

Anapanasati Sutta - Dharma Study Session October 4, 2020

Reference Material

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Sutta Reference Material

Majjhima Nikaya 26 (Why do this? Why did Buddha engage in the practice?)

Before my self-awakening, when I was still just an unawakened Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be), being subject myself to birth, aging, illness, death, sorrow, & defilement, I sought (happiness in) what was subject to birth, aging, illness, death, sorrow, & defilement. The thought occurred to me: ‘Why am I, being subject myself to birth...defilement, seeking what is subject to birth... defilement? What if I... were to seek the unborn, unaging, unailing, undying, sorrowless, undefiled, unexcelled security from bondage: Unbinding.’

So at a later time, when I was still young, black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life, I shaved off my hair & beard—though my parents wished otherwise and were grieving with tears on their faces—and I put on the ochre robe and went forth from the home life into homelessness.

Samyutta Nikaya 54:1 (16 steps of Anapanasati Sutta)

Now how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so that it bears great fruit & great benefits?

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 setting 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, and to 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 [literally, 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.'

This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so that it bears great fruit & great benefits.

Majjhima Nijkaya 78 (Not emulating a baby; using skillful practices)

Then Pancakaṅga the carpenter went to Uggāhamāna, a follower of Muṇḍikā the contemplative [or: the shaven contemplative—a Jain?], was staying and, on arrival, greeted him courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was

sitting there, Uggāhamāna said to him, 'I describe an individual endowed with four qualities as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. Which four? There is the case where he does no evil action with his body, speaks no evil speech, resolves on no evil resolve, and maintains himself with no evil means of livelihood. An individual endowed with these four qualities I describe as being consummate in what is skillful... an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.'

Then Pancakaṅga the carpenter neither delighted in Uggāhamāna's words nor did he scorn them. Expressing neither delight nor scorn, he got up from his seat & left, thinking, 'I will learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of the Blessed One.'

Then the carpenter went to where the Blessed One was staying and on arrival, after bowing down to him, sat down to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One the entire conversation he had had with Uggāhamāna.

When this was said, the Blessed One addressed Pancakaṅga, saying, 'In that case, then according to Uggāhamāna's words a stupid baby boy, lying on its back, is consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. For even the thought "body" does not occur to a stupid baby boy lying on its back, so from where would it do any evil action with its body, aside from a little kicking? Even the thought "speech" does not occur to it, so from where would it speak any evil speech, aside from a little crying? Even the thought "resolve" does not occur to it, so from where would it resolve on any evil resolve, aside from a little bad temper? Even the thought "livelihood" does not occur to it, so from where would it maintain itself with any evil means of livelihood, aside from its mother's milk? So according to Uggāhamāna's words a stupid baby boy, lying on its back, is... an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.

'If an individual is endowed with these four qualities, I do not describe him as... an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. Rather, he stands on the same level as a stupid baby boy lying on its back....

'An individual endowed with ten qualities is one who I describe as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. With regard to that point one should know that "These are unskillful habits," I say. With regard to that point, one should know that "That is the cause of unskillful habits" ... "Here unskillful habits cease without trace" ... "This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits," I say. 'With regard to that point, one should know that "These are skillful habits" ... "That is the cause of skillful habits" ... "Here skillful habits cease without trace" ... "This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits," I say.

'With regard to that point, one should know that "These are unskillful resolves" ... "That is the cause of unskillful resolves" ... "Here unskillful resolves cease without trace" ... "This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves" I say.

'With regard to that point, one should know that "These are skillful resolves" ... "That is the cause of skillful resolves" ... "Here skillful resolves cease without trace" ... "This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves," I say.

'Now what are unskillful habits? Unskillful bodily actions, unskillful verbal actions, evil means of livelihood.... What is the cause of unskillful habits?... They are said to be mind-caused.... Which mind?—for the mind has many modes & permutations.... Any mind with

passion, aversion, or delusion: That is the cause of unskillful habits. Now where do unskillful habits cease without trace?... There is the case where a monk abandons wrong bodily conduct & develops right bodily conduct, abandons wrong verbal conduct & develops right verbal conduct, abandons wrong livelihood & maintains his life with right livelihood. This is where unskillful habits cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the nonarising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful habits.

