

MN 118

Ānāpānasati Sutta

“Discourse on the Mindfulness of In and Out Breathing”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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I have personally heard this.

At one time the Blessed One was living at the Pubba Monastery in the palace donated by Migāra’s mother, Visakhā, where the Blessed One was surrounded by His group of highly esteemed and learned Senior Bhikkhus, such as the Venerables Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna, Mahākassapa, Mahākaccāyana, Mahākoṭṭhita, Mahākappina, Mahācunda, Anuruddha, Revata, Ānanda and other learned Senior Disciples.

It was during that time, that these Senior Bhikkhus were advising and instructing the junior monks, where a single Senior Bhikkhu would be advising ten Junior Bhikkhus, while another twenty, and another thirty, while still another forty Junior Bhikkhus.

And in being instructed and guided in this way, soon the junior Bhikkhus came to attain Higher states of mind, never before experienced.

It was then, on a Full Moon night of the Pavāraṇā ceremony, during the Uposatha, as the Blessed One was sitting outside, under the moonlight surrounded by the Sangha of Bhikkhus, sitting quietly around their Teacher in silent contentedness.

And the Blessed One, after sweeping with His mind over the minds of the silent Sangha of Bhikkhus, addressed His Disciples by saying:

“Bhikkhus, I’m quite satisfied with this mode of progress. As I survey the Sangha, my mind is content with this progress being made. Therefore, Bhikkhus you must arouse much effort to attain what has not yet been attained, to realize what is yet to be realized, making the most of this time, for I will be leaving Sāvatthi on the Komudī Full Moon Day of the fourth month.

And the Bhikkhus from around that region, in hearing about the Blessed One’s upcoming departure from Sāvatthi, quickly made their way to come and see the Blessed One before He left.

Now, the Senior Bhikkhus continued to instruct and guide the other Bhikkhus with even more fervency, whereby a single Senior Bhikkhu was advising ten Junior Bhikkhus, while another twenty, and another thirty, while still another forty other Bhikkhus. And while being instructed and guided by the Senior Bhikkhus in this way, soon the other Bhikkhus came to attain Higher states of mind, never before experienced.

And on the night of the Komudī Full Moon Day, during the fourth month's Uposatha, the Blessed One was sitting outside, under the full moon surrounded by the Sangha of Bhikkhus, sitting quietly around their Teacher in silent contentedness.

And the Blessed One, having scanned with His mind, the minds of the silent Sangha of Bhikkhus, addressed His Disciples by saying:

“Bhikkhus, this gathering of Bhikkhus is without any useless talk, as no one here engages in chatter. This gathering is the pure essence of the True Sangha! Such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus. Such is this gathering!

It is such a gathering that is Worthy of Offerings and Hospitality; the Ones to be revered with joined palms at the heart, the Incomparable Field of Merit for the Entire World. Such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus. Such is this gathering!

Even if only a little is offered to such a gathering of Bhikkhus, it becomes enormous in its outcome, as it bears much fruit, let alone when much more is offered. Such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus. Such is this gathering!

A gathering like this is so rare to be seen in the world! Such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus. Such is this gathering!

It is indeed worth traveling a very long distance on an arduous journey, just to see a gathering like this. Such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus. Such is this gathering!

“For in this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who are Arahants with all their mental contaminants destroyed, who have truly lived the Holy Life, done what should be done, and put down the burden by reaching the Ultimate Goal, having destroyed the fetters responsible for further becoming, as they are now completely released through Final Awakening.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus who, having already destroyed the five lower fetters to the sensual world, are to reappear spontaneously in the Pure Realms of Anāgāmins, who will attain Full Release in those realms, without ever having to be reborn into any state of becoming.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus who, having already destroyed the three fetters, are now greatly weakened in their lust, hatred, and delusion, and are Once-Returners, at the most to be reborn into this world once more, when they will finally put an end to suffering by attaining Full Release.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus who, having destroyed the three fetters, are now Stream-Enterers, never again to fall into rebirth within the lower realms, firmly set on their sure Path to Final Release.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Four Right Efforts.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of the Four Bases of Psychic Powers.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of the Five Spiritual Faculties.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of the Five Spiritual Powers.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of the Seven Factors of Awakening.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Loving Kindness.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Compassion.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Altruistic Joy.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Equanimity.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Seeing the Repulsive.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Seeing impermanence.

