

Establishing of Mindfulness Meditation (*satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*): the Creative Interplay of Cognition, Praxis and Affection¹

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

Abstract:

“Investigation of Dhamma”, “effort” and “joy” constitute the 2nd to 4th items of the seven bojjhanga “Factors of Awakening” in the satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā, “Establishing of Mindfulness meditation”, the methodology specifically formulated by the Buddha as the “one way” or “direct path” (ekāyano maggo) to liberation, namely, Nibbāna. There is probably no more succinct an example than the placing of the three, in their intended logical sequence, that speaks to the interactive process among cognition, praxis and affection. The practitioner begins in the cognitive (investigation of Dhamma), puts the mind into an active mode based in the cognition, thus engaging in praxis (effort), which in turn comes to impact upon the affective (joy). This paper seeks to establish the intricate and complex web of interrelationships between and among the trio cognition, praxis and affection in relation to the total Discourse.

*Nalanda College
Buddhist Studies/
University of
Toronto*

*Canadian Journal of
Buddhist Studies,
Number Four, 2008*

1. Introduction

“Establishing of Mindfulness” (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is the meditation methodology specifically formulated by the Buddha as the “Only Way” (Nyānaponika, 1954), “Direct Path” (Anālayo, 2003) or “one way”² (*ekāyano maggo*) to Nibbāna (D.22). The Discourse has, of course, been well studied in its soteriological dimension, more relevantly for Buddhism in its second sense, “The Doctrine of Salvation”, replacing here “salvation” with “liberation”. However, it is not far from the related first sense, namely, “a discourse on health, or the science of promoting or preserving health” (OED, 2927). Meditation is a healing of the mind.

In this paper, however, we shall seek to discover the methodology developed towards liberation as a psychological process, drawn upon an intricate interrelationship between and among *cognition*, *praxis* and *affection*, if assuredly to varying degrees. This will be done

© 2008
by Nalanda College
Buddhist studies

primarily in relation to the four “following-throughs” (*anupassanā*), that constitute the Buddha’s methodology, taking the practitioner from “following-through on the body”³ (*kāyānupassanā*) to feelings (*vedanānupassanā*) to mind (*cittānupassanā*) to *Dhamma* (*dhammānupassanā*), meaning both reality and “mental qualities” in our context. There is no attempt here to work out the implications of the practice, overall or in its detail, nor is there any attempt at a comparative perspective in relation to insights available from phenomenological, psychological or philosophical studies. All we are doing is to seek out the consistent and continuing interaction of the three aspects of the mind, namely, cognition, affection and praxis. The contribution expected of the paper is to get an understanding of how the practice involves the totality of the mind.

To help our exploration, we need to first understand what is meant by each of the terms cognition, praxis and affection as used here.

We begin with “*cognition*”, taking it simply to mean “to know” (Webster’s Dictionary), or literally “knowing together” (co- + -gnition < Latin *gnoscere*).⁴ Phenomena to be known may be external, such as facts and figures, or within oneself, such as inferences based in facts and figures, formulations of ideas, creative thought, or affects (happiness and anger about yourself or others, etc). The highest ideal from a Buddhist perspective, of course, would be wisdom (*paññā*).

Praxis is characterized in the Dictionary as “practice”, distinguished from “theory”. Another meaning given is “a set of ... exercises, as in grammar”. As in all of these senses, what is entailed is a “doing”, an “application”. It is indeed a “transferring of thought into action”, as e.g., in the Freirian sense (Freire, 1970)⁵.

“*Affection*” has a specific meaning of “a fond or tender feeling...usually distinguished from love”. But it is used here in the other, neutral sense of “a mental state”, a feeling or sensation felt by one.⁶

With these preliminary meanings, then, we shall see how each of the three plays its role, independently and co-dependently.

2. The Cognitive, Praxic and Affective Process(es) Explored

To introduce the discussion, we fast-forward to the fourth Mindfulness to be established in the *satipaṇṇāna bhāvanā*, and stop at the “Factors of Awakening” (*bojjhanga*), where we note how “investigation of Dhamma” (*dhammavicaya*), “Effort” (*virīya*)⁷ and “Joy” (*pīti*) constitute the second through the fourth of the seven factors. There is probably no better, more succinct, example than the placing of the three⁸ in their intended sequence, which speaks to the interactive process entailed in the Buddha’s methodology. The practitioner begins in the cognitive domain (investigation of mental

qualities), and based on this, puts in an “effort” in the domain of praxis, consequently “benefiting” from it in the affection domain (joy).

However, we don’t have to wait until the fourth Establishing in order to discover the clever tripartite strategy adopted by the Buddha. It begins with the very first exercise, watching the breath (*ānāpāṇa sati*).

2.1 The First Establishing: Following-through on the Body (*kāya*)

The opening practice, *kāyānupassanā*, is as follows:

“Breathing *in* a **long** breath, one⁹ **knows** (*pajānāti*) “I breathe in a long breath”; breathing *out* a long breath, one knows “I breathe out a long breath” (italics and bold added). Breathing *in... out* a **short** breath, one knows “I breathe in... out a long breath”

“**Conscious** of the whole (breath-) body (*sabbakāyapañisaṃvedī*), I shall breathe in”, **thus one trains oneself** (*sikkhati*). “Conscious of the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe out”, thus one trains oneself.

“**Calming** (*passambhayam*) the bodily function (of breathing), I shall breathe in”, thus one trains oneself. “Calming the bodily function (of breathing), I shall breathe out”, thus one trains oneself.

We immediately note the *cognitive* function here, watching the in-breath ending, next giving rise to the out-breath, which in turn gives rise to the in-breath in a bio-feedback loop: “one knows”, then one is “conscious” in the second. The *praxis* presents itself in the second exercise, in the words, “thus one trains oneself”. This is a clear attempt at transferring knowledge into an activity of the mind. We become conscious of both the *affective* and the *praxis* in the next step, the “calming” of the breathing. When “calming” is understood as intention, then it is clearly cognition. When taken as an activity, it is *praxis*. If the meditation is successfully done,¹⁰ the outcome is a calmed mind, slowing down the heart rate, both measurable physiologically. This is a phenomenon of the affective domain.

Yet another aspect of the *praxis* emerges in so far as the calming comes to be the outcome of the very watching of the mind itself (see 2.2 for a clarification). Watching entails “telling” your mind¹¹ to *watch* (a cognitive process) and to *implement* the intention of watching by actually doing the watching (*praxis*).