‘And what are skillful habits? Skillful bodily actions, skillful verbal actions, purity of livelihood.... What is the cause of skillful habits?... They are said to be mind-caused.... Which mind?—for the mind has many modes & permutations.... Any mind without passion, without aversion, without delusion: That is the cause of skillful habits. Now where do skillful habits cease without trace?... There is the case where a monk is virtuous but not fashioned of virtue. He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release & discernment-release where his skillful habits cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits? There is the case where a monk generates desire... for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful habits.

‘And what are unskillful resolves? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on violence.... What is the cause of unskillful resolves?... They are said to be perception-caused.... Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations.... Any sensuality-perception, ill will-perception, or violence-perception: That is the cause of unskillful resolves. Now where do unskillful resolves cease without trace?... There is the case where a monk, quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. This is where unskillful resolves cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves? There is the case where a monk generates desire... for the sake of the nonarising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of unskillful resolves.

‘And what are skillful resolves? Being resolved on renunciation [freedom from sensuality], on non-ill will, on non-violence.... What is the cause of skillful resolves?... They are said to be perception-caused.... Which perception?—for perception has many modes & permutations.... Any renunciation-perception, non-ill will-perception, or non-violence-perception: That is the cause of skillful resolves. Now where do skillful resolves cease without

trace?... There is the case where a monk, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. This is where skillful resolves cease without trace. And what sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves? There is the case where a monk generates desire... for the sake of the nonarising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the... development & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. This sort of practice is the practice leading to the cessation of skillful resolves.

‘Now, an individual endowed with which ten qualities is one whom I describe as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments? One endowed with the right view of an adept (an Arahant), the right resolve of an adept, the right speech... the right action... the right livelihood... the right effort... the right mindfulness... the right concentration... the right knowledge... the right release of an adept. An individual endowed with these ten qualities I describe as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.’

That is what the Blessed One said. Glad at heart, Pancakaṅga the carpenter delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Majjhima Nikaya 20 (Eliminating the Hindrances, Working on Obstacles)

When a monk is intent on the heightened mind, there are five themes he should attend to at the appropriate times. Which five?

There is the case where evil, unskillful thoughts—imbued with desire, aversion, or delusion—arise in a monk while he is referring to & attending to a particular theme. He should attend to another theme, apart from that one, connected with what is skillful. When he is attending to this other theme... those evil, unskillful thoughts... are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a skilled carpenter or his apprentice would use a small peg to knock out, drive out, & pull out a large one; in the same way...he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

If evil, unskillful thoughts—imbued with desire, aversion, or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is attending to this other theme, connected with what is skillful, he should scrutinize the drawbacks of those thoughts: ‘Truly, these thoughts of mine are unskillful... blameworthy... these thoughts of mine result in stress.’ As he is scrutinizing their drawbacks... those evil, unskillful thoughts... are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a young woman—or man—fond of adornment, would be horrified, humiliated, & disgusted if the carcass of a snake or a dog or a human being were hung from her neck; in the same way... the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

If evil, unskillful thoughts—imbued with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is scrutinizing the drawbacks of those thoughts, he should pay no mind & pay no

attention to those thoughts. As he is paying no mind & paying no attention to them... those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a man with good eyes, not wanting to see forms that had come into range, would close his eyes or look away; in the same way... the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

If evil, unskillful thoughts—imbued with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is paying no mind & paying no attention to those thoughts, he should attend to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts. As he is attending to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts... those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as the thought would occur to a man walking quickly, ‘Why am I walking quickly? Why don’t I walk slowly?’ So he walks slowly. The thought occurs to him, ‘Why am I walking slowly? Why don’t I stand?’ So he stands. The thought occurs to him, ‘Why am I standing? Why don’t I sit down?’ So he sits down. The thought occurs to him, ‘Why am I sitting? Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. In this way, giving up the grosser posture, he takes up the more refined one. In the same way... the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

If evil, unskillful thoughts—imbued with desire, aversion or delusion—still arise in the monk while he is attending to the relaxing of thought-fabrication with regard to those thoughts, then—with his teeth clenched & his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth—he should beat down, constrain, & crush his mind with his awareness. As—with his teeth clenched & his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth—he is beating down, constraining, & crushing his mind with his awareness... those evil, unskillful thoughts are abandoned & subside. With their abandoning, he steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it. Just as a strong man, seizing a weaker man by the head or the throat or the shoulders, would beat him down, constrain, & crush him; in the same way... the monk steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it.

