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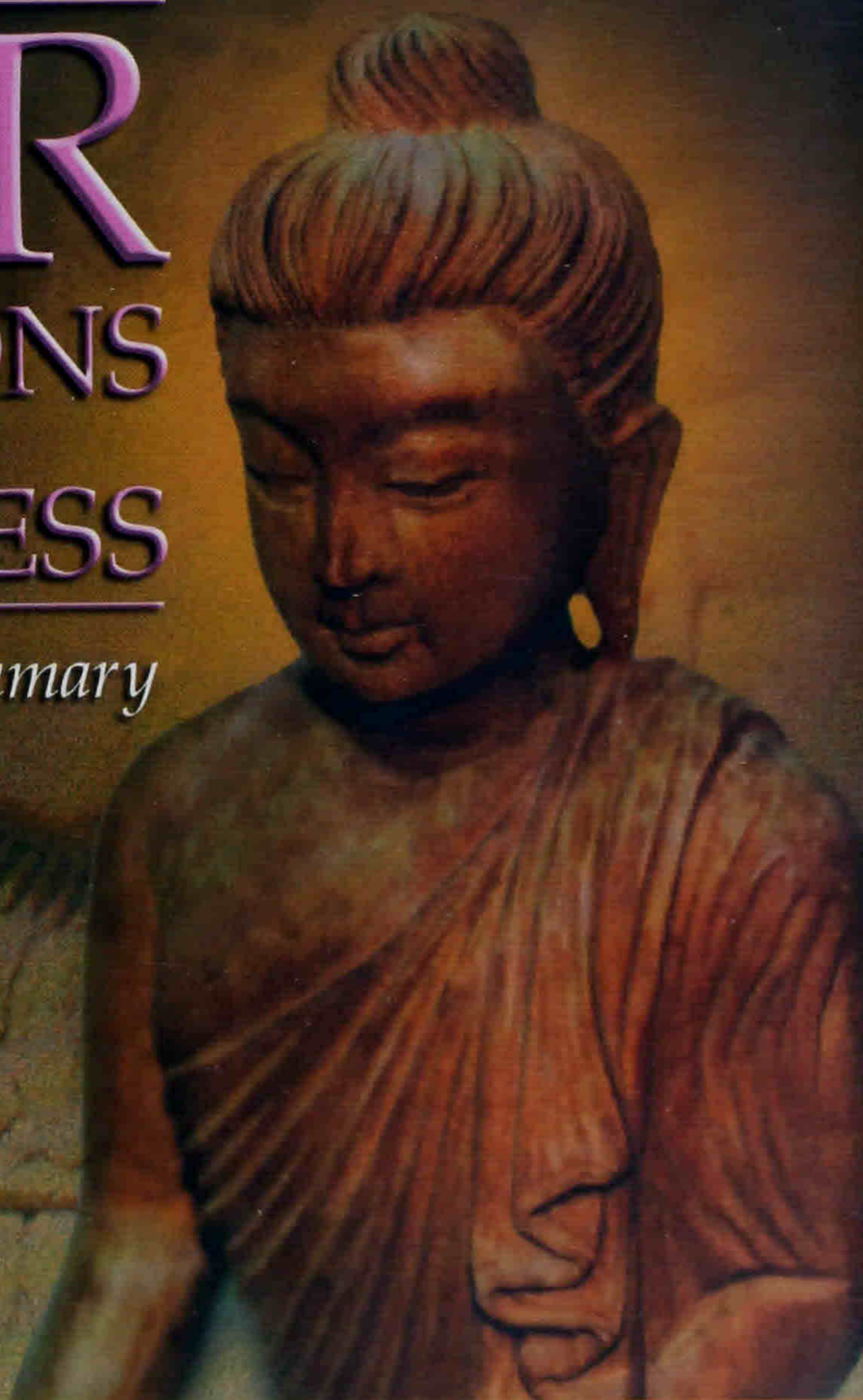
FOUNDATIONS

of

MINDFULNESS

An Exposition of the Summary

5



Sayadaw U Sīlānanda



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FOUNDATIONS
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MINDFULNESS

An Exposition of the Summary

Sayadaw U Sīlānanda

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&

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AN EXPOSITION OF THE SUMMARY

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PREFACE

SATIPATṬHĀNA (foundation of mindfulness) or Vipassanā (insight) meditation was first introduced by the Buddha in India more than two and a half millenium ago. It is a practice aimed, firstly, at the establishing and developing of mindfulness, the mental factor that is most crucial to the Buddha's path of liberation from *Saṃsāra* — the rounds of suffering. When mindfulness is firmly established through the practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* it serves as a powerful tool for the investigation of mind-body processes uncovering their conditioned nature as impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self. Such insight into the conditioned nature of mind-body processes, when sufficiently developed will effect in the mind of the meditator a disenchantment with, a letting go of and turning away from all things conditioned. His/her mind will then incline and finally plunge into the unconditioned element called Nibbāna, the acme of the Buddhist path of mental culture. All unsatisfactoriness or suffering entailed by the conditioned world of *Saṃsāra* will be brought to an end once Nibbāna is attained.

Closer to our time, *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation was popularized by the late Venerable Ledi Sayadaw (1846 – 1923) in Burma about a century ago. Since then through the effort of other teachers,

notably the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw (1904 – 1982) and Sayagyi U Ba Khin (1899 – 1971) of Burma as well as S.N. Goenka, this ancient system of Buddhist meditation had gained world-wide popularity. Out of this development came the many methods of *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation that we have today. Each one of these methods is derived directly or indirectly from the MAHĀ SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA (The Great Discourse On the Foundations of Mindfulness), the most comprehensive discourse that the Buddha ever delivered on the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation. Even though their approaches may be different these various methods find a common ground in this discourse. An understanding of this discourse is therefore most important for a *Satipaṭṭhāna* or Vipassanā meditator in order to guide him/her on the right track.

This work as its sub-title suggests is an exposition of the summary of this all important discourse. It is transcribed from a talk given by Sayadaw U Sīlānanda at the Buddha Sāsana Yeikthā, Seven Bridge, Ontario, Canada. The summary here refers to the opening passage in the discourse which begins with the Buddha laying claim to the efficacy of *Satipaṭṭhāna* as the only way for obtaining seven benefits — beginning with the purification of beings and among which is the realization of Nibbāna. The Buddha then goes on to give a summary of the method for the establishing of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) with reference to body, feeling, consciousness and *dhamma*. These four — collectively called the

Four Foundations of Mindfulness — are the four objective domains for contemplation with mindfulness in *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation practice. In the summary the Buddha listed out the mental factors such as energetic effort, mindfulness, etc. that the meditator must bring to bear in his work of meditation. He also stated very concisely how *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation is to be carried out. Due to its conciseness the meaning of this passage may not be at once clear or apparent. An exposition of its meaning is therefore helpful to uncover its meaning.

Drawing from his vast knowledge of the Pāli canonical and commentarial texts as well as his years of experience teaching *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation, Sayadaw U Sīlānanda gives us — in a very simple language — lucid explanation of the meaning of each and every word in the summary passage as well as its significance and implication in the actual work of *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation. As he said it is very important for a *Satipaṭṭhāna* or Vipassanā meditator to understand this passage correctly and clearly. Understanding even this much they will have a firm understanding of the practice and how to carry it out.

To aid readers unfamiliar with Buddhist technical terms found in the exposition, a glossary of these terms are given at the end of this book. For the benefit of readers unacquainted with *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation but wish to learn it, a brief meditation instruction by Sayadaw is included, in appendix two. And for

those interested we have also included, in appendix one, a word for word Pāli to English translation of the original Pāli text of the opening passage of the MAHĀ SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA.

The *sutta* number of the references to SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA follows that of THE CONNECTED DISCOURSES OF THE BUDDHA, Bhikkhu Bodhi's new translation of the SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA.

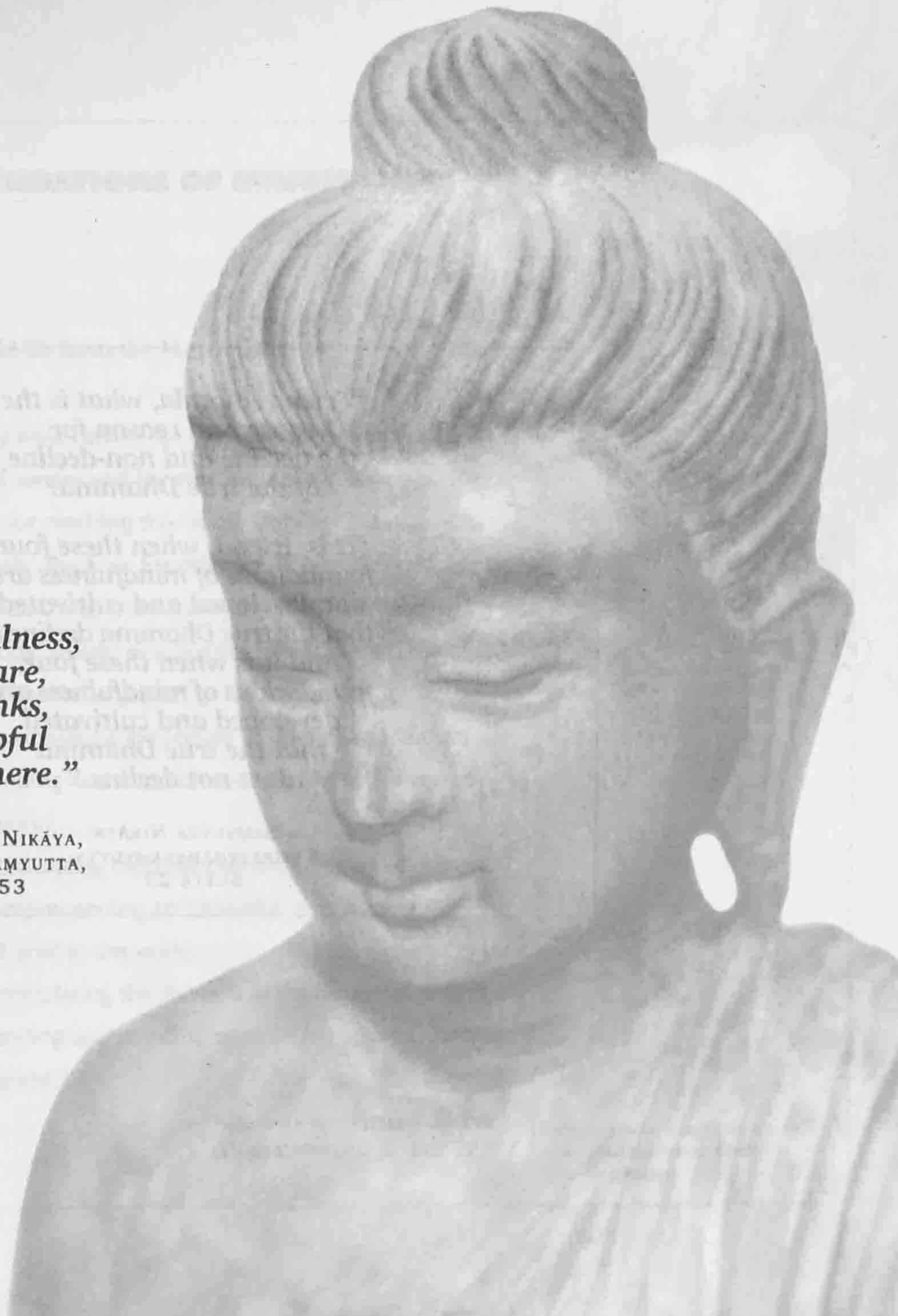
We are honored to bring you yet another of Sayadaw U Sīlānanda's work. We hope Sayadaw's clear explanation will help to illuminate your inward journey towards awakening.

Sumitta

DECEMBER, 2001

***“Mindfulness,
I declare,
O monks,
is helpful
everywhere.”***

**~ SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA,
BOJJHAṄGASAMYUTTA,
SUTTA 53**





“Friend Ānanda, what is the
cause and reason for
the decline and non-decline
of the true Dhamma?

“It is, friend, when these four
foundations of mindfulness are
not developed and cultivated
that the true Dhamma declines.
And it is when these four
foundations of mindfulness are
developed and cultivated
that the true Dhamma
does not decline.”

~ SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA,
SATIPAṬṬHĀNASAMYUTTA,
SUTTA 23

THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

THE OPENING PASSAGE from the MAHĀ SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA:

“This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for reaching the Noble Path, for the realization of Nibbāna, namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

“Herein (in this teaching) monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming covetousness and grief in the world;

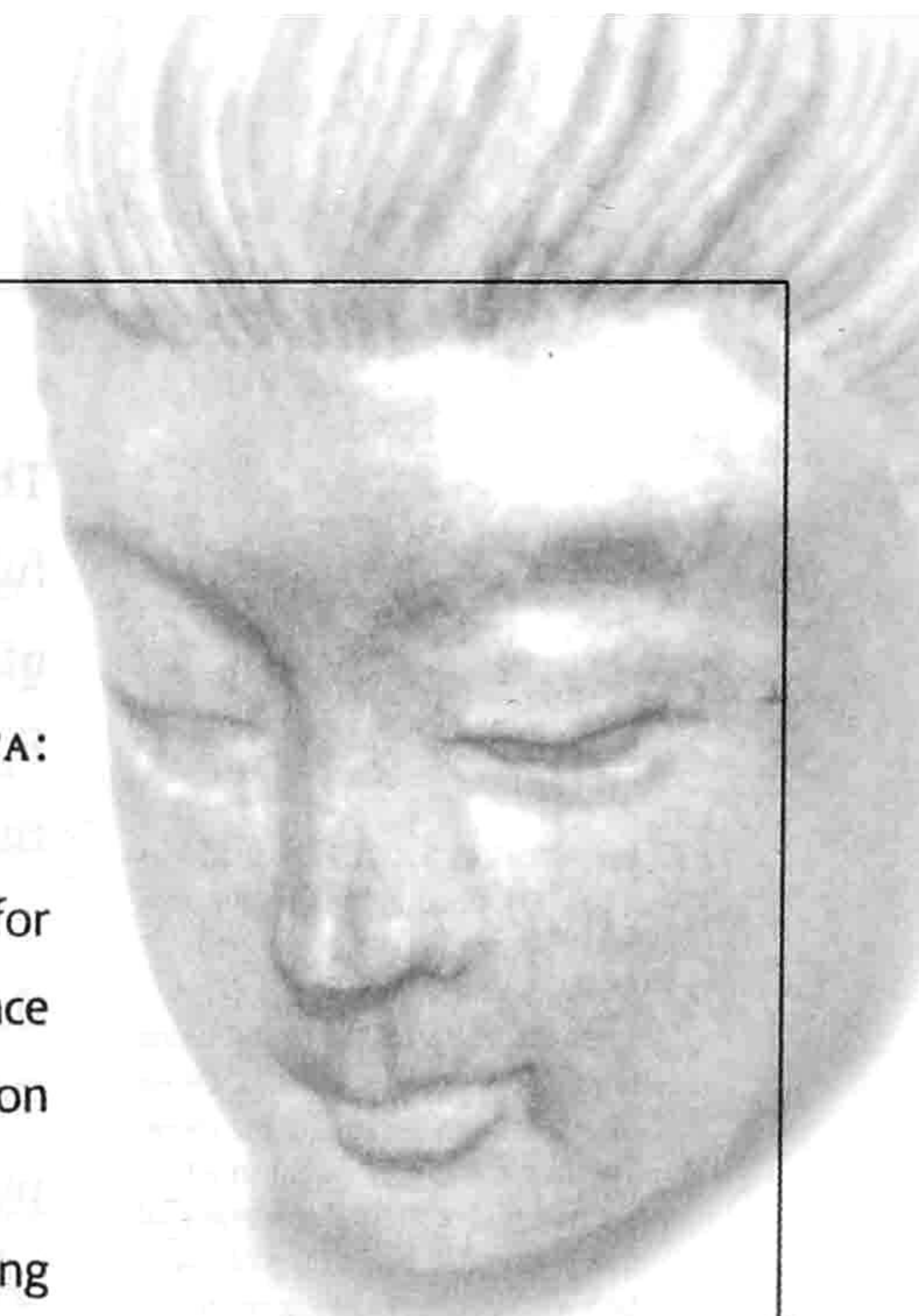
“He dwells contemplating the feeling in the feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming covetousness and grief in the world;

“He dwells contemplating the consciousness in the consciousness, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming covetousness and grief in the world;

“He dwells contemplating the *dhamma* in the *dhammas*, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming covetousness and grief in the world.”

~ MAHĀ SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA
(DĪGHA NIKĀYA, SUTTA 22)¹

¹ See appendix 1, pg 41 for a word for word Pāli-English translation of this passage.



2. **SATIPATTHANA SUTTA.** This discourse is the 10th discourse in the MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA. Another discourse – the **MAHĀ SATIPATTHANA SUTTA** (The great discourse on the foundations of mindfulness) – is found at DĪGHA NIKĀYA as the 22nd discourse there. The two suttas are similar in all respect except in their treatment of the four noble truths: the MAHĀ SATIPATTHANA SUTTA being more elaborate in its explanation.

N.B. In the Burmese 6th Buddhist Council edition of the TIPITAKA (The Pāli Canon) however, the MAHĀ SATIPATTHANA SUTTA (the more elaborate version) appears in both Nikāyas, replacing the SATIPATTHANA SUTTA in MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA.

See 'TIPITAKA' under glossary for the organisation structure of the Nikāyas.

3. For example in the SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA a whole chapter (the SATIPATTHANA-SAMYUTTA – the 47th Samyutta) is dedicated to the exposition of the various aspects of the practice of the four foundation of mindfulness. The PATISAMBHIDĀMAGGA & VIBHANGA too contain a treatise each for the same purpose. Other parts of the Pāli Canon (TIPITAKA) also contain various discourses pertaining to this practice.

Today I will explain the passage that we read every morning. This is from the Discourse called The Four Foundations of Mindfulness.² This passage is just a summary of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. But it is important that those who practice the Foundations of Mindfulness or Vipassanā Meditation understand this passage correctly and clearly.

As I have said, the method of the practice of Mindfulness or the Four Foundations of Mindfulness was discovered by the Buddha. He practiced it himself and got the best results from this practice and then for forty-five years he taught the Four Foundations of Mindfulness many times. After his death these methods were collected and recorded in what is known as the Pāli Canon.³ The instructions given at Vipassanā retreats are all based on the MAHĀ SATIPATTHANA SUTTA which contains this passage.