In this opening practice itself, what we see is the interactive process of the three.

Following the exercise of watching the breath, the next calls upon the practitioner to be mindful of the physical process, namely the postures of the body: “One knows when going, ‘I’m going’”; this practice extends to “standing” and “lying down”.

In the next development, “clear comprehension” (*sampajañña*) is applied to other physical processes: going forward / back, looking straight / elsewhere, bending / stretching, eating / drinking / chewing / savouring, obeying the calls of nature, walking / standing / sitting / falling asleep / waking / speaking and being silent.¹² Since “clear comprehension” is clearly cognitive, there is a continuing element of praxis here as well. The affective is when the mind-body becomes calmer.

If what we find primarily in this segment of the practice is knowing and comprehension, i.e., a cognition, there is also affect and *praxis*.

In the next exercise, one goes through the different parts of the body, in a physiological meditation (see Punnañi, 2001, and Sugunasiri, 2005, for visual presentations—solids from “head hair” to “brain”¹³, and liquids from “bile” to “urine”). In this practice again, the practitioner, literally “sees into again” or idiomatically “experiences” (*paccavekkhati*), which is part of the cognitive domain. At a different level, the body is to be seen merely as a “double-mouthed provision bag” (*ubhatomukhā mutoḷī*), where the mouth and the anus serve as the two openings, the bag refers to the skin, and the 32 body parts contained within seen as the ‘provisions’¹⁴.

But it is also *praxis* in that as one goes through each body part, one begins to, ironically, both “build” and “break apart” one’s own body, eventually getting a “feel” for it as well, taking us to the domain of affect. Seeing one’s own body as a mere structure of 32 different parts, to make a point here of my own understanding, makes it appear ludicrous to have any affection towards it, promoting disaffection if any (in the affective domain); but there is a more direct affective dimension when the whole body is seen as “full of impurities” (*asucino*), when ludicrousness turns into disgust, as indeed originally intended by the meditative practice.¹⁵

The same repulsiveness in the affective domain continues in the “nine cemetery contemplations” when the meditator contemplates on the image of a body “discarded in the charnel-ground” being devoured by crows, jackals and then worms, when eventually the body “crumbles to dust”. If this is cognition, when the meditator applies it “to one’s own body”, it becomes *praxis*. The revulsion the meditator feels, then, takes one to the affective, as his /her own body is seen in the different states and stages—skeleton held by tendons without flesh and blood, then bones scattered as in “here bones of the hand, there bones of the

foot”, etc. The repetition as a mnemonic device is meant to indelibly stamp the image in the meditator’s memory.

This brings us to the end of the first Establishing of Mindfulness, “following-through on the body” (*kāyānupassanā*); it draws upon the affective, cognitive and praxic processes, with an emphasis on one or the other in each practice.

Before we end the section, however, the translation of *anupassanā* as “following-through on” merits an explanation. As can be seen from the brief exposé above, the practice seeks to capture how the mind is “looking” (*passanā* < *pas-*), following (< *amu-*) (each detail of) the body (*kāya*), giving us the literal translation “follow-see”. It would be like a telescope tracking or following a distant, moving star. So, while a literal “follow-see” would keep us reminded of what is entailed, we shall use the more idiomatic “follow-through”¹⁶, the hyphenation seeking to capture the ongoing sense of going beyond a single-time of watching. But we add “on”, giving us “follow through on” (the body), to indicate a more watchful process, but which has an implicit sense of pausing (at each step).

2.2 The Second Establishing: Following-through on Feelings (*vedanā*)

The second Establishing is “following through on feelings” (*vedanānupassanā*), where the primary focus is on the affective:

“Sensing (*vedīyamāno*) a pleasant (*sukham*) sensation (*vedanam*)¹⁷, one knows, “I am experiencing (*vedīyamīti*)¹⁸ a pleasant sensation”;

“Sensing a painful sensation (*dukkham*), one knows, “I am experiencing a painful sensation”;

“Sensing a non-painful, non-pleasant (*adukkham—asukham*, “non-dukkha, non-sukha”, i.e., neutral), sensation, one knows, “I am experiencing a non-painful, non-pleasant sensation.”

Again, there is the sensation—happiness or excitement, melancholia or hurt (affective) or the neutral. Watching each of them rise, the meditator comes to realize pain as pain, pleasure as pleasure, and the neutral as neutral.¹⁹ Knowledge arises of change (*anicca*) through watching, a cognitive process.

If this is the cognition, the praxis is when the very watching itself results in either dying out (painful) or being strengthened (pleasant), resulting in a change (negative or positive). Addressing Ananda, the Buddha says:

There is the case where, when seeing a form with the eye, there arises in a monk what is agreeable, what is disagreeable, what is agreeable and disagreeable. He discerns that “This agreeable thing has arisen in me, this disagreeable thing... this agreeable and disagreeable thing has arisen in me. And that is compounded, gross, dependently co-arisen. But this is peaceful, this is exquisite, i.e., equanimity.

With that, the arisen agreeable thing...disagreeable thing... agreeable and disagreeable thing *ceases*, and equanimity takes its stance (M. 152, Thanissaro translation, 1996: 267, bold added).

The unwholesome thoughts coming to subside in the process of awareness may be called “underdeveloping” - basically, something getting minimized in the same process as another thing/aspect getting maximized. The insight for this point—about how the cognition (watching) results in eliminating the bad—comes from the Buddha’s own Enlightenment experience. The Buddha gained three knowledges (*tevijjā*), one in each of the watches of the night (6-10, 10-2, 2-6), the third being “knowledge of cutting off cankers” (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*). In the same process arises not just the knowing of, but the actual cutting off of the cankers (*kankhāvitarāṇa*); the Buddha thus became “the one who has cut off the cankers” (*khīnāsava*).

Thus we see in this exercise both praxis (because it is a transferring of cognition into a result) and the affective (because the result affects one’s spiritual life).

2.3 The Third Establishing: Following Through on Mind (*citta*)

At the third stage of mind cultivation, *cittānupassanā*—“following-through on mind”, the practitioner’s primary focus, as also in the second Establishing, is clearly on the *affective*. This is evidenced by the three cognates for mind as found in the Canon: it is not *mano* or *viññāṇa* that come to be used, but *citta* which “emphasize[s] the emotional and conative side...more than its...rational side” (Davids & Stede, 266).