Now when a monk... attending to another theme... scrutinizing the drawbacks of those thoughts... paying no mind & paying no attention to those thoughts... attending to the relaxing of thought fabrication with regard to those thoughts... beating down, constraining, & crushing his mind with his awareness... steadies his mind right within, settles it, unifies it, & concentrates it, he is then called a monk with mastery over the ways of thought sequences. He thinks whatever thought he wants to, and doesn’t think whatever thought he doesn’t. He has severed craving, thrown off the fetters, and—through the right penetration of conceit—has made an end of suffering & stress.

[Visuddhimmagga VIII extract] – Mindfulness of Breathing (Breath practices – sounds trivial, but it’s the heart of the practice)

187. Here are the five stages: learning, questioning, establishing, absorption, characteristic.

Herein, *learning* is learning the meditation subject. *Questioning* is questioning about the meditation subject. *Establishing* is establishing the meditation subject. *Absorption* [278] is the

absorption of the meditation subject. *Characteristic* is the characteristic of the meditation subject; what is meant is that it is the ascertaining of the meditation subject's individual essence thus: "This meditation subject has such a characteristic."

188. Learning the meditation subject in the five stages in this way, he neither tires himself nor worries the teacher.

So in giving this meditation subject consisting in mindfulness of breathing attention, he can live either with the teacher or elsewhere in an abode of the kind already described, learning the meditation subject in the five stages thus, getting a little expounded at a time and taking a long time over reciting it. He should sever the minor impediments. After finishing the work connected with the meal and getting rid of any dizziness due to the meal, he should seat himself comfortably. Then, making sure he is not confused about even a single word of what he has learned from the teacher, he should cheer his mind by recollecting the special qualities of the Three Jewels.

189. Here are the stages in giving attention to it: (1) counting, (2) connection, (3) touching, (4) fixing, (5) observing, (6) turning away, (7) purification, and (8) looking back on these.

Herein, *counting* is just counting, *connection* is carrying on, *touching* is the place touched [by the breaths], *fixing* is absorption, *observing* is insight, *turning away* is the path, *purification* is fruition, *looking back on these* is reviewing.

190. 1. Herein, this clansman who is a beginner should first give attention to this meditation subject by counting. And when counting, he should not stop short of five or go beyond ten or make any break in the series. By stopping short

of five his thoughts get excited in the cramped space, like a herd of cattle shut in a cramped pen. By going beyond ten his thoughts take the number [rather than the breaths] for their support. By making a break in the series he wonders if the

meditation subject has reached completion or not. So he should do his counting without those faults.

191. When counting, he should at first do it slowly [that is, late] as a grain measurer does. For a grain measurer, having filled his measure, says "One," and empties it, and then refilling it, he goes on saying "'One, one" while removing any rubbish he may have noticed. And the same with "Two, two" and so on. So, taking the in-breath or the out-breath, whichever appears [most plainly], he should begin with "One, one" and count up to "Ten, ten," noting each as it occurs.

192. As he does his counting in this way, the in-breaths and out-breaths become evident to him as they enter in and issue out. Then he can leave off counting slowly (late), like a grain measurer, and he can count quickly [that is, early] as a cowherd does. For a skilled cowherd takes pebbles in his pocket and goes to the cow pen in the morning, whip in hand; sitting on the bar of the gate, prodding the cows in the back, he counts each one as it reaches the gate, saying "One, two," dropping a pebble for each. And the cows of the herd, which have been spending the three watches of the night uncomfortably in the cramped space, come out quickly in parties, jostling each other as they escape. So he counts quickly (early) "Three, four, five" and so up to ten. In this way the in-breaths and out-breaths, which had already become evident to him while he counted them in the former way, now keep moving along quickly.

193. Then, knowing that they keep moving along quickly, not apprehending them either inside or outside [the body], but apprehending them just as they reach the [nostril] door, he can do his counting quickly (early): “One, two, three, four, five; one, two, three, four, five, six ... seven ... eight ... nine ... ten.” For as long as the meditation subject is connected with counting it is with the help of that very counting that the mind becomes unified, just as a boat in a swift current is steadied with the help of a rudder.

194. When he counts quickly, the meditation subject becomes apparent to him as an uninterrupted process. Then, knowing that it is proceeding uninterrupted, he can count quickly (early) in the way just described, not discerning the wind either inside or outside [the body]. For by bringing his consciousness inside along with the incoming breath, it seems as if it were buffeted by the wind inside or filled with fat. By taking his consciousness outside along with the outgoing breath, it gets distracted by the multiplicity of objects outside. However, his development is successful when he fixes his mindfulness on the place touched [by the breaths]. That is why it was said above: “He can count quickly (early) in the way just described, not discerning the wind either inside or outside.”

