

Satipaṭṭhāna | Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Acknowledging is the heart of Insight Meditation. Insight Meditation, through the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, focuses on the body, feelings, mind (thought) and objects of the mind. These Four Foundations serve as a basis to develop mindfulness and awareness. The focus is specifically directed to the Five Aggregates (body, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness).

- **Mindfulness of the Body** (*kāyānupassanā*) means to contemplate bodily actions, sensations, and feelings. means to contemplate the nature of the body, bodily actions, bodily position. This includes, for example, acknowledging the surface we touch with our hands, the touching of our lips when we speak, being conscious of the lifting of our arms, legs, hands, and feet, or acknowledging our breathing.
- **Mindfulness of the Feelings** (*vedanānupassanā*) means to contemplate our feelings as they appear. We can experience both physical and mental feelings, like happiness, sadness, grief, hatred, joy, excitement, etc. When we feel sad, we look at the sadness and the pain in our body as it was someone else's suffering. We are not engaged with the feelings, we watch them and notice when they come, when they stay, and when they leave. We are constantly contemplating and attend to feelings that arise from body and mind.
- **Mindfulness of the Mind** (*cittānupassanā*) means to contemplate thoughts or to be aware of the conditions of the mind such as desire, anger, delusion, sloth, distraction, peace, etc. We observe our thoughts being aware of their arising and their disappearance. They flow in our mind like a river. We watch them, but we are not in them.
- **Mindfulness of the Objects of the Mind** (*dhammānupassanā*) means to contemplate what our mind recognizes as something familiar, for example a tree, a book, sadness, happiness, the image of a friend, etc. Recognition is to know something when perceiving it. The objects of the mind also include the times when we think about or comment on something.

The key is mindfulness. Constant awareness of what happens within our minds and bodies.

"And what, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering? It is that craving which gives rise to birth, bound up with pleasure and passion, finding fresh delight now here, now there: that is to say craving for sensual pleasures, craving results from actions, and craving no results from actions. And where does this craving arise and establish itself? Wherever in the world, there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there craving arises and establishes itself."

- Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna sutta

If you are curious to know more about the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna you may enjoy reading the excerpt from the book *"Walking the Tightrope"* by Pemasiri Thera below.

The four foundations of mindfulness

In the *satipaṭṭhāna-vipassanā* teachings of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, the Buddha explains how we develop *sati-sampajañña*.

He explains how we turn our bodies, our feelings, our states of mind, and the objects of our minds towards the wholesome and beneficial. The Buddha explains how we turn towards *sammā-sati* in order to overcome decay and death. The meditation practice taught by the Buddha in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* is a large comprehensive subject that is compared to an elephant's footprint: all other animals' footprints fit within an elephant's footprint.

The *satipaṭṭhāna* practice is also compared to a large bowl into which all the other practices fit. We will not attempt an extensive discussion of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*; our discussion is limited to the practice of *sati* within the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*. *Sati* and pathing are the two Pali words that combine to form *satipaṭṭhāna*. We know *sati* means a fully aware wholesome state of mind. *Paṭṭhāna* means establishment, attendance, waiting on. Thus literally, *satipaṭṭhāna* means establishing attention to a fully aware wholesome state of mind; although, *satipaṭṭhāna* is usually rendered as "foundations of mindfulness."

There are four foundations of mindfulness listed in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*:

1. **Mindful contemplation of the body**, *kāyānupassanā*
2. **Mindful contemplation of feeling**, *vedanānupassanā*
3. **Mindful contemplation of states of mind**, *cittānupassanā*
4. **Mindful contemplation of mind-objects**, *dhammānupassanā*

To develop our *sati*, we must develop beneficial attention, *yonisomanasikāra*, towards the four foundations of mindfulness - body, feelings, states of mind, and mind-objects. Beneficial attention to the four foundations prevents us from misdirecting our attention towards the harmful.

