

Rebecca Dixon 10-6-2010



Rebecca Dixon is a long-time student and practitioner who has spent many years sharing the dharma and practice opportunities with hospice patients, incarcerated women, and the chemically dependant. A graduate of the Community Dharma Leader program, she has taught meditation in a variety of settings, helped found the East Bay Meditation Center, co-teaches a dharma study group, and leads a **The Satipatthana Sutta**

Rebecca distributed and discussed these notes on the Satipatthana Sutta (<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.010.soma.html>):

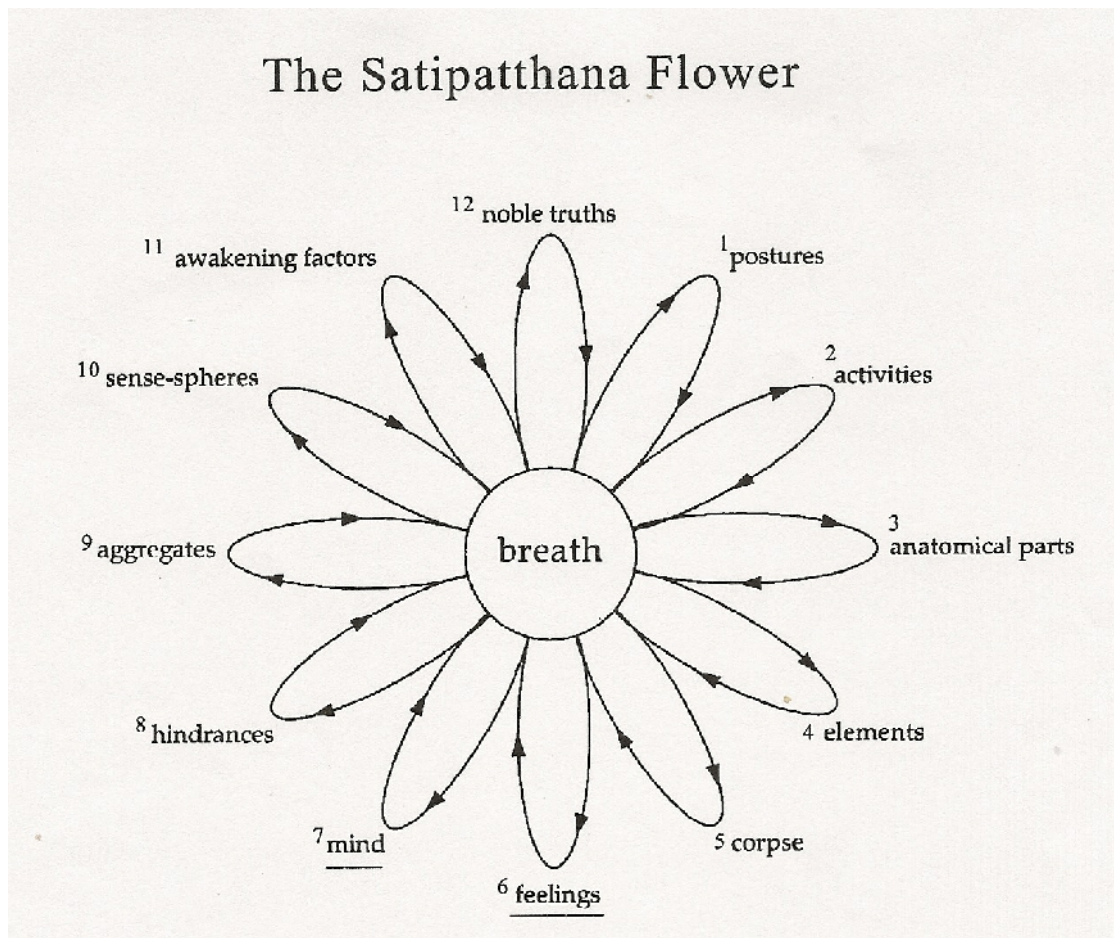


Fig.15.2 Dynamic interrelation of the *satipaithana* contemplations

From awareness of the main object of meditation, the dynamics of contemplation can at any given moment lead to any of the other *satipaithiina* exercises, and then revert to the main object. That is, from being aware of the process of breathing, for example, awareness might turn to any other occurrence in the realm of body, feelings, mind, or *dhammas* which has become prominent, and then revert to the breath. Otherwise, in the event that the newly-arisen object of meditation should require sustained attention and deeper investigation, it can become the new centre of the flower, with the former object turned into one of the petals.

- from Analayo, pg. 270

Practiced in this way, satipatthana becomes an integrated four-faceted survey of one's present experience, taking into account its material, affective, and mental aspects from the perspective of the Dhamma.

- pg. 271

TOOLS AND INSTRUCTIONS In the Satipatthana Sutta

This practice uses states of mind to free ourselves from suffering. Some of these mindstates seem like thinking, but they're not the kind of "thought" like planning, daydreaming, etc. Rather, the practice uses *recognition* and *discernment* to deeply know how suffering works in us, and to uproot its causes. The sutta asks us to "contemplate" 4 objects, or foundations of mindfulness:

The body Feelings Mind Dharma

We are to contemplate each object as a direct experience, with special attention to its impermanence, without thinking of it as "I," "me," or "mine."

To do this, we need to use 4 mental qualities:

- 1) **Diligent** - commitment + effort; can be pleasant, when balanced;
- 2) **Clearly knowing** - non-grasping, discriminative understanding (seed of wisdom);
- 3) **Mindful** - gathers information processed by #2, holds balanced attention; non-interfering;
- 4) **Without desire & discontent** - in the moment: acceptance, choiceless awareness.

We use these 4 qualities to contemplate body, feelings, mind & dharma according to a set of instructions in the refrain that's repeated after each practice given in the sutta. We should contemplate each object:

- 1) **Internally & externally** - as it appears in one's own mind and is observed in others [this is the most likely of *many* interpretations];

- 2) In **its arising, passing away and both** - when diligently-applied to one's self, this powerfully alters mental habits and leads to liberation;
- 3) **With mindfulness, until there's "bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness"** using concepts & discernment only as needed to know what you see; leads to #4;
- 4) **"... then abide independent, not clinging to anything in the world."** This consistent, accepting awareness can last during your meditation, and eventually become a way of life free of self-centered clinging and (thus) suffering.