● The Only Way

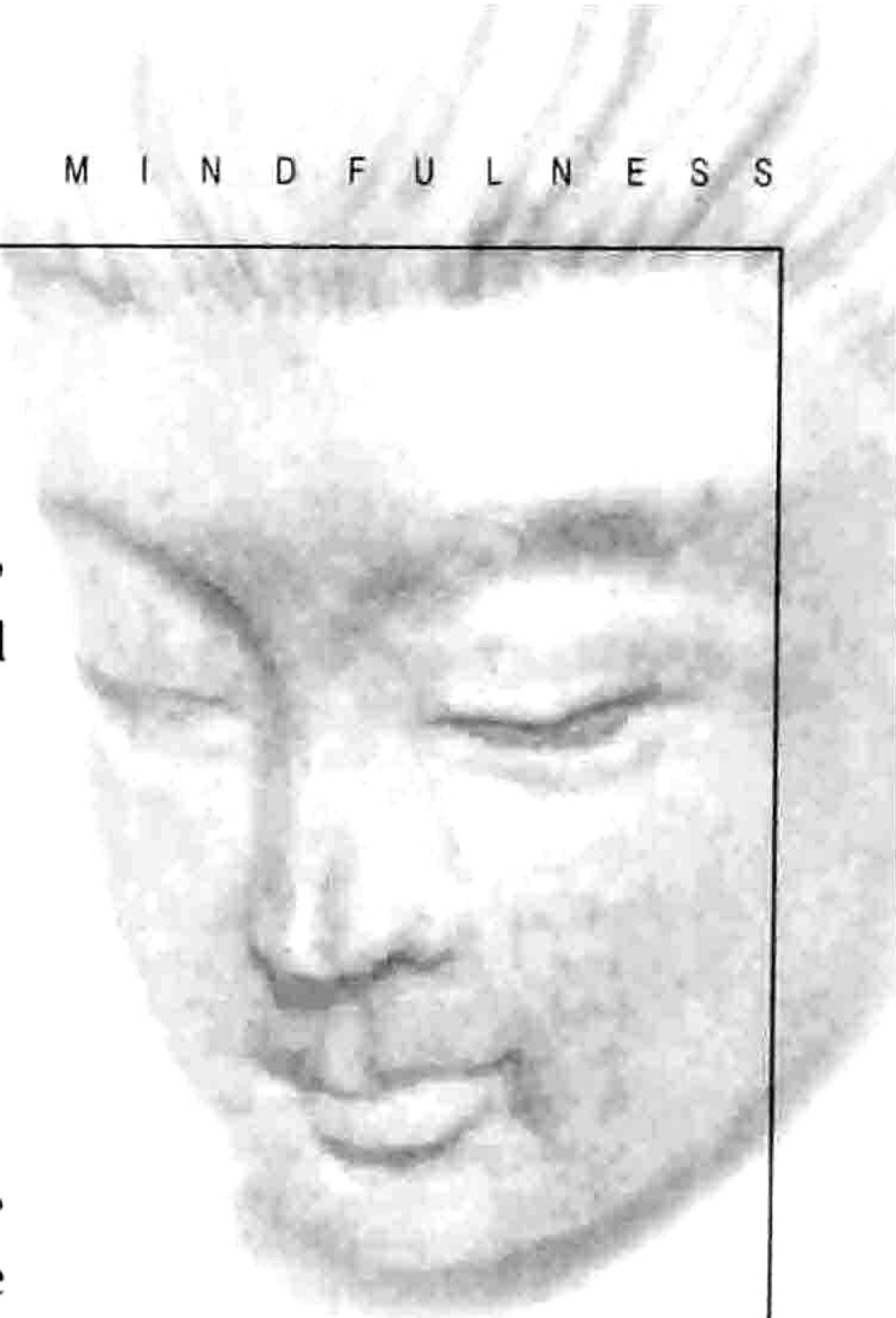
The first sentence is, “This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings ... namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.” So, at the very beginning the Buddha said, “**This is the only way**”. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness or the Practice of Mindfulness, is the only way for the purification of beings ... Here the Buddha said, “This is the only way”. Now, the Pāli word for this translation is “*Ekāyano*”.



The meanings of “*Ekāyano*”:

1. “*Ekāyano*” is composed of two parts, “*eka*” and “*ayana*”. “*Ayana*” means way, path or road, and “*eka*” means one. So, *ekāyano* literally means one way. This one way is interpreted to mean one way which has no forks, no branches. There is just one way and if you tread this way you will surely reach your destination. There are no misleading branches of this way.
2. The other meaning is that this is the way to be taken by one, to be taken by the individual only. That means when you are treading on this path or on this way you are alone, you have no companion because you make progress or you do not make progress depending on your own capabilities.
3. Also, this word is interpreted to mean “the Way of The One”. “The One” here means the Buddha. The Buddha was the best of beings and so he was called “The One” and this is the way discovered and taught by the Buddha, so this is called the “Way of The One”.
4. Also, it is interpreted to mean the only way, this is the only way, there is no other way for the purification of beings and so on.⁴

4 Another meaning of *ekāyano* not mentioned here but given in the commentary is that it is the way that goes to the One. ‘One’ here refers to Nibbāna. So it is the way that goes solely to Nibbāna. See Soma Thera, *THE WAY OF MINDFULNESS* (Published by Buddhist Publication Society)





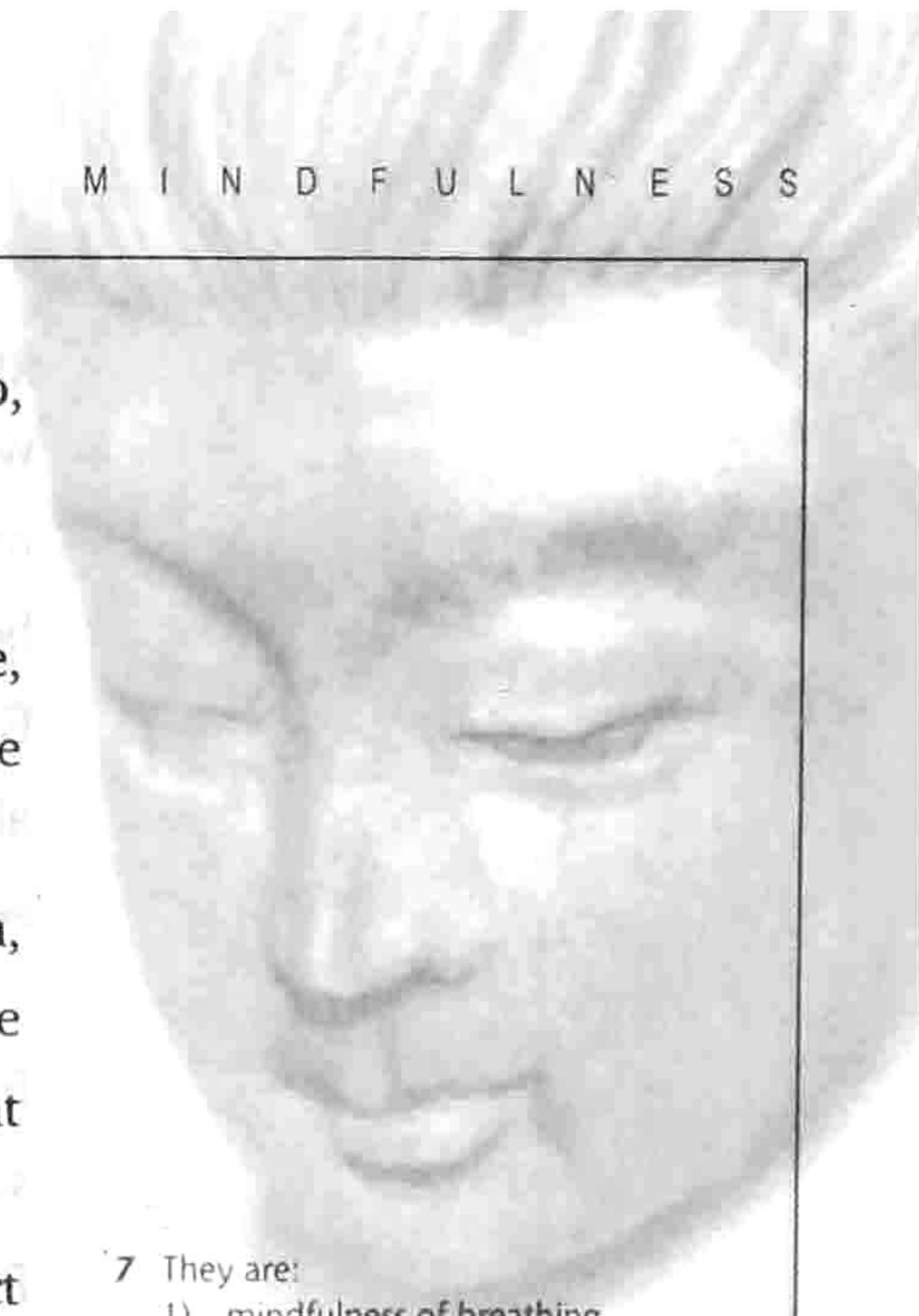
Now, with regard to the translation “the only way” there are two questions. One is that here, Four Foundations of Mindfulness mean mindfulness only. But, there are other factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. So, are they (the other factors) also not the way to purification of beings? The answer is that they are also the way to purification of beings, but they do not exist without mindfulness. So when mindfulness is mentioned, they are virtually mentioned, i.e., although mindfulness alone is mentioned here, we should understand that all the other seven factors that are concomitant with the Noble Path are also implied.

The other question raised by people, especially of the West, is “Why did the Buddha say, ‘This is the only way’? Aren’t there other ways for the purification of beings?” They argue that there are different roads to reach a city and just as there are different roads to a city there must be different ways to reach purification of beings or to reach Nibbāna. Some people do not like this or they thought the Buddha would not have said, “This is the only way”. Sometimes analogies are not really correct. It is true that there are different roads to reach this town. (I am not familiar with this country so I do not know which roads reach this town.) But they are roads, they are not marshes or forests. And so the road is the only way to reach this town. There may be different roads but they are roads.⁵ In the same way, there may be different ways of practicing mindfulness but they must be mindfulness.⁶

5 The point here is that though there exists many roads leading to the town, they are all similar in that they are roads, they are not marshes or forests. They may be tar road, cement road or dirt road; one-lane, two-lane, three-lane or four-lane, one-way or two-way; lighted or not, wide or narrow, etc., but they are roads, nevertheless. And only by means of a road can the town be reached. Therefore road is called “the only way” to reach the town.

6 Just as with the road so also with the practice of mindfulness. There are different ways to practice mindfulness, e.g. mindfulness of breathing, mindfulness of postures of the body, or of feelings, or mind-states, or mindfulness of the five-aggregates-of-clinging, or of the internal and external sense-bases, etc. Regardless of the method of practice of mindfulness adopted they are practices of mindfulness. They are not any other practice such as the practice of *samatha* (tranquility meditation) or practice of morality or generosity etc. They are practices of mindfulness and they lead to the establishing of right-mindfulness that leads finally to the realization of Nibbāna.





Only mindfulness can lead us to the attainment of Nibbāna. Also, if we say physical exercise is the only way to build big muscles, I think no one would object to that. If you want to build big muscles you have to do physical exercise. Without physical exercise, you cannot hope to build muscles. But, physical exercise can take different forms such as weight lifting or using machines and so on. In the same way, mindfulness is the only way to reach Nibbāna, but mindfulness may take different forms. Even in this discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, mindfulness practice is taught in twenty-one ways. There are twenty-one different kinds of mindfulness practice⁷ to choose from. Therefore, I think it is correct to say that this is the only way. So mindfulness is the only way.

People may argue here because the word used here is “*ekāyano*”, one way. But in another place — in the DHAMMAPADA — Buddha said clearly, “This alone is the way and there is no other way for the purity of wisdom.”⁸ So we cannot argue that Buddha said there is any other way. He expressly said that this alone is the way and there is no other way. So I think we must accept that this is the only way for the purification of beings. If we consider it with reference to the practice it becomes clear.

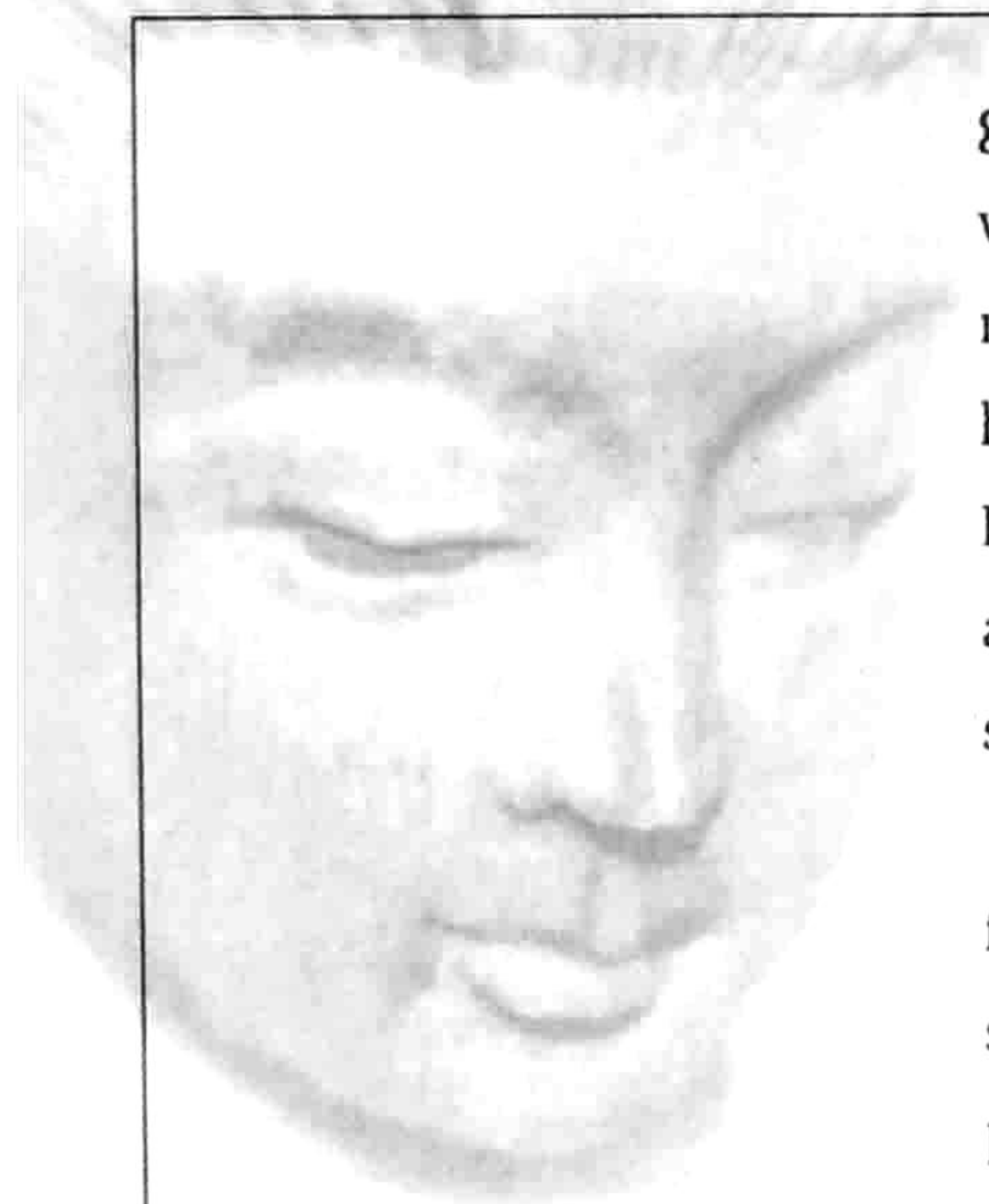
I have said that mindfulness is like a guard, and once the guard is removed anything can come in. So as long as mindfulness is at the sense doors, our minds are pure. No unwholesome mental states can come into our minds, because mindfulness is there

⁷ They are:

- 1) mindfulness of breathing,
- 2) mindfulness of the postures of the body,
- 3) mindfulness with clear comprehension,
- 4) reflection on the repulsiveness of the body,
- 5) reflection on the material elements,
- 6-14) nine cemetery contemplations,
- 15) contemplation of feelings,
- 16) contemplation of consciousness,
- 17) the five hindrances,
- 18) the five aggregates of clinging,
- 19) the six internal and six external sense-bases,
- 20) the seven factors of enlightenment, and
- 21) the Four Noble Truths.

See MAHĀ SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA.

⁸ *Es'eva maggo* : This is the only way (referring to the Noble Eight-fold Path) — DHAMMAPADA verse 274.



“For the purification of beings” means for the purification of the minds of beings.

guarding the sense doors. Once mindfulness is removed, or once we lose mindfulness, all these mental defilements come in. So mindfulness is the only way to keep the mind pure. Please note here also that mindfulness is one of the eight Factors of the (Noble Eightfold) Path described in the DHAMMAPADA (verse quoted above), and if the Eightfold Path is the “only way”, then mindfulness surely is the only way too.

Again, mindfulness may take different forms, such as mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feeling, mindfulness of consciousness, mindfulness of *dhamma* objects or mindfulness of parts of the body and so on. So, if it is mindfulness it is the only way for the purification of beings.

● **The Purification of Beings**

“For the purification of beings” means for the purification of the minds of beings. Because Buddha is more concerned about the purification of mind than the purification of the physical body — although it does not mean that we do not take care of the cleanliness of the physical body — what is more important for us is the cleanliness of our minds. So, the purification of beings here means purification of minds of beings.

In the Commentaries⁹, it is said that personal cleanliness or cleanliness of the body as well as the cleanliness of the place are

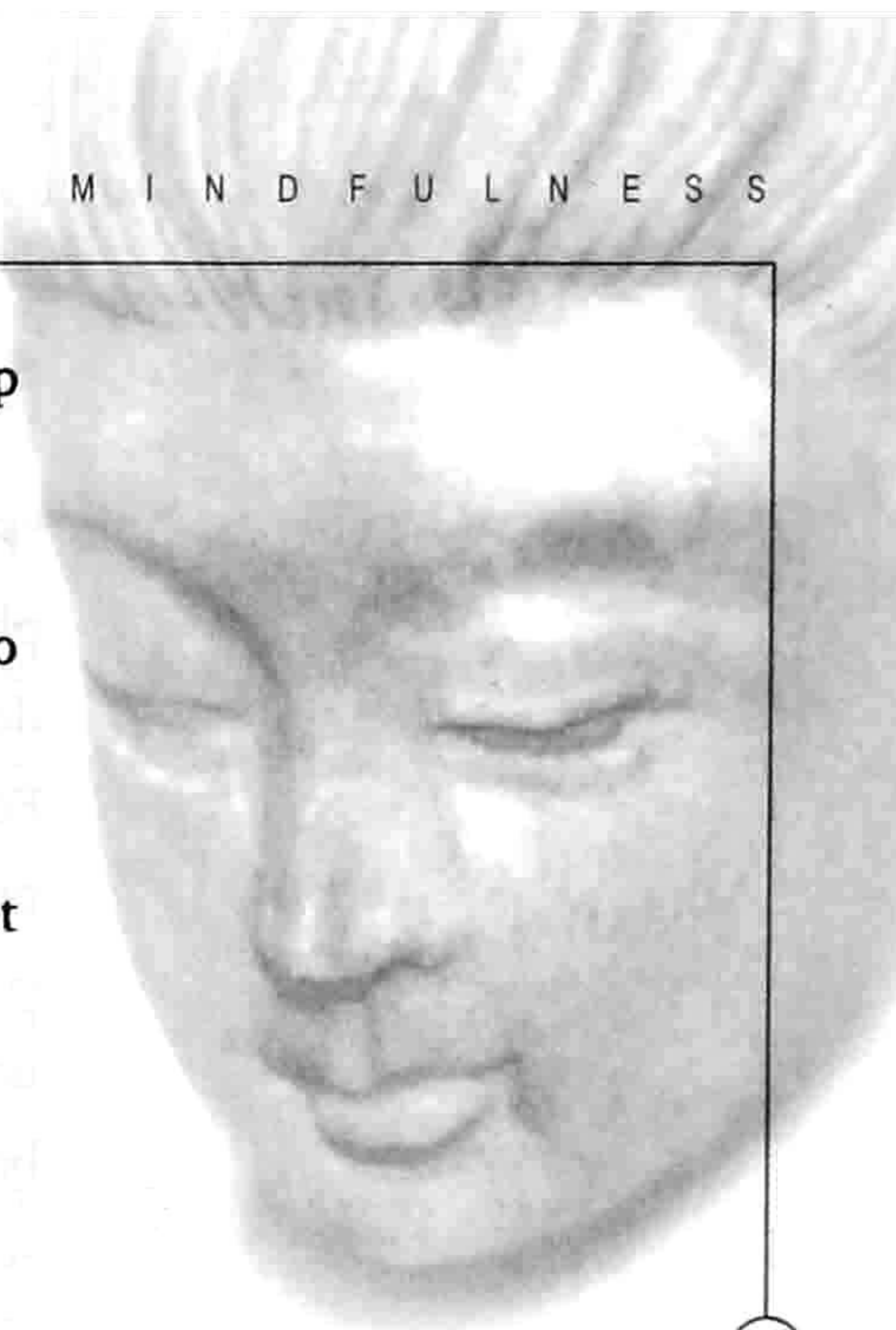
⁹ See “Commentary” under glossary. pg 63.

conductive to concentration and wisdom. So we also need to keep our bodies clean and keep the place where we meditate clean. Although we are not to neglect the cleanliness of the body we should be more concerned about the cleanliness of our minds. So here the Buddha said that mindfulness is the only way for the purification of minds of beings.

With this passage Buddha mentioned the benefits we will get from the practice of mindfulness. The first benefit the Buddha mentioned is purification of mind.

- **Overcoming of Sorrow and Lamentation**

Then Buddha said, “**for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation**”. If we want to overcome sorrow and lamentation or crying aloud we should practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is the only way to overcome sorrow and lamentation. Here sorrow is a mental state. Lamentation is crying aloud through sorrow and saying this thing or that. To overcome sorrow and lamentation also we should practice the Foundations of Mindfulness.