1. Kāyānupassanā | Mindful Contemplation of the Body

The first foundation of mindfulness listed in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* is *kāyānupassanā*. *Kāya* means body and *anupassanā* means looking at, viewing, and contemplating with constant mindfulness. Putting the two terms together, *kāyānupassanā* is application of mindfulness to the contemplation of the body. We use mindful contemplation of our bodies to turn all of our physical actions towards wholesomeness, and thus towards *sati*. This is accomplished through a number of exercises:

- **Mindfulness of breathing**, *ānāpānasati*
- **Mindfulness of body postures**, *iriyāpatha*
- **Mindfulness with clear comprehension**, *sati-sampajañña*
- **Reflection on the thirty-two parts of the body**, *kāyagatāsati* and *asubha*
- **Analysis of the four physical elements**, *dhātu-manasikāra*
- **The nine charnel ground contemplations**, *sīvathikā*

Mindful contemplation of the body, *kāyānupassanā*, means knowing the actions of our bodies as well as knowing the physical realities of our bodies; we dwell in mindful

contemplation of the body, in the present. Truth has no past. Truth has no future. It will only be found in the present moment. We know what we are doing while we are doing it. When we drink a cup of tea, we are fully aware we are drinking a cup of tea; when we pick up a pen, we know we are picking up a pen; when we move the pen, we know we are moving it; and when we place the pen down, we also know we are placing it down. We are aware of our thoughts and intentions to pick the pen up, move it, and place it down. We get to the present. The past is gone. Through a variety of exercises, we get to the present.

Application of mindfulness to our breathing, *ānāpānasati*, is one of the exercises. We are aware of our breath as it goes in and aware of our breath as it goes out. We are aware of the rising and falling nature of our breathing. Another exercise is the application of mindfulness to body postures, *iriyāpatha*. When we walk, we know we are walking; when we stand, we know we are standing; when we sit, we are aware and understand we are sitting; and when we lie down, we know we are lying down.

A third exercise is mindfulness with clear comprehension, *satisampajañña*. By being mindful of a bodily action at the same time we are engaged in that bodily action, we train in clear comprehension. When we go forward, we are aware we are going forward; when we go backward, we are aware we are going backward; and when we bend and stretch our limbs, we are aware we are bending and stretching our limbs. When we look straight ahead, we are aware we are looking straight ahead; when we look this way and that way, we are aware that we are looking this way and that way; when we turn our heads, we are fully aware we are turning our heads. Even when we blink, we do it with mindful awareness. We also eat and drink with awareness. We are aware of chewing our food, feeling the taste of our food, and swallowing our food. We are even aware of cleansing our bodies, going to the toilet, and taking care of personal needs.

By diligently training in clear comprehension, we develop the ability to habitually perform all of our bodily actions with a high level of awareness, with clear comprehension, with *sampajañña*. Clear comprehension of our actions enables us to convert all of our actions to wholesome and beneficial actions, and to live completely in the wholesome, in *sati*.

When we apply mindful contemplation of body exercises – mindfulness of breathing, mindfulness of posture, and analysis of physical elements - throughout most of the day, we establish mindfulness on the body; we live in a mode of awareness. Continuously, again and again we practise being aware of our physical reality. If a physical action takes place, it takes place knowingly, with awareness of its physical reality. And thus, we are able to turn our bodies towards skillfulness. We turn towards *sati*. This is mindful contemplation of body, the first foundation of mindfulness.

A fourth exercise is analysis of the four physical elements, *dhātumanasikāra*:

- earth,
- water,
- fire, and
- air.

With clear comprehension and understanding, we contemplate and come to know that our body is composed of the four physical elements; we know our body is the arising

and the passing away of these four. With *sampajañña*, we are aware. There are just these primary elements in our bodies and the mind that is aware of them.

We are, for example, aware of the earth element in our bodies, a feeling of hardness. We just know that. We are simply aware that there is this feeling of hardness in our bodies. We do not feel adverse to that particular experience. No. We are just aware of the earth element and aware that the earth element has a feeling of hardness to it. We know that. Or we are aware of the water element in our bodies, a feeling of fluidity. We know we are sweating or that saliva is flowing in our mouths, and we know this is the water element. We are also aware of the fire element in our bodies, a feeling of heat. Heat is felt. There is the element of fire in our bodies and there is the mind that knows the element of fire in our bodies. And air element. We know, are aware that our breath goes in, know our breath goes out, and know this feeling of motion is the air element. We are aware of our bodies.

You are writing words in your notebook. A thought comes to you to write and then you are writing. And now, you know you are writing - you are writing with awareness. Because you are unsure about something I said, you put a question mark in your notebook. Doing your writing with full awareness is mindful contemplation of body.

While you are practising mindful contemplation of the body, the thought arises that this is good or this is bad: you are pleased or displeased with what you observe regarding the body. This quality, where the mental factor called feeling predominates, belongs to the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*'s mindful contemplation of feeling, *vedanānupassanā*, and it does not belong to mindful contemplation of the body.