195. But how long is he to go on counting? Until, without counting, mindfulness remains settled on the in-breaths and out-breaths as its object. For counting is simply a device for setting mindfulness on the in-breaths and outbreaths

as object by cutting off the external dissipation of applied thoughts.

196. 2. Having given attention to it in this way by counting, he should now do so by *connection*. *Connection* is the uninterrupted following of the in-breaths and out-breaths with mindfulness after counting has been given up. And that is not by following after the beginning, the middle and the end.

197. The navel is the beginning of the wind issuing out, the heart is its middle and the nose-tip is its end. The nose-tip is the beginning of the wind entering in, the heart is its middle and the navel is its end. And if he follows after that, his mind is distracted by disquiet and perturbation according as it is said: “When he goes in with mindfulness after the beginning, middle, and end of the inbreath, his mind being distracted internally, both his body and his mind are disquieted and perturbed and shaky. When he goes out with mindfulness after the beginning, middle and end of the out-breath, his mind being distracted externally, both his body and his mind are disquieted and perturbed and shaky”

3–4. So when he gives his attention to it by connection, he should do so not by the beginning, middle and end, but rather by *touching* and by *fixing*.

198. There is no attention to be given to it by touching separate from fixing as there is by counting separate from connection. But when he is counting the breaths in the place touched by each, he is giving attention to them by counting and touching. When he has given up counting and is connecting them by means of mindfulness in that same place and fixing consciousness by means of absorption, then he is said to be giving his attention to them by connection, touching and fixing. And the meaning of this may be understood through the similes of the man who cannot walk and the gatekeeper given in the commentaries, and through the simile of the saw given in the Paṭisambhidā.

199. Here is the simile of the man who cannot walk: Just as a man unable to walk, who is rocking a swing for the amusement of his children and their mother, sits at the foot of the swing post and sees both ends and the middle of the swing plank successively coming and

going, yet does not move from his place in order to see both ends and the middle, so too, when a bhikkhu places himself with mindfulness, as it were, at the foot of the post for anchoring [mindfulness] and rocks the swing of the in-breaths and out-breaths; he sits down with mindfulness on the sign at that same place, and follows with mindfulness the beginning, middle and end of the in-breaths and out-breaths at the place touched by them as they come and go; keeping his mind fixed there, he then sees them without moving from his place in order to see them. This is the simile of the man who cannot walk.

200. This is the simile of the gatekeeper: Just as a gatekeeper does not examine people inside and outside the town, asking, “Who are you? Where have you come from? Where are you going? What have you got in your hand?”—for those people are not his concern—but he does examine each man as he arrives at the gate, so too, the incoming breaths that have gone inside and the outgoing breaths that have gone outside are not this bhikkhu’s concern, but they are his concern each time they arrive at the [nostril] gate itself.

201. Then the simile of the saw should be understood from its beginning. For this is said:

“Sign, in-breath, out-breath, are not object
Of a single consciousness;
By one who knows not these three things
Development is not obtained.
“Sign, in-breath, out-breath, are not object
Of a single consciousness;
By one who does know these three things
Development can be obtained.”

202. “How is it that these three things are not the object of a single consciousness, that they are nevertheless not unknown, that the mind does not become distracted, that he manifests effort, carries out a task, and achieves an effect?

“Suppose there were a tree trunk placed on a level piece of ground, and a man cut it with a saw. The man’s mindfulness is established by the saw’s teeth where they touch the tree trunk, without his giving attention to the saw’s teeth as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown to him as they do so; and he manifests effort, carries out a task, and achieves an effect. As the tree trunk placed on the level piece of ground, so the sign for the anchoring of mindfulness. As the saw’s teeth, so the in-breaths and out-breaths. As the man’s mindfulness, established by the saw’s teeth where they touch the tree trunk, without his giving attention to the saw’s teeth as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown to him as they do so, and so he manifests effort, carries out a task, and achieves an effect, [282] so too, the bhikkhu sits, having established mindfulness at the nose tip or on the upper lip, without giving attention to the in-breaths and out-breaths as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown to him as they do so, and he manifests effort, carries out a task, and achieves an effect.