Citta is derived from the root √cit- “to think.”²⁰ Interestingly, it also has the meaning of “painting” (ibid., 265).²¹ So it is like an artist working with paint on a palette, leaving indelible marks, making an imprint on the palette called *citta*!

So how does one dwell on practicing mind-contemplation?

Herein, one knows the mind with lust, as with lust, the mind without lust, as without lust...

If the practice begins in relation to lust (*rāga*), the same practice is repeated in relation to hatred (*dosa*) and delusion/ignorance (*moha*) with variations: shrunken / distracted state, developed / undeveloped state, surpassable / unsurpassable state, concentrated / unconcentrated state, and freed/unfreed state, each watched from within and without, i.e., internally and externally. Then one dwells,

Contemplating origination-factors in the mind... dissolution-factors, both origination-dissolution factors...

It is clear that lust and hatred are emotive (i.e., in the affective domain), the former in relation to oneself and the latter to the other, or each in relation to both. Delusion and ignorance, however, are in the cognitive domain, even though it is the emotive base that keeps one in delusion and ignorance. As the practitioner watches the good, bad, and the neutral, the negative comes to be weakened, and the positive comes to be enhanced (see above, 2.2), the neutral perhaps remaining untouched.

Ignorance is clearly in the cognitive domain. This particular cultivation has as its primary focus both the affective and the cognitive. And the praxis, of course, is in the cultivation that takes place either in terms of increased calming or cognition, or both.

2.4 The Fourth Establishing: Following Through on Dhamma

It is in the *dharmānupassanā*, “following through on the Dhamma”, however, that the interaction among the cognitive, praxis and affective comes to full bloom. This serves as the real beginning of a meditator’s liberational process, taking one to the furthest shores of the liberational universe.²² If up to this point, one was preparing the ground, what is watched now are “mental qualities” and “reality”, which is how the term *Dhamma* is being translated here.²³

As if to ensure an unencumbered lift-off, in the first exercise of this final Establishment, one seeks to jettison what may be called unspiritual debris. Towards this end, the meditator begins by taking stock of the presence or absence of this debris in the form of the negative mental qualities in oneself, namely, the five impediments (*nīvaraṇa*)—sense-desire (*kāmacchanda*), anger (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), flurry and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*).²⁴ These are in the affective domain. Anger is a feeling that arises in one in relation to another; seeking a taste you like (sense-desire) is a feeling in relation to oneself, as are sloth and torpor, flurry and worry, and doubt. Sloth and torpor relate to praxis. Doubt falls within the cognitive domain.

This is the first praxis, which thus entails the interaction of all three.

The weight jettisoned, the practitioner is now well set on the course, as one watches (cognition) what have come to be called the “Factors of Awakening” (*bojjhanga*).²⁵ We list them in a chart, identifying the aspect into which each falls (Column 2) and its concomitant (Column 3):

	ITEM	ASPECT	CONCOMITANT
1	Mindfulness	Cognition	Affection
2	Dhamma investigation	Cognition	Praxis
3	Effort	Praxis	Cognition
4	Joy	Affection	Praxis
5	Relaxation	Praxis	Affection
6	Concentration	Affection	Praxis
7	Equanimity	Cognition	Praxis

Chart 1: The Factors of Awakening (*bojjhanga*) in Relation to Cognition, Praxis and Affection

What we note from the Chart is how the process entailed in the *bojjhanga* begins with a strong cognitive element (ll. 1-2, col. 1), moving between praxis and affection (ll. 3-6), and ending up in cognition. But it is even more complex than this. While “Mindfulness”²⁶ (*sati*) is clearly in the cognitive domain (col. 2), it also appears in the affective (col. 3). “Dhamma investigation” (*Dhamma vicaya*), as the term “investigation” suggests, is cognitive. What is meant here is any and all reality, as discovered by oneself thus far and/or as taught by the Buddha, in relation to one’s own mind. Like a scientist examining the qualities of a fluid or a solid, the practitioner is now looking deeper and broader into the nature of one’s own mental qualities, and in the process other related phenomena. But “investigation” is also praxis.

Effort (*virīya*) is praxis since it involves a doing, even if the doing is in and of the mind; but cognition is entailed as well in that one needs to know what the effort is about (both content and process). If Joy (*pīti*) is clearly in the affective domain, it is also the result of the earlier steps, and hence a praxis. Relaxation (*passaddhi*) falls into the praxis while also being affective. In Concentration (*samādhi*) we see a reversal of the order, the first being an affection and then a praxis. While there is indeed an affective dimension to Equanimity (*upekkhā*), it may be first taken as a cognition since it entails a conscious change of

direction. It is as if one's mind is saying, "Yes, do enjoy the joy and the relaxation, and by all means the resulting concentration, but hey, let's not get carried away here. Let's have some distance [detachment] and have a balance of mind." And, of course, developing that balance of mind is the praxis, in that it ensures that relaxation is done for both mind and body, which alone serves as the immediate condition for concentration.

The point that emerges is that if any given mental quality comes to be primary in a given domain, it is also linked with one or more other domains.

The cognitive, praxic and affective process(es) entailed in the seven Factors of Awakening can be looked at from another perspective. We may consider Mindfulness, Dhamma investigation and Effort as being collectively in the praxic domain, since they can be seen to be as a pro-active path (*magga*), the result (*phala*) of which is Joy, Relaxation and Concentration. These first six in turn may be seen as affection in the service of cognition, entailed in Equanimity.

At yet another level, in a reverse order, the Factors of Awakening can be seen as a *praxis* in relation to the impediments; more specifically as antidotes to them, as seen in Chart 2.

IMPEDIMENTS	FACTORS OF AWAKENING
Sense-desire	Mindfulness, Equanimity
Anger	Joy, Relaxation, Equanimity
Sloth and torpor	Effort
Flurry and worry	Concentration/Dhamma investigation
Doubt	Dhamma investigation

Chart 2: The Praxic Relations of the Factors of Awakening (*bojjhanga*) and the Impediments (*nīvaraṇa*)

In Mindfulness, what one does is to watch the arising and the fading away of a given phenomenon. For example, as a sense-desire in terms of passion arises, the practice calls for the application of Mindfulness (col. 2, line 1), and the watching of the arisen passion. As noted above, the very watching (*manasikāra*) results in the disappearance of the arisen phenomenon, even if only momentarily, for it may perhaps arise again. Only advance in the practice as the mind experiences one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) will ensure that the arisen passion is kept in abeyance for longer and longer periods of time until the passion completely dies out. This practice may be assisted by a sense of Equanimity.

