

Anapanasati Sutra Appreciation (MN 118):* Fulfilling Awareness of the Breath Meditation

by Br. Pho Quan

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammá Sambuddhassa

A concise appreciation of the Anapanasati Sutra “In and Out Breath Awareness” (MN 118) is shared with the emphasis on personal meditative insight experience to liberating wisdom.

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(Introductory Section)

1. *Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in the Eastern Park, in the Palace of Migāra’s Mother, together with many very well known elder disciples—the venerable Sāriputta, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna, the venerable Mahā Kassapa, the venerable Mahā Kaccāna, the venerable Mahā Kotthita, the venerable Mahā Kappina, the venerable Mahā Cunda, the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Revata, the venerable Ānanda, and other very well known elder disciples.*

2. *Now on that occasion elder bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing new bhikkhus; some elder bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing ten bhikkhus, some elder bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing twenty...thirty...forty*

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bhikkhus. And the new bhikkhus, taught and instructed by the elder bhikkhus, had achieved successive stages of high distinction.

3. On that occasion—the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, on the full-moon night of the Pavāranā ceremony—the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the Sangha of bhikkhus. Then, surveying the silent Sangha of bhikkhus, he addressed them thus:

4. “Bhikkhus, I am content with this progress. My mind is content with this progress. So arouse still more energy to attain the unattained, to achieve the unachieved, to realize the unrealized. I shall wait here at Sāvattḥī for the Komudī full moon of the fourth month.”

5. The bhikkhus of the countryside heard: “The Blessed One will wait there at Sāvattḥī for the Komudī full moon of the fourth month.” And the bhikkhus of the countryside left in due course for Sāvattḥī to see the Blessed One.

6. And elder bhikkhus still more intensively taught and instructed new bhikkhus; some elder bhikkhus taught and instructed ten bhikkhus, some elder bhikkhus taught and instructed twenty ... thirty ... forty bhikkhus. And the new bhikkhus, taught and instructed by the elder bhikkhus, achieved successive stages of high distinction.

7. On that occasion—the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, the full-moon night of the Komudī full moon of the fourth month—the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the Sangha of bhikkhus. Then, surveying the silent Sangha of bhikkhus, he addressed them thus:

8. “Bhikkhus, this assembly is free from prattle, this assembly is free from chatter. It consists purely of heartwood. Such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an incomparable field of merit for the world—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly that a small gift given to it becomes great and a great gift greater—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as is rare for the world to see—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as would be worth journeying many leagues with a travel-bag to see—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly.

9. *“In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who are arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.*

10. *“In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who, with the destruction of the five lower fetters, are due to reappear spontaneously [in the Pure Abodes] and there attain final Nibbāna, without ever returning from that world—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.*

11. *“In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who, with the destruction of three fetters and with the attenuation of lust, hate, and delusion, are once-returners, returning once to this world to make an end of suffering—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.*

12. *“In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who, with the destruction of the three fetters, are stream-enterers, no longer subject to perdition, bound [for deliverance], headed for enlightenment—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.*

13. *“In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of the four foundations of mindfulness—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus. In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of the four right kinds of striving ... of the four bases for spiritual power ...of the five faculties...of the five powers...of the seven enlightenment factors...of the Noble Eightfold Path—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.*

14. *“In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of loving-kindness...of compassion...of altruistic joy...of equanimity...of the meditation on foulness...of the perception of impermanence—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus. In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of mindfulness of breathing.*

The setting is the end of the long three month monastic retreat taken during the monsoon season. The monastics mentioned and gathered varied in maturity with senior and experienced members helping others in their practice and

understanding. A dedication and sincere effort is sensed from all. An informative read and example of these early disciples can be found in *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, Wisdom Publication (2003). The chapter on Ven. Sariputra is particularly worth reading (also available at www.accesstoinsight.org--the Life of Sariputta by Ven. Nyanaponika Thera).

Without mention, a foundation of responsible conduct-virtue adhering to the monastic code and discipline is followed. In turn lay practitioners follow the Five Wise Actions or precepts as conduct in their daily lives and activities (goodwill rather than ill will; generosity and sharing vs. selfishness, hoarding or stealing; honesty and being truthful rather than gossiping, backstabbing and lying; sexual responsibility or abstinence rather than carnal pursuits; sobriety rather than alcohol and drug use.) Revealed is how intentions and self-directed actions shape one's life—careless and habit dominated or responsible and wisely engaged actions. The basic role of karma as intention stands out.