Majjhima Nikaya #118 (Anapanasati Sutta) extract – Relationship to Satipatthana

Now, how does mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, bring the four frames of reference to culmination?

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—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, 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—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

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—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, monks, that this—close attention to in-&-out breaths—is classed as a feeling among feelings, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on feelings in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

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—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. I don't say that there is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing in one of confused mindfulness and no alertness, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

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 relinquishment': On that occasion the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He who sees clearly with discernment the abandoning of greed & distress is one who oversees with equanimity, which is why the monk on that occasion remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, brings the four frames of reference to culmination.

Anguttara Nikayha 5:28 (Jhana descriptions with similes; Fifth factor of reflection)

Now what, monks, is five factored noble right concentration? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. Just as if a skilled bathman or bathman’s apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again & again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within & without—would nevertheless not drip; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. This is the first development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

Furthermore, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of concentration. Just like a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having no inflow from east, west, north, or south, and with the skies periodically supplying abundant showers, so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate & pervade, suffuse & fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of concentration. This is the second development of the five factored noble right concentration.

And furthermore, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture, so that there is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture. Just as in a blue-, white-, or red-lotus pond, there may be some of the blue, white, or red lotuses which, born & growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated & pervaded, suffused & filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those blue, white, or red lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture. This is the third development of the five-factored noble right concentration. And furthermore, with the abandoning of pleasure & stress—as with the earlier disappearance of joys & distresses—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness, so that there is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness.

Just as if a man were sitting wrapped from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating his body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness. This is the fourth development of the five-factored

noble right concentration. And furthermore, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well pondered, well tuned [well penetrated] by means of discernment.

Just as if one person were to reflect on another, or a standing person were to reflect on a sitting person, or a sitting person were to reflect on a person lying down; even so, monks, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well pondered, well tuned by means of discernment. This is the fifth development of the five-factored noble right concentration. When a monk has developed & pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening. Suppose that there were a water jar, set on a stand, brimful of water so that a crow could drink from it. If a strong man were to tip it in any way at all, would water spill out?

Yes, lord.

In the same way, when a monk has developed & pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening.

Suppose there were a rectangular water tank—set on level ground, bounded by dikes—brimful of water so that a crow could drink from it. If a strong man were to loosen the dikes anywhere at all, would water spill out?

Yes, lord....

Suppose there were a chariot on level ground at four crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, waiting with whips lying ready, so that a skilled driver, a trainer of tamable horses, might mount and—taking the reins with his left hand and the whip with his right—drive out & back, to whatever place and by whichever road he liked; in the same way, when a monk has developed & pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know & realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening.

Recap of Practice Approaches to Sutta

- Buddha (in the Suttas) – take it as written! But note the relationship with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and also that references to this practice (such as his practices in the Mahaparanibbana Sutta) generally include the 4 jhanas. This is interpreted differently by different teachers – see e.g. below
- Visuddhimagga/ Budagosa – First Tetrad takes practitioner into all 4 jhanas; remaining 12 are all cultivation of insight, leading to release/awakening
- Thanissaro Bikkhu – First six steps in to the first jhana; steps 13 through 16 are cultivation of insight leading to awakening; steps 7 through 12 are necessary intermediaries for most practitioners

- Buddhadasa – always work through all 16 steps in order; the flow creates a move through absorption and insight (note: doesn't specifically describe jhanas)
- Bikkhu Analayo – work through the steps in specific order, move through satipattana (Four Foundations of Mindfulness) and Seven Factors of Enlightenment; no specific intention around absorption/jhanas
- Thich Nhat Hanh – work on any step in any order: all create connectedness, groundedness. No mention of jhanas

Definitions of Stream Entry (First glimpse of Unbinding) (Social, intellectual, practical)

Definition 1 (e.g. SN 48:8)

- Confidence in Buddha – refuge and/or belief in his awakening
- Confidence in the Dharma – refuge and/or belief it is the objective and available path to awakening that Buddha followed and that is available to all
- Confidence in Sangha – refuge and/or belief they are worthy of gifts, respect, hospitality
- Practice of Virtues Appealing to Noble Ones – variously following the precepts, generosity, or other forms

Definition 2 (e.g. SN 55:5)

- Association with good people
- Listening to the true Dharma
- Appropriate attention
- Practice in accordance with the Dharma

Definition 3 (in suttas but don't have ref; quote from Wings of Awakening (pg 105))

- Cut off self-identity views
- Cut of uncertainty
- Cut off grasping at habits and practices (and rituals)

Further Reading/Study

Majjhima Nikaya #118 – Anapanasati Sutta

The long form of the sutta, usually referenced as the source, comprising: a lengthy preamble; the introduction to the 16 steps; the 16 steps of in-&-out-breathing mindfulness; relationship of the 16 steps to satipatthana (four foundations/establishments of mindfulness); relationship of relationship to the seven

enlightenment factors; explanation that the practice leads to true knowledge and deliverance.