● Disappearance of Pain and Grief

“For the disappearance of pain and grief”: Pain here means physical pain, pain in the body, and grief means mental pain, depression, ill will, hatred; all these are included in the word “grief”. For the overcoming and disappearance of pain and grief we should practice the Foundations of Mindfulness. As I said you may not conquer pain, you may not overcome pain altogether, pain may not disappear altogether. But, if you practice mindfulness you will be able to live with pain and accept it. Like that of the Venerable Anuruddha¹⁰, your mind will not be disturbed or perturbed by the physical pain. If your mind is not perturbed by physical pain, pain is virtually non-existent. So, for the disappearance of pain or the overcoming of pain, we should practice mindfulness meditation.

For the overcoming of grief, overcoming of ill will, depression and so on we should practice mindfulness meditation. Grief is a mental state and sorrow is also a mental state. They are actually connected with each other. These are mental states and so these mental states can be overcome or made to disappear or can be avoided by the practice of mindfulness.

Mind cannot take two things or more than one thing at a time. Mind can only take one object at a time. I think we are lucky. If mind could take two or more things at a time our suffering would be much greater. Since mind can take only one thing at a

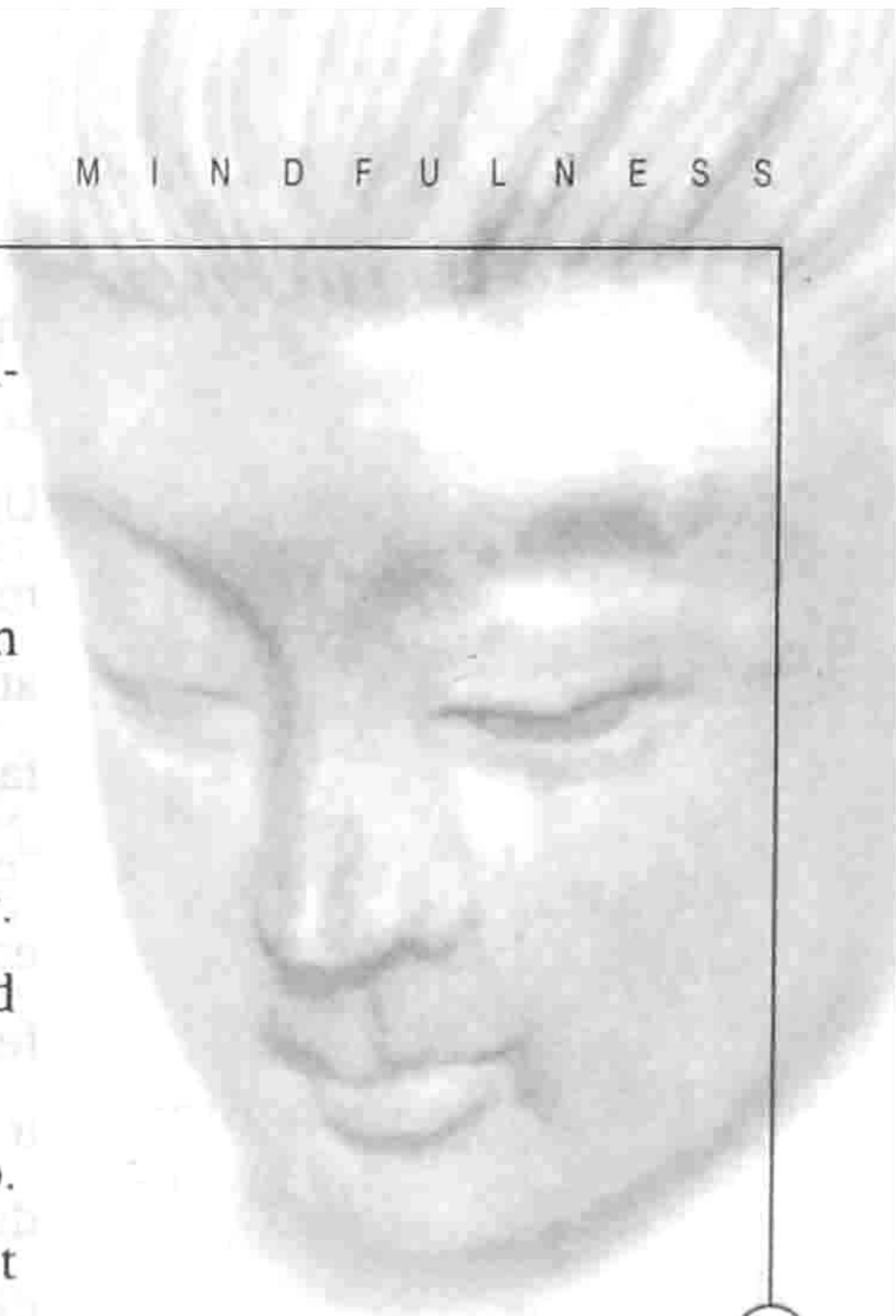
¹⁰ Once Ven. Anuruddha was afflicted with a grave illness accompanied by painful physical sensations. He was however able to tolerate calmly these painful sensations. A group of monks inquired how he was able to do this. Ven. Anuruddha declared that he was practicing the four foundations of mindfulness.

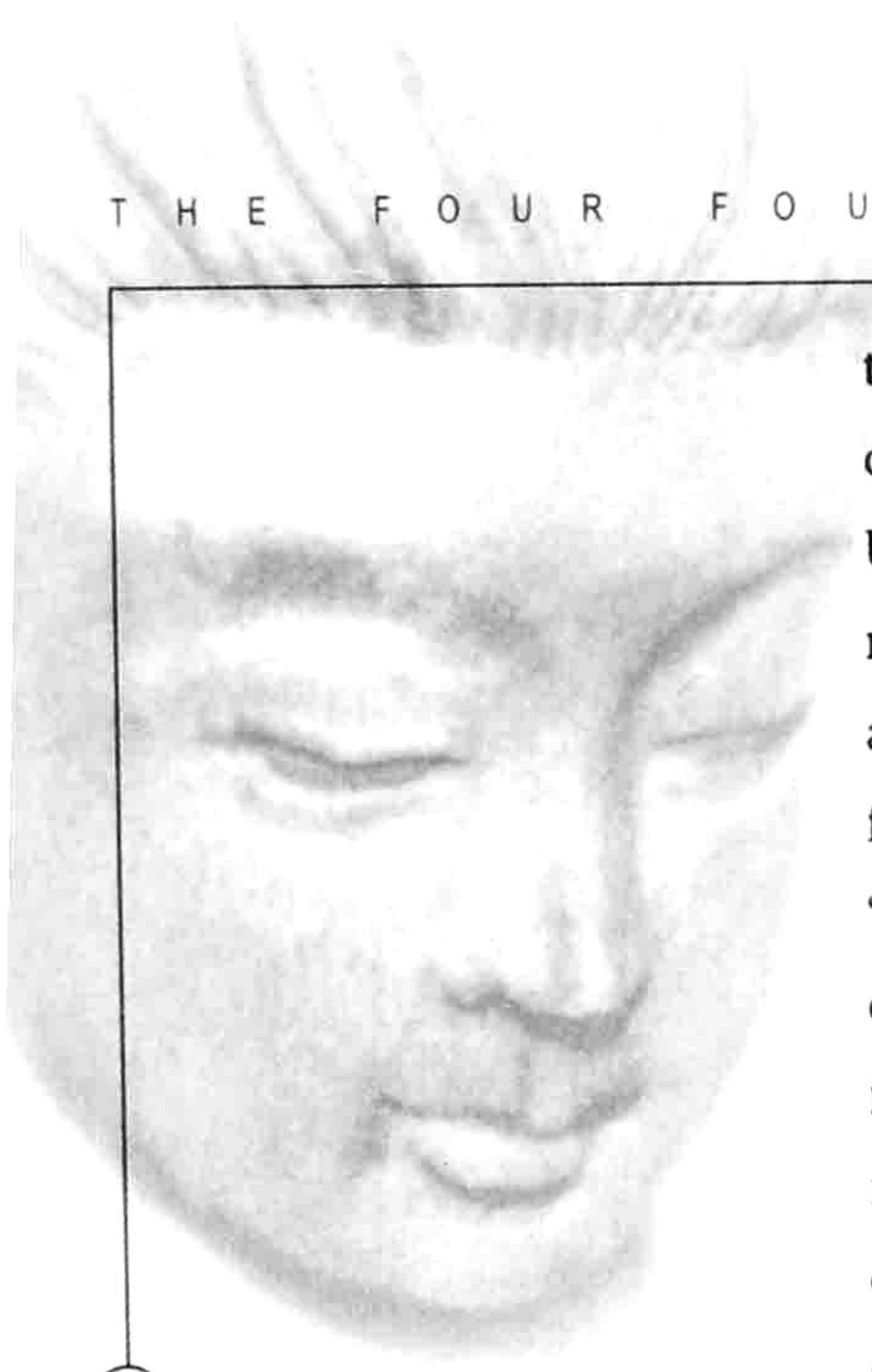
(see SAMYUTTA NIKAYA, ANURUDDHA SAMYUTTA, SUTTA 10)

time, we can overcome sorrow and grief by the practice of mindfulness. Let's take anger, for example. Suppose I am angry with Mr. A. So long as my mind is on Mr. A, my anger will increase and I will be getting more and more angry with him because I am taking him as the object of my consciousness or mind. But once I turn my mind from Mr. A, who is the source of my anger, to anger itself — the moment I turn my mind to anger itself — Mr. A does not exist for me at that time. He has already disappeared from my mind. When my mind is on the anger itself and when the source of anger has disappeared, anger has to disappear also. That way, we treat such mental states with mindfulness, with just simple but strong or forceful mindfulness. This is how we deal with what are called emotions such as attachment, anger, hatred, depression, and sorrow. Whatever the mental state, we just treat it with mindfulness and try to be mindful of it. When our mindfulness is really strong, they will surely disappear. So Buddha said, "This is the only way to overcome sorrow and lamentation and to overcome pain and grief."

● **Reaching the Noble Path**

"This is the only way for reaching the Noble Path." When you read books on Buddhism, you will see this word "Path" many times. Sometimes it is spelt with a lower case 'p', but mostly with





the upper case 'P'. "Path" as a technical term is a name for the combination or group of the eight Factors of the Path — Right Understanding, Right Thought and so on¹¹ — that arise at the moment of enlightenment. The type of consciousness (that arises at the moment of enlightenment) that is accompanied by these factors is called "Path Consciousness (*magga-citta*)". The word "enlightenment" is another technical word whose meaning is not easy to understand. People use this word quite freely, but only a few might understand its meaning properly. Without definition it is vague. It may mean different things to different persons or different religions: enlightenment for a Buddhist may be quite different from enlightenment for a Christian.

When we talk about enlightenment, we should first define it. According to Buddhism, enlightenment means the eradication of mental defilements and seeing Nibbāna directly, seeing Nibbāna face to face, at the same time. As a person practices Vipassanā meditation and progresses from one stage to another, to higher and higher stages, as the result of this Vipassanā practice, a time will come when in his mind a type of consciousness arises which he has not experienced before. That type of consciousness, along with its mental concomitants is so powerful that it can eradicate mental defilements altogether, not to come back again. At the same time it takes Nibbāna as object. So, what we mean by enlightenment is "**what happens at that moment**" — a moment,

¹¹ The eight Factors of the Path are:

- 1) Right Understanding.
- 2) Right Thought.
- 3) Right Speech.
- 4) Right Action.
- 5) Right Livelihood.
- 6) Right Effort.
- 7) Right Mindfulness and
- 8) Right Concentration.



when that consciousness (1) arises, (2) eradicates mental defilements and (3) takes Nibbāna as object.

That consciousness is called “**Path Consciousness**”. Immediately following that Path Consciousness are two or three moments of Fruition Consciousness (*phala-citta*).¹² You have to understand *Abhidhamma* to understand this fully. So “for reaching the Noble Path” simply means for gaining enlightenment. When you really reach the Noble Path, you become enlightened and you are able to eradicate mental defilements and take Nibbāna as object.

● **Realization of Nibbāna**

“**This is the only way for the realization of Nibbāna**”. This is the same thing as reaching the Noble Path. So, when a person reaches the Noble Path, when the Path Consciousness arises in him/her and that consciousness takes Nibbāna as object, that is when he/she is said to have realized Nibbāna. So, reaching the Noble Path and realization of Nibbāna mean the same thing.

● **The Meaning of Sati**

Buddha said that the practice of mindfulness is the only way to purify our minds, the only way to overcome sorrow and lamentation, to overcome pain and grief, to reach the Noble Path and to

So, what we mean by enlightenment is "what happens at that moment" — a moment, when that Path Consciousness (1) arises, (2) eradicates mental defilements and (3) takes Nibbāna as object.

¹² In A COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL OF ABHIDHAMMA, fruition-consciousness is defined as the consciousness with “the function of experiencing the degree of liberation made possible by the corresponding path (consciousness)”.

See A COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL OF ABHIDHAMMA (Published by Buddhist Publication Society) pg. 66



realize Nibbāna, namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

Here also we have the words “foundation” and “mindfulness”. First, let us understand what mindfulness is. All of us have been practicing mindfulness for, maybe years, but sometimes when we are asked, “What is mindfulness?” we may not be able to give a satisfactory answer. “Mindfulness” is the translation of the Pāli word “**Sati**”. This discourse is called, “*Satipaṭṭhāna*” so you have the word “*sati*” there. This “*sati*” is translated as mindfulness. Maybe there is no better word for it.

“*Sati*” literally means remembering, but it covers more than remembering actually. Etymologically, “*sati*” means remembering but in normal usage “*sati*” means more than that.

Sati is defined in the Commentaries as remembering and its characteristic is said to be “non-wobbling”, that means “not floating on the surface”. If it is *sati*, it must not be superficial, it must go deep into the object (instead of just floating on the surface.) That is why I always say, “full awareness of the object,” or “thorough awareness of the object.”

Sati is said to have the function of not losing the object. As long as there is *sati*, or mindfulness, we do not lose that object, we do not forget that object. Mindfulness has the function of not losing or forgetting the object. It is like a guard at the gate. So, that is what we call mindfulness. Mindfulness is not superficial awareness, it is a deep and thorough awareness of the object.

Mindfulness is not superficial awareness, it is a deep and thorough awareness of the object.


● The Meaning of Satipaṭṭhāna

“Foundations of Mindfulness” means actually, “setting up” of mindfulness or “firmly established mindfulness” or “mindfulness firmly established”. The Pāli word “*satipaṭṭhāna*” is translated as foundations of mindfulness but we must understand that it means setting up of a firm mindfulness or establishing a firm mindfulness. So, the practice of establishing firm mindfulness is called the “Foundations of Mindfulness.”

● Choice-less Awareness

In this discourse, Buddha said that there are four foundations of mindfulness. When you practice Vipassanā meditation at a retreat like this, you practice all these four foundations of mindfulness, but you practice them at random and not one after another in the order given in the Discourse. That is because when you practice Vipassanā meditation you have to be mindful of the object at the present moment. You cannot afford not to be mindful of the object at the present moment. The object at the present moment can be any one of these four. Sometimes the body, sometimes feelings, sometimes consciousness, and sometimes *dhamma* objects. You have to take these objects as they come, you have no choice. That is why sometimes Vipassanā meditation is called “choice-less

When you practice Vipassanā meditation, you practice all these four foundations of mindfulness, but you practice them at random and not one after another in the order given in the Discourse. ...you have to be mindful of the object at the present moment. The object at the present moment can be any one of these four.



awareness". That means you have no choice, you just have to take what is presented to you. So you practice these four foundations of mindfulness at random when you practice Vipassanā meditation. Here in the summary the Buddha taught us how to practice the four foundations of mindfulness. So what are the four? "Herein, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming or removing covetousness and grief in the world." It is a very short sentence but it has many meanings.

- **Precise
Mindfulness**

"Contemplating the body in the body": that means when a monk practices mindfulness of the body he is precise. He contemplates the body in the body and he does not contemplate the feeling in the body or he does not contemplate the person in the body and so on. He contemplates the body in the body. In order to have a precise object the Buddha repeated the words "body", "feeling", "consciousness" and "*dhamma*" in these sentences. So that means he is precise in his mindfulness of the body, feelings, consciousness and the *dhammas*. When he practices body contemplation he is ardent, he is clearly comprehending and he is mindful.

● The Meaning of Ātāpī (Ardent)

With regard to the word “ardent” I do not know what other meaning it carries in English. This word is the translation of the Pāli word “*ātāpī*”. Sometimes we lose something when we translate from one language to another. The word “*ātāpī*” comes from the word “*ātāpa*”. “*Ātāpa*” means “heat of the sun.” Heat of the sun can heat up things so that things become withered and they may even burn. So in the same way the effort heats up the mental defilements or burns them up. So it is called “*ātāpa*” in Pāli and one who has *ātāpa* is called *ātāpī*, the “*ī*” denoting possession. So one who possesses *ātāpa* is called *ātāpī*. When we read the *Sutta* in Pāli and when we read the word *ātāpī* we have that in our mind, we see the effort burning up the mental defilements. When you translate this word into English as “ardent” you lose that image. So *ātāpī* means he/she makes real effort, not a slack effort, he makes a real effort to be mindful and to clearly comprehend.

When the Buddha, still a Bodhisatta, sat down under the Bodhi tree to practice to become the Buddha he made a very firm resolution in his mind. “May my skin, sinews and bones remain, and may my flesh and blood dry up, but I will not desist from or give up this superhuman effort until I reach Buddhahood. I will not get up from this seat until I reach Buddhahood, I will make

**...effort heats up
the mental
defilements
or burns
them up.**

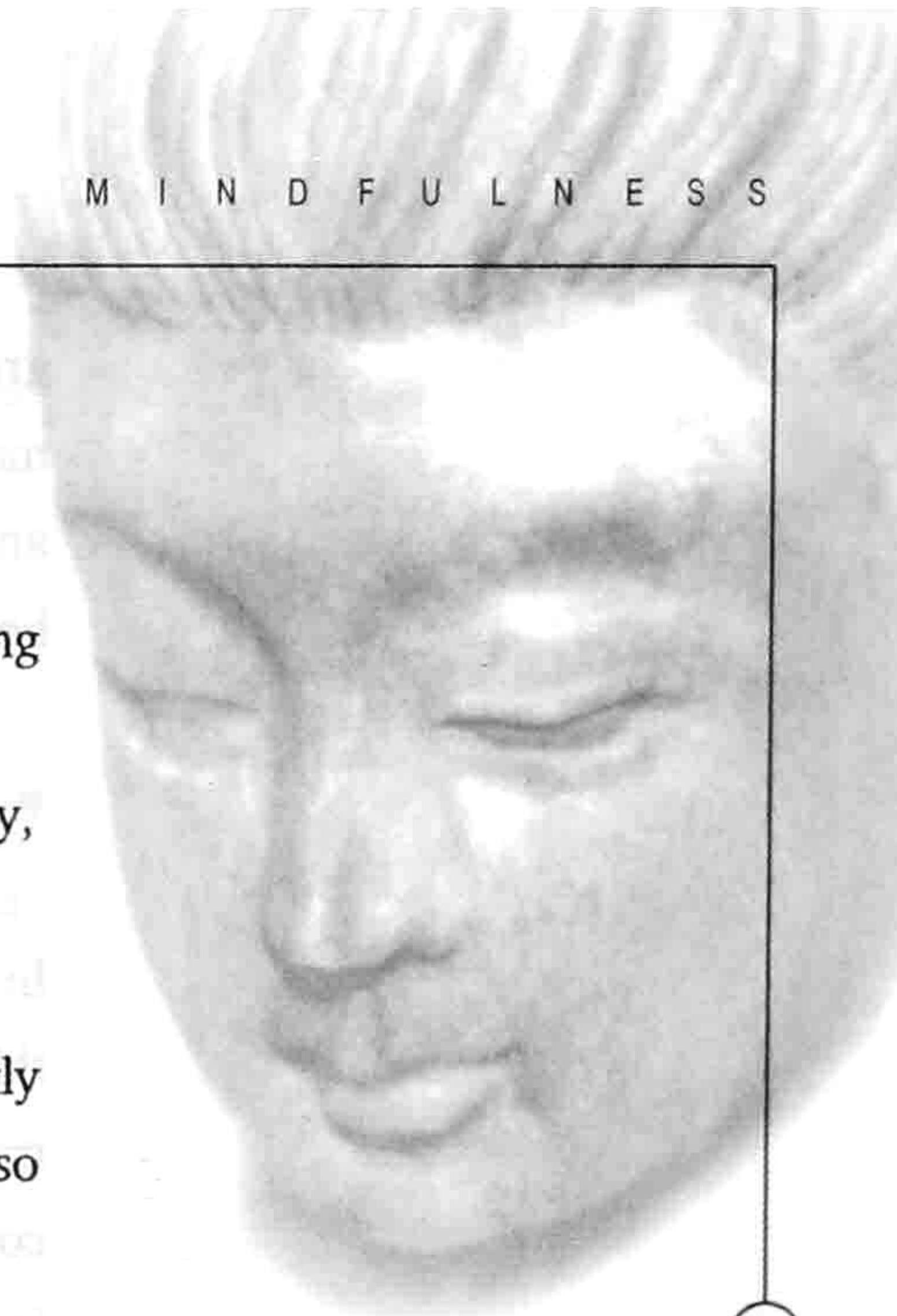


every effort to achieve my aim.” Such an effort is called the “right effort”. So to make the right effort means you have to make a really good effort, not a slackening effort. This word “*ātāpī*” implies all these meanings.