Additionally, a 'Middle Way' appreciation is followed—not over indulging in sensual gratification through renunciation and restraint as well as tempering hostility and aggression (The complete Middle Way Path is Wise Understanding, Wise Intention, Wise Speech, Wise Action, Wise Livelihood, Wise Effort, Wise Awareness, and Wise Concentration.). Try as one will, if you are out of control and over indulging in passions and desires while overwhelmed by strong emotions, it is impossible to take control and have a proper perspective and insight for life. All too often people make excuses for not practicing or feeling the need to indulge their habits and every whim that comes to mind. Less is best. Meditation then is a beneficial timeout from the exhausting and stressful need to fulfill a self-attached, one-sided ideal. Action begets action as a cause and effect suffering scenario, a self-pursued Conditions Arising cycle stands out.

The Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths have also been clarified and detailed, bringing into focus the true nature of life and reality as impermanent, dissatisfying and subject to suffering, and without self nature: 1) attachment to the Five Groups of Self-Identification is suffering (body, feelings, perception, mental reactions and conscious attention); 2) craving as a self actor leads to suffering consequences; 3) craving ceasing, suffering ends (Nirvana and the Unconditioned Realm); 4) and the Middle Way Path is fulfilled as wisdom-liberation to the Unshakeable Deliverance of Mind.

Stream Entry Passage

Ten habit fetters over four stages remain to be cut off to fulfill liberation. Known as the Stream Entry Path to final wisdom-liberation, for each understanding there

is a Middle Way ‘path’ experience and a corresponding ‘fruit’ or insight ripening as wisdom recognition eliminating a specific habit.

- **Stream Enterer**—The Stream Enterer is consummate in conduct-virtue and has control and mastery over the underlying self-entangled karma within this present Sense Realm. The Middle Way conduct of Wise Speech, Wise Action and Wise Livelihood are emphasized. One is to be reborn no more than seven more times before final liberation.
- **Once Returner**—Here greed and hatred are weakened not to arise as frequently or as previously dominating. At this level of insight one returns ‘once’ more to a Sense Realm rebirth before liberation.
- **Non-Returner**—By completely eliminating greed/desire and hatred/aversion one never again returns to the Sense Realm, but to a higher rebirth and from there passes to the Unconditioned Realm, Nirvana. The Non-Returner is consummate in the Middle Way’s meditation-concentration. Control and mastery over the underlying karma for craving as delight and pleasure is achieved.
- **Accomplished One**—Eliminated is self-associated craving and rebirth within the Fine-Material Realm; eliminated is self-associated craving and rebirth within the Immaterial Realm; self-associated conceit is eradicated; self-associated restlessness is eradicated; and, ultimately, the threefold misunderstanding (ignorance) is done away with (the drive for desire, the drive for existence, driven by misunderstanding life as self). As an Accomplished One or Arhat the Middle Way Insight-Wisdom experience is fulfilled, realizing the Unshakeable Deliverance of Mind.

As personal intuition, the Four Noble Truths profound recognition encompasses a grand scope of 37 insight experiences.

- **The Four Awareness References:** body, feelings, mind and life-actions are straight forward, practical and reveal life and reality as impermanent, dissatisfying and subject to suffering, and of a non-self, impersonal nature underscored by purposeful action.
- **The Four Wise Efforts:** the effort to abandon detrimental mental states; the effort to prevent detrimental mental states; the effort to arouse beneficial

mental states; the effort to maintain beneficial mental states, all directed to ending self-obsession and suffering.

- **The Four Base Powers:** energy, persistence, intention, and investigation aid in regulating effort.
- **The Five Faculties:** conviction, energy, awareness, concentration, and wisdom support Wise Reflection to a penetrative wisdom.
- **The Five Strengths:** conviction, energy, awareness, concentration, and wisdom mature to realize the Ultimate Reality.
- **The Seven Enlightenment Aids:** Awareness, Investigation, Energy, Rapture, Tranquility, Concentration and Equanimity unify to discern the Four Noble Truths Wisdom-Liberating vision (self as suffering; craving as delight and pleasure carrying over to compromising consequences; craving's cessation; and the Middle Way Noble Eightfold Path followed to deliverance).
- **The Middle Way Noble Eightfold Path:** Wise Understanding, Wise Intention, Wise Speech, Wise Action, Wise Livelihood, Wise Effort, Wise Awareness, and Wise Concentration are followed as a Stream Entry wisdom maturation experience directed to ending self-suffering and penetrating the liberating breakthrough to Nirvana.