Samyutta Nikaya, Book V, Chapter X – Anapanasamyutta (Connected Discourses on Breathing)

Containing 20 suttas in two vaggas (shorter books), this text includes a more compact sutta containing substantially the core 16 steps of the Anapanasati Sutta in the midst of suttas that repeat, related to, explore, and offer variations on the practices of the sutta. This remaining 11 chapters of Book V explore the 37 factors of enlightenment and other practices taught by Buddha to support our path to awakening

Pathisambhidamagga [“The Path of Discrimination”] III Treatise on Breathing

One of the volumes in the Khuddaka Nikaya, compiled approx. 2nd-3rd centuries BCE, comprising treatises on breathing, liberation, loving kindness, voidness, insight, and a number other practice topics. “Treatise on Breathing” is an extended, detailed, and very difficult to follow commentary on the Anapanasati Sutta.

Visuddhimagga [“The Path of Purification”] Chapter VIII (9) Mindfulness of Breathing.

This 5th Century BCE commentary and analysis by Buddhagosa is for all practical purposes canonical in the Theravada tradition. Using the Sutta Nikaya as its source, it is an encyclopedic analysis of and commentary on Buddhist practice, and serves as a thorough practice manual. It takes the Pathisambhidamagga (see above) as a primary source, and the section on Mindfulness of Breathing draws very heavily and parallels that text in its structure

Mindfulness of Breathing – Bikkhu Nanamoli

This contemporary text includes a translation of Anapanasati Sutta (MN 118), and the commentaries from the Pathisambhidamagga and Visuddhimagga, along with a number of other related suttas from the Sutta Nikaya. It is dense and not really readable per se, but it is a great reference source of the primary material.

Mindfulness with Breathing: A Manual for Serious Beginners – Buddhadasa Bikkhu

This is both the most useful and the most accessible of the contemporary commentaries that I’ve read. Thoroughly recommended.

The Sutra on Full Awareness of Breathing – Thich Nhat Hanh

Delightful, meaningful, but did not for me offer as much depth as Buddhadasa. Recommended, but probably not as your only text.

Mindfulness of Breathing: A Practice Guide and Translations – Bikkhu Analayo

Thorough and impressive, providing both rich background and overview and a thorough and important navigation through the four tetrads. Tends to be intellectual and heavy. Specifically discusses the absorptions/jhanas and argues that while important to practice, this is not the point of the Anapanasati Sutta, which is rather to . The last 100

pages (of 250 total) are a detailed comparative analysis of different versions in the Chinese canon of the Anapanasati Sutta.

The Breath of Awakening – Namgyal Rinpoche

I picked this up when looking for other approaches to the sutta and was initially not impressed. A second reading revealed more, but I would certainly not start here.

The Wings of Awakening – Thanissaro Bikkhu

A thorough practice manual about the “37 Wings of Awakening”, aka the 37 Factors of Enlightenment, in which he brings out the Anapanasati Sutta as one of the key practices connected with the factors, and a key practice on the path to awakening – which he calls “Unbinding”.

Right Concentration: A Practical Guide to the Jhanas – Leigh Brasington

A good description of the jhanas, of their process, and of the experiences therein. It appears to be written as a “guided tour”, intended to provide the practitioner guidance on navigating; I recommend instead that the first half of this book be read as general background description and then put aside.

Ānāpānasati Sutta – Mindfulness of Breathing (MN 118)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattthī in the Eastern Monastery, the palace of Migāra’s mother, together with many well-known elder disciples—Ven. Sāriputta, Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, Ven. Mahā Kassapa, Ven. Mahā Kaccāna, Ven. Mahā

Koṭṭhita, Ven. Mahā Kappina, Ven. Mahā Cunda, Ven. Revata, Ven. Ānanda, and other well-known elder disciples. On that occasion the elder monks were teaching & instructing. Some elder monks were teaching & instructing ten monks, some were teaching & instructing twenty monks, some were teaching & instructing thirty monks, some were teaching & instructing forty monks. The new monks, being taught & instructed by the elder monks, were discerning grand, successive distinctions.