The antidote to anger (line 2) is to focus one's attention on something joyful. Since Relaxation follows upon Joy, and then

Equanimity, the two are also shown in Chart 2 as having a similar function of overcoming anger.

The role of Effort (line 3) in overcoming sloth and torpor should be self-evident. Sloth and torpor feed on excuses - it is too hot/too cold, too early/too late, too difficult/too easy, or too expensive/too cheap. Effort, by contrast, pays no attention to such as these; it employs a rallying call, which would sound thing like, “Too hot? I’ll take it on. Too cold? I’ll take it on, too”, etc.

Though flurry (*uddhacca*) and worry (*kukkucca*) are shown as a paired single concept; they represent distinct phenomena. Flurry appears in the list of ten *samyojana* (the 9th item) (D.I.71); it is a fetter “that binds man to the wheel of transmigration” (Vin.I.183). It has a range of meanings: overbalancing, agitation, excitement, and distraction (Davids & Stede). While Concentration is shown as the general antidote, Equanimity may serve as the antidote to “overbalancing”.

While *kukkucca* does not feature among the *samyojana*, it nevertheless has a range of meanings too: 1. bad doing, misconduct, bad character; 2. remorse, scruple; and 3. worry.

While the Chart shows Dhamma investigation as the antidote to flurry and worry, Mindfulness and Equanimity may also be seen as effective antidotes.

Doubt, also one of the 10 fetters, refers to doubt about the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, as well as the Precepts, which makes the Dhamma investigation the obvious antidote.

While each of the Factors of Awakening may be seen as antidotes to the impediments, at another level Dhamma investigation may be seen as the overall cognitive antidote in relation to all five impediments. But bringing the Buddha’s teachings to mind, objectivity, wisdom, compassion, etc., and the affective practice of meditation can also be said to be praxis in relation to the five impediments.

Equanimity was seen above to be in the cognitive domain, but we may also see it as being in the affective domain in relation to the exercise of bringing to mind the Four Noble Truths. It is the balancing of the mind entailed in Equanimity that helps see the Truths in their unbiased way, i.e., as reality. So in this sense, Equanimity serves as the praxic bridge connecting the six Factors of Awakening to the Four Noble Truths.

Looking now at the Four Noble Truths, what we see is the interactive process among cognition, praxis and affection. Collectively “Truths” fall in the cognitive domain, since it is a coming to know the reality (of life). But taken one by one, the first Truth, *dukkha*, falls into the affective domain. “Separation from loved ones is *dukkha*” (*piyehi vippayogo dukkho*) just as “Coming to be with unloved ones is *dukkha*” (*appiyehi sampayogo dukkho*). But *dukkha* also has a praxic component:

birth is *dukkha*, ageing is *dukkha*, as is death (*jāti pi dukkho, jarāpi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkho*).

The second Truth, “arising” (*samudaya*), is primarily affective: sense-attachment (*kāma taṇhā*), attachment to be (*bhava taṇhā*), and attachment to not be (*vibhava taṇhā*). *Taṇhā* is “When the sense organs come into contact with the outside world, there follow sensation and feeling, and these result in *taṇhā*” (Davids & Stede (op. cit., 294, citing DII. 34). The affectivity of *taṇhā* (Skt. Root, *trṣ-*) is clear with the meaning of “to thirst”, and the associated concept of “drought”.²⁷

The third Truth is “cessation” (*nirodha*)—rooting out the flows (*āsavānam khaya*), which is undoubtedly a praxis. Indeed while how to root out the flows is one of the three knowledges that constitutes the Buddha’s Awakening, that very knowledge serving to root them out was also very much part of the Awakening experience (see 2.2 above). What we clearly have then is praxis in its classical and original sense of the term—translating knowledge and theory into comportment. But, as can be seen from Chart 3, nowhere is the interaction of the cognitive, praxic and affective processes laid bare more clearly than in the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyo atthaṅgiko maggo*), the fourth Truth. An overview of Chart 3 shows that the primary aspect of the first two steps of the Path are in the cognitive domain, 3 to 6 fall into the praxic, with 7 and 8 being in the affective.

	STEP IN PATH	PRIMARY ASPECT	ASSOCIATED ASPECT(S)
1	Excellent View	Cognitive	Praxis
2	Excellent Conceptualization	Cognitive	Praxis
3	Excellent Communication	Praxis	Cognitive
4	Excellent Conduct	Praxis	Cognitive
5	Excellent Livelihood	Praxis	Cognitive
6	Excellent Exercise	Praxis	Cognitive
7	Excellent Mindfulness	Affective	Praxis
8	Excellent Concentration	Affective	Praxis

Chart 3: The Noble Eightfold Path and its Cognitive, Praxic and Affective Aspects

To go into more detail here, Excellent View (*sammā diṭṭhi*), is the understanding of both the nature of life, as gained through meditation, in terms of the three characteristics, *anicca* “impermanance/change”, *dukkha* “suffering/unsatisfactoriness”, and

anatta (asoulity).²⁸ Watching the breath, going in and out, one realizes that the nature of the breath is to change. By extension, as also seen throughout meditation, there comes the knowledge of its reality in both mind and body. Just as the body is tight at times during the practice, it gives way to a relaxation in practicing the Factors of Awakening. Encountering unpleasant feelings, in the second Establishing, or sense attachment under the third, one comes to the realization of suffering. Practicing the physiological meditation in the first Establishing, going through the parts of the body, one has to look hard in vain for anything other than the different parts as constituting “you”. To wax poetic, one is led to ask, “So where art thou, o’ soul?”

Then the cognition, if not total understanding, follows upon the liberative process in terms of the Four Noble Truths. The reference to praxis in Chart 3, Column 3 relates to going over the Truths in one’s mind.

Excellent Conceptualization (*sammā samkappa*) is a cognitive process, but it involves a praxic dimension in that one has to take an aspect of the mind at a given moment, evaluate it against the Right View, and then implement it or not.²⁹

Excellent Communication (*sammā vācā*)³⁰ is characterized as language that avoids lying (*musāvādā*), slandering (*pisunā vācā*), gossip (*samphappalāpā*), and coarse language (*pharusā vācā*). Clearly this is in the praxic domain, even though speaking entails affection; speakers are emotionally involved in expressing love, anger, appreciation, and so on.