An Accomplished One or Arhat is no longer victim to worldly passions, has control over the mind, and through renunciation and restraint self-expressions don't arise. Self-delusion is eradicated. Penetrated is the Supreme Noble Truth, the Unconditioned Realm; Nirvana as liberating cessation from self-fabrication and suffering.

The Immeasurables (loving-kindness, compassion, shared joy, and equanimity) help transform a self-limited focus to become devoid of desire, hatred and harming. These qualities are all inclusive, unbounded, without limit or hindrance. Awakened are altruistic intentions and actions for life as something other than a one-sided self-domination. The Immeasurables go on to affect dormant, active and transgressing habits, shrinking the self-perspective.

Loving-Kindness

Loving-Kindness heals wounds, anger, upset and bitterness as patience, gentleness and forgiveness stand out. Caring and goodwill are established. Self-focus is reshaped to consideration, flexibility, generosity and willingness.

Compassion

Not to be confused with pity or sorrow but having genuine sympathy, caring and understanding you connect with other people's misfortune. Jealousy, bitterness and anger curtailed, forgiveness, acceptance and compassion are engaged. As a personal fulfillment, compassion embraces all sorrow-stricken and suffering beings—including one's self.

Shared Joy

Shared joy opens to the simplest of virtues—to be happy for others. A self-perspective alienates the world at large, but as a genuine happiness and respect, sees the other person not as a threat but as part of your life and on the same journey. Sympathy and caring are known. Emerging from a petty self-shell, everyone is considered a friend. There is caring and joy.

Equanimity

Equanimity is an even-tempered abiding without discrimination, judgment or attachment. Patience and acceptance stand out. Loving-kindness, compassion, and shared joy deepen to a fulfilled equanimity. From a stand point of confidence, assurance and peace, everything and everyone is held in equal regard and esteem.

The self-directed focus vanquished, there is only tranquility and peace. Extending to the world at large, equanimity's settling is an open acceptance and tolerance embracing all people, situations and experiences whether good, bad, challenging or difficult. Without self-directed ambition there is nothing to prove, pursue, gain or uphold—one is equanimous.

Finally, there is an uncompromising and sobering view of life in general as 'foul.' This isn't pessimism but the honest awareness for sickness, aging, death, loss and responsibility for one's actions (the Five Remembrances) as well as the impermanence and dissatisfaction that runs through life.

(Awareness of Breathing)

15. *“Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and great benefit. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness. When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfill the seven enlightenment factors. When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated, they fulfill true knowledge and deliverance.*

16. *“And how, bhikkhus, is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated, so that it is of great fruit and great benefit?”*

17. *“Here a bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.*

18. *“Breathing in long, he understands: ‘I breathe in long’; or breathing out long, he understands: ‘I breathe out long.’ Breathing in short, he understands: ‘I breathe in short’; or breathing out short, he understands: ‘I breathe out short.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body [of breath]’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body [of breath].’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation.’*

19. *“He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing rapture’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing rapture.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in tranquillizing the mental formation’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillizing the mental formation.’*

20. *“He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the mind’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the mind.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in gladdening the mind’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out gladdening the mind.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in concentrating the mind’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out concentrating the mind.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in liberating the mind’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out liberating the mind.’*

21. *“He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating fading away’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating fading away.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating cessation’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating cessation.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating relinquishment.’*

22. *“Bhikkhus, that is how mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, so that it is of great fruit and great benefit.*

A welcomed break from all activities, work and demands, meditation isn't just one more thing to rush through. Quite the opposite, the sitting is an actual comfort, ease, settling and joy as well as insight. Meditation takes one away from automatic impulsive tendencies. Attention is turned towards a present minded connection to better know life.

Comfortable in your sitting position, lower jaw dropped allowing facial muscles to stretch and relax, shoulders down and back muscles relaxed, abdominal and pelvic pressures released, a centering body scan is engaged.