Now on that occasion—the uposatha day of the fifteenth, the full moon night of the Pavāraṇā ceremony—the Blessed One was seated in the open air surrounded by the Saṅgha of monks. Surveying the silent Saṅgha of monks, he addressed them:

“Monks, I am content with this practice. I am content at heart with this practice. So arouse even more intense persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. I will remain right here at Sāvattthī (for another month) through the ‘White Water-lily’ Month, the fourth month of the rains.”

The monks in the countryside heard, “The Blessed One, they say, will remain right there at Sāvattḥī through the White Water-lily Month, the fourth month of the rains.” So they left for Sāvattḥī to see the Blessed One.

Then the elder monks taught & instructed the new monks even more intensely. Some elder monks were teaching & instructing ten monks, some were teaching & instructing twenty monks, some were teaching & instructing thirty monks, some were teaching & instructing forty monks. The new monks, being taught & instructed by the elder monks, were discerning grand, successive distinctions.

Now on that occasion—the uposatha day of the fifteenth, the full moon night of the White Water-lily Month, the fourth month of the rains—the Blessed One was seated in the open air surrounded by the Saṅgha of monks. Surveying the silent Saṅgha of monks, he addressed them:

“Monks, this assembly is free from idle chatter, devoid of idle chatter, and is established on pure heartwood: Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly. The sort of assembly that is deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, an incomparable field of merit for the world: Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly. The sort of assembly to which a small gift, when given, becomes great, and a great gift greater: Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly. The sort of assembly that is rare to see in the world: Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly—the sort of assembly that it would be worth traveling for leagues, taking along provisions, in order to see.

“In this Saṅgha of monks there are monks who are arahants, whose effluents are ended, who have reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, laid to waste the fetter of becoming, and who are released through right gnosis: Such are the monks in this Saṅgha of monks.

“In this Saṅgha of monks there are monks who, with the wasting away of the five lower fetters, are due to arise spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, destined never again to return from that world: Such are the monks in this Saṅgha of monks.

“In this Saṅgha of monks there are monks who, with the wasting away of (the first) three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion, are once-returners, who—on returning only once more to this world—will make an ending to stress: Such are the monks in this Saṅgha of monks.

“In this Saṅgha of monks there are monks who, with the wasting away of (the first) three fetters, are stream-enterers, certain, never again destined for the lower realms, headed for self-awakening: Such are the monks in this Saṅgha of monks.

“In this Saṅgha of monks there are monks who remain devoted to the development of the four establishing of mindfulness... the four right exertions... the four bases of power... the five faculties... the five strengths... the seven factors for awakening... the noble eightfold path: Such are the monks in this Saṅgha of monks.

“In this Saṅgha of monks there are monks who remain devoted to the development of good will... compassion... empathetic joy... equanimity... (the perception of the) unattractiveness (of the body)... the perception of inconstancy: Such are the monks in this Saṅgha of monks.

“In this Saṅgha of monks there are monks who remain devoted to mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

“Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit. Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, brings the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination. The four establishings of mindfulness, when developed & pursued, bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination. The seven factors for awakening, when developed & pursued, bring clear knowing & release to their culmination.

Mindfulness of in-&-Out Breathing

“Now how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit?

“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 relinquishing.’ He trains himself, ‘I will breathe out focusing on relinquishing.’

“This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit.

The Four Establishings of Mindfulness

“And how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to bring the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination?

“[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, monks, 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, monks, that this—careful attention to in-&-out breaths—is classed as a feeling among feelings, 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 mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to bring the four establishings of mindfulness to their culmination.

The Seven Factors for Awakening

“And how are the four establishings of mindfulness developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination?

“[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 becomes aroused. 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 becomes aroused. 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 becomes aroused. 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 becomes aroused. 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 becomes aroused. 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 becomes aroused. 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 becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

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

“This is how the four establishings of mindfulness are developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination.

Clear Knowing & Release

“And how are the seven factors for awakening developed & pursued so as to bring clear knowing & release to their culmination? There is the case where a monk develops mindfulness as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on 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, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in relinquishment.

“This is how the seven factors for awakening are developed & pursued so as to bring clear knowing & release to their culmination.”

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