The right effort to be understood here is the Right Effort that is one of the eight Factors of the Path.¹³ You may have read about Right Effort in other books. Right Effort means to remove or avoid unwholesome mental states and to acquire and cultivate wholesome mental states. In order to resist unwholesome mental states, in order to resist evil, you need mental effort. If you do not make effort you cannot resist evil. Effort is very useful in resisting or removing unwholesome mental states and also to cultivate wholesome mental states. To develop wholesome mental states you need effort. If you do not make effort you do not come here, if you do not want to make effort you do not go to a retreat at all. So you need a real, strong effort to practice the Foundations of Mindfulness.

Here also the Buddha described the monk as being ardent which means he has that kind of effort that burns up the mental defilements. That is indicated by the word *ātāpī* in the Pāli text.

¹³ See side note 11.



● **The Meaning of Clearly Comprehending**


The next word is “**clearly comprehending**”. Clearly comprehending means clearly seeing. Whatever object he puts his mind on, he sees it clearly. What does “clearly” mean? He sees it thoroughly, he sees it with wisdom.

When a yogi (meditator) concentrates on breathing, for instance, he sees the breath clearly. He sees the in-breath distinctly from out-breath and out-breath distinctly from in-breath; and also he sees that the breath arises and disappears and that at the moment there are only the breaths and the awareness of the breaths and no other thing to be called a person or an individual. Such understanding is called “clear comprehension.”

When you have clear comprehension about something, you know that thing and all its aspects. And also according to the teachings of the Buddha, you know that there are just the thing observed and the mind that observes and none other which you could call a person or an individual, a man or a woman. Seeing in this way is called clear comprehension.

This clear comprehension will come only after some time, not right at the beginning. You practice mindfulness, but right at the beginning you may not even see the breaths clearly. Sometimes they are mixed together and very vague. Little by little with the

*You know that there
are just the thing
observed and the
mind that observes
and none other
which you could
call a person or
an individual, a man
or a woman.*



growth of your concentration and practice, you'll see the objects more and more clearly and then also their arising and disappearing and so on. So this clear comprehension comes not right at the beginning but after one has gained some experience.

● **The Missing
Concentration**

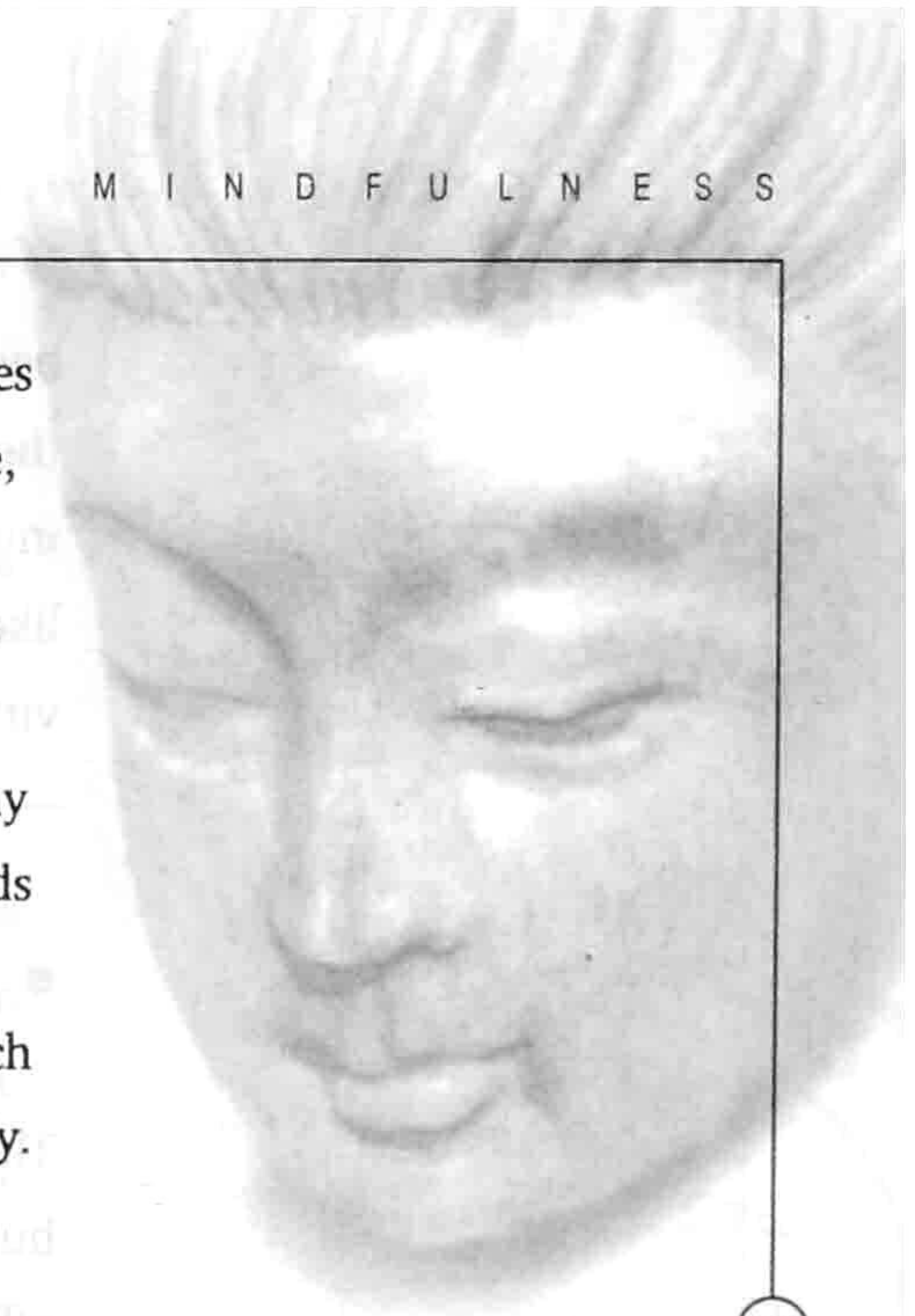
In order for this clear comprehension to arise, we need one more thing. Although it is not mentioned in this Discourse we need one more thing and that is concentration. Without concentration clear comprehension cannot come. What is concentration? **Concentration** is a mental state or a mental factor, which keeps the components of mind squarely on the object, and does not let them go to other objects. That is what we call concentration. It is usually described as the mind being able to be on an object for a long period of time. For example, if you take the breath as an object your mind is always on the breath and the mind does not go anywhere else. That is what we call concentration. Actually, at every moment also the mental factor or state which is called concentration keeps the mind and its components unified on the object, it keeps them together and does not let them go to another object. This concentration is essential for clear comprehension to arise. Without this concentration we cannot hope to see things clearly, we cannot hope to get clear comprehension.

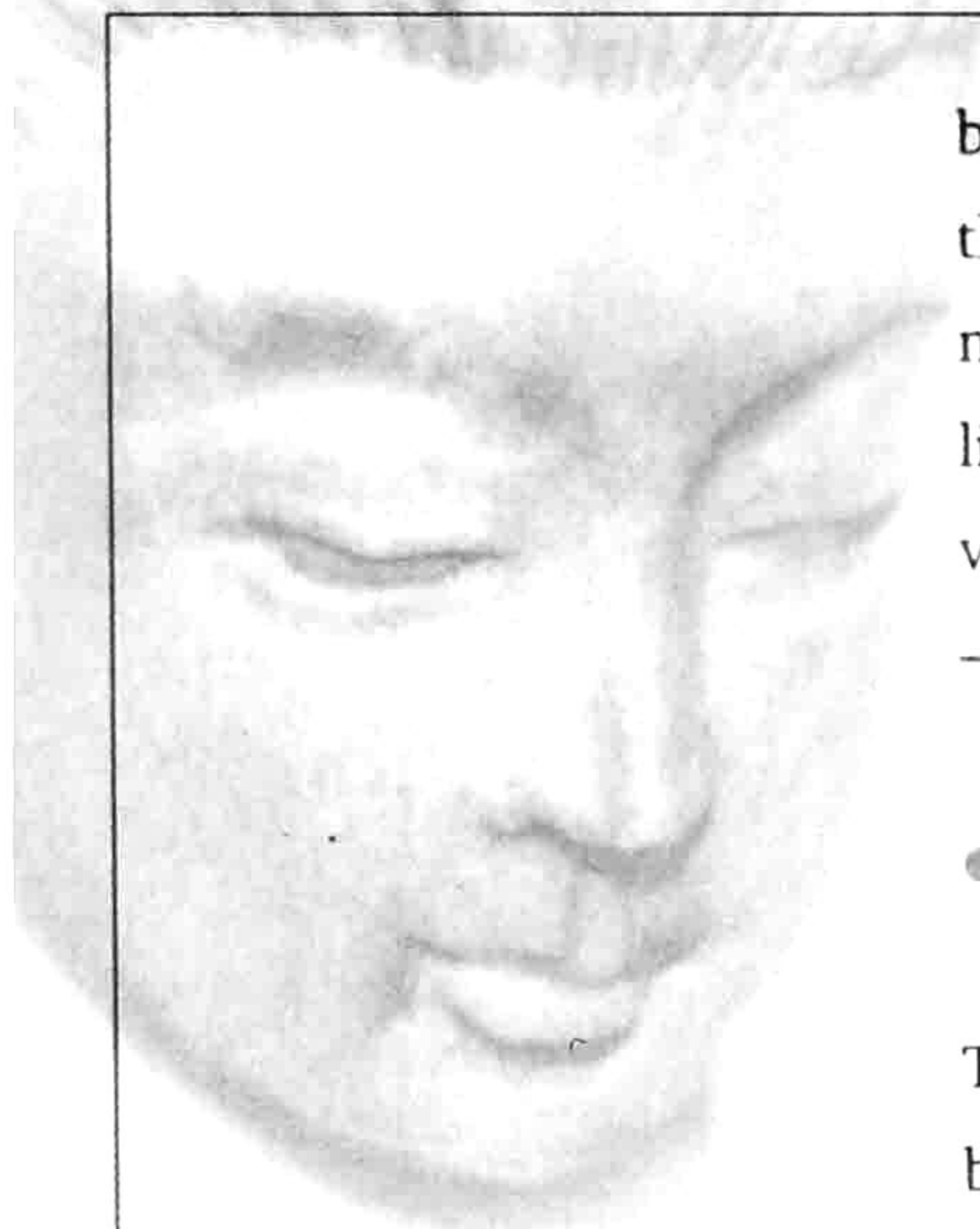
*Without
concentration
clear
comprehension
cannot come.*

When we get concentration, our mind calms down and becomes quiet and that is the time when we begin to see things. It is like, say, water. At first there is dirt or mud in the water and so we cannot see through the water. But when the dirt or mud settles down and the water becomes clear we can see through it. So, mind needs to be like the water, settled, because there are many dirt or many mental defilements in our mind. So long as our minds are contaminated by mental defilements we cannot see things clearly. We need to suppress or let these mental defilements which are called mental hindrances settle down so that we can see clearly.

When we get concentration we will be able to keep these mental hindrances settled. When the mental hindrances are subdued or settled, mind becomes clear and it is the time when clear comprehension or the true knowledge of things arises.

In order to get clear comprehension we need concentration and concentration is not mentioned here. But we must take it that concentration is also included in this passage because without concentration we cannot get clear comprehension. Sometimes some words may be left out but we have to understand them as mentioned through inference. Let's say there is a flat rock and a hunter is following a deer and he sees footprints on one side, but on the flat rock itself he does not see any footprints, and again he sees the footprints on the other side. So from this he infers that the deer must have run across the flat rock. He sees the





*We make effort,
so we have
mindfulness.
We have
mindfulness,
so we have
concentration and
concentration
leads to
clear comprehension.*

beginning and he sees the end and so he infers the middle, that the deer must have run on the rock. In the same way here, to be mindful is the beginning and clear comprehension is something like the end. So, when these two are mentioned the middle is also virtually mentioned because without the middle — concentration — there can be no clear comprehension.

● **The Order of Practice**

Then the last word here is “**mindful**”: Mindfulness is put last here but actually, in practice it should come after “ardent”. We make effort, so we have mindfulness. We have mindfulness, so we have concentration and concentration leads to clear comprehension. We have “mindfulness” here, but I have already defined mindfulness¹⁴ so I do not need to define it again.

A monk dwells contemplating the body in the body. A monk practices the foundation of mindfulness on the body, being ardent, making true effort, being mindful and being thoroughly aware of the object and having concentration and clear comprehension.

● **Five Components of the Practice**

How many components do we now have? Ardent is one component, clearly comprehending is another component, concentration is

¹⁴ See pg 11: THE MEANING OF SATI.

yet another and mindfulness, another. So we have four mental states here. These four mental states are the components of the practice. When we practice there must be these four mental states working together harmoniously.

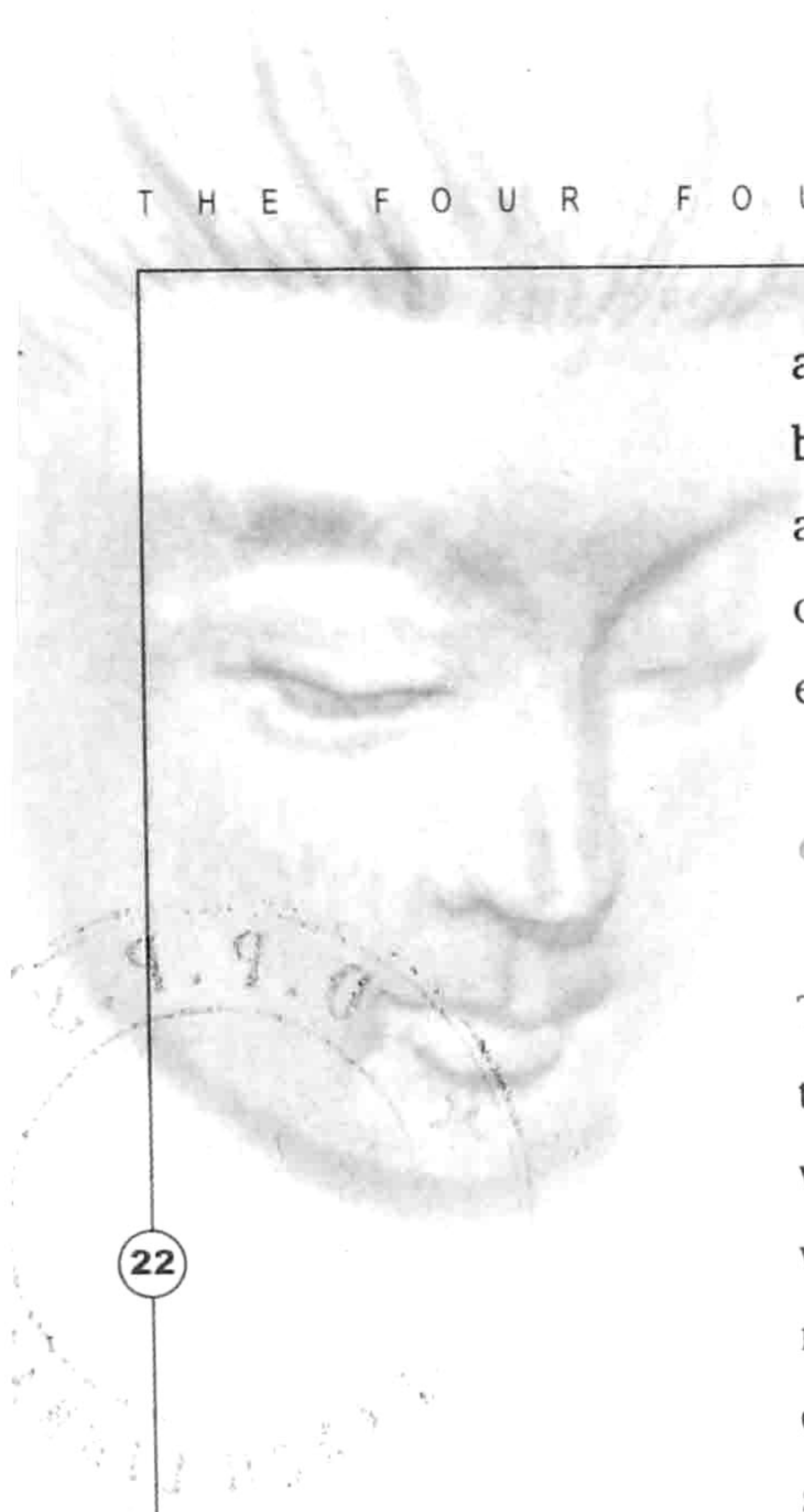
But, there is one more mental state which is not mentioned here, and that is faith or confidence. Confidence or faith is also an important factor because if we do not have confidence in this practice we would not practice. We do not really have blind faith but we have faith or confidence in the Buddha and His teachings. We believe that just by paying attention to these objects we will be able to see the true nature of these things, the impermanent, suffering and non-soul nature. So we should have that much confidence because without confidence no work can be successful. Confidence, therefore, is also a part of the practice of meditation and although it is not actively operating at the moment of meditation or practice of mindfulness, it is still there working harmoniously with the other factors.

So, altogether we get five factors and these are the five factors that are called five Mental Faculties. In Pāli they are called *Indriyas*. Meditation teachers are fond of talking about these five factors. These five factors must be working simultaneously and harmoniously with each other if we are to have a good practice of meditation.

As I said, in the beginning we may be lacking in clear comprehension but later when our concentration develops we will be

We believe that just by paying attention to these objects we will be able to see the true nature of these things, the impermanent, suffering and non-soul nature.