Excellent Conduct (*sammā kammanta*) relates to how one lives one’s life, which is clearly in the praxic domain. The classical understanding of this excellent conduct stems from the Training Principle (*sikkhāpada*), more popularly, Precepts (see Thich Nhat Hanh, 1993, for an elucidation). “I take up the Training Principle to abstain from” (*veramaṇi sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi*) these five actions:

1. taking life (*pāṇa atipāta*),
 2. taking what is not given (*adinnā ādana*)³¹,
 3. sexual misconduct (*micchā ācāra*)³²,
 4. speaking falsehood (*musāvādā*)³³,
 5. visiting places of liquor and...
- (*surameraya majja pamādaṭṭhānā*).³⁴

The first four refer to social praxis in terms of one’s relations to others; others include animals and plants. The fifth relates more to personal praxis.

In the eight Training Principles, the laity is encouraged to observe on Full Moon days the three additional proscriptions relating to

6. untimely eating (*vikāla bhojanā*),
7. high and comfortable beds (*uccā sayana mahā sayanā*),
and
8. visiting places of dance, singing, instrumental music, mime
(and acrobatics?), garlands, perfume and ointments,
and ornaments, finery and adornment (*nacca gīta
vādita visūkadassana mālā gandha vilepana dhāraṇa
maṇḍaṇa vibhūsanatthānā*).

Then there are for the sangha the 227 (for bhikkhus) and 252 (for bhikkhunis) Vinaya rules.

But beyond such detail, an overall litmus test in personal praxis entailed in these Training Principles may perhaps be the conscious attempt to live by the Buddha's personal example contained in the maxim, "I say as I do, I do as I say" (*yathāvādī tathākārī, yathākārī tathāvādī*). Being aware of the guideline will help us from making promises we can't keep, and from putting up facades for show and tell with no commitment internally.

Excellent Livelihood (*sammā ājiva*) is clearly in the praxic domain and needs no elaboration, except to remember its ethical basis.

Praxis in Excellent Exercise (*sammā vāyāma*) is the most critical personal praxis, in that it serves as the bridge, a final preparation and thrust towards the last phase of the liberative work of Excellent Mindfulness. This serves as the Establishing for the final solid foundation in the Noble Eightfold Path, namely, Excellent Concentration. For this very reason, it is most comprehensive and may be seen as a four-lane convergence:

1. Guarding (*nivāraṇappadhāna*) from any unarisen (unskilled) *akusala* to arise.
2. Rooting out (*pahāṇappadhāna*) any existing *akusala*.
3. Cultivating (*bhāvanāpadhāna*) the unarisen (skilled) *kusala*.
4. Protecting (*anurakkhanappadhāna*) the already arisen *kusala*.

It is comprehensive in that it deals with both *kusala* and *akusala*. It also uses the mechanism of under-developing (see above) one (*akusala*) while simultaneously one cultivates the other (*kusala*). The four-dimensional praxis may be best understood with a computer analogy:

EXCELLENT EXERCISE	COMPUTER FUNCTION
Guarding	Firewall
Rooting out	Anti-virus
Cultivating	Computing
Protecting	Saving

Chart 4: Computer Function as Analogy for Excellent Exercise (*sammā vāyāma*) in the Noble Eightfold Path

Computers connected to the Internet can be under constant attack from viruses, just as the mind is under attack from unskillful thoughts. The computer industry's strategy has been to develop tools, such as a "Firewall", to both stop such malicious software (c.f., guarding) from entering the system, as well as to root out any that have somehow made it into the system ("Anti-virus" software). This well matches with what the meditator seeks to do: guard and root out the unskilled states. The computer allows the developing of new texts, visible on the screen page but managed through the internal mechanism of the motherboard, which can then be "saved" for later retrieval and use. Likewise, the meditator cultivates the mind and seeks to keep it at that cultivated state for ongoing use.

In Excellent Mindfulness (*sammā sati*), we return to affection with an element of praxis (as in Chart 1), noting that the Mindfulness the practitioner encounters as a Factor of Awakening becomes an Excellence (*sammā*).

The same points may be noted in relation to Excellent Concentration (*sammā samādhi*)—a praxis encountered earlier, but now to be Excellent. It is this excellence in the practice that takes the practitioner to the four *jhāna* "supercalm-in-awareness" (SCIA),³⁵ and to eventual Awakening.

In addition to the presence of the cognitive, praxis and affective in the details, we may now note, as in the following chart, their presence taken overall, the characterizations being self-evident.

COGNITIVE	PRAXIC	AFFECTIVE
Four Noble Truths	Noble Eightfold Path	Impediments / Factors of Awakening

Chart 5: The Cognitive, Praxic and Affective Division of *Dhammānupassanā*

2.5 Cognitive, Praxic and Affective Interaction in the Overall Practice

We have seen how throughout the *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, the interactional process of the trio—cognition, praxis and affection—comes into play in all four *anupassanā*. This is the *intrinsic* presence of the trio. There are also the three *extrinsic* “watchtowers” that the Buddha sets up at the very beginning of the practice. Here is how the meditator is introduced to the meditation, identifying the three characteristics to be conscious of throughout the practice: “Herein one dwells practicing body-contemplation on the body, ardent (*ātāpi*), clearly comprehending (*sampajañña*) and mindful (*satimā*)”. The statement is repeated at the end of each of the other three follow-throughs. If being ardent is in the praxic domain, comprehending is clearly in the cognitive. Being mindful is both cognitive and affective.

The phrase “One knows” appears at each of the four Establishings, as e.g., in the very first step of the first Establishing, relating to the breath, “Breathing in a long breath, he knows, ‘I breathe in a long breath’”, or in relation to impediments in the fourth Establishing, “One knows when sense-desire is present / absent...how the arising of the non-arisen comes to be...how the rejection of the arisen comes to be...how non-arising in future of the rejected comes to be...” (Nyanaponika, op.cit.,123).

If there is clearly cognition here, there is also affection, since these are the mental qualities by which one is afflicted. Through this process, the practitioner comes to the realization of the absence/presence or the extent of a given mental construct or quality.

Then there is the line at the end of each *anupassanā*: “...mindfulness that ‘there is a body [feelings/mind/mental qualities]’ is established in one to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness.” If cognition is directly captured in the final phrase, “for knowledge and mindfulness”, affection is the state of mind experienced in the process of transferring that cognition, i.e., praxis.

The Established Mindfulness is followed, again in each of the *anupassanā*, by the words, “Independent, one dwells, clinging to nothing in the world.” Being independent is in the cognitive domain

since it involves judgment, but it is also affective, because it is the result of cognition through the series of exercises. The praxis is the dwelling, that is, “clinging to nothing in the world”.