At the same time as you are practising mindful contemplation of the body, you are experiencing feeling, and are aware of it. Where and when this happens is subtle. The first foundation of mindfulness turns into the second foundation of mindfulness; mindful contemplation of the body turns into mindful contemplation of feeling. Your contemplation of feeling is actually going along together with your contemplation of body. Knowing this directly and experientially, *pajānāti* requires very keen *sati*.

As I speak with you, I am experiencing mindful contemplation of feeling because I am wondering if what I am saying is being translated well and if you understand what I am saying. At this very moment, I am experiencing a feeling connected to whether or not you understand what I am teaching. When I think the teaching is being translated well and you understand the teaching, I experience the feeling as something pleasing. Mindful contemplation of feeling is present; feeling exists, in our experience with objects.

Though the Buddha spoke about the practice of mindful contemplation of the body, it is impossible to say that we are ever practising one hundred percent mindful contemplation of the body. Of course, we start off our practice by doing mindful contemplation of the body - that starting point is there—but feeling is always part of our experience. Therefore, we are also practising mindful contemplation of feeling at the same time as we are practising mindful contemplation of the body. And when we realise our mind is arising in this way, we are practising mindful contemplation of the states of mind, *cittānupassanā*.

Mindful contemplation of body, feeling, states of mind, and mind-objects - all four foundations of mindfulness are inseparably linked. The mindful contemplation of the body practice, for example, starts with mindful contemplation of the body, but then

proceeds with mindful contemplation of the three other foundations. At the time, we are performing any action, we know the physical action is one part, know the feeling of pleasure or pain connected with the action is another, and know it is the mind that is aware of these two distinct parts. Mindful contemplation of states of mind is knowing that it is the mind that knows the experience; mindful contemplation of mind-objects, *dhammanupassanā*, is knowing the mental experience arises and as soon as it arises it passes away.

When *sati* is good, all physical aspects of our lives, from the blinking of our eyes to the stretching of our arms, are clearly seen through the four foundations of mindfulness. We are aware of intentions, movements, speaking, wiping our eyes, our hand writing, and what is going on in our minds. When our mindfulness is more developed, we are also aware of the linking between the four foundations. We are completely aware of everything that takes place in our experience.

2. Vedanānupassanā | Mindful Contemplation of Feeling

The second foundation of mindfulness of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* is *vedanā - nupassanā*.

Vedanā means feeling. Connecting *vedanā* with *anupassanā* yields *vedanānupassanā*, contemplating feelings with constant awareness. *Vedanā -nupassanā* is the application of mindfulness to the contemplation of feeling; we constantly contemplate and attend to feelings that arise from body and mind.

There are five types of feelings:

1. Pleasant bodily feeling, *kāyika sukha-vedanā*
2. Painful bodily feeling, *kāyika dukkha-vedanā*
3. Pleasant mental feeling, *cetasika sukha-vedanā*
4. Painful mental feeling, *cetasika dukkha-vedanā*
5. Equanimity, *upekkhā*

Feeling is the common factor. The first two types of feelings, pleasant and painful bodily feelings, pertain to physical feelings of the body, the materiality - *rūpa*. The third and fourth types, pleasant and painful mental feelings, pertain to psychological feelings, the mentality - *nāma*. Pleasant mental feelings include joy and painful mental feelings include frustrations and anger. The fifth type of feeling is equanimity. It is neutral. Neither pleasant nor painful bodily or mental feelings, it is a well-balanced mind free of aversion and clinging.

Due to a motorcycle accident, your friend's shoulder hurts and she is worried about it. Yes, she has an unpleasant feeling in her shoulder, but through worrying she has compounded her physical pain with psychological pain. We all have painful feelings in our bodies and do what we can to alleviate them. If necessary, we see a doctor. Physical pain in our bodies, however, is one thing. When we take our physical pains into our minds, when we think about them and are frustrated, our physical pains develop into psychological pains and that is a problem, an unnecessary problem. When your friend talks about her son, she-forgets all of her pains. Thoughts of her son give her joy.

Do you remember the story of *Devadatta* throwing a stone at the Buddha? The Buddha's foot was injured, blood flowed, and *bhikkhus* carried him to see Dr. Jivaka at the palace. After treatment, the Buddha returned to the monastery. That evening, the doctor

became concerned and wanted to visit the Buddha, but the palace locked its gates at night and the doctor had to wait until the following morning.