Acknowledge any clenching and tension felt, relaxing the body. Meditation is a timeout without distractions, preoccupations and demands. Gently guide your awareness to the most obvious feeling and sensation—the breath's quality. Note the initial restlessness and unsettling when first sitting to meditate. Charged by strong impulses, follow how wanting, dislikes, judgments, fears and fantasies are a stressful stranglehold. One goes through the day distracted, confused and overwhelmed. The upset then translates to nervousness and a frustrated, pressure-filled gasping for air. Self-domination is a conflicted triangle—a struggle with desire, overwhelmed by hatred, and confused by doubts (these mental states play out on dormant, active and transgressing levels). Judging, craving after and at odds, you are your own worst enemy.

As though carrying a great burden or weight on your shoulders, without realizing it back muscles tend to arch and stiffen. Allow the shoulders to drop and arms to hang freely with hands cupped at the lap. Note, too, if there is any pelvic tension or stiffness in the lower extremities. Be relaxed. Smile and take a few deep breaths. Feel at ease. Connect with the simple relief meditation affords.

Slowly moving down, have awareness for the chest and any pressure there. Breathe naturally and freely. Follow the lungs inhaling, the diaphragm expanding then the lungs exhaling as the abdomen drops and the breath is expelled.

Notice whether abdominal muscles are clenched and tight. Think of the abdomen as something soft and flexible, allowing the muscles to relax with the meditation. Enjoy the meditative timeout from the compulsion to always be busy and self-absorbed.

Note the mind and passing thoughts. Usually at the start of a meditation, pressing thoughts and demands carry over from earlier in the day to flash and distract. Feel how a thought brings pressure to the forehead as well as behind the eyes. Try to relax the mind from actually squeezing, narrowing and gripping the thought. If the mind continues to be distracted, taking in a few deep breaths through the nostrils helps reestablish meditative calm. Acknowledge how the body and mind communicate. With each thought and emotion there is a corresponding physical tension and sometimes accompanying pain. Self-related accumulated stress and pressure builds up. Work demands, family responsibilities, the commute, errands, conflicts and day-to-day challenges are reflected as a tense breathing, tightened muscles and disturbed thinking. Everyday life takes a toll. Greed, hatred and confusion stand out as reactive impulses. Try to relax and allow the pressures to release.

This first connecting breath awareness initially gauges physical well-being then turns to realize ongoing mental states. A bio-feed back takes place as an insightful personal therapy is established. A revealing appreciation, meditation is the means to realizing and dealing with habitually self-absorbed confusion. Recognize the ongoing stress and agitation that is generated and plays out as a scheming self actor. Note the tension over the facial muscles and throughout the body. Acknowledge how the mind, attention and thoughts stressfully narrow as a self-focus. Through meditative awareness, self-impulses are controlled, curbed and go on to be released. Acknowledge the 'rapture and gladdening' benefits experienced through meditation as self-identification is minimized.

Centered and settled, note the gradual steps in calming down leading to separation from impulsive desires, disliking and dominating habits. A reflective Middle Way appreciation along with strict conduct-virtue (the Five Wise Actions), the impulsive self-driven routine is muted. Physically settled, acknowledge how the everyday, self-absorbed breath gasps in fits and affects the body. Notice how a Monkey Mind distracted dialogue dominates (desire/craving, hatred/aversion, laziness/fatigue, restlessness/worry, and doubt/skepticism). Follow the full natural course of the breath as a revealing personal awareness. As one breathes

(whether agitated or calm, impulsive or aware), so is one's life engaged. Note how the persisting self-monologue quiets and habitual impulses dissipate to a concentrated calm and relieved well-being. Acknowledge how facial tension, physical stress and distracting thoughts ease and drop away. Note as your settled concentrated awareness expands. This is meditation as insight, a personal experience and recognition.

Recognized are the subconscious game playing involved and the pursuit in being a self actor. The inherent conceit and restlessness is a threefold delusion—the drive to uphold and pursue self-fulfillment desire, the drive for existence as being self-defined, driven by the misunderstanding or ignorance for not truly knowing life and reality. Rather than self-identification, there is a Conditions Arising series of multiple interacting causes and effects joining and played out as compelling-willed actions. Be sensitive to the 'impermanence, fading and cessation' that characterize life as well as the 'relinquishment' or weakening of self-identification.