Taken in its entirety, then, the *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* is an interaction of the cognitive, praxic and affective domains. First there is the calming (*samatha*) element, be it at the earliest stages or lowest levels, as in “calming the breath” in the first Establishment, or at the highest in terms of “supercalm-in-awareness” (*jhāna*) at the peak stage. Its insight (*vipassanā*) element is the cognition, be it the reality of recognizing that whatever comes to be passes away as intuited from the very first exercise of watching the beginning and end points of the breath, seeing conditioned co-origination in Excellent Concentration (*sammā samādhi*), or holding to the Four Noble Truths in concentrating on the Establishing of the Dhamma. The praxic element is that the entire meditation is a practice, not a theory to be read about or merely cognized. Therefore, the cognitive, praxic and affective interactional process runs throughout *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* in its details and overall structure.

3. Concluding Observations

In concluding this paper, a few observations emerge from the discussion. The first is that each of cognition, praxis and affection of a given practice or meditative process is to be understood as being only the primary, and not the exclusive, aspect. Conditioned co-origination reminds us that conditions occur together, in association with others (multicausality) and in relation to each other (reciprocity). This is evident when we consider a concept, e.g., the animal: animality includes sentience, gender, age, etc.

Another point is that each of the terms cognition, praxis and affection is used in both a strong and obvious sense, and sometimes in a loose and obscure sense. Praxis, e.g., is directly evident in *magga*, being the path to be traveled on, but in a loose sense in *dhammavicaya* in the Factors of Awakening practice.

The use of the terms cognitive, praxic and affective (or cognition, praxis and affection), in the present analytical mode is rooted in a Western framework or paradigm. So it was quite a pleasant surprise to discover how well these three terms corresponded to the three terms used for the mind in the Pali canon, namely, *citta*, *mano* and *viññāṇa*.³⁶ *Mano* is characterized as “represent[ing] the intellectual functioning of consciousness...” (Davids and Stede, op.cit). *Citta* is “the subjective aspect of consciousness.” (ibid.). As characterized elsewhere, it is the mind complex upon which an incoming stimulus makes its imprint, creating a new ongoing mind that then includes the latest object to impinge upon it (which entails an understanding of *viññāṇa*). As for

viññāṇa, we find it characterized “more as **minding** than mind” (emphasis mine). So what we have is an *active* form, a *doing* rather than a naming. This is seemingly confirmed when we next read that “[i]ts form is participial...” (ibid. 618), which means participating in the nature of both verb and adjective.

The active nature of *viññāṇa* is evidenced by the process of how it comes to be established, as shown in the Abhidhamma (see Bodhi, 1999, for details). In the Buddha’s characterization, *viññāṇa* results from a stimulus (*ārammaṇa*) making contact (*phassa*) with one of the “sensitive elements” (*pasāda rūpa*) of the six senses (which includes the mind). An example would be a book on a store shelf catching your eye (see next).

To explain the detailed process in technical terms, we begin by noting the existing, or ongoing, “life continuum consciousness” (*bhavāṅga citta*, literally “mind that constitutes becoming”), meaning the mind at a given point in time. When the image (say, of the book) falls on the retina (“sensitive eye” (*cakkhu pāsāda*)), there is “vibration” (*calana*) of the life-continuum consciousness (LCC hereafter), as if to say, “I sense a visitor”. Then there is arrest (*upaccheda*), for after the initial disturbance, the mind takes stock of the “vibration”, as if asking “Let me see what this visitor is all about”. Next there is an “apprehending at a sense” (*dvārāvajjanā*), as if now taking a closer look at the visitor. This is followed by cognition (*sancetanā*), as if to say, “Hm, something flat, in colour (or, black and white).” A “reception” (*sampaticchanna*) follows, as if to say, “Let’s welcome it”, and then an “investigation” (*santīraṇa*) (“Hm, looks reasonably harmless / harmful, ” etc.).³⁷

If each of the first six stages reflects an active process, we can see how each is still “passive” compared to the next step, “determination (*voṭṭhapana*), when a conscious decision is made by the LCC to like or dislike what has impacted upon it (“Oh, I like it”) (“I like the colour/author/title,” etc), kamma arising at this point since volition is involved³⁸, a thirst (*taṇhā*)³⁹ arising. This is followed by an impulsion (*javana*), meaning something like a going forward towards joining with the ongoing mind, and a final “registration” (*tadālabhāna*) as the book (or parts of which has fallen on the retina) become part of the LCC. The entire process of “sensing”, from stimulus to LCC, is an active one, and it is this that allows us to judge *viññāṇa* as praxis (see Sugunasiri, 2001, op. cit, 58-64).⁴⁰

Viññāṇa is also a praxis when looked at from another point of view. The text itself tells us *satipaṭṭhāna* really is *sati-upaṭṭhāna*. *Sati* is “memory”, and *upaṭṭhāna* means “standing near/close” (upa- “near”, “close”), as for example, *upāsaka*—“one sitting near” (=devotee).

Satipaṭṭhāna is literally “standing near memory”. A closer analysis may give us even a more sophisticated understanding. This is inspired by a Sinhala usage⁴¹ of the same term in its Sanskritized form,⁴² *upasthāna*. Its most common use is in relation to looking after the parents, e.g., in *demāpiyaṇṭa [aeṇa] upasthāna kirīma*,⁴³ or attending to the sick (*gilanunṭa upasthāna kirīma*). *Sati-upaṭṭhāna*, then, would mean something like “attending to memory closely and with compassion”. This clearly places the entire meditation in the praxic domain, even though an intended outcome is cognition about reality and a calming of the mind (affection).

It is, however, appropriate to re-visit the term praxis. In our discussion, it has been understood as something “one does”, i.e., doer and action. But this is only to speak in conventional terms (*sammutti sacca*). In the Buddhist understanding, there is no such duality. Asked of the Buddha, “Who eats consciousness food?” the answer is given, “Not a sound question” (See Warder, 1970, 118ff for a discussion). “Consciousness food” is the mental activity that takes place within one’s consciousness, both the “production” of the “food” and its “consumption” take place automatically, a process conducted within the autonomous nervous system. So “praxis” needs to be understood as a process that happens automatically in the presence of conditions. Thus, the mind turns to a calming of the mind (praxis); the calming (affection) happens when the in-breath and out-breath are watched (cognition). But praxis is not to be understood in dualistic terms. In this context, we can consider the analogy of how the functioning of the brain has been compared to that of a thermostat: “The brain is no more conscious of the processes being fed back to it than is the thermostat” (Restak, 311). In other words, praxis is an automatic process as are cognition and affection.