“Did your injury cause you any pain last night?” asked Dr. Jīvaka. *“Yes”* said the Buddha. *“There was some pain in my foot, but none in my mind.”* The Buddha experienced physical pain from his injury, but by no means did he allow his physical pain to disturb him mentally; his physical pain remained outside. For the Buddha, there was physical, but not psychological pressure. The same is said of *arahats*. They experience painful bodily feelings, but not painful mental feelings.

What do you mean by pressure?

We experience pressure from our psychological and physical burdens. This pressure is sometimes pleasant and sometimes painful. You, for example, experience pain when your friend tells you about the pain in her shoulder. Clearly, you are also experiencing pains when someone states views that are different from yours. At both of these times, you are experiencing painful mental feelings though you may also be experiencing some painful bodily feelings.

Is this psychosomatic pain?

You may be experiencing some painful feelings in your body, but in these two situations you are primarily experiencing painful mental feelings. We practise mindful contemplation of our feelings, *vedanānupassanā*, in the same way we practise mindful contemplation of our bodies: we start with one foundation of mindfulness and then develop the three other foundations. Mindful contemplation of the body, for instance, begins by attending to the physical aspects of our bodies - eating, drinking, walking, breathing, the four elements, etc. - and then proceeds with mindful contemplation of feelings, states of mind, and finally mind-objects.

Mindful contemplation of feeling begins by applying mindfulness to the feelings that arise. We perceive whether our bodily or mental feelings are pleasant, painful, or neutral. Pleasant and painful feelings point out our mind. We clearly identify our pleasant, painful, and neutral feelings. Then we proceed with the remaining three foundations of mindfulness.

Often when we sit for meditation, our knees give us some pain. Perceiving this pain is mindful contemplation of feeling. We know this is a painful feeling. We also know this painful feeling arises in our knees, which is a part of our bodies. Knowing the pain is in the body is mindful contemplation of the body. Knowing whether our state of mind is wholesome and beneficial or unwholesome and harmful is mindful contemplation of states of mind. Finally, knowing the pain in our knees arises and also knowing it passes away is mindful contemplation of mind-objects. We know that our knee pain changes; it increases and decreases.

I don't like the pain from sitting.

As feelings are your own experience, nobody can tell you much about them. But investigate your feelings without attachment and ask yourself: *“What is pain?”*

Mindful contemplation of feeling enables you to see your feelings as they really are. Thus, when painful bodily feelings arise, you don't compound your physical pain with psychological pain. In its place, a deeper understanding of your pain develops.

Do I change my pain to pleasure or to a neutral feeling?

Just because you experience painful physical feelings, you do not necessarily have to experience painful mental feelings. You have a physical pain, but you are not suffering mentally. You recognise your painful physical feeling, see the reality of that painful feeling, and in this way turn your pain towards skilfulness.

Do I leave aside my pain?

To explain these details, I have to go into the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*. Our discussion is limited to sati, sati within the eightfold path.

3. *Cittānupassanā* | Mindful Contemplation of States of Mind

The *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*'s third foundation of mindfulness is *cittānupassanā*.

Citta translates as mind, consciousness, and states of consciousness; hence, *cittānupassanā* means contemplating mind with constant awareness. *Cittānupassanā* is the application of our mindfulness to the contemplation of states of mind, to our consciousness. We know that it is mind that perceives and understands any object.

And again, mindful contemplation of states of mind is practised in the same way we practise mindful contemplation of body and mindful contemplation of feeling: we begin with the specific foundation of mindfulness and then develop the other three foundations. With the mindful contemplation of states of mind practice, we start by applying mindful contemplation to our states of mind and then proceed to apply mindful contemplation to body, feelings, and mind-objects.

You seem to be thinking about your tape recorder. It is your mind that has the tape recorder as its object. Knowing that your mind has the tape recorder as its object is mindful contemplation of your state of mind; knowing that the tape recorder is made of physical elements is mindful contemplation of body; knowing the way you experience the tape recorder, what its value is for you and whether it gives you a pleasant or painful feeling, is mindful contemplation of feeling; and lastly, knowing that this is the arising of form and that this is the passing away of form is mindful contemplation of mind objects. Change is happening.