Meditation is both a settling and insight. Expressing a willingness to reflect and look deeper, meditation puts you in a position to better understand life. Don't be in a hurry. Feel as channels of awareness and a sensitive appreciation for the body and mind open. Meditation is a personal realization. Sit relaxed and enjoy the beneficial calm moment. Settling down, you begin to breathe freely. Once centered, longer and revealing meditation sessions follow. After finishing, don't be in a hurry to get back to being busy. Acknowledge meditation's settling relief. Feel how tension and stress are dropped as a 'relinquishment' and release from self-associated activity and self-promotion. The established calm and awareness begins carrying over to all aspects of your life. A wise-reflection takes place and deepens over time to further penetrating insights.

(Fulfillment of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness)

23. “And how, bhikkhus, does mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfill the four foundations of mindfulness?”

24. “Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu, breathing in long, understands: ‘I breathe in long,’ or breathing out long, understands: ‘I breathe out long’; breathing in short, understands: ‘I breathe in short,’ or breathing out short, understands: ‘I breathe out short’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body [of breath]’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body [of breath]’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation’—on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I say that this is a certain body among the bodies, namely, in-breathing and out-breathing. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

25. “Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing rapture’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing rapture’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in tranquillizing the mental formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillizing the mental formation’—on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I say that this is a certain feeling among the feelings, namely, giving close attention to in-breathing and out-breathing. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

26. “Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in gladdening the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out gladdening the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in concentrating the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out concentrating the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in liberating the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out liberating the mind’—on that

occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I do not say that there is the development of mindfulness of breathing for one who is forgetful, who is not fully aware. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

27. *“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating fading away’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating fading away’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating cessation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating cessation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating relinquishment’—on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. Having seen with wisdom the abandoning of covetousness and grief, he closely looks on with equanimity. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.*

28. *“Bhikkhus, that is how mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness.*

Culminating in the Wisdom-Liberating Deliverance of Mind and freedom from self-domination, over the course of 4 associated tetrads breath awareness is a meditative insight for the body, feelings, mind and life-actions (phenomena). The Buddha himself followed Awareness of Breathing Meditation on the night of his enlightenment.

Purposely initiated through meditation but carried over to all aspects of life, the awareness of the breath meditation follows the Middle Way appreciation. Self-demanding intentions on the other hand are a stressed preoccupation to gratify and indulge as well as be aggressive and hostile. Connected through the breath’s quality, the Middle Way approach is a clarifying experience. Life is slowly reconnected with through patience, sensitivity and an awareness that isn’t self-obsessed.

Awareness of the breath meditation centers around four areas of present-minded appreciation—the body (of which the breath is part) and material form; feelings

as pleasant, painful and neutral experiences; the mind and mental states; and life-actions as passing phenomena in general is recognized. Here the Middle Way appreciation is a mindful connection.

When first sitting, breaths are long and heavy (an almost out of control panting and heaving carrying over from ongoing activities, work, encounters and over the top indulgences). An observation and recognition and awareness for the body, feelings, mind and life-actions (or phenomena) aid in recognizing life without self-involvement.

Present awareness for the body—Separated from worldly distractions and pursuits, focused, alert and mindful, with the breath as the centering contact point, revealed is a charged biology. Follow as meditation brings familiarity for the body. For all its remarkable physiology, the body weakens and isn't to be identified as self, but through an underlying insight all moments and experiences are short-lived and impermanent. The four general postures of walking, standing, sitting as well as lying down are conscientiously noted. A Middle Way appreciation, life is revealed as so many connected conditions arising rather than self-obsessed. Acknowledge the 'impermanence, fading and cessation' related to the body.

Present awareness for feelings—Separated from worldly distractions and pursuits, focused, alert and mindful, feelings arise and are noted with each and every moment as either pleasant, painful or neutral experiences. Meditation is followed as insight rather than attaching to pleasant feelings, rejecting painful episodes, or ignoring neutral moments. Attentive without indulging or judging the feeling, through an underlying insight all moments and experiences are regarded as short-lived and impermanent. A Middle Way appreciation, life is revealed as so many connected conditions arising rather than self-obsessed. Acknowledge the 'impermanence, fading and cessation' related to feelings.