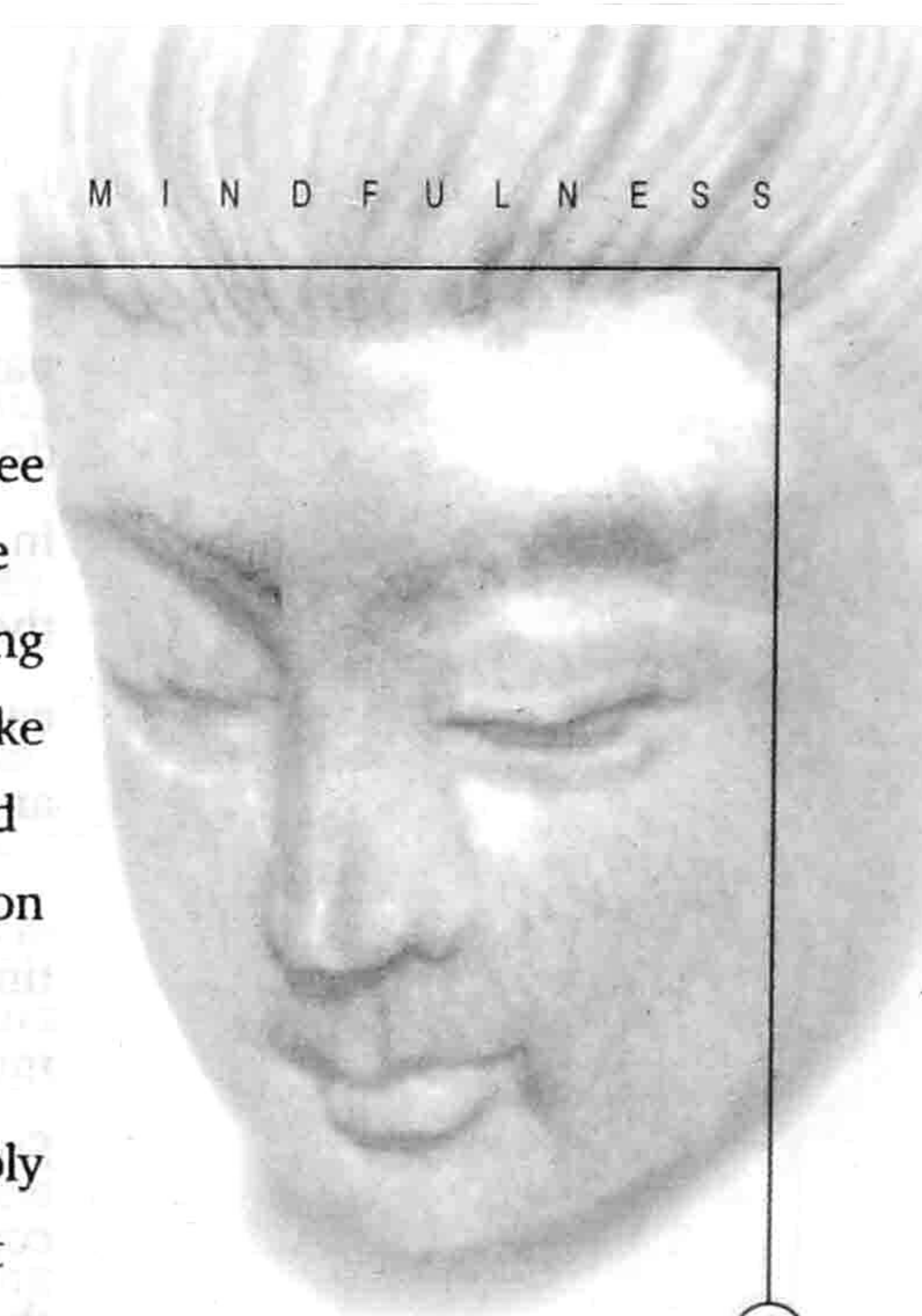
able to see things clearly and so on and these five components will be working in harmony. What if they do not work in harmony? We are lost! When we are practicing, especially important is the balance of effort and concentration. If they are not balanced, if there is an excess of one or the other, we are lost, our meditation is nothing.

● **Balancing Effort
and Concentration**

The effort we make must be just enough, not too much, and not too little. Sometimes we tend to make too much effort because we want to achieve something; we become a little greedy and so we make more effort. When we make more effort, we become restless, agitated and then we lose concentration. So, too much effort will not work. What if there is too little effort? We become sleepy, lazy and we cannot concentrate and cannot practice either. So, the effort we make must be neither too much nor too little.

*The effort
we make
must be
just enough,
not too much,
and
not too little.*

When there is excess of effort there is not enough of concentration. Among effort and concentration, when one goes up the other goes down. Too much effort, and concentration will go down. When you make too little effort, again concentration goes down. Concentration also must not be too much. When we have too much concentration we tend to become lazy. We tend to take it easy or we tend to slacken our effort. Suppose we are practicing and we have good concentration. When we have good



concentration we do not have to make much effort and so we tend to slacken the effort. When we slacken our effort the degree of effort goes down and we become lazy or sleepy. In that case we have to step up our effort, by making more effort and paying closer attention or sometimes by adding some things to note like three or more objects in succession at a time. So, the effort and concentration must be balanced so that we have good meditation and clear comprehension.

Sometimes, say, we are practicing and we have good concentration and all of a sudden we lose concentration. Probably we have made more effort than is needed. We want to make it better and so we make more effort and the result is the opposite of what we want. Sometimes you are practicing meditation, your concentration is good and even though your concentration is good, you tend to go sleepy or nodding. That means you have too much concentration. If there is too much concentration you have to make the level of concentration go down by stepping up effort, by taking more objects at a time and so on.

So, meditation is not easy. I do not want to discourage you but meditation is not easy. It is very delicate. Just a little bit of an unbalanced mental state can destroy the concentration you have built up with great effort. So, these five mental states should be working simultaneously and also they should be working in harmony. Meditation practice is like a machine. There are many

*...mindfulness is
always needed,
there can be
no excess of
mindfulness.*

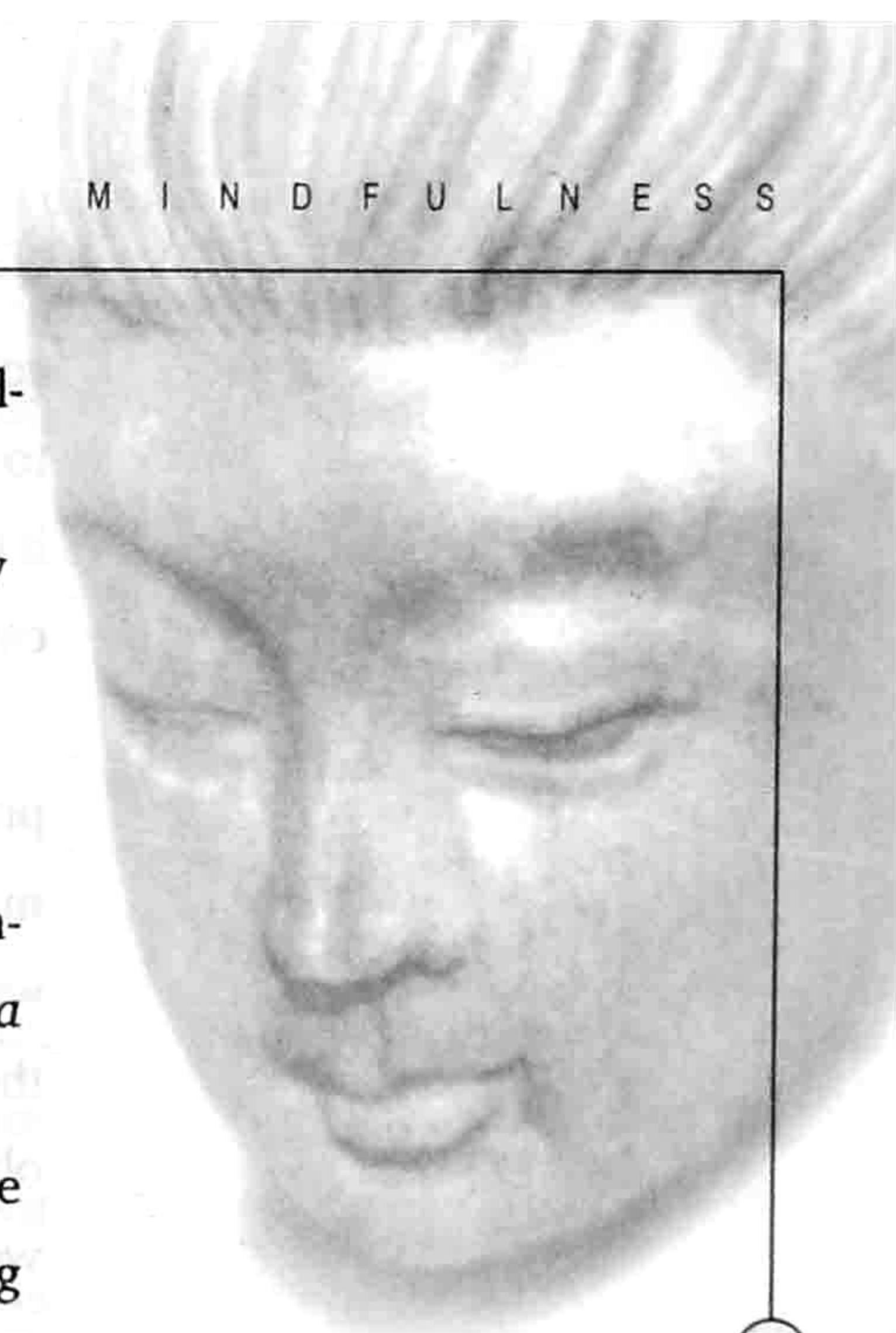
¹⁵ See SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA,
BOJJHANGASAMYUTTA, Sutta 53

parts in a machine and each part must work properly. If one part does not work properly, the whole machine goes out of control. In the same way, if any one of the factors does not work properly, the whole work of meditation is thrown out of balance. Therefore, each one of these five mental factors must be working properly and harmoniously with other factors.

Here comes the value of mindfulness. Mindfulness is a regulating mental factor. So it helps to keep effort from becoming too much, it helps concentration from becoming too much and so on. So, the mindfulness factor is a regulating factor among these five components in the practice of meditation. That is why it is said that mindfulness is always needed¹⁵, there can be no excess of mindfulness. Mindfulness is needed everywhere like the seasoning of salt in all dishes and like a Prime Minister who does all the work of a king. Mindfulness is a very important factor in these five factors but every factor is important and each one of them must be working in harmony and in balance with the other factors.

● **Overcoming Covetousness and Grief**

When the five mental factors are working in balance and a yogi is clearly comprehending, then what is the result? The result is overcoming covetousness and grief in the world. That is the result



a yogi gets from clearly comprehending in the practice of mindfulness meditation.

Now here, most English translations missed the point. They translate it as “having overcome”¹⁶ or “having abandoned”, or “having removed” covetousness and grief in the world. What is the practice for? What is this mindfulness practice for? It is for overcoming covetousness and grief. Covetousness means attachment, and grief means ill will or anger. So, Vipassanā or *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation is “for overcoming” covetousness and grief.


If a person has already overcome covetousness and grief he/she does not need to practice. For this very purpose we are practicing mindfulness, but if we have already achieved this purpose we do not need to practice mindfulness. So, here we should translate it as “overcoming (at the same time) covetousness and grief in the world,” and not “having overcome.” That means the yogi overcomes covetousness and grief as he practices mindfulness. I want you to be aware of this. (Here an explanation with reference to Pāli grammatical construction would be helpful; but since it would be too involved I have no choice but to ignore it.)¹⁷

Overcoming covetousness and grief in the world means avoiding craving or attachment or anger or ill will concerning the object the yogi is observing. “In the world” means in the world of body, feelings and so on, concerning that object. We see one object and we can be attached to that object. If we come to the

¹⁶ The Pāli word under discussion here is *vineyya* (See side note 17)

¹⁷ A brief explanation of the Pāli grammatical construct is given in ON CLEAR COMPREHENSION:
“The Pāli construction here, called the absolutive, also called *gerund* (*pubbakiniyā*), can denote action taking place either simultaneously (‘removing’) with the action of the main verb (‘he dwells’), or prior to it (‘having removed’). But it is not ‘having removed’. One who has removed covetousness and grief does not have to practice meditation at all because he already has achieved his purpose.”

See pg 72 ON CLEAR COMPREHENSION by Sayadaw U Silānanda (IJ043, Published by Inward Path Publisher).



conclusion that it is beautiful, or it is good, we will be attached to it; and we can have anger, or hatred, etc., towards that object if we decided it was ugly or disgusting. So, these mental defilements can come into our minds when we experience something.

In order to prevent them from arising, we need to make some protection and that protection is mindfulness. When we are mindful, they will not get a chance to get into our minds. When we are mindful, when we comprehend clearly, and when we see the objects clearly, we know that these objects come and go, these objects are impermanent and so not to be attached to them. So, we can avoid covetousness or attachment and grief or hatred regarding that object by the practice of mindfulness.

● **Prevention,
Not Cure**

Whether we say “overcoming” or “removing” or whatever, actually we are avoiding or preventing them from arising. Not that they have come and then we overcome them, or we remove them after they have come. The meaning really is preventing covetousness and grief from arising in our minds. If we do not practice mindfulness on the object they will surely come, either covetousness or grief, or attachment or hatred. These mental states can come, but by the practice of mindfulness we can prevent them from coming. Preventing them from arising in our mind is what is meant by

*Preventing them
(mental defilements)
from arising in
our mind is
what is meant
by overcoming
them.*

overcoming them. (But if they have arisen, of course, we should make them the object of our attention to eliminate them.)


● **The Defilements that are Eradicated during Enlightenment**

When we talk about enlightenment we say, “at the moment of enlightenment” mental defilements are eradicated. What mental defilements are eradicated at that moment? The present ones, or past ones or the future ones? The past is already past, we do not have to do anything to get rid of them, and the future defilements are not here yet, so you cannot do anything about them. What of the present defilements? If they are present there can be no enlightenment because enlightenment is a wholesome state and those mental defilements are unwholesome states. Wholesome states and unwholesome states cannot exist together. They do not co-exist. So the defilements that are said to be eradicated at the moment of enlightenment are not of the past, not of the future and not of the present. Then what defilements are eradicated?

Actually, strictly speaking, those that are eradicated are not called defilements, or *kilesas* in Pāli. They are called latencies or *anusayas* in Pāli, which means the potential to arise. What the enlightenment consciousness eradicates is that potential. That means when something is always with us we say we have that

The defilements that are said to be eradicated at the moment of enlightenment are not of the past, not of the future and not of the present.

What the enlightenment consciousness eradicates is that potential (for the defilements to arise).



thing. Take, for example, smoking. Suppose you smoke but right now you do not. If I ask you, "Do you smoke?" you would say, "Yes, I do." Because you smoked in the past and you will smoke in the future and you have not given up smoking. So although you are not smoking at this very moment, you say, "Yes, I smoke."

In the same way, now right at this moment, I hope I have no mental defilements in my mind and you have no mental defilements in your mind. But after the talk you go out and you step on something sharp or someone pushes you and you get angry and thus the mental defilement comes when there are the conditions for them. So we say we have mental defilements. I have mental defilements, you have mental defilements, but not right at this moment. So, that "liability to arise" is what is eradicated by enlightenment.

The mental defilements that are said to be eradicated at the moment of enlightenment are actually nothing but that ability or liability to come up. When they come up they are already there. In the same way here, overcoming covetousness and grief means avoiding or preventing them from arising in our minds. How? By the practice of mindfulness. We make effort, we apply mindfulness and we have concentration and we see things clearly. When we see things clearly there is no chance for these mental defilements to come into the mind. In this way, Vipassanā or mindfulness practice removes mental defilement.

● **Three Kinds of Removal of Defilements**

1. **MOMENTARY REMOVAL:**

This removal or overcoming is just momentary, just by substitution. Next moment they may come back. It is of a very short duration. It is called **abandonment by substitution**. That means you abandon the unwholesome mental states by substituting them with the wholesome mental states. When there is a wholesome mental state there cannot be any unwholesome mental state. You put wholesome mental states in the place and so unwholesome mental states do not get a chance to arise. That is called abandonment by substitution. That will last for only a moment. The next moment they may come back.

At the moment of Vipassanā the covetousness and grief are removed in that way (by substituting them with mindfulness and clear comprehension). You get out of Vipassanā and you meet some conditions for them to arise, and they will arise.

2. **TEMPORARY REMOVAL:**

There is another kind of abandonment called “**temporary abandonment**” or abandonment by pushing away. When you push something away it may stay there for sometime, it may not come back quickly, like plants in the water. If you push

3 Kinds of Removal of Defilements:

- i) Momentary Removal*
- ii) Temporary Removal*
- iii) Total Removal*



them away they may stay away for some time, but then very slowly they may come back. That kind of removing or abandonment is called “temporary abandonment or removing”, or removal by pushing away. That is achieved by *jhānas*. When a person gets *jhānas*, or experiences *jhānas*, he/she is able to push these mental defilements away for some time. They may not come to his/her mind for the whole day or maybe a week or a month, but in this case too they can eventually come back.

3. TOTAL REMOVAL:

The third removal is called **total removal**. The Pāli word is “*samuccheda* = cutting off”, i.e., removal by cutting off. It is like you cut the root of a tree and it never grows back. So the total removal or removal once and for all is called removal by cutting off and that is achieved at the moment of enlightenment. The mental defilement eradicated at the moment of enlightenment never comes back to that person.

An *Arahant* has eradicated all mental defilements. He has no attachment, no anger, no pride, no jealousy and other unwholesome mental states. Even though they are provoked *Arahants* will not get angry. Even though they may see a very, very attractive and beautiful object, they will not feel any attachment or desire for that object. Those are the persons who have eradicated mental defilements by totally cutting them off.

● **Temporary Removal of Defilements through Vipassanā**

These are the three kinds of removing, and here (in the practice of Vipassanā) we can understand the two kinds of removing. I have already explained the first removing (momentary removal). There can also be the second kind of removing (temporary removal) here. That is, if you have practiced meditation well and you are able to avoid covetousness and grief with regard to the objects you observe, you will find that you are able to avoid covetousness and grief even with regard to those objects that you do not observe. Here “do not observe” means do not treat with mindfulness.

Naturally, the objects we come across can cause covetousness and grief in our minds. If we do not practice mindfulness on the object, then we will have attachment or ill will towards that object. That happens to most people. If you are good at Vipassanā practice and you have this experience of avoiding covetousness and grief with regard to objects that are observed, you will find that you are able to prevent them from arising even with regard to those that are not observed. That is what is called temporary removal by Vipassanā.¹⁸

Vipassanā can achieve only these two kinds of removal — momentary removal and temporary removal. But Vipassanā cannot achieve the third one, the total removal; that will be done by

18 What this means is that when the momentum of the mindfulness — that keeps the mind pure (free from defilements) from moment to moment — picks up, it keeps the mind inclined towards that state of purity such that even if attractive or repulsive objects contact the senses and the meditator fails to observe it with mindfulness the defilements will still not arise. However since this removal of defilements is only temporary, once that momentum is lost — due to lack of repetition of mindfulness — the mind will again incline towards the defilements due to latent tendencies (*anusayas*) and the defilements will surface again.

enlightenment or Path Consciousness.

When Buddha said “overcoming covetousness and grief in the world”, he meant that the monk is able to avoid covetousness and grief from arising with regard to that object which he is observing. Here “covetousness” means all kinds of attachment, greed, lust, and other similar mental states and “grief” means not just grief but anger, hatred, depression, sorrow; all are included in grief. There are three roots of unwholesomeness and they are attachment, anger and ignorance. Among these three, two are mentioned here. Covetousness is actually the first one which is *lobha* or attachment and the second one is *dosa* (anger). So, by covetousness we mean all shades of *lobha* and by grief we mean all shades of *dosa*. *Moha* (ignorance) is not included here because *moha* is very difficult to prevent and eradicate.

So, in this sentence we must understand that a monk practices body contemplation making effort, applying mindfulness, getting concentration and clearly comprehending and at the same time he is able to avoid covetousness and grief from arising. It is the same with regard to feelings, to consciousness and to *dhamma* objects. (The Commentary says that the statement ‘overcoming covetousness and grief’ refers to the overcoming of all the five mental hindrances, because when covetousness and grief that are the strongest of the five hindrances are mentioned, we must understand that the other hindrances are also mentioned.)

You know the four Foundations of Mindfulness, four kinds of setting up of mindfulness. There are four because there are four kinds of objects.

● **Contemplation of Body**

The first one is body. Sometimes body does not mean the whole physical body, but a group of some material properties.¹⁹ Breathing is also called the body.²⁰ Different parts of the body are also called the body. By the word “body” we must understand anything that is associated with the body.

● **Contemplation of Feeling**

The second is feelings. Feeling is a mental state. Now we have pain here, physical pain and we experience that physical pain with our mind. In our mind there is a mental state called feeling. Since it is (physical) pain, the (mental) feeling is the painful feeling. When Buddha said a monk contemplates feeling in the feeling, He means the monk is contemplating on that mental state and not necessarily on the pain there. In practice, when we have pain we have to concentrate on the pain and be mindful of it because that is practical. But actually, when we are making notes as, “pain, pain”, we are really making notes of the mental state

Sometimes body does not mean the whole physical body, but a group of some material properties.

¹⁹ Besides body, the Pāli word kāya can also mean a heap, a collection or a group.

²⁰ i.e. the breath body or the group of material properties related to the breath that arises when there is breathing e.g. pressure, heat, cold, friction, motion, etc.



that feels the pain in the body. That feeling is of three kinds — pleasant, unpleasant and neutral.