To make another observation, the clever tripartite strategy adopted by the Buddha is quite natural, and the reasons for this are obvious. An individual is a *nāmarūpa*, “mindbody”, but since there would be no *nāma* without *rūpa*, nor vice versa, it also entails the interplay of the two, which is praxis on the part of both. As if setting a thief to catch a thief, the Buddha uses the tripartite methodology by way of keeping the practice in harmony with the nature of the mind-body, involving both hemispheres of the brain, anatomically speaking of course. This speaks to the comprehensive nature of the *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

Additionally, if the meditational process is consciously intended to guide the practitioner towards liberation, an additional benefit to the practitioner is its contribution towards a maximization of health, regardless of the degree of success in terms of liberation. Notes scientist Gary Schwartz, “If as a result of consciously regulating specific

thoughts and emotions the brain generates specific motor and visceral output devices, we have the psychobiological foundation for teaching a person to regulate his health” (cited in Restak, 1979:309).

At the end of each of the four Establishings, the concept or contemplation, “There is a body”, “There is a mind”, etc, is established in the meditator’s mind. In that spirit, we may conclude this exploration with the following: “There is cognition, praxis and affection in the *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness.” The final phrase is aptly relevant since we have not gone through every practice, but only enough to make the point.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anālayo, 2003, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization*, Windhorse Publications
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Gen Ed.), 1999, *A Comprehensive Manual of Buddhism*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society
- Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, 1975, Pali Text Society
- Davids, Rhys & David Stede, 1979, *Pali-English Dictionary*, London: Pali Text Society *Dhammapada*
- Dīgha Nikāya*, London, Pali Text Society,
- Frank, A G, 1966, “The Development of Underdevelopment”, *Monthly Review*, Sept
- Freire, Paolo, 1970, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, NY: Seabury Press
- Jayasuriya, W F, 1963, *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism*, Colombo: YMBA Press (recent edition by Motilal Banarsidass)
- Majjhima Nikāya*, London: Pali Text Society
- Merleau-Ponty, (1945) 1966, *Phenomenology of Perception*, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Nyanaponika Thera, (1954) 1996, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, Samuel Weiser
- Oxford English Dictionary*
- Punnaji, Madawela, 2001, *Awakening Meditation: Sambodhi bhavana*, Edmonton: Puremind
- Restak, Richard M, 1976, *The Brain: the last frontier*, Warner Books
- Sugunasiri, Suwanda H J, in preparation (a), “ ‘Asoulity’ as Translation of *Anatta*”.
- , in preparation (b), “*Buddha Pūjāva* in Sinhala Buddhism”.
- , 2005, “Human Body: Buddha’s Analysis, 543 BCE” (Poster), Toronto: Nalanda College of Buddhist Studies (Canada).
- , 2001, *You’re What You Sense: Buddha on Mindbody*, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Cultural Centre.
- Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 1996, *Wings to Awakening*, Boston: Barrie Centre for Buddhist Studies

Thich Nhat Hanh, 1993, *For a Future to be Possible*, Parallax.

Varela, F. J., E. Thompson, E. Rosch, 1991, *The Embodied Mind, Cognitive Science and Human Research*, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Vinaya Pitaka, London, Pali Text Society

Warder, A K, 1970, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Webster's Dictionary.

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2nd Pali Conference of Nanhua University, Taiwan in October 2008.

² *Ekāyano* is made up of *eka* “one” + *ayano* < root *ī-* “to go”; *maggā* meaning “path”, “road”, “way”. Hence my literal translation “One way” as in a “one way street” which goes only in one direction.

³ See later for a discussion on translating *anupassanā*.

⁴ We may usefully note here the Pali cognate *ñāṇa-* “knowledge” from *jānāti*.

⁵ But see Section 3 for a further Buddhist understanding of praxis.

⁶ Webster’s gives a third meaning as “disease; ailment”. This may probably better resonate with the Buddhist meaning, since both “warm feeling” and “love”, and sensation are seen to be ailments that render the mind of all but the spiritually evolved insane, as captured in words, *sabbe puthujjanā ummattakā* “Masses are deranged”. But this is not the sense used in the paper.

⁷ Although the term *virīya* does include the connotation of “persistence” as translated by Thanissaro (1996), “effort” captures the praxis, or the doing, aspect better.

⁸ We may note that the first is “mindfulness” (*sati*), also an aspect of cognition.

⁹ While the text has “he” here, the reference being to the male sangha being addresses, we replace it with ‘one’ for the reason that the practice is engaged in by a wider community.

¹⁰ The assumption is that maximum results come from maximal success in engaging in a given aspect of the practice.

¹¹ We need to be careful that “telling” is to be understood as speaking in “conventional language” and does not suggest a duality of the mind being given directions by something else.

¹² Included also in the activities to be done with “clear comprehension” are “wearing robes / carrying the alms bowl”, directed at the ordained and hence deleted here.

¹³ We note here that “brain” (*matthalunga*) is a later addition by Buddhaghosa (*Vism*, VIII.240).

¹⁴ We insert the full quote below: “As if there were a double-mouthed provision bag filled with various kinds of grain such as hill-paddy,

paddy, green-gram, cow-pea, sesamum, husked rice; and [one] with sound eyes, having opened it, should examine it thus: ‘This is hill-paddy, this is paddy, this is green-gram, this is cow-pea, this is sesamum, this is husked rice.’ Just so, ... [one] reflects on this very body, from the soles of his feet up and from the crown of his head down, enclosed by the skin and full of impurities: ‘There are in this body: head hair...urine’.”

¹⁵ If I may be allowed to add a personal note here, in my personal meditation, I remind myself (cognition) that each body part is made up of cells, resulting from a division (mitosis) of the first cell formed at conception, and a particular cluster coming to form each different part of the body, not just the ones identified but also externally (nose, face, head, hands, legs, etc.). I also cognize how each body part is a process, each cell and the cell-bundle that constitutes a body part, having no permanence. This gives me the insight of *anatta*. In the praxic domain, it makes facing death no threat as I cognize the cells in a dying process all the time, thus death in a personal sense being no different, and understanding it as a process. The knowledge that, should I not achieve liberation in this life time, I can have another kick at the can, to put it in a lighter vein, i.e., that I will be born again additionally helps take away any anxieties over death.