There are indeed such Bhikkhus here, in this gathering!

In this gathering there are Bhikkhus, who live while being committed to the practice of Mindfulness on the In and Out Breathing.

Mindfulness of the In and Out Breathing:

Bhikkhus, when mindfulness on the in and out breathing is continuously developed and cultivated intently, it brings with it many benefits and great results. When mindfulness on the in and out breathing is continuously developed and cultivated intently, it also addresses and fulfills the objectives of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. When the Four Establishments of Mindfulness are continuously developed and cultivated intently, they fulfill the objectives of the Seven Factors of Awakening. And when the Seven Factors of Awakening are continuously developed and cultivated intently, they fulfill the objectives of True Knowledge and Release.

And how, Bhikkhus, is mindfulness on the in and out breathing continuously developed and cultivated intently?

Here, the Bhikkhu, by going to the forest, or sitting at the root of a tree, or in an empty kuti, folds his legs together, keeping his body straight, and brings his awareness inwards and rests it upon the breath flowing in and out. Thus, he mindfully breathes in and mindfully breathes out.

1. While breathing in long, he knows “I breathe in long.” Breathing out long, he knows, “I breathe out long.”
2. Breathing in short, he knows, “I breathe in short.” Breathing out short, he knows, “I breathe out short.”
3. By training himself with the breath further, he pays attention to the whole breath, from beginning to end, as he experiences it flowing inward. Training further, he pays attention to the whole breath, from beginning to end, as he experiences it flowing outward.
4. Further, while breathing in, he settles down the breath’s movement within the physical body. While breathing out too, he settles down the breath’s movement within the physical body.
5. Training himself further, while breathing in, he is sensitive to experiencing joy. And, while breathing out too, he remains sensitive to experiencing joy.
6. Training himself further, while breathing in, he is sensitive to experiencing gladness. And, while breathing out too, he remains sensitive to experiencing gladness.
7. Training himself further, while breathing in, he becomes sensitive to his thoughts and feelings. And while breathing out too, he becomes sensitive to his thoughts and feelings.
8. Training himself further, while breathing in, he quiets down his thoughts and feelings, bringing them to complete stillness. And while breathing out too, he continues quieting down his thoughts and feelings, bringing them to complete stillness.
9. Training himself further, while breathing in, he is sensitive to experiencing the mind. And while breathing out too, he remains sensitive to experiencing the mind.

10. Training himself further, while breathing in, he gladdens the mind. And while breathing out too, he continues gladdening the mind.

11. Training himself further, he breathes in while collecting the mind in Samādhi by steadying it. And while breathing out too, he continues collecting the mind in Samādhi and steadies it.

12. Training himself further, he breathes in while freeing the mind. And while breathing out too, he continues freeing the mind.

13. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing and watching impermanence. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing and watching impermanence.

14. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing and seeing detachment. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing and seeing detachment.

15. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing cessation. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing cessation.

16. Training himself further, he breathes in while experiencing relinquishment as he keeps giving up. And while breathing out too, he continues experiencing relinquishment, as he keeps giving up.

Therefore, Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of the in and out breathing is continuously developed and cultivated intently in this manner, then it truly brings with it many benefits and great results.

Fulfilling the Four Establishments of Mindfulness:

And how, Bhikkhus, does the mindfulness of the in and out breathing address and fulfill the objectives of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, when it is continuously developed and cultivated intently?

Here, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu is applying the steps whereby he knows if he is breathing short or long, whether breathing in or out; or when he knows the body of the breath from beginning to end, whether he is breathing in or out; or when he is settling down the breath's movement within the physical body, whether he is breathing in or out, then being thus keenly aware of his breathing, he carefully stays with the body, striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world. For I say, Bhikkhus, that it is by staying closely with the body through the breath, that the mindfulness of in and out breathing becomes an aspect of establishing oneself within the body. It is for this reason that the Bhikkhu carefully stays with the body, striving ardently, as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world.