Present awareness for the mind and mental states—Separated from worldly distractions and pursuits, focused, alert and mindful, judgments, bias, attachments as well as indifference, realize how self-related greed, hatred and confusion absorb the mind and associated conflicted thoughts arise. Relate to the passing nature of thoughts. Through an underlying insight all moments and experiences are short-lived and impermanent. A Middle Way appreciation, life is revealed as so many connected conditions arising rather than self-obsessed. Acknowledge the 'impermanence, fading and cessation' related to the mind.

Present awareness for life-actions or phenomena—Separated from worldly distractions and pursuits, focused, alert and mindful, follow how life flows as actions and experiences arise, connect and go on to fade. Reflecting the many

actions in the 'one,' the true nature of life is action based and not self-related. The Conditions Arising cycle is underscored by purposeful action, leading to grave or less suffering experiences and consequences. Through an underlying insight all moments and experiences are short-lived and impermanent. A Middle Way appreciation, life is revealed as so many connected conditions arising rather than self-obsessed. Acknowledge the 'impermanence, fading and cessation' related to life-actions.

Begin to feel the subtle shift away from self-exhausting habits to a Middle Way calm awareness. Without demands or deadlines, meditation is a restful relief and clarification. Acknowledge the ease, calm and well-being. Relax and release the buildup of stifling energies.

Following the breath, the compulsive and self-driven, all-too-critical personality stops. Calmly follow each passing breath with an intuitive awareness. Without bearing down, acknowledge detachment. Self-association for the body gradually weakens. Follow the Middle Way which that isn't impulsive or aggressive. Without reacting, one is presently aware and reflective rather than projecting a self-association. Sense how self-burdened ways free up and disperse.

Note the shift away from self-perception to an intuitive calm awareness. A mindful recognition, you are open, at ease, alert and patient. Feel as the mind settles and self-identification for the body, feelings, mind and life-actions fall away. Follow how awareness of the breath deepens as an intuition for life. Meditation is discerning and insightful rather than self-inclined.

The benefit, healing, 'rapture' as joy and transformation realized through meditation is established by the simple act of sitting and having awareness for the breath and body, feelings, mind and life-actions. A slowing down and break with worldly distractions, passions and pursuits, life and reality are known without self-defining attachment—not taken as a personality view, not craved after as mine, nor is there attachment to self-conceit.

(Fulfillment of the Seven Enlightenment Factors)

29. *“And how, bhikkhus, do the four foundations of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven enlightenment factors?”*

30. *“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world—on that occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in him. On whatever occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in a bhikkhu—on that occasion the mindfulness enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfillment in him.*

31. *“Abiding thus mindful, he investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it. On whatever occasion, abiding thus mindful, a bhikkhu investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it—on that occasion the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

32. *“In one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it, tireless energy is aroused. On whatever occasion tireless energy is aroused in a bhikkhu who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it—on that occasion the energy enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

33. *“In one who has aroused energy, unworldly rapture arises. On whatever occasion unworldly rapture arises in a bhikkhu who has aroused energy—on that occasion the rapture enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

34. *“In one who is rapturous, the body and the mind become tranquil. On whatever occasion the body and the mind become tranquil in a bhikkhu who is rapturous—on that occasion the tranquility enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

35. *“In one whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. On whatever occasion the mind becomes concentrated in a bhikkhu whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure—on that occasion the*

concentration enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.

36. *“He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. On whatever occasion a bhikkhu closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated—on that occasion the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

37. *“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world ... (repeat as at §§30–36) ... the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

38. *“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world ... (repeat as at §§30–36) ... the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

39. *“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-object as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world ... (repeat as at §§30–36)...the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.*

40. *“Bhikkhus, that is how the four foundations of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven enlightenment factors.*

Established in a regular meditation and insightful practice, awareness of the breath meditation for the body, feelings, mind and life-actions deepens, expands and matures to encompass a revealing wisdom intuition—the Seven Enlightenment Aids (Awareness, Investigation, Energy, Rapture, Tranquility, Concentration and Equanimity). The Enlightenment Aids have a dual function of ‘actively’ directing as well as ‘settling’ the mind to a penetrated discernment. With the initial Awareness Aid as foundation, Investigation, Energy and Rapture are a directed focus while Tranquility, Concentration and Equanimity assist as a refined-recognition.

