

Satipatthana and Profound Samadhi - Day 1 Talk 1

Francisco Morillo Gable & Aleix Ruiz-Falqués

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Francisco Morillo Gable

Welcome. I'm really happy to be here with you. Thank you for being here together on this Saturday morning. I'm in Berkeley, so it's nice and early in the morning. And I really appreciate your time and you being here. I feel a certain kind of reverence to making the time for this practice. So I'm here with my colleague, Aleix Rees.

And Aleix, do you want to say a quick hello? Aleix and I are going to kind of tag team a little bit.

Aleix Ruiz-Falqués

Hi, good morning, everyone. Good evening here from Barcelona, Spain. Nice to meet you all.

Francisco Morillo Gable

Thank you, Aleix. Aleix will be back in about a half hour before the first guided meditation. And I'm going to kind of lay out a little bit the program for these two weekends. The idea is to talk about to talk about *satipaṭṭhāna* and look at it with an emphasis on the concentration practice, concentration side of it. Of course it's a *vipassanā* practice, it's an insight practice, but within the *satipaṭṭhāna*, as we practice the text, and we're going to be using a translation by Gil Fronsdal that Rob's going to put in the chat in a moment.

We can really see in the progression this movement and incorporation and this integration of unifying all parts of ourselves. Unifying our body, mind, and heart. And it's very special, very useful, I think, to have *vipassanā* be complemented and fulfilled by a *saṃatha* dimension, a tranquility dimension, the wholesome, soft qualities that we actually see fully expressed in the very end of the *Satipaṭṭhāna*. So the goal is coming, bringing to fulfillment the seven awakening factors, balancing those awakening factors, which are really basically a combination of energizing, seeing activities and the calming *saṃādhi* side.

And I'm delighted to talk about the *Satipaṭṭhāna* because it's a very inspirational practice. It's my Burmese teacher, Sayadawabhiva Kananda, has told me wonderful stories of his days with Upandita, the great teacher that is teacher to many of the teachers that brought this tradition to the United States. And in the stories that I hear are just how very simple and everyday common language and common, not very even well-educated people, achieved many states of awakening. It was almost like a common thing in the culture.

And he tells me stories of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of meditation centers of this practice, which is a wonderful lineage that we are connected to and a wonderful lineage that we come from.

And what's inspirational to me about *Satipaṭṭhāna* is the clarity of awareness that arises. The clarity of awareness that is established and that we learn to abide in. And this clarity of awareness is very liberating.

And what it liberates is something that we don't always maybe pay such close attention that turns out to be a huge thing. How we grasp. How we grasp and then how we cling. And this practice brings grasping and clinging to a complete ending.

And that's really inspiring because in that letting go, we're really now entering in the terrain of no suffering, the ending of suffering. And it's interesting to me that I think important to me with the progression that I'm going to be laying out that this ending of suffering is, which we always point to and is extremely valuable and profound. But the ending of suffering also comes with the arising of something. The arising of something.

The arising of the ending of *dukkha* comes with the arising of *sukha*. It comes with the arising of pleasant aspects, the deeply beneficial, the deeply wholesome aspects that bring into wholeness that are really within the potential of our being, within us, and are occluded over by a lot of the fabrications, a lot of the constructions that the mind does. And so this progression happens by this progressive development in the practice. It is gradual unification, this gradual bringing together.

We start with in a very broad level with the body. Many parts of the body. Half the sutta is about the body. And then we move to the states, the pleasant and unpleasant feelings, the deep sensations and the unpleasant and pleasant sensations in the terms that we'll use, surface and deep sensations.

And then we move to the mind, that vast mind, and then to the mental objects, the phenomena, the activities of mind. And all of this is unified. And as it's in the process of bringing all of this together so that it works harmoniously, healing happens. We're healed by the divisions, the ways we're cut off, the ways we're distracted from ourselves, deep in ourselves.

We have this selective attention that really separates us from deep sources within that are wholesome, are deeply enjoyable, and really nice to have, really nice to exist in. They're a place of peace and a place of deep rest. And they are in that realm of the boundless and the unconditional.

And why I thought about pointing to the, or making links with signless concentration of mind, which I'll lay out more in the second program. But in this process, we get to see the ends and the means. We get to see that the means that we're using to achieve this wholesomeness, to achieve this ending of *dukkha*, also includes the end of the practice and complete liberation.