Mindful contemplation of mind-objects also includes knowing this is the arising of some concentration as well as knowing this is the passing away of concentration. Practising the four foundations in this way, we establish a fully aware wholesome state of mind.

Is contemplation of the tape recorder mindful contemplation of body, kāyānupassanā?

Yes. It falls in the analysis of the four physical elements, the *dhātumanasikāra*, within mindful contemplation of body. At this point, the practice turns to mindful contemplation of mind-objects; *dhammānupassanā* grows here.

By constantly attending to and contemplating our states of consciousness, *cittānupassanā*, we are able to turn our minds away from unskillfulness, and turn our minds towards skillfulness. This is exactly the same as the body and the feelings practices: in the contemplation of body practice, we turn our bodies towards

wholesomeness by performing physical actions without expectation; in the mindful contemplation of feelings practice, we turn our feelings to wholesomeness by seeing the reality of feeling. In the contemplation of states of mind practice, we turn our minds and thoughts to the wholesome and beneficial.

4. **Dhammānupassanā** | Mindful Contemplation of Mind-Objects

The fourth foundation of mindfulness listed in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* is *dhammānupassanā*. *Dhamma* as an object of mind can be anything past, present, or future, anything physical or mental, anything conditioned or unconditioned, and anything real or imagined. *Dhammānupassanā* is the contemplation of *dhamma*. *Dhammānupassanā* is the application of mindfulness to the contemplation of various mind-objects:

- **The five hindrances**, *nīvaraṇa*
- **The five aggregates**, *khandha*
- **The six internal and external sense bases**, *salāyatana*
- **The seven factors of enlightenment**, *bojjhaṅga*
- **The four noble truths**, *ariya-sacca*

When *sati* is well developed, it is in the sphere of mindful contemplation of mind-objects where most contemplation takes place. Consider our minds to be water and our thoughts to be colouring. Pure water is colourless, odourless, and shapeless. When we add some dye to the water, the water takes on the colour of the dye. Nonetheless, there is still a difference between the water and the dye: water and dye are two separate and distinct entities. In the same way, when we engage in thinking, our minds take on the colour of our thoughts. Sometimes our thoughts support attaining *nibbāna* and sometimes our thoughts hinder attaining. Thoughts that are hindrances, *nīvaraṇa*, include excitement of sensual pleasures, ill will, dullness and lethargy, restlessness and worry, and doubt. Whether our thoughts support or hinder, there is still a difference between mind and thoughts. They are two separate entities.

Mindful contemplation of mind-objects, *dhammānupassanā*, means recognising whether hindrances are or aren't present in our minds. Is a hindrance to our attaining *nibbāna* on the rise? If so, how did it arise and how is it overcome? Mindful contemplation of mind-objects also includes recognising the characteristics of the five aggregates, the *khandhas* - feeling, perception, volitional formations, consciousness, and materiality. How do the aggregates arise and how do they pass away?

When our *sati* is good, we automatically turn our minds away from the hindrances. Automatically, we turn our minds towards the beneficial. We hear a sound; a bird chirps. The object of our minds is the sound of the chirp, which is actually a form, a *rūpa*. At the very moment we hear the chirp, there is nothing else besides the sound of the chirp and the mind that knows the chirp. We feel the chirp is pleasant, painful, or neutral. We know the mind-object is feeling. We also know that our feeling towards the chirp arises and passes away, and we know that within our feelings there are various other thoughts taking place. All of this is mindful contemplation of mind-objects, *dhammānupassanā*.

Mindful contemplation of mind-objects means the object of the mind is mind. We are attentive and contemplate mind with mind as the mind changes from one object of experience to another object of experience to another.

Another example. With confidence in the teachings, we are working towards liberation, but for some reason anger arises. In the very moment that we are doing something with wisdom and understanding, we become overwhelmed, our confidence vanishes, and we get angry. In the next moment, our anger disappears and greed arises. The mind is changing from one object to another object. Our thoughts are changing.

Immediately recognising the thoughts that come to our mind, as soon as they come to mind, requires good mindfulness, *sati*. *Sati* enables you to see and note your harmful state of anger, and move on. This is similar to tasting sugar. A person can read about the taste of sugar, but it is quite different from actually tasting sugar. You are seeing your anger, not reading about it. Without *sati*, you never see your anger.

I often get very angry.

Sati enables us to know when anger is present in the mind and to know when greed is present. It enables us to immediately recognise whatever hindrance comes to our minds.