Unifying as a concentrated realization of the Four Noble Truths (self suffering; craving after self as the catalyst to continued suffering; craving cut off, suffering ceases; and the Middle Way Path followed to transformation and liberation), the Enlightenment Aids are an active discernment, focus and experience through seclusion, dispassion, release and cessation. Not an intellectual endeavor but a firsthand penetrated freedom from self-fabricated and promoted actions, the Aids' recognition crystallize as the Unshakeable Deliverance of Mind. Like a chick breaking out through its shell it takes repeated diligence and effort to be free of all self-obsessed attachments. Meditation then is a personal insight for how life is lived and played out as a self actor.

Focused through meditative seclusion, dispassion and the cessation from self-directed attachments, the Awareness Aid connects with the Middle Way Wise Understanding of the Noble Truths and the Conditions Arising actions engaging life. Present awareness focuses as a one-pointed discernment without self-definition, judgment or bias. Settled in thoughts, speech and actions, the Middle Way calm presence and intuition is followed as well as having blameless and flawless conduct-virtue.

Abiding in seclusion from worldly pursuits and distractions, acknowledge the detachment from sensory experiences and compelling mental states. Recognize the ebb and flow as actions arise, peak, and fade without an individual nature, but rather the many actions joining to give the illusion of the 'one' or self.

Body—The body is regarded for its many external sources and internal interactions. A misplaced self-identification, you have willed yourself to be the person you are. Wisely-reflecting, the body exists to the extent necessary for awareness and knowledge. You are detached and don't cling to physical identification. The body is experienced as a short-lived material flux, supporting a stream of connected conscious experiences.

Feelings—Follow how pleasant feelings are held on to, the recoil from painful episodes, and how neutral moments ignored. Recognized is the contacted causes and effects of sensory stimulation making for feelings (eyes/forms/sight, nose/smell/scents, tongue/taste/flower, ears/sound/reverberation, skin/touch/tactile and mind/thoughts/impressions).

Mind—Habit impulses flash and echo. The subconscious exposed, note the pressure and burden as a mistaken self-identification forms around mental experiences. Craving as a subconsciously willed monologue drives the self actor. Self-centered thoughts, speech and actions go on to play out.

Life-Actions—Reflecting the many actions in the ‘one,’ the true nature of life is action based and not self-related. A threefold misperception blurs reality (the drive for desire, the drive for existence, driven by misunderstanding life as self). As a personal intuition, acknowledge how associated conditions arise, play out and disperse.

Previously, the mind flitted about as a Monkey Mind distraction (desire/craving, hatred/aversion, laziness/fatigue, restlessness/worry, and doubt/skepticism) giving way to compromising habits. Now your awareness recognition distinguishes detrimental ‘dark’ qualities and beneficial ‘bright’ qualities of mind. Wisely-reflecting, subconscious dormant self-impinging states are recognized before becoming active and leading to transgressing actions.

Follow as flashing thought impressions quickly disperse and fade before escalating to a craved after self-outlet. Below the level of subconscious dormant, active and transgressing habit intentions, the Awareness Aid recognition is clear, perceptive and discerning.

Focused through meditative seclusion, dispassion and the cessation from self-directed attachments, through the Investigation Aid mental states are not only examined and reflected on, but the misunderstanding as self-reference and not properly knowing life clears.

The Four Noble Truths clarify life:

The Five Groups of Self-Attached Identification (body, feelings, perception, mental reactions and conscious attention) are a suffering. **The recognition is a Signless Deliverance.** Acknowledge the shift from self-bewilderment to a non-self Signless insight without self-identification that is the First Noble Truth realization.

Played out through the Conditions Arising cycle, craving as delight and pleasure (as desire, for self-identity and to escape are a self-seduction). **The recognition is a Desireless Deliverance.** Allowing for habitual craving to disperse, the Desireless Deliverance is experienced.

Craving cutoff and ceasing, suffering ends and liberation is known (Nirvana, the Unconditioned Realm). **The recognition is an Emptiness Deliverance.** A non-self clarification, craving’s release is fathomed and penetrated. Feel the actual relaxing as relinquishment of physical tension as well as the settling of underlying motives and the break with craving.