● **Contemplation of Consciousness**

The third is consciousness. It is usually translated as mind, but I think consciousness is a better translation. The Pāli word is “*citta*”. This means consciousness. In Buddhist psychology, mind is composed of four things.²¹ So what we call “mind” is a group of or combination of four things. Sometimes there may be confusion regarding these terms: **mind** and **consciousness**. Let us say mind is composed of two things first, consciousness and mental factors.²² Consciousness is defined as the awareness of an object. Here awareness is not like awareness in the practice of meditation. It is just mere awareness. It is like I am aware of someone there (at the side) although I am looking this way (in front). That kind of awareness is called consciousness. At least, it is called consciousness in ABHIDHAMMA. The English word may mean more or less than that, I am not sure.

Please note that although we use the word consciousness for the word “*citta*”, it is not an exact translation of the word. Consciousness is defined as a mental state which is the awareness of the object. Only when there is awareness of the object can there be contact with the object, feeling of the object, liking of the object, disliking of the object and so on. So, these mental states (i.e.

²¹ i.e. the aggregates of feeling, perception, mental-formations & consciousness.
See ‘aggregates’ under glossary, pg 63

²² In Abhidhamma teaching, the aggregates of feeling, perception and mental-formations are grouped together under the heading of mental-factors.


contact, feeling, like, dislike, etc.) are subordinate to consciousness, but they are also components of the mind. So, mind is first divided into two — consciousness and mental factors. Contact, feeling, perception, attention, like, dislike and so on are all called mental factors. According to ABHIDHAMMA there are fifty-two mental factors, and these fifty-two are grouped into three — feeling, perception and mental formations.²³ So when we add consciousness to these three we get four kinds of mental states. It's amazing that the Buddha could define and differentiate each of these mental states that arise simultaneously taking the same object.

When we practice meditation and say “sorry, sorry”, that means we have a consciousness accompanied by sorrow or something like that. It could be contemplation on consciousness. When I say, “angry, angry”, I am doing contemplation of consciousness (accompanied by anger.)

● Contemplation of Dhamma

The last one is the *dhamma*. This is one Pāli word that is most difficult to translate or that cannot be translated adequately. This word means different things in different contexts. You cannot translate the word “*dhamma*” with just one English word. If you do, you will be wrong. Here, *dhamma* simply means the objects that are the five mental hindrances, the five aggregates, the twelve

²³ The aggregate of feeling is the mental-factor of feeling and the aggregate of perception is the mental-factor of perception. The aggregate of mental formations comprises fifty other mental-factors such as contact, volition, like, dislike, etc. So altogether there are 52 mental-factors.



bases, the seven Factors of Enlightenment and Four Noble Truths.²⁴ They are called *dhamma* in this discourse. So, we cannot translate this word. Mostly it is translated as “mind object” or “mental object”, but each of these translations is not satisfactory. Therefore it is better to keep the word “*dhamma*” untranslated to avoid confusion.

Dwelling on *dhamma* objects: if you concentrate on anger, then you are doing contemplation on the *dhamma*. Here *dhamma* does not mean the teachings or discourse or other things. If you see something and you are mindful of seeing, then you are doing *dhamma* object contemplation. So, the *dhamma* object contemplation is very wide and includes mental hindrances, aggregates, bases, Factors of Enlightenment and the Four Noble Truths.

If we translate it as “mind object”²⁵ and we take it to mean “mind as object”, then some objects (that fall under this contemplation) are not mind. If we translate it as “mental object”, then everything is object of mind. Body is also object of mind. Since we cannot get a satisfactory and adequate translation, it is better to leave it untranslated.

● Final Note about the Practice

I have already told you that you practice these four (foundations of mindfulness) at random and so when you are really practicing do not try to find out which one you are doing. This is a distraction.

²⁴ Refer to the glossary on the definition all these *dhamma* objects.

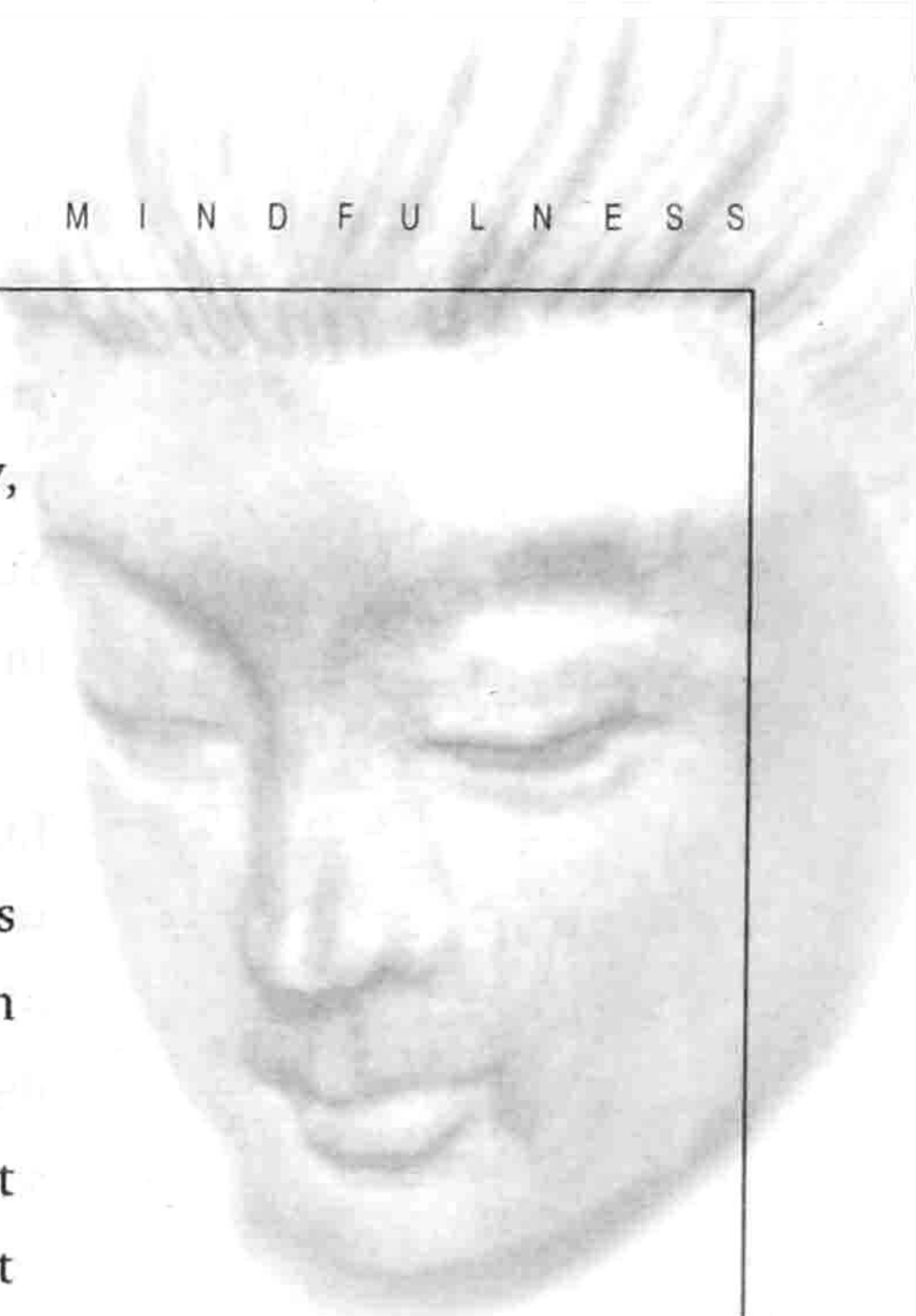
²⁵ Many translations of the MAHĀ SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA render *dhamma* as “mind-object”.



As a practitioner of Vipassanā you have to take what is there at the present moment. Do not try to find out whether it is the body, or the feeling, or the consciousness or the *dhamma*. Whatever there is, your duty is to be mindful of that object so you do not have covetousness and grief regarding that object.

In order not to have covetousness and grief you have to be mindful. You have no time to find out whether it is consciousness or *dhamma* or other things. When you practice Vipassanā meditation you practice all these four foundations of mindfulness as they come along. So long as you are mindful of the object at the present moment you are doing fine, your meditation is good. What is not good is when you are carried away by your thoughts and forget about meditation for some seconds or maybe minutes. That is not good. But so long as you are mindful, you are doing the right thing, your meditation is going well.

Sometimes, yogis think that if they do not concentrate on the main (primary)²⁶ object they are not doing meditation. Sometimes they say, “Oh, we have to spend time or waste time noting the mind going here and there and we do not have much time to concentrate on the main object.” Whether you are aware of the main object or the secondary object, so long as you are mindful at that moment you are doing fine. You are meditating and practicing Vipassanā. What is important in Vipassanā meditation is first to be mindful of the object at the present moment. Sometimes



As a practitioner of Vipassanā you have to take what is there at the present moment. Do not try to find out whether it is the body, or the feeling, or the consciousness or the dhamma.

²⁶ The primary or home object of meditation e.g. the abdominal movement, the breathe sensation at the tip of the nose, the sensation of sitting and sensation of touch at various location in the body, etc. They are use to anchor the mind in the absence of other more prominent (secondary) objects.



So long as you are mindful of the object at the present moment you are doing fine, your meditation is good.

Seeing of these three general characteristics of all conditioned phenomena (impermanent, suffering and non-soul) is the essence of Vipassanā.

you may miss to be mindful and then (by becoming aware that you have missed) that missing also becomes the object of meditation. You have to say to yourself, “missing, missing” or something like that before you go back to the home object.

There should be mindfulness always, mindfulness here, mindfulness there; and if you can keep mindfulness intense, then you will make rapid progress and you will begin to see the true nature of things. That is, you will begin to see the objects arising and disappearing. When you see the arising and disappearing you also see that they are impermanent. When you see they are impermanent you also see their suffering nature and also the non-soul nature or that you have no control over these, that they arise and disappear at their own free will. So, when you see them you are said to see the three general characteristics of all conditioned phenomena. Seeing of these three general characteristics of all conditioned phenomena is the essence of Vipassanā. If you practice Vipassanā you must see these three characteristics because the word “Vipassanā” means “seeing in different ways” and seeing in different ways means seeing in the light of impermanence, in the light of suffering and in the light of non-soul. What is important in Vipassanā is to see these three characteristics and in order to see these three characteristics we need to observe, we need to watch and pay attention to the objects at that present moment.



In order to pay attention to the object at the present moment we need to make effort. Without effort nothing worthwhile can be achieved. This is why Buddha said, “ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful.” When we can fulfill these conditions — being ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful — and have concentration we will be able to overcome covetousness and grief regarding the object we observe.

This is the summary of the discourse called the MAHĀ SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA, the Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness. If you understand the summary this much I think you have a firm understanding of what mindfulness practice is, and so you will understand how to practice mindfulness meditation. There are other detailed instructions for the practice of mindfulness and I hope you are familiar with all these instructions. Following these instructions, making effort, applying mindfulness and seeing things clearly, may all of us be able to overcome covetousness and grief in the world. 🍀



*If you understand
the summary this
much I think you
have a firm
understanding of
what mindfulness
practice is,...*



Handwritten: Subhuti Samadhi



“Monks, those who have neglected these Four Foundations of Mindfulness have neglected the noble path leading to the complete destruction of suffering. Those who have undertaken these Four Foundations of Mindfulness have undertaken the noble path leading to the complete destruction of suffering.”

~ SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA,
SATIPATTHĀNASAMYUTTA,
SUTTA 33

APPENDIX ONE

Word for word Pāli-English translation
of MAHĀ SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA
opening passage

Ekāyano ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā,
sokaparidevānaṃ samatikkamāya dukkhadomanassānaṃ
atthaṅgamāya ñāyassa adhigamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriyaṃ,
yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā.

ayaṃ	This
Ekāyano maggo	The only way
Bhikkhave	monks
sattānaṃ	of beings
visuddhiyā	for the purification
sokaparidevānaṃ	of sorrow (soka) and lamentation (parideva)
samatikkamāya	for the overcoming
dukkhadomanassānaṃ	of pain (dukkha) and grief (domanassa)
atthaṅgamāya	for the disappearance
ñāyassa	of the Noble Path
adhigamāya	for reaching
nibbānassa	of Nibbāna
sacchikiriyaṃ	for the realization
yadidaṃ	namely
cattāro	four
satipaṭṭhānā.	foundation of mindfulness

This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for reaching the Noble Path, for the realization of Nibbāna, namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.



Katame cattāro?

*Katame
cattāro*

What?
Four

What four?



*Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī
sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ ...*

Idha

Herein

Bhikkhave

monks

bhikkhu

a monk

kāye

in the body

kāyānupassī

contemplating (*anupassī*) the body (*kāya*)

viharati

he dwells

ātāpī

ardent

<i>sampajāno</i>	clearly comprehending
<i>satimā</i>	mindful
<i>vineyya</i>	overcoming
<i>loke</i>	in the world
<i>abhijjhādomanassaṃ</i>	covetousness (<i>abhijjhā</i>) and grief (<i>domanassa</i>)

Herein (in this teaching), monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming covetousness and grief in the world.



... *vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ* ...

<i>vedanāsu</i>	in the feelings
<i>vedanānupassī</i>	contemplating the feeling (<i>vedanā</i>)

The rest is the same as above (for contemplation of body).

He dwells contemplating the feeling in the feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming covetousness and grief in the world.



... *citte cittānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya
loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ* ...

citte

in the consciousness

cittānupassī

contemplating the consciousness (*citta*)

The rest is the same as above.

He dwells contemplating the consciousness in the consciousness,
ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming cove-
tousness and grief in the world.



... *dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā
vineyya loka abhijjhādomanassaṃ*.

dhammesu

in the *dhammas*

dhammānupassī

contemplating the *dhamma*

The rest is the same as above.

He dwells contemplating the dhamma in the dhammas, ardent,
clearly comprehending and mindful, overcoming covetousness
and grief in the world.

APPENDIX TWO

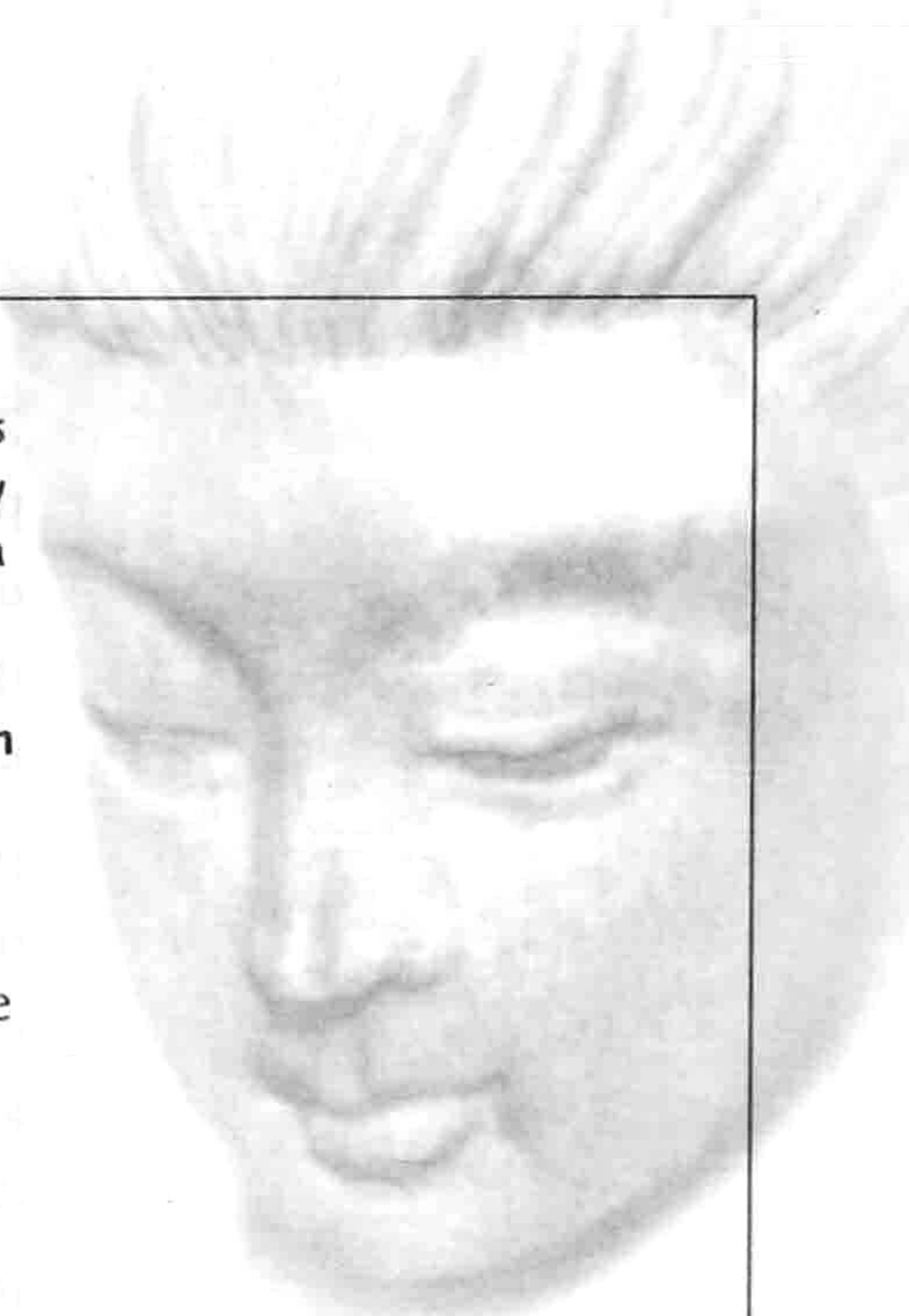
Meditation Instructions: for Loving-kindness
and Vipassanā Meditation by
Sayadaw U Sīlānanda


[The instructions given here are for those who want to practice meditation
for an hour or so and are for sitting and walking meditation only.]

TO PRACTICE MEDITATION, you have to look first for a suitable place. A suitable place is a place which offers you the necessary seclusion. Such secluded places are found in nature, however, when you are meditating inside a house, you have to look for a place which is most suitable for yourself and you will then use this place for meditation each time. You may want to put up a statue or a picture of the Buddha, some flowers, a candle or some incense to assist your meditation, but these items are not so important as is the necessity for a secluded place where you will always practice your meditation in the future.

● Postures for Sitting Meditation

To begin your meditation, please be seated in a comfortable posture, preferably in a cross-legged position, keeping the upper portion of your body erect, but not stiff or tense. One of two kinds of cross-legged position is recommended, namely, the half lotus





position or the easy posture, which some teachers call “Burmese posture”. In the half lotus position one leg is put on top of the other, but in the easy posture one leg is put in front of the other, thus the pressure on either leg is minimized. If any of the cross-legged position is still too difficult, you may select any sitting posture that is most comfortable for yourself. Because some degree of comfort is necessary to continue the practice of meditation, a cushion, a chair or a bench is recommended. Though the cross-legged position is the ideal position for meditation, you have to decide for yourself in which position you can maintain your meditation best. Important in all sitting positions is that you keep the upper portion of your body erect.

- **Forgiveness and Loving-kindness**

Teachers of meditation suggest that you ask forgiveness from those whom you may have offended by deed, speech or thought; forgiving others and yourselves also clears your minds of ill-will. The practice of loving-kindness is also beneficial in that it calms your mind so that you can go into Vipassanā meditation smoothly. Thus, prior to Vipassanā meditation, it is highly recommended that you ask for forgiveness and practise loving-kindness meditation.