I am worried that my anger will explode and I will hurt someone.

Sati helps you to get through your anger because you are seeing your anger as it arises. Out of your craving, conceit, and views, you are clinging to something. You can see this for yourself. With *sati*, we recognise our hindrances in the same moment they arise and get rid of them, immediately. We use *sati* to let go of clinging and overcome our difficulties. It is almost useless to recognise hindrances after they have come and gone. No, that is not very useful. But for beginners, it is good enough.

Why is recognising my past hindrances any different from recognising my present hindrances?

When we reflect upon how our hindrances arose in the past, we improve our skill in recognising them when they arise in the present - we are developing our awareness, our *sati*. Eventually though, we need to recognise and dismantle our hindrances in the same moment they arise. A flashlight helps us to find objects in the dark. When we shine the light, we see the object that we are looking for. Shining the light towards the object and seeing the object happen simultaneously in one and the very same moment. There aren't two moments. We shine the light into the dark place and at the exact same moment we see and recognise the object. Shining the light is mind and recognising the object is thought, all in one moment. Just as water is mind and coloured dye is thought, if we keep the mind clear, we are aware when any colour is added.

Keep the mind clear.

Yes. When we keep our minds clear and pure, we see when any colouring is added. Sometimes wholesomeness is added and sometimes unwholesomeness is added. Practising mindful contemplation of mind objects means sorting out the mental factors that hinder our attaining of *nibbāna* from the mental factors that support our attaining, and then distancing ourselves from the factors that hinder. We purify our minds and turn our mental factors to the beneficial.

Essentially, this is what all four foundations of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* - mindful contemplation of body, feeling, states of mind, and mind-objects - accomplish. When we have *sati*, we are always in one of these four foundations. Sometimes we are in mindful contemplation of states of mind, sometimes feeling, sometimes body, and sometimes mind-objects. The meditator who meditates regularly and properly is always in one of the four foundations of mindfulness, lives in a wholesome state of mind, and is untouched by any unwholesomeness. The meditator is always in *sati*. "All wholesome states of mind," said the Buddha, "are *sati*."

Again, how do we turn our lives towards the beneficial?

By performing actions, by experiencing feelings, and by experiencing mindstates without any expectations whatsoever, we turn towards the wholesome. We also turn towards the wholesome through confidence in whatever liberation it was that the Buddha found. We are confident the Buddha followed a certain path to make a particular state arise, and we are confident that state arose when he followed that path. This path is the eightfold path. This path is the four foundations of mindfulness. We are confident the Buddha followed this path and achieved liberation from suffering.

The Direct Path

The eightfold path is called the *ekāyana-magga* - the direct path. Nothing else gets mixed up with it. It is the straightest way to the goal. The way of the Buddha and the four foundations of mindfulness - these are the practices of a person on the direct path.

The person on the path lives alone. This does not mean retiring to the forest, isolation in a room, or anything like that. No. To the person living alone, the city is the same as the forest. *Eko vūpakaṭṭha appamatto ātāpi* is a frequently used expression to describe life on the path. And though *eko vūpakaṭṭha appamatto ātāpi* does include living alone, it also includes being jealous and being master of oneself. We are zealous in mastering the solitary life, a life of seclusion. This does not mean physically removing ourselves from other people. It does not mean that. Living alone means making the effort to restrain and abandon the harmful, as well as making the effort to develop and maintain the beneficial. Alone means unwholesomeness never accompanies us. Alone on the path, we neither judge nor criticise others.

"*This path*," said the Buddha, "is the only way to overcome *dukkha*". A meditation centre is where people on the direct path live together. We practise living without expectations. When we eat our meals, we do not think about tomorrow's meal. Striving to maintain our minds and perform all of our actions in the present moment, the present moment is now. The next moment is also now. In this very moment, we try hard to prevent harmful states from arising. We do not allow greed to get mixed up with the present moment, do not allow aversion to get mixed up with the present moment, and do not allow delusion to get mixed up with the present moment. This is a practice of causes and effects, *hetu-phala*. Recognising and believing in causes and their effects is non-delusion, *amoha*.

Through contemplation and training, the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice develops. When we train properly for a month or two, without any gaps in the practice, our *sati* begins to

function automatically. When we are firmly established in the four foundations of mindfulness, we know the state of *sati*.

Pemasiri Thera: from the book "Walking the Tightrope"