# SN 54.13 — SN 54:13 To Ānanda (on Mindfulness of Breathing) | Ānanda Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN54_13.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017

License notice: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Attribution: From Handful of Leaves, Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu; https://www.dhammatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/SuttaPitaka_251113.epub. Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

## Text

To Ānanda (on Mindfulness of Breathing)

Ānanda Sutta (SN 54:13)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then Ven. Ānanda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he asked the Blessed One, “Is there one quality that, when developed & pursued, brings four qualities to completion? And four qualities that, when developed & pursued, bring seven qualities to completion? And seven qualities that, when developed & pursued, bring two qualities to completion?”

“Yes, Ānanda, there is one quality that, when developed & pursued, brings four qualities to completion; and four qualities that, when developed & pursued, bring seven qualities to completion; and seven qualities that, when developed & pursued, bring two qualities to completion. And what is the one quality that, when developed & pursued, brings four qualities to completion? What are the four qualities that, when developed & pursued, bring seven qualities to completion? What are the seven qualities that, when developed & pursued, bring two qualities to completion?

“Concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, brings the four establishings of mindfulness to completion. The four establishings of mindfulness, when developed & pursued, bring the seven factors for awakening to completion. The seven factors for awakening, when developed & pursued, bring clear knowing & release to completion.

“Now how does a monk develop & pursue concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing so that it brings the four establishings of mindfulness to completion?

“There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and establishing mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

“[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in long’; or breathing out long, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out long.’ [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing in short’; or breathing out short, he discerns, ‘I am breathing out short.’ [3] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.’ [4] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.’

“[5] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.’ [6] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.’ [7] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.’ [8] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.’

“[9] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.’ [10] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in gladdening the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out gladdening the mind.’ [11] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in steadying the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out steadying the mind. [12] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in releasing the mind.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out releasing the mind.’

“[13] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.’ [14] He trains himself, ‘I will breathe in focusing on dispassion [or: fading].’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.’ [15]

He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'

"[1] On whatever occasion a monk breathing in long discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, discerns, 'I am breathing out long'; or breathing in short, discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, discerns, 'I am breathing out short'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&... out sensitive to the entire body'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out calming bodily fabrication': On that occasion the monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, Ānanda, that this—the in-&-out breath—is classed as a body among bodies, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"[2] On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to rapture'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to pleasure'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to mental fabrication'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out calming mental fabrication': On that occasion the monk remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, Ānanda, that this—careful attention to in-&-out breaths—is classed as a feeling among feelings,1 which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"[3] On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out sensitive to the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out gladdening the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out steadying the mind'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out releasing the mind': On that occasion the monk remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I don't say that there is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing in one of lapsed mindfulness and no alertness, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"[4] On whatever occasion a monk trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on inconstancy'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on dispassion'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on cessation'; trains himself, 'I will breathe in...&...out focusing on relinquishing': On that occasion the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He who sees with discernment the abandoning of greed & distress is one who watches carefully with equanimity, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"This is how concentration through mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, brings the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination.

“And how are the four establishings of mindfulness developed & pursued so that the seven factors for awakening come to completion?

“[1] On whatever occasion the monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world, on that occasion his mindfulness is steady & without lapse. When his mindfulness is steady & without lapse, then mindfulness as a factor for awakening is aroused in him. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

“[2] Remaining mindful in this way, he examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment. When he remains mindful in this way, examining, analyzing, & coming to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening is aroused in him. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

“[3] In one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, persistence is aroused unflaggingly. When persistence is aroused unflaggingly in one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then persistence as a factor for awakening is aroused in him. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

“[4] In one whose persistence is aroused, a rapture not of the flesh arises. When a rapture not of the flesh arises in one whose persistence is aroused, then rapture as a factor for awakening is aroused in him. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

“[5] For one enraptured at heart, the body grows calm and the mind grows calm. When the body & mind of a monk enraptured at heart grow calm, then calm as a factor for awakening is aroused in him. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

“[6] For one who is at ease—his body calmed—the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind of one who is at ease—his body calmed—becomes concentrated, then concentration as a factor for awakening is aroused in him. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

“[7] He carefully watches the mind thus concentrated with equanimity. When he carefully watches the mind thus concentrated with equanimity, equanimity as a factor for awakening is aroused in him. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

[Similarly with the other three establishings of mindfulness: in feelings, mind, & mental qualities.]

“This is how the four establishings of mindfulness, when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of the seven factors for awakening.

“And how are the seven factors for awakening developed & pursued so as to lead to the culmination of clear knowing & release? There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion… dispassion… cessation, resulting in relinquishment. He develops analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening… persistence as a factor for awakening… rapture as a factor for awakening… calm as a factor for awakening… concentration as a factor for awakening… equanimity as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion… dispassion… cessation, resulting in relinquishment.

“This is how the seven factors for awakening, when developed & pursued, lead to the culmination of clear knowing & release.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Ānanda delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Note

1. As this shows, a meditator focusing on feelings in themselves as a frame of reference should not abandon the breath as the basis for his/her concentration.