By the practice of asking for forgiveness, you remove any guilt feelings that may arise during meditation, due to some wrong by

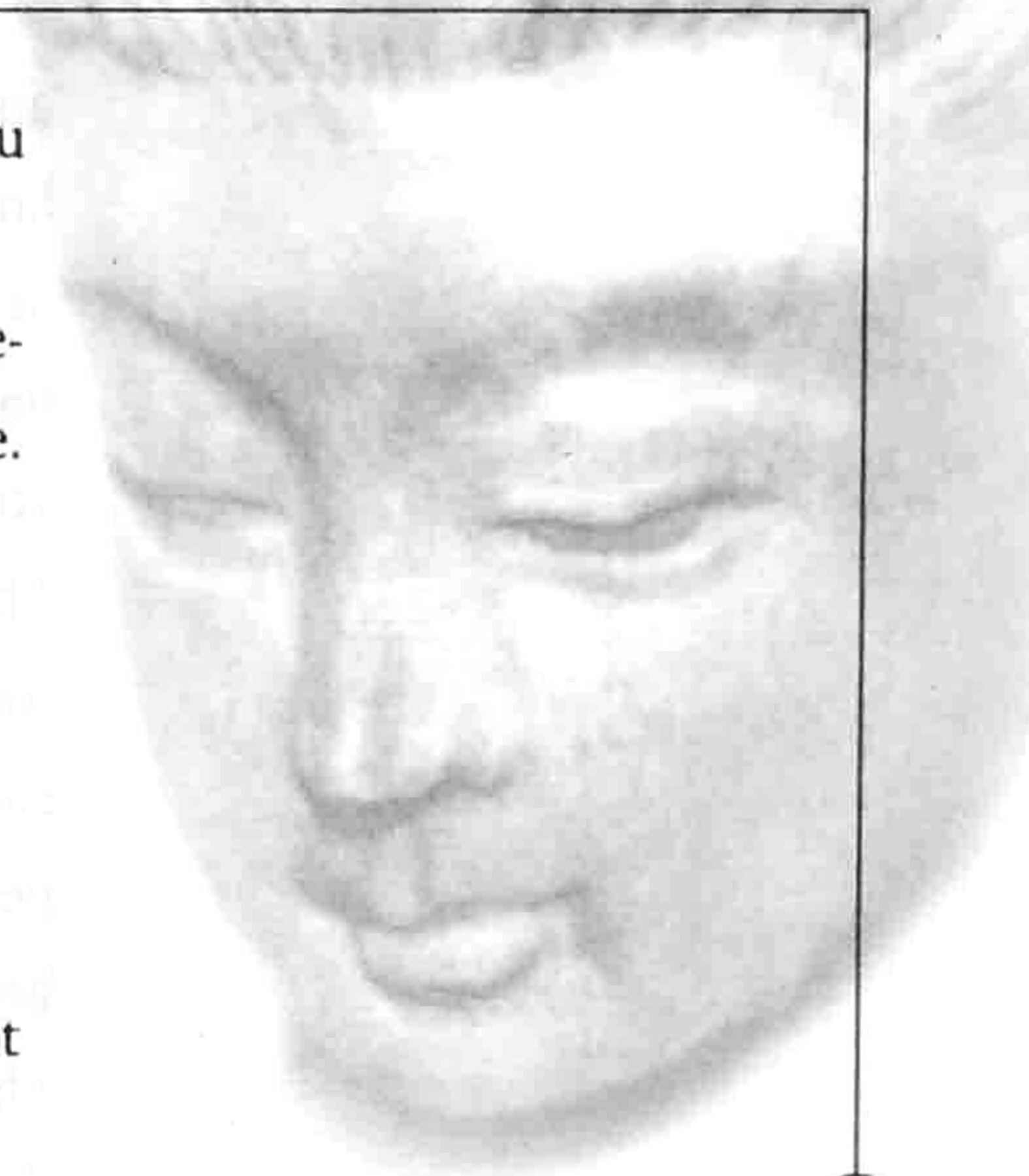
body, speech or mind that you may have done to others. When you are meditating, the mind must be kept pure, as when disturbing thoughts appear, they tend to hinder your efforts. To ask for forgiveness from others is like cleaning the slate, keeping it clean and pure.

This is one aspect. The other aspect is to forgive others. Someone may have done you wrong, and you may have some anger or grudge against that person. You have to get rid of this anger or grudge in order to practice loving kindness fully. You must be able to send thoughts of loving-kindness to all beings without hindrances. But if you cannot forgive others, you will not be able to practice loving-kindness meditation fully. So, loving-kindness and forgiveness go together.


Thirdly, you must also forgive yourself. Sometimes, you may find it more difficult to forgive yourself than to forgive others. If you cannot forgive yourself, you will not be able to practice loving-kindness to yourself; and if you cannot practice loving-kindness to yourself, it is very unlikely that you can send loving kindness to other beings.

Therefore, before attempting Vipassanā meditation, it is highly recommended that you practice forgiveness to others as well as to yourselves; and loving-kindness meditation.

Loving-kindness is love without attachment, craving or lust. It is a wholesome and genuine desire for the well-being of all beings including yourselves. So when you practice loving-kindness



*Loving-kindness is
love without
attachment,
craving or lust.*



and wish for your own happiness, saying, “May I be well, happy and peaceful”, this should not be construed as selfishness because, in order to send out thoughts of loving-kindness to others, you have to generate these thoughts first in yourselves. Also, when you send thoughts to yourself, you can take yourself as an example. That means, when you say, “May I be well, happy, and peaceful,” you are thinking, “Just as I want to be well, happy and peaceful, so do all other beings. So may they also be well, happy and peaceful.” To be able to practice loving-kindness towards other beings, you must first practice loving kindness towards yourself. Then you can send your thoughts to other beings. You can send these thoughts in different ways. You can send thoughts to all beings by location. You can send loving-kindness to all beings in this house. By “all beings” you mean not only human beings, but also animals, insects, etc. Then you send loving-kindness to all beings in this area, in this city, in this county, in this state, in this country, in this world, in this universe, and last, to all beings in general. When you say the sentences to yourself, please, mean them and try to see and visualize the beings you mention as really well, happy, and peaceful, and your thoughts of loving-kindness reaching them, touching them, embracing them and making them really well, happy, and peaceful. It may take about fifteen minutes.

When practicing forgiveness, you should fold your hands up, and repeat to yourself:

To be able to practice loving-kindness towards other beings, you must first practice loving kindness towards yourself.

“If by deed, speech or thought,
Foolishly I have done wrong,
May all forgive me, honored ones,
Who are in wisdom and compassion strong.
I freely forgive anyone
who may have hurt or injured me.
I freely forgive myself.”

Now you can practice loving-kindness meditation. When practicing loving-kindness meditation, you repeat the following sentences silently to yourself, about ten times each.

May I be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this house be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this area be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this city be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this county be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this state be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this country be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this world be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings in this universe be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.

*May suffering ones be suffering free
and the fear-struck fearless be.*



*May the grieving shed all grief,
and all beings find relief.*

Loving-kindness can also be practiced by way of persons, as follows:

May I be well, happy, and peaceful.

May my teachers be well, happy, and peaceful.

May my parents be well, happy, and peaceful.

May my relatives be well, happy, and peaceful.

May my friends be well, happy, and peaceful.

May the indifferent persons be well, happy, and peaceful.

May the unfriendly persons be well, happy, and peaceful.

May all meditators be well, happy, and peaceful.

May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.

*May suffering ones be suffering free
and the fear-struck fearless be.*

*May the grieving shed all grief,
and all beings find relief.*

After you have sent thoughts of loving-kindness to the whole world and all beings, you may then begin your practice of Vipassanā meditation.

● **Vipassanā:**

Sitting Meditation

BREATHS AS MAIN OBJECT

Now focus your attention on the breaths; keep your mind at the tip of the nose, or at the entrance of the nostrils. When you breathe in, be mindful of the in-breath for the whole duration, or from the beginning to the end. And when you breathe out, be mindful of the out-breath for the whole duration, or from the beginning to the end. In-breath and out-breath each last about four or five seconds. Be really mindful of the breaths. You may feel a sensation of the air at the tip of your nose or in your nose. Be mindful of it. And concentrate on the nature of breath, the moving nature or the supporting nature of breath, rather than the shape or form of the breath. Try to see the in-breath and out-breath as two separate things, not just one and the same breath going in and coming out. Do not let your mind follow the breath into your body or outside the body. Your mind is like a gatekeeper standing at the gate, taking note of people going in and coming out. Do not force or strain yourself. Just calmly be mindful and watch the breaths. You may make a mental note when you breathe in and when you breathe out, as “in”, “out”, “in”, “out.” Making mental notes, or labeling, is just to help you keep your mind on the object; if it interferes with your meditation, you don’t have to do it, but just be mindful of the object. What is important in this meditation is mindfulness

*... What is important
in this meditation
is mindfulness
of the object
at the moment,
and not the notes
(labels) you make.*

of the object at the moment, and not the notes you make.

If your mind can be on the breaths only, that is very good. However, mind has a tendency to wander quite often. So, if, in the course of keeping your mind on the breaths, your mind wanders or goes out and you are aware of it, do not feel guilty, or be upset; just be mindful of its going out. Or you may say to yourself, “going out, going out, going out,” two or three times and then go back to the breaths.

If you see something or someone in your thoughts, be mindful of seeing, or say to yourself, “seeing, seeing, seeing,” until that object disappears from your mind; then go back to the breaths. If you hear somebody talking in your thoughts, be mindful of hearing or say to yourself, “hearing, hearing, hearing,” and then go back to the breath.

If you talk to someone in your thoughts, or if you talk to yourself, be mindful of talking, or say to yourself, “talking, talking, talking,” and then go back to the breaths.


If you speculate about something, be mindful of speculating; if you analyze something, be mindful of analyzing; if you make judgments, be mindful of making judgments. In Vipassanā meditation, you pay just bare attention to the object, without any additions of your own, as “beautiful”, “ugly”, “good”, “bad”, etc. Or, in other words, you take the object as it is, without subjective additions of your own.

In Vipassanā meditation, you pay just bare attention to the object, without any subjective additions of your own.

☺ If you remember something in the past, be mindful of the remembering, or say to yourself, “remembering, remembering, remembering” or “thinking, thinking, thinking,” and then go back to the breaths. If you think of the future and make plans, be mindful of it, or say to yourself, “thinking of future, thinking of future, thinking of future,” or “planning, planning, planning,” and then go back to the breath.

If you become lazy, be mindful of your laziness, or say, “lazy, lazy, lazy.” The laziness will go away after some moments, then go back to the breaths. If you feel bored, be mindful of boredom, or say to yourself, “bored, bored, bored,” until boredom goes away, then go back to the breaths. If you have resistance, be mindful of it, or say to yourself, “resisting, resisting, resisting.” When resistance disappears, go back to the breaths.

If you have thoughts of attachment or greed or lust, again do not feel guilty, but be mindful of these thoughts, or say to yourself, “attachment, attachment, attachment,” or “greed, greed, greed,” or “lust, lust, lust,” until they disappear and then go back to the breaths. If you are upset or angry for any reason, just be mindful of that anger, or in other words, make that anger the object of meditation. Concentrate on your anger, or you may say to yourself, “anger, anger, anger” or “angry, angry, angry” or “upset, upset, upset.” After some moments, the anger will disappear and when it has disappeared, go back to the breaths.




If you want to swallow your saliva, first be mindful of the intention or desire to swallow, saying to yourself, “intention, intention, intention,” or “desire, desire, desire.” And when you have gathered the saliva in your mouth, be mindful of the gathering, or say to yourself, “gathering, gathering, gathering.” When you swallow it down, be mindful of swallowing, or say to yourself, “swallowing, swallowing, swallowing,” then go back to the breaths.

If you have an itching sensation, do not scratch it right away. Concentrate on the place of that itching and be mindful of it, saying to yourself, “itching, itching, itching.” In most cases, itching will go away after some time. When it goes away, return to the breaths. Sometimes, the itching will not go away, but will even become more intense. In that case try to be with it, taking note of it and be aware of it, as long as you can. If you think you cannot bear it any longer, you may scratch. But before scratching, be mindful of the intention or desire to scratch; and when you move your hand to the place where you experience the itch, be mindful of moving. Move your hand slowly, following the movement with mindfulness. When your fingers touch the place, say “touching, touching, touching.” When you scratch, say “scratching, scratching, scratching.” When you take the hand back, say “taking, taking, taking” or “moving, moving, moving.” When your hand touches your lap, the knee or the other hand again, be mindful of touching, or say to yourself, “touching, touching, touching.” Then go back to the breaths.

If you have painful or unpleasant feelings in the body — numbness, stiffness, or heat — focus your mind on the place of these feelings and be mindful of them. If you have pain somewhere in the body, focus on the place of that pain, and be mindful of that pain, or say to yourself, “pain, pain, pain.” You will have to be very patient with painful feelings. Pain will not easily go away. You have to be patient and be mindful of it. It may go away or it may become more acute. Stay with it as long as you can. Actually pain is a very good object for meditation. It is a strong object. Your mind is pulled towards the place where there is pain. So be mindful of it and try to see it just as a sensation, an unpleasant sensation. And it is important that you do not identify pain with yourself, so do not say to yourself, “it is my pain” or “I feel pain.” There is just the pain, just the sensation. If the pain becomes so intense that you think you cannot bear it any longer, you may ignore pain altogether and go back to the breaths, or you may make movements or change posture to ease pain. But when you make movements or change posture, first note the intention to change, or be mindful of the intention to change and then make movements slowly, one at a time, following each movement with mindfulness. And when you have made the changes, go back to the breaths.

So the breaths are the home (primary) object of your meditation. Whenever there are no other objects to be mindful

*Actually pain is
a very good object
for meditation.
It is a strong object.
... it is important
that you do not
identify pain
with yourself,
... There is just the
pain, just the
sensation.*



of, continue with being mindful of the breaths. If there are more prominent objects, then take note of them, be aware of them, or be mindful of them, and then go back to the breaths. Do not use force, do not strain yourself, just calmly watch the objects, take note of them, or be mindful of them. Do not try to forcefully push distractions or emotions or feelings in the body away, just watch them and let them go by themselves.

MOVEMENTS OF THE ABDOMEN AS MAIN OBJECT

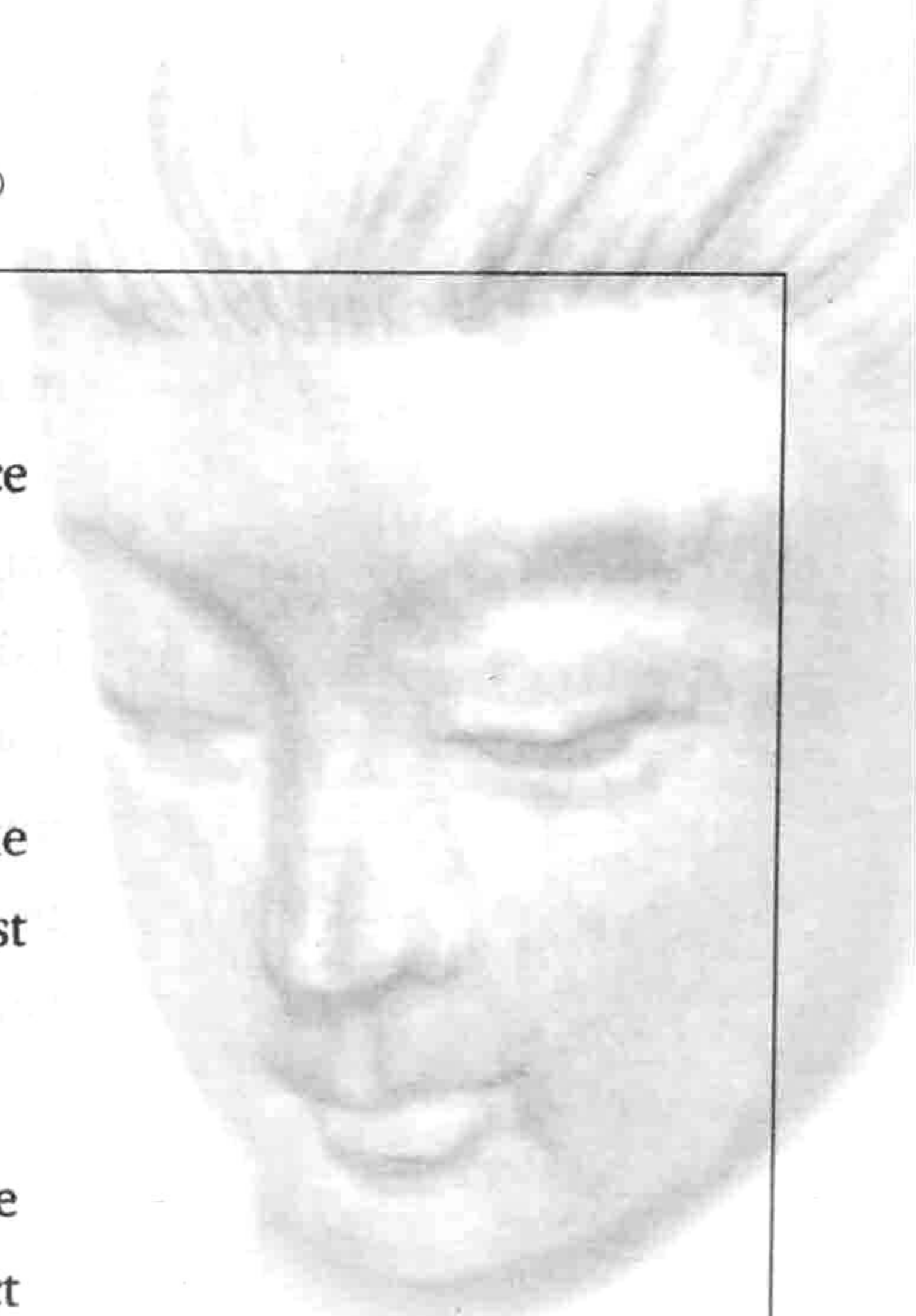
For some people, it is difficult to concentrate on the breath at the tip of the nose. Such people can keep their mind on the abdomen and be mindful of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. When you inhale, the abdomen extends or rises and when you exhale, it contracts or falls. These movements — rising and falling of the abdomen — can be the main object of meditation instead of the breaths. Keep your mind on the abdomen and be really mindful of the rising movement from the beginning to the end, and also of the falling movement from the beginning to the end. Your mind is like a jockey riding a horse, your mind and your abdomen are both moving (concurrently). You may even put your hand on the abdomen to feel the rising and falling movements. After some time, you may be able to follow the rising and falling movements without your hand on the abdomen. Here also, you may make mental notes as

*Do not try
to forcefully push
distractions or
emotions or feelings
in the body away,
just watch them and
let them go by
themselves.*

“rising, falling”, “rising, falling”, “rising, falling”. The rest is the same as for taking the breaths as main object. The only difference is to substitute “breaths” with “movements of the abdomen”.


COMMON TO BOTH METHODS

Let your mindfulness be precise, i.e., going concurrently with the objects. Take only one object at a time; take the one which is most prominent and be mindful of it. If you cannot decide which is most prominent, choose just one and be mindful of it. What is important in this meditation is to be mindful of the object at the present moment; so whether you are mindful of the main object or the secondary object, so long as you are mindful, you are doing the right thing. Do not have any expectations, do not expect to experience something strange or to see visions or to get results or even to get concentration. Expectations are good because they motivate us to practice, but when you are right in the practice, they become obstacles to concentration. That is because they are a mild form of greed or attachment which is a hindrance to concentration. So if expectations come up in spite of yourself, do not be irritated by them, but just be mindful of them, or say to yourself, “expecting, expecting, expecting.” Then go back to the breaths or the movements of the abdomen. When you practice mindfulness you make effort, mental effort; the effort you make thus must be neither too much nor too little; if you make too



*Let your
mindfulness
be precise, i.e.,
going concurrently
with the objects.*

*Do not have any
expectations,
do not expect
to get results or
even to get
concentration.*



much effort, you will become agitated and you cannot concentrate; and if you make too little effort, you will become sleepy and again cannot concentrate. The effort you make must, therefore, be well balanced. If you miss to be mindful and then remember, then be mindful of that missing, or say to yourself, “missing, missing, missing”, or “forgetting, forgetting, forgetting.” Above all, do not be tight or tense in your mind; be relaxed, and calmly watch, or be mindful, or make mental notes.

