

## Thursday sit with instruction, week 3

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As we come to the completion of the *Satipaṭṭhāna* instructions, it isn't that it represents going deeper and deeper or further and further, but rather think of it as learning how to include more and more into your present moment awareness. You don't have to be any different than you are. Wherever you are, that's the place of practice. If you think you're supposed to be somewhere else in practice, or you think that what's happening is not supposed to be happening, to that degree you're missing the opportunity to practice now, here. And it's often the case that we, in our lives, we spend a lot of time focusing on thinking about what is happening, or what should happen, or what did happen. And for the most part, for this practice, what is happening is not that important compared to, oh, you're present, how you know what is happening.

In some of these distinctions that *Satipaṭṭhāna* makes, that I'm calling, you know, shallow and profound. They're invaluable for getting a seeing more clearly what's happening. But be careful you don't set those two things up. One is better than the other. If doing so takes you away from the simple, clear attention to this. Now, as it is, the how we're aware can be an awareness that gives permission for everything to arise and to appear.

And it can be an awareness that doesn't pick it up, doesn't react, doesn't use it as a basis to wander off in thought. In a sense, both allows it, gives it permission to arise, and leaves it alone. So it has permission, it has possibility of passing away. Thoughts arise, and if you leave them alone, they pass away. Stories arise, and if you don't get involved in them or add to them, see them clearly, they pass away. Maybe they return and pass again.

Reactions arise and pass. We can sometimes see a clinging arise, a resistance arise, a desire and aversion, to know it clearly, to feel it sensitively, without getting entangled. Quiet enough to see the arising, quiet enough to see the passing, and how we're aware can become,

come into better, better focus. And that's what the seven factors of awakening can support. Help us to be aware, be attentive with more clarity, openness, calmness, non-reactivity. To know without participating, to know how the mind participates, but to know it's a mind with thinking, analyzing, commenting, reacting, and appreciating the nature of the awareness that can see in such a way.

And to understand or appreciate the simplicity of awareness each moment. I'll offer a guided meditation on the seven factors of awakening, and not so much to evoke them in you, but maybe as a way of recognizing that these are simple capacities, simple states that are readily at hand, maybe already here, in the midst of how you know, sense, observe, first to establish a global awareness of the body, maybe a kind of bodily version of open awareness, open bodyfulness. And within the body, there's the body's experience of breathing that involves a gentle rhythm of in-breaths and out-breaths. The body's awareness of breathing arises with breathing, passes with breathing. In some ways, maybe the awareness grows through your body with a global awareness of the body. Experiences can feel like the body with sensations, the body with emotions, the body with tensions.

Everything is okay in the field of awareness. And the first factor of awakening, awareness, maybe can be brought into highlight with a simple word. Here, here is the experiences of practice. Here is where awareness can only be. Here, aware here. Okay.

And in what way can you be aware here, without any strain, where the sensing and knowing is less something you do and more something you allow? Almost as if it's not you being aware. It is here being aware. The second factor of awakening, of a deep clarity of mind, may be brought into highlight with the word what. What is this, but without looking for an answer, but rather what that opens the metaphoric eyes, opens the sensing, the knowing, into greater clarity or a fullness of registering, receiving, what is happening here. And then the vitality factor of awakening that might be highlighted with the word yes, yes to being aware, yes to opening the doors of the senses, yes to the breathing, appearing and disappearing.

The joy factor of awakening highlighted with the sound, is there something here in the practice, in the knowing and sensing that feels good, has an awe in it, the tranquility factor of awakening, with the word kaka, saying the word whispering, the word calmly. Kaka. To highlight a calm awareness, calm sensing, calm knowing, a calming of the mind and body, the *samādhī* factor of awakening invoked by the word including the whole of our experience, the global experience of body and mind, in which everything is nested, everything is cozy, here, and the equanimity factor of awakening highlighted with some deep reassurance that can be provided by the word, it's okay. No need to react, pick up, reject or accept. Hear this. Now

it's okay.

It's okay to be aware of this. To be awake. To the present moment, awake. So in the space of awareness, there's a knowing of what appears and knowing as things disappear, not straining or searching for arising and passing, but with a clarity of a mind, clarity of awareness that leaves everything alone, nothing to judge, nothing to comment on, nothing to react to. Just one more thing to allow it to appear as it appears, allow it to disappear as it goes. When the mind is awake, it doesn't interfere with anything.

There's space in awareness for things to rise as they are, to persist the way they do, and to pass away, fade away, as the next arising comes. Wherever we are, that place is here. Wherever we are, the time is now. Now by itself has no time, like using watercolors to paint on a flowing river. We call this particular now 9:05. There will be no bell to end the sitting.

Some endings and beginnings is water painting on a moving river when you're ready to get up to continue practicing in a different mode. Oh, you think it's time for your work meditation. Don't let it be an end of the meditation, an end of mindfulness. Let it be a continuation in a different posture, with different activities. May be sensitive that here and now is a river of change, of things appearing and disappearing.