forms, in good states of experience, and in states of woe, each faring according to his deeds (cutûpapâtañâna). This was the second knowledge attained by him in the middle watch of the night. Next he directed his mind to the knowledge of the eradication of the taints (âsavakkhayañâna).

He understood as it really is: “This is suffering (dukkha), this is the arising of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the path leading to the cessation of suffering.” He understood as it really is: “These are defilements (âsavas), this is the arising of defilements, this is the cessation of defilements, this is the path leading to the cessation of defilements.”

Knowing thus, seeing thus, his mind was liberated from the defilements of sense pleasures (kâmâsava), of becoming (bhavâsava), and of ignorance (avijjâsava). When his mind was thus liberated, there came the knowledge, “liberated” and he understood: “Destroyed is birth, the noble life (brahmacariya) has been lived, done is what was to be done, there is no more of this to come” (meaning, there is no more continuity of the mind and body, no more becoming, rebirth). This was the third knowledge attained by him in the last watch of the night. This is known as tevijjâ (Skt. trividyâ), threefold knowledge.

Thereupon he spoke these words of victory:

“Seeking but not finding the house builder, I hurried through the round of many births: Painful is birth ever and again.

O house builder, you have been seen; You shall not build the house again. Your rafters have been broken up, Your ridgepole is demolished too.

My mind has now attained the unformed Nibbâna And reached the end of every sort of craving.” ”

(Dhammapada, verse 153)

4.2 Seven Factors of Awakening

Definition 4.6. Satta Bojjhaṅgā (Pali), sapta bodhyanga (Skt.)

Common translations: Seven Factors of Awakening, Enlightenment Factors **Intuitions:**

Similar to the jhanas, these wholesome states mind also arise from a cessation of the five hindrances. There is close similarity to these factors of awakening and the jhanic mental factors

1. Mindfulness, sati (Pali), smṛti (Skt). Mindfulness of the four foundations of mindfulness: the body, feeling, intention or formations, and consciousness. Mindfulness of dhammas (phenomena), the four noble truths, the seven awakening factors, five aggregates, five hindrances.
2. Investigation of the nature of reality, dhamma vicaya (Pali), dharmapravicaya (Skt).
3. Energy, viriya (Pali), vīrya (Skt). Also determination, effort.
4. Joy or rapture, pīti (Pali), prīti (Skt).
5. Relaxation or tranquility, passaddhi (Pali), prashrabdhi (Skt). Tranquility of both body and mind.
6. Concentration, samādhi (Pali, Skt). A calm, one-pointed state of mind, or “bringing the buried latencies or samskaras into full view”
7. Equanimity, upekkhā (Pali), upekshā (Skt). To accept reality as-it-is (yathā-bhuta) without craving or aversion.

4.3 Map of Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta (MN 111)

<https://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/46.6-Sankhitta-Dhamma-S-a-63-piya.pdf>

<https://neuroticgradientdescent.blogspot.com/2023/08/there-are-only-few-suttas-where-buddha.html>

https://library.dhammasukha.org/uploads/1/2/8/6/12865490/a_guide_to_twim.pdf

1. Cultivate the Jhanic factors: directing attention, sustaining attention, physical and emotional tranquility/contentment (Happiness or sukha), physical sensations (generally pleasant though not uniformly so, joy or pīti), and one-pointedness of mind
2. Set aside the hindrances to Jhana: sensory desire, aversion, ill-will, sloth-and-torpor, doubt, restlessness-and-worry
3. Take Jhana factors as the basis, apply them to the brahmavihārās (loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative-joy, and equanimity)
4. Take equanimity as the basis, apply this clear state of seeing to the four foundations of mindfulness: the body, feeling tones, mental formations, Dhamma factors. The dhamma factors relate to seeing the three marks in the five skandhas.

4.4 Personal map

1. Ānāpāna contributes to cultivation of samahdhi related jhanic factors as well as restlessness related hindrances.
2. Jhana meditations for cultivation of pitti and other jhanic factors (directing attention, sustaining attention, physical and emotional tranquility/contentment, physical sensations, and one-pointedness of mind.) Pleasant and imaginal aspects of jhana contribute to reinforcing habitual practice.
3. Mindfulness contributes to samahdhi related jhanic factors as well as interoception of fast-clenching tanha and proliferation of dukkha. Insight ways of seeing the second mark (dukkha) in all five skandhas. Mindfulness practices on dependent arising and emptiness contribute insight ways of seeing the third mark (no-self) in all five skandhas.
4. Vipassanā contributes to insight ways of seeing the first mark (impermanence) and the third mark (no-self) in all five skandhas as well as the cultivation of equanimity.
5. Core transformation and forgiveness meditation contributes to overcoming various hindrances and defilements through investigation and letting go. Core transformation and core states naturally transition into Jhana meditation, contributing to the cultivation of jhanic factors applied to brahmaviharas (loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, equanimity).
6. Various on and off-the-cushion practices for applying equanimity to the first three of the four foundations of mindfulness (the body, feeling tones, mental formations, dhamma factors). Various practices for understanding and developing self-discipline to overcome five hindrances.
7. Kriya yoga, tantric yoga, and exercise to antidote hindrances of sloth-and-torpor, restlessness-and-worry, and other aversions to practice.