The Middle Way Path followed to fulfillment, carving after stopped, the Conditions Arising causes and effects cycle is halted. **The recognition is the Unshakeable Deliverance of Mind.** As liberation from self-promotion, the Noble Truths clarifying insights dislodges self-deluded misunderstanding. Underlying subconscious motives wane, craving stops and self-manifestation is halted. Feel the relief and release from no longer identifying or delighting with the body, feelings, mind and life-actions as self-defined.

Focused through meditative seclusion, dispassion and the cessation of self-directed attachments, the applied Energy Aid is a proper Wise Effort (to stop detrimental mental states; prevent future manifestation of detrimental mental states; to develop beneficial mental states; and to continue beneficial mental states). Habits no longer replenished and craving's compelling urgency falling away, experience self-fabrication's cessation as a relief and release.

Focused through meditative seclusion, dispassion and the cessation from self-directed attachments, the Rapture Aid reflects how joy and happiness are a true part and outcome of meditation and the Middle Way Path. There is relief and joy in understanding life, going from carelessness and craving after to a mature and joyful self-released recognition. Acknowledge the relief and happiness from self-related worldly distractions and pursuits. Note how the mind is at ease, composed, peaceful and relieved. Self-burdened relinquishment is a joyful experience.

Focused through meditative seclusion, dispassion and the cessation from self-directed attachments, the Tranquility Aid arises as fulfillment of the Middle Way Path and Noble Truth Wisdom-Liberating breakthrough. Habits transformed, craving after no longer arises. Acknowledge the emptiness, freedom and release from the self actor ordeal.

Focused through meditative seclusion, dispassion and the cessation from self-directed attachments, the Concentration Aid discerns as a one-pointed recognition the Four Noble Truths wisdom penetration. The essential clarification is realized and dropped is the unessential self-deluded craved after pursuit. Self-identification defused, feel the shift in the breath's quality and attention to a calmed, refined revealing concentration. Habits exorcised and misunderstanding now clarified, acknowledge how craving's urgency is broken and self-obsession has fallen away. Follow the undisturbed and restful moment as a Noble Truth discernment and liberating experience.

Focused through meditative seclusion, dispassion and the cessation from self-directed attachments, the Equanimity Aid abides in the fulfillment and liberation

from self-identified attachments and misunderstanding. The world's general unrest reflects how people are overwhelmed by self-delusion and associated habits. Equanimity is the peaceful relieved abiding from all self-fabrication. With self-identification dropped, note the well-being and fulfillment that is craving's cessation. Unprovoked by common challenges, adversities or distractions, Equanimity is the outcome of the Noble Truths liberating revelation and suffering's end. The Conditions Arising causes and effects cycle is penetrated rather than a self-involved entanglement. The self-blinders have been pulled away to distinguish the Unconditioned. The threefold misunderstanding is eradicated (the drive for desire and existence, driven by mistaking life as self). The Unshakeable Deliverance of Mind realized, self-suffering ends.

(Fulfillment of True Knowledge and Deliverance)

41. *“And how, bhikkhus, do the seven enlightenment factors, developed and cultivated, fulfill true knowledge and deliverance?”*

42. *“Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu develops the mindfulness enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment. He develops the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor...the energy enlightenment factor...the rapture enlightenment factor...the tranquility enlightenment factor...the concentration enlightenment factor...the equanimity enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.*

43. *“Bhikkhus, that is how the seven enlightenment factors, developed and cultivated, fulfill true knowledge and deliverance.”*

Bringing to an end all self-related suffering, Awareness of the breath meditation fulfills the Four Foundations of Awareness for the body, feelings, mind and life-actions as well as the Seven Enlightenment Aids realization of the Four Noble Truths Wisdom-Liberating Deliverance.

Peaceful and sublime, with worldly distractions and pursuits dropped as well as dispassion for sensory activity, self-identification cooled, craving quenched, and associated conceit extinguished, one resides in fulfilled and released equanimity.

As an Accomplished One, the true course of awareness of the breath meditation is brought to fruition. Liberating wisdom fulfilled, the Unshakeable Deliverance of Mind penetrates the Unconditioned Realm. A fire gone out, a thirst quenched, a cooling down, without self-definition and self-fabrication, Nirvana as liberating cessation is known in this very life.