Furthermore, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu is applying the steps whereby he is sensitive to experiencing joy, whether he breathes in or out; or when he is sensitive to experiencing gladness, whether he breathes in or out; or when he becomes sensitive to his thoughts and feelings, whether he breathes in or out; or when he quiets down his thoughts and feelings, bringing them to complete stillness, whether he breathes in or out, then being thus keenly aware of his breathing, he carefully stays with his feelings, striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world.

I say this, Bhikkhus, because there is a strong connection between feelings and the in and out breathing, since it is when they are carefully attended to by staying closely with the feelings experienced through the breath, that the mindfulness of in and out breathing becomes an aspect of establishing oneself within feelings. It is for this reason that the Bhikkhu carefully stays with his feelings, striving ardently, as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world.

Furthermore, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu is applying the steps whereby he is sensitive to experiencing the mind, whether he is breathing in or out; or when he gladdens the mind, whether he is breathing in or out; or while collecting the mind in Samādhi by steadying it, whether he is breathing in or out; or while freeing the mind, whether he is breathing in or out, then being thus keenly aware of his breathing, he carefully stays with the mind, striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world.

However, Bhikkhus, I say that proper development of the mind cannot take place for the Bhikkhu who is without focus nor attentiveness towards his in and out breathing. But it is by paying close attention to the quality of the mind through the breath, that the mindfulness of in and out breathing becomes an aspect of establishing oneself within the mind. It is for this reason that the Bhikkhu carefully stays with the mind, striving ardently, as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world.

Furthermore, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu is applying the steps while experiencing and watching impermanence, whether he is breathing in or out; or while experiencing and seeing detachment, whether he is breathing in or out; or while experiencing cessation, whether he is breathing in or out; or while experiencing relinquishment as he keeps giving up, whether he is breathing in or out, then being thus keenly aware of his breathing, he carefully stays with the various mind-objects and their relationships, striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world.

Therefore, Bhikkhus, he wisely abandons thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world, as he restfully stays close and watches over with an equanimous state of mind. And it is by paying close attention to the various mind objects and their relationships through the breath, that the mindfulness of in and out breathing becomes an aspect of establishing oneself through wisely understanding the various mind objects and their relationships. It is for this reason that the Bhikkhu carefully stays with the mind, striving ardently, as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world.

This, Bhikkhus, is how mindfulness of the in and out breathing addresses and fulfills the objectives of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, when it is continuously developed and cultivated intently.

Fulfilling the Seven Factors of Awakening:

And how, Bhikkhus, do the Four Establishments of Mindfulness address and fulfill the objectives of the Seven Factors of Awakening, when they are continuously developed and cultivated intently?

(Kāyānupassana)

Here, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu carefully stays with the body, being keenly aware, while striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world, then continuous mindfulness is easily sustained and established in him. Because of this, whenever the Bhikkhu is established in continuous mindfulness, the **Awakening Factor of Mindfulness** becomes activated in him, as he strives to sustain and develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While living mindfully in this manner, the Bhikkhu begins to thoroughly investigate as he wisely examines whatever state he is experiencing, with discernment. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Investigation of States** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While wisely investigating his mental states in this manner, the Bhikkhu experiences a surge of tireless energy swelling up within him. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Persevering Energy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

When experiencing such energy within him, suddenly there arises joy in the heart. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Joy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the heart thus full of joy, soon his body and mind experience tranquility. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Tranquility** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the body appeased and tranquil thus, he experiences gladness, and the mind becomes collected into Samādhi. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Collectedness of Mind** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

The Bhikkhu then, equanimously observes with wisdom the mind that is collected in Samādhi. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Equanimity** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

(Vedanānupassana)

Similarly, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu carefully stays with his feelings, being keenly aware, while striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world, then continuous mindfulness is easily sustained and established in him. Because of this, whenever the Bhikkhu is established in continuous mindfulness, the **Awakening Factor of Mindfulness** becomes activated in him, as he strives to sustain and develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While living mindfully in this manner, the Bhikkhu begins to thoroughly investigate as he wisely examines whatever state he is experiencing, with discernment. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Investigation of States** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While wisely investigating his mental states in this manner, the Bhikkhu experiences a surge of tireless energy swelling up within him. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Persevering Energy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

When experiencing such energy within him, suddenly there arises joy in the heart. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Joy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the heart thus full of joy, soon his body and mind experience tranquility. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Tranquility** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the body appeased and tranquil thus, he experiences gladness, and the mind becomes collected into Samādhi. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Collectedness of Mind** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