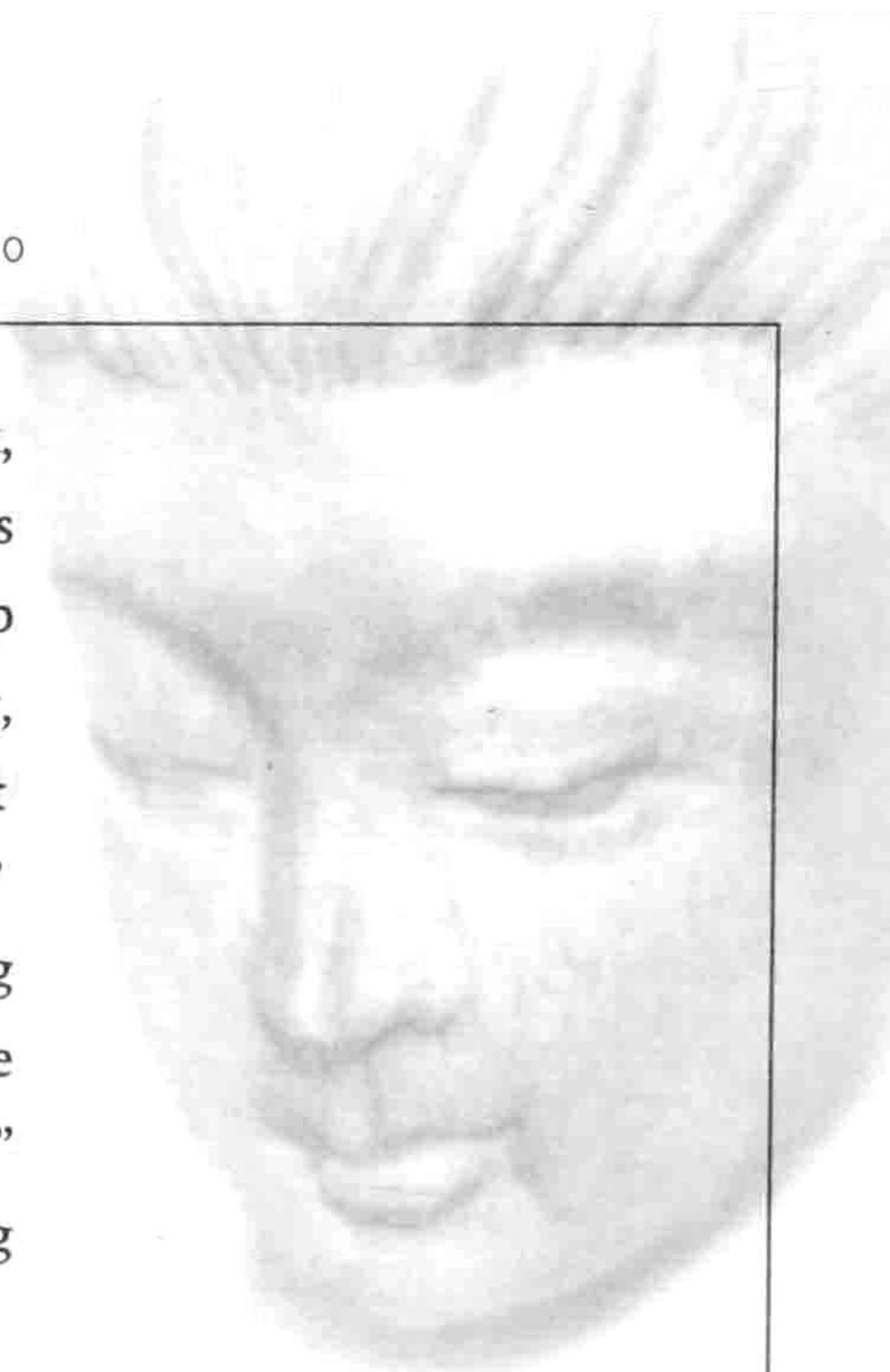
- **Vipassanā:**
Walking Meditation

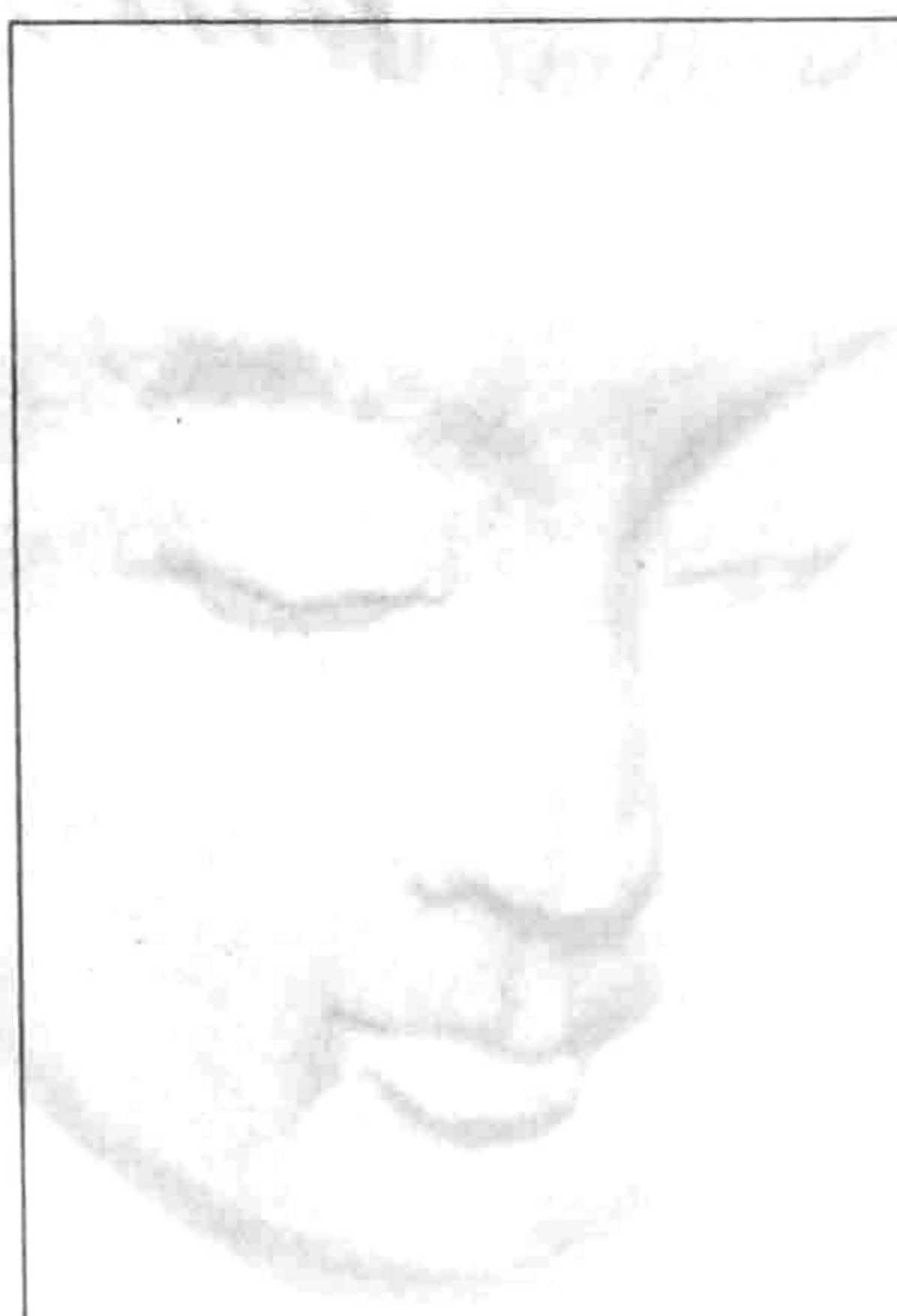
Having meditated for about thirty minutes or more, you may practice walking meditation. When you practice Vipassanā meditation, it is important to keep mindfulness with you always. So, when you change from sitting to standing, keep mindfulness with you. Before standing up, therefore, be mindful of the intention to stand up or to get up. You may say to yourself “intention, intention, intention,” or “desire, desire, desire.” Then get up slowly, keeping your mind on the whole of your body, or saying to yourself, “getting up, getting up, getting up.” And when you are standing, be mindful of the standing position, or say to yourself, “standing, standing, standing.”

When you walk, it is better to choose a walking path and stay on it. Walk on it back and forth. When you walk, you walk slowly,

keeping your mind on the foot or rather the movements of the foot, being aware of at least four stages of each step. And keep your eyes down always. In order to make a step, you first raise your foot. Keep your mind on the foot and be mindful of the raising or lifting, saying, "lifting." Then you push your foot forward, or you move your foot forward. Be mindful of that moving, saying to yourself, "moving." When you put your foot down on the floor, be mindful of the putting down, or just say, "putting." Then you shift your weight to make the other step. Keep your mind on the whole body and say, "shifting." Then make the next step, being mindful of lifting, moving, putting down, and shifting, making movements slowly. Keep your eyes open and look at the floor about three or four feet in front of you. Do not close your eyes. You may fall if you close your eyes. Keep them a little open and look at the floor, or look down.

When you reach the end of the walking space, you stop and be mindful of stopping, or say to yourself, "stopping, stopping, stopping." When you want to turn around, be mindful of the desire or intention to turn around, or say to yourself, "intention, intention, intention," or "desire, desire, desire," and then you turn slowly. Be mindful of the turning movement, or say to yourself, "turning, turning, turning." Then walk again, taking note of the different stages in each step, lifting, moving, putting down, shifting, and so on, until you reach the other end of the walking space. Stop there and be mindful of stopping. When you turn around, be mindful of





turning around and then walk again. Also, when you walk, you may keep your hands in front or in the back or on the sides. So, you walk back and forth until the end of the walking period.

Walking meditation is designed to give exercise to the body. When you are practicing for half an hour or an hour, walking may not be necessary. But when you are on a retreat and practice the whole day, your body needs some kind of movement. Hence the walking meditation. At the end of the walking period, the sitting period begins again. So you go back to the sitting place, walking slowly, making notes, being aware of the different stages and steps. Before lowering yourself down, be mindful of the desire to sit down. Then lower yourself down slowly, keeping your mind on the whole body. When the body touches the floor, say “touching, touching, touching.” When you arrange your legs and hands, say “arranging, arranging, arranging.” And then, go back to the breaths and be mindful of the in-breaths and out-breaths. This way, you alternate sitting and walking and maintain your mindfulness, trying not to lose it at any moment during the retreat.

During retreats, eating is also done with meditation, for everything has to be done with mindfulness. Even the activities in the bathroom should not escape your mindfulness.

For full instructions for practice at a retreat, please read “**PRACTICAL VIPASSANĀ MEDITATIONAL EXERCISES**”²⁷ by the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw.

27 **PRACTICAL VIPASSANĀ MEDITATIONAL EXERCISES** by Mahāsi Sayadaw, published by Inward Path (Inward Journey book no. IJ064/02) Also see suggested reading, pg 70

● **Sharing of Merit**

After meditation, it is advisable to share merits, as it is a good practice to share merits with all beings whenever you have done some meritorious deeds. Sharing of merits means other beings too have a chance to accumulate merits themselves by rejoicing at your merits. By rejoicing at your merits, they themselves acquire merits, and these merits are what give them happy results. Your merits do not decrease when you share them; in fact, they increase, because sharing of merits is itself an act of merit which is *dāna* or giving. Therefore, sharing of merits is beneficial to both the sharer and the recipient.

Please share merit as follows;

*May all beings share this merit
which we have thus acquired.*

*For the acquisition of
all kinds of happiness.*

*May beings inhabiting space and earth,
Deities and others of mighty power,
Share this merit of ours!*

May they long protect the teachings.

“Sādhu (well-done)! Sādhu! Sādhu!”



*“Monks, those for
whom you have compassion,
those who may deem you
worth listening to,
you friends and colleagues,
your relatives —
they ought to be encouraged,
introduced to and
established in the Four
Foundations of
Mindfulness.”*

~ SAMYUTTA NIKĀYA,
SATIPATTHĀNASAMYUTTA,
SUTTA 48

GLOSSARY

- Abhidhamma** : Lit. higher teaching. It is the systematic, analytical as well as synthetical study of ultimate realities (i.e. consciousness, mental factors, materiality and Nibbāna.) It deals with Buddhist philosophy and psychology and forms the third section of the Pāli Canon (See TIPITAKA, pg 66).
- Aggregates** : Five aggregates (*Pañcakkhandha*) The aggregates that make up what we call a sentient being, i.e. material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. Of these five, material form is the only material phenomenon (*rūpa*). Feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness are mental phenomena (*nāma*). These five aggregates are called conditioned phenomena in the sense that they arise supported by favourable conditions and pass away with the cessation of these conditions. Having the nature of arising and passing away, they exhibit the conditioned nature of being impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self. Compare this with Nibbāna which is the unconditioned element. (See Nibbāna, pg 65)
- Arahant** : A worthy one. One whom had attained full enlightenment by totally eradicating all mental defilements.

- Bases** : Twelve bases — the six internal base (eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, tactile-base and mind-base) and the six external base (visible-form, sound, smell, taste, tangibles and mind-objects.)
- Bodhisatta** : A being whom is destined to become a Fully Self Enlightened Being (*Sammāsambuddha*).
- Commentary** : In Pāli “*Aṭṭhakathā*” (lit. discussion of the meaning.) The commentaries are exegetical literature which major function is to elucidate the meaning of the Pāli Text contained in the *TIPITAKA*. They contain the explanation of the Pāli Texts as given by the ancient elders and teachers of the Theravāda school.
- Factors of Enlightenment** : The seven factors of enlightenment are mindfulness, investigation of *dhammas*, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration and equanimity.
- Four Noble Truths** : The Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering (ie. craving), the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (i.e. Nibbāna) and the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering (i.e. the Noble Eightfold Path.)
- Hindrance** : The five mental hindrances. These are the five mental states that obstruct the progress in meditation. They are sense-desire, ill-will, restlessness

and remorse, sloth and torpor, and doubt.

Jhāna : Mental absorption. Refers to a highly developed state of mental concentration. There are altogether 5 levels of such concentration mentioned in the ABHIDHAMMA. At each successive levels the mind becomes progressively more refined and still.

Nibbāna : Lit. “blowing out” — the ending of *samsāra* (the rounds of birth and death) which is suffering (*dukkha*); the laying down of the burden of the five aggregates (See ‘aggregates’ above); cessation; extinction; peace; rest. It is often called by its synonym, “The Unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*)”, in the sense that it is beyond conditionality. It does not arise supported by favourable conditions nor does it pass away with the cessation of those conditions. Rather it is said that Nibbāna neither arises nor passes away. Since it is so it does not exhibit the conditioned nature of being impermanent or unsatisfactory (*anicca & dukkha*), i.e. it is permanent and satisfactory. However all phenomena regardless of being conditioned or unconditioned exhibit the nature of being non-self, i.e. devoid or empty of any self-existing real ego-entity, soul or any abiding substance.

Noble Eightfold Path: The path of practice taught by the Buddha that leads to the end of suffering. The eight factors of the path are: Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Pāli : Refers to the language used to preserve the Buddhist Pāli canonical texts and commentarial literature. It was originally used to refer only to the canonical texts, i.e. the TĪPIṬAKA. See TĪPIṬAKA below.

Tīpiṭaka : Lit. the Three Baskets. It is an extensive body of Canonical Pāli Texts in which are enshrined the teachings of Gotama Buddha expounded for forty-five years from the time of his enlightenment to his *Parinibbāna* (final passing away.) It consists of three divisions:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| I. VINAYA PĪṬAKA | Division of disciplinary and procedural rules for Monastics |
| II. SUTTANTA PĪṬAKA | Division of discourses |
| III. ABHIDHAMMA PĪṬAKA | Division of higher teaching
(See 'ABHIDHAMMA', pg 63) |

The contents of each division are as follows (According to the Sixth Buddhist Council):

- | |
|-------------------|
| I. VINAYA PĪṬAKA |
| 1. Pārājika Pāli |
| 2. Pācittiya Pāli |
| 3. Mahāvagga Pāli |
| 4. Cūlavagga Pāli |
| 5. Parivāra Pāli |

II. SUTTANTA PIṬAKA

1. Dīgha Nikāya

[Collection of Long Discourses. 34 discourses (*suttas*)]

2. Majjhima Nikāya

[Collection of Middle Length Discourses.
152 discourses]

3. Saṃyutta Nikāya

[Collection of Connected Discourses.

It contains 56 *saṃyuttas* (chapters) each containing *suttas* relating to a specific topic.]

4. Aṅguttara Nikāya

[Collection of Numerical Discourses. It contains 11 chapters according to the number of doctrinal items the *suttas* in each chapters contain. So *suttas* in chapter one contain one item, in chapter two two items and so on until eleven items in chapter eleven]

5. Khuddaka Nikāya

[Collection of Minor Texts. The largest section of the SUTTANTA PIṬAKA containing the largest number of treatises as listed below]

- a. Khuddaka Pāṭha
- b. Dhammapada
- c. Udāna
- d. Itivuttaka

- e. Suttanipāta
- f. Vimānavatthu
- g. Petavatthu
- h. Theragāthā
- i. Therīgāthā
- j. Jātaka
- k. Niddesa (Mahā, Cūḷa)
- l. Paṭisambhidā Magga
- m. Apadāna
- n. Buddhavaṃsa
- o. Cariyā Piṭaka
- p. Netti
- q. Peṭakopadesa
- r. Milinda Pañha

III. ABHIDHAMMA PIṬAKA

- 1. Dhammasaṅgaṇī [Enumeration of Phenomena]
- 2. Vibhaṅga [Book of Analysis]
- 3. Dhātukathā [Discourse on Elements]
- 4. Puggalapaññatti [Concepts of Individuals]
- 5. Kathāvatthu [Points of Controversy]
- 6. Yamaka [Book of Pairs]
- 7. Paṭṭhāna [Book of Conditional Relations]

**Vipassanā**

: Lit. seeing (the material and mental phenomena) in various ways (such as impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self.) Usually translated simply as “Insight”. Refers to the intuitive knowledge regarding the nature of material and mental phenomena such as impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self. It has been popularly used to refer to the name of the method of meditation based upon the four foundation of mindfulness, the purpose of this meditation being to arouse such insight knowledge in the meditator’s mind. Insight knowledge when fully developed culminates in the process of enlightenment (See definition of enlightenment above under “REACHING THE NOBLE PATH”, pg 9)



SUGGESTED READING

Pāli Texts Translation & Commentaries

- Maurice Walshe, *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, WISDOM PUBLICATIONS, 1987. A contemporary complete translation of the Dīgha Nikāya. The Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is included here as the 22nd sutta.
- Bhikkhus Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY/WISDOM PUBLICATIONS, 1995. A contemporary complete translation of the Majjhima Nikāya. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is included here as the 10th sutta.
- Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY/WISDOM PUBLICATIONS, 2000. A contemporary complete translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya. The Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta contain many suttas relating to the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna.
- Ven. Soma Thera, *The Way of Mindfulness*, BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, 1981. This work brings together a translation of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, it's ancient Pāli commentary and other essential source material for insight meditation.
- Ven. U Sīlānanda, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness*, WISDOM PUBLICATIONS, 1990. A contemporary commentary of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Written in a clear and easy to understand language it dwells into the meaning of the sutta and it's relevance to the practice of meditation. Also offers a complete translation of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

The Way of Mindfulness

- Ven. Mahāsi Sayadaw, *Practical Vipassanā Meditational Exercises*, INWARD PATH PUBLISHER, re-print 2002. Basic instructions on the practice of insight meditation by one of Burma outstanding masters.
- Ven. U Paṇḍita, *In This Very Life*, BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, 1992. Burmese meditation master Sayadaw U Paṇḍita is the rarest kind of teacher, one who can show us that freedom is as immediate as breathing, as fundamental as a footstep. In this book he describes the path of the Buddha and calls all of us to that heroic journey of liberation.
- Ven. U Sīlānanda, *On Clear Comprehension*, INWARD PATH PUBLISHER, 2000. A modern exposition on the practice of “clear comprehension” based upon the Satipaṭṭhāna commentaries.
- Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart Of Buddhist Meditation*, BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, 1992. A modern spiritual classic. Combining deep personal insight with the power of clear exposition, the author guides reader into the essential principles making up the Buddha’s Way of Mindfulness. Besides offering a lucid account of the basic practises of insight meditation, the book contains a complete translation of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.
- Ven. H. Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, WISDOM PUBLICATIONS, 1993. A practical, step by step guide to insight meditation written in simple English with a minimum of technical terms.

Bhikkhu Visuddhācāra, *Invitation to Vipassanā*, MALAYSIAN BUDDHIST MEDITATION CENTRE, 1991.

A call to take up the practice of *Vipassanā*. This booklet gives reasons why you should practice *Vipassanā* and provides basic instructions on how to do so.



- Ven. Sujīva, *Essentials of Insight Meditation Practice*, BUDDHIST WISDOM CENTRE, 2000. A