¹⁶ “See-through” might come closer to capturing the idea of watching, but it has the meaning of “going past something” as in “I can see through it all” (figuratively) or “I can see through the glass” (literally).

¹⁷ Although the Pali terms are given following the English translation, the original Pali appears as a sentence, *sukham vedanam vedīyamāna* in a different order.

¹⁸ We may note that “experienced” has been used here, the same term translated in the first occurrence as “sensing”. While in the first instance, the attempt was to capture the literal sense (*vedanam vedīyamāno*), “experienced” reads better in English.

¹⁹ The attention to the neutral here may be seen as a preparation for *upekkhā* in the fourth Establishing (see later).

²⁰ Although the dictionary begins with the characterization, “the centre & focus of man’s emotional nature as well as that intellectual element”, and in “Indian Psychology *citta* is the seat and organ thought (*cetasā cinteti*)”, it is “in later scholastic [language] that we are unjustified in applying the term “thought” ...” (op.cit). See my argument elsewhere (Sugunasiri, 1995) that it is the whole body and not the heart that is the seat of consciousness. See also Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) and Varela et al., *The Embodied Mind* (1992).

²¹ A painter is *cittakāra* “doer of paint”, and a “painted house” *cittāgāra* (ibid., 266).

²² This metaphorical language should not be taken to mean a physical place (as e.g., *sukhāvati* “Pure Land” in Japanese Buddhism). The reference rather is to *Nibbāna*.

²³ While *dhamma* has many meanings, here it refers to both mental qualities (e.g., *nīvaraṇa* and *bojjhanga* (see later in the discussion)) and reality (e.g., Four Noble Truths).

²⁴ It is to be noted that sense-desire, anger, flurry and worry and doubt also find a place among the ten fetters that keep one in *samsāra*.

²⁵ Thanissaro (ibid.) translates it more imaginatively, and symbolically, as “Wings to Awakening”, though with no canonical authority, as the author admits.

²⁶ Mindfulness, like the other six Factors of Awakening to follow, is shown in capitals here, in order to indicate that we’re talking about a special quality of the mind that deserves respect given its liberative potential, which is my practitioner’s bias. Not valuing good qualities of mind is, by the same token, may be considered a secular bias.

²⁷ English is from the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, of which Sanskrit is another, as is Greek and Latin, both of which have the same range of meaning—“to dry” and “to roast”, respectively.

²⁸ See Sugunasiri (a), in preparation, for this translation.

²⁹ This insight is from linguistics. Before a speaker opens his mouth, much if rapid organization has gone into it: the appropriate grammatical structure, the right words, itself made up of the right phonemes to ensure the correct concatenation, meaning, etc. But prior to this is the concept (c.f., “right view”, i.e., semantically speaking) that one seeks to communicate.

³⁰ In preference to the common translation of *sammā vācā* as “excellent language” (or speech) I use excellent “Communication” here since it allows the inclusion of not only speaking but also non-speaking—what the Buddha refers to as “noble silence” (*ariyo vā tuṇhībhāvo*)—and non-linguistic dimensions such as kinesics (gestures, etc.), proxemics (distance between/among speakers in a given situation), and oculosics (eye contact or absence thereof).

³¹ We may note here the opposite of *ādāna* “taking”, namely, *dāna* “giving”.

³² To be noted here is that what is to be abstained from is *mis*behaviour, and not normal, healthy sexual relations, either for procreation for the continuity of the species or recreation, serving as a condition for a stable relationship.

³³ Even though it is “lying” that is specifically mentioned here, the other three are implicit.

³⁴ The more common translation of *surameraya majja pamādaṭṭhānā* is “abstention from liquor, etc., that leads to heedlessness/psychological dissonance” (*pamāda*), suggesting a total ban by the Buddha; my interpretation suggests that just as the Buddha did not ban eating meat, he did not ban alcohol either. See Sugunasiri (b), in preparation, for a fuller treatment.

³⁵ *Jhāna* is another difficult term to translate, but its characteristics are clear. First, it is a form of super-calm, super because it is not of the ordinary kind. Second, in *jhāna*, one is constantly aware, hence my label “supercalm-in-awareness” (SCIA). “Super” has the association of excellence, as in a friend saying “super” for some sort of achievement of yours. But it also has an association of being “extraordinary”, as e.g., Superman, the media character, who does things that seem impossible. *Jhāna* indeed is an experience “beyond this world” (*lokuttara*), i.e., not part of ordinary existence, but of which, as with Superman, achievability is a reality, if by the select few who have been willing to go through the disciplined training of cultivating the mind. The quality of mental focus experienced in *jhāna* is “out of this world” given the nature of a mind that is normally “unstable and fickle, difficult to guard, difficult to discipline” (*phandanaṃ capalaṃ cittaṃ, durakkhaṃ dunnivārayaṃ*) (Dhp, 33), etc. And the successful outcome of the attempted focus is a calm (*samatha*) of a super-ordinary quality. Hence, the term “supercalm”. Furthermore, “in-awareness” is used to indicate that the term “trance” is not an appropriate description for one would be completely lost in terms of time and space (see earlier translations in Pali Text Society editions). Rather, in this state of “supercalm-in-awareness”, one is, even as the mind is fully focused internally, it is likewise fully aware of its surroundings as well: a whiff of wind blowing, a fruit falling, an animal lurking, etc.

³⁶ For a more intricate analysis of the mind, see Bodhi (Gen Ed.), 1999. For a popular treatment, see Sugunasiri, 2001.

³⁷ Here, if already familiar with books, there may be some matching with an already existing template of a book in the consciousness. For a pre-literate child, or an adult from a non-literate culture, this may be a brand new entry into consciousness.

³⁸ “Intent, I say, oh Bhikkhus, is kamma” (*cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi*).

³⁹ It may be noted that *taṇhā*, generally translated as “attachment”, is from the root *trṣ-* ‘to thirst’.

⁴⁰ For a more detailed, and scientific, study, see Jayasuriya (1963), a medical practitioner well versed in buddhadhamma.

⁴¹ Sinhala, it may be noted, grew in the shadow of Buddhism since its introduction in the 3rd c. BCE. And hence the influence of Pali should be no surprise.

⁴² It may be noted that Sinhala has at least 3 strands, Pali, Sanskrit (since the Cola colonization of the 11th century) and indigenous (*eḷu*).

⁴³ *Aepa* adds a sense of commitment.