And that's, maybe I'm not big enough to even use that word because it's such a big deal that we're, the notion of liberation. But because it is such a special state to realize, that I think it's nice to see that this very practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* is leading there, leads there, and is connected to an ending and a fulfillment. And I found that for me in my development, that it was really important to get a sense, get a feel, get an idea, a felt sense idea of how this path fits together.

That this path actually takes me somewhere and that I can know it and I can experience some of it. Which built my faith because the practice is sometimes manual labor. And it requires this activity of restarting, restarting, restarting and continuing and continuing.

And as we go along, we find that the practice wants to continue along because we get so much reassurance and so much benefit from it. So to fit things along and to see that there's an ending of the path and not to create striving, not to create some additional goal, additional way of measuring of how we're not there. Quite the opposite is what I hope to inspire, to see how in the *Satipaṭṭhāna* we're already in the line of liberation, already practicing liberation. And that I find very encouraging.

So the process of this sutta, the process of bringing *sati* into its flowering, into its brightness, is a two-part process. It's a shedding process. It's a quieting process. It's a letting go and a calming of all the constructions and all of the activities of mind that the mind makes up, those things that we make up that are not so helpful that keep us stuck and keep us feeling trapped and not really fully connected and aware of all of what we are and what we have.

And then the other side of this that I want to emphasize here in this program is that there's also an allowing of these natural qualities to arise. It's a letting of the wholesome qualities, that which bring wholeness to us to be here. To be available to nourish us so that there's a unified field that is here with us at all times.

And it can be here at all times when all sense faculties, all sense faculties are working together in a seamless way. And that's what all of the different practices the *satipaṭṭhāna* achieve. And so that we don't fall into striving, which can be very natural, the notion of growing, this practice as a growing activity, as something that grows, the Pāli word is *bhāvanā*, I find very supporting to let us rest back and let this practice happen.

Allow this practice to happen. There's a different way of being if I asked you, what are you practicing? As opposed to, what are you growing? Maybe when I ask you, what are you practicing? I immediately would begin to list some practices that I'm doing, and they almost begin to feel like, sometimes, like tasks and activities that I do, that there's a doing.

And in the worst extreme, it's like the activities are a technique. Whereas if I look at what I'm growing, what am I growing in this meditation of the four foundations of awareness? Maybe I become a little more reflective, and the pointing to is for something natural that grows. As we say very often, this is a gradual path.

It's a gradual growing of something that is natural within us and that it comes to full flowering if we take care to be in this mode of being aware that we'll be practicing. And the four foundations, the *satipaṭṭhāna* sutta, the translation that we're using, Gil Fronsdal's translation, instead of the four foundations of mindfulness, it's translated as the four foundations of awareness. That is, awareness is what is not exactly we're doing, but it's something that we're performing activities to have be established, to have something that is there, to have awareness be strong, to have awareness be available.

And it's more in something that we let happen, something that's there because awareness, the word awareness as opposed to the word mindfulness is kind of handy because it isn't something that we do. It lends to be seen as something that is available, that happens on its own. And we perform activities to help it be bright and strong and hear.

And so the biological emphasis, the emphasis on something that has to do with biological mammalian being, which is what we are, really takes advantage, really brings something forth that is of the human mammal. These qualities of nurturing automatic care, automatic love, are aspects of ourselves, of this of the beings that we are, that are auto in themselves connected to, if I may put it this way, infinitude into the boundless dimension.

Love is here. Love can be felt as an endless thing because we have this automatic responsivity to care, to be kind, to be joyful, and to be compassionate. So, we bring to fullness in a way, if you'll allow me to say, this awareness that at its, at its, in its expression is accepting and allows everything to be, has room for everything.

And as such, it has a lot of qualities of love. It shines on everything. And in the shining of it, it helps things to grow and shift and change and heal. And the final expression of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* is bringing to fulfillment the seven awakening factors that I mentioned.

And these factors, we begin to sense in us, we begin to bring them into expression, and we learn to balance them, we learn to how they work in practice. And the instructions are to bring them to fulfillment, make a lot, make a big deal of this, make a very, very big deal of this. Make a big deal of joy. Make a big deal of your wholesome energy, of your ability to see and investigate and be curious.