The Bhikkhu then, equanimously observes with wisdom the mind that is collected in Samādhi. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Equanimity** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

(Cittānupassana)

Similarly, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu carefully stays with the mind, being keenly aware, while striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world, then continuous mindfulness is easily sustained and established in him. Because of this, whenever the Bhikkhu is established in continuous mindfulness, the **Awakening Factor of Mindfulness** becomes activated in him, as he strives to sustain and develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While living mindfully in this manner, the Bhikkhu begins to thoroughly investigate as he wisely examines whatever state he is experiencing, with discernment. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Investigation of States** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While wisely investigating his mental states in this manner, the Bhikkhu experiences a surge of tireless energy swelling up within him. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Persevering Energy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

When experiencing such energy within him, suddenly there arises joy in the heart. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Joy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the heart thus full of joy, soon his body and mind experience tranquility. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Tranquility** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the body appeased and tranquil thus, he experiences gladness, and the mind becomes collected into Samādhi. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Collectedness of Mind** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

The Bhikkhu then, equanimously observes with wisdom the mind that is collected in Samādhi. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Equanimity** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

(Dhammānupassana)

Similarly, Bhikkhus, whenever the Bhikkhu carefully observes the various mind objects and their relationships in the mind, being keenly aware, while striving ardently as he shuns any thoughts of desiring or aversion towards the world, then continuous mindfulness is easily sustained and established in him. Because of this, whenever the Bhikkhu is established in continuous mindfulness, the **Awakening Factor of Mindfulness** becomes activated in him, as he strives to sustain and develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While living mindfully in this manner, the Bhikkhu begins to thoroughly investigate as he wisely examines whatever state he is experiencing, with discernment. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Investigation of States** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

While wisely investigating his mental states in this manner, the Bhikkhu experiences a surge of tireless energy swelling up within him. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Persevering Energy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

When experiencing such energy within him, suddenly there arises joy in the heart. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Joy** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the heart thus full of joy, soon his body and mind experience tranquility. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Tranquility** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

With the body appeased and tranquil thus, he experiences gladness, and the mind becomes collected into Samādhi. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Collectedness of Mind** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

The Bhikkhu then, equanimously observes with wisdom the mind that is collected in Samādhī. Because of this, the **Awakening Factor of Equanimity** becomes activated in him, as he strives to develop it further, in order to reach its perfection.

This, Bhikkhus, is how the Four Establishments of Mindfulness address and fulfill the objectives of the Seven Factors of Awakening, when they are continuously developed and cultivated intently.

Fulfilling True Knowledge and Release:

And how, Bhikkhus, do the Seven Factors of Awakening address and fulfill the objective of True Knowledge and of Release?

Here, Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhu develops the Awakening Factor of Mindfulness that is maintained by seclusion, detachment, cessation, and comes to its completion in relinquishing and giving up.

Similarly, the Bhikkhu develops the Awakening Factor of Investigation of States that is maintained by seclusion, detachment, cessation, and comes to its completion in relinquishing and giving up.

Similarly, the Bhikkhu develops the Awakening Factor of Persevering Energy that is maintained by seclusion, detachment, cessation, and comes to its completion in relinquishing and giving up.

Similarly, the Bhikkhu develops the Awakening Factor of Joy that is maintained by seclusion, detachment, cessation, and comes to its completion in relinquishing and giving up.

Similarly, the Bhikkhu develops the Awakening Factor of Tranquility that is maintained by seclusion, detachment, cessation, and comes to its completion in relinquishing and giving up.

Similarly, the Bhikkhu develops the Awakening Factor of Collectedness of Mind that is maintained by seclusion, detachment, cessation, and comes to its completion in relinquishing and giving up.

Similarly, the Bhikkhu develops the Awakening Factor of Equanimity that is maintained by seclusion, detachment, cessation, and comes to its completion in relinquishing and giving up.

This, Bhikkhus, is how the Seven Factors of Awakening address and fulfill the objectives of True Knowledge and of Release.

This is what the Blessed One explained. And the Bhikkhus were all deeply satisfied and delighted in the words spoken thus by the Blessed One.

Sādhū

Sādhū

Sādhū