And also make much of tranquility, *samādhi*, and your equanimity. These are beautiful things that are that are almost like the seedbed of a deep source within us. We get to enliven this deep source, help water this deep source, so that this deeper way of knowing and deeper attention, what the tradition calls a caring attention, begins to come forth all on its own through us, for us.

And it's very sweet when we have this. We have the clear knowing, the clear seeing, the strong seeing of *vipassanā*. That is what *vipassanā* can be seen as. And this *vipassanā* that comes forth, that I look forward to moving toward, is a *vipassanā* that could be called a wet *vipassanā*.

Because in the process of bringing forward the seven awakening factors, especially the calming factors, equanimity, tranquility, *samādhi*, and equanimity, is that the mind, the heart, and the body become soft, malleable, receptive, ready for us, to us. And that makes what is often called a drive *vipassanā*, which is the tradition that it's a label that's been put to the tradition that we inherited from the Burmese tradition that I mentioned that my teacher was a part is a part of it, makes it a wet *vipassanā*.

And it's I have found that to be extremely helpful to have seeing and knowing be complemented by sensing. It is complementing by dimensions of feeling, these softer dimensions that help the seeing

feel more at home. They help the seeing feel more connected. They help the seeing not be so dry and disconnected.

And so finally, as the light of awareness begins to shine, it shines from these three attentional faculties that we're going to spend a lot of time on. And that I'm going to invite my colleague Aleix in a moment to speak more about from an etymological perspective. These are maybe the only three things that I might say are worth really remembering in this program.

Nothing else. Just let it all go and just be here in the moment. But knowing, the faculty, attentional faculty of knowing. The attentional faculty of sensing. And the faculty of calming.

These are what bring forth that capacity of awareness to be this spacious light that just shines on anything. And as it shines, it allows things to grow and it makes room for something to happen. What you maybe want most to happen. And light is very handy.

It opens up so much. I take this walk on the hills here on Berkeley, like I said, and sometimes I take a walk late in the day and I find myself in the dark at night. And it's always astonishing to me how these paths that I know so well become so small and so narrow.

Even after my eyes adjust to the night vision, the quality of the darkness, there's still not the room, the openness, the vastness, the fullness of the blue sky. I can't see nearly the amount of what appears with the light. And so *sati*, the word we translate for mindfulness or awareness, is this shining, shining phenomenon that allows us to see and ends in this knowledge and vision, the ending of the path often referred to in those terms, categorized in those terms as knowledge and vision.

And there's a cognitive, somewhat cognitive capacity there. Knowledge. And then vision is more of a sensing ability. So knowing and sensing go all the way to the end of the path.

And this light, when it falls on the artificial things, the mind-made things, the complicated attachments, it does that thing that awareness does. It opens the ability to understand them and get to know them and get them to find their place of security and healing. The light also, and this is what I will be bringing out in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, and so will my colleague Aleix, light shines on the beneficial qualities, on the wholesome.

And then they shift and change and bring a lot of softening, a lot of relaxation. And the wholesome grows into this caring attention that is a profound kind of attention that comes from deep within us. So I think the last thing I'll say to put a plug on how, why we're going to dwell on knowing, sensing and relaxing is that there's a deep knowing that's born that when attention is not distracted, there's a deep knowing to know that kind of knows.

And new dimensions of knowing come out all on their own that have nothing to do with us. And let me see if Aleix is around before I hand it off. Ah, I see some friends join us. Hey, Aleix.

I'll hand it over to you in a moment. But the last thing I'll say that we're leading off with this presentation to talk about these three attentional faculties because they're so pervasive throughout this

course. And also they are the first instructions to know your breathing, the in and the out, how long and how short, and to experience, to sense and feel the whole body, and then to allow for this big calming.

And these instructions are, I think, significant in the sense that these are the same instructions in all three of the mindfulness discourses. The four foundations of awareness, the mindfulness of breathing, and the mindfulness of the body all begin with these set of instructions, which I take to, since they're kind of put right at the beginning, I kind of take these things seriously. Because these crafters of these documents thought they were important enough to lay out at the beginning and make them that front and center.

So with that said, I'll hand it over to Aleix. Thank you for your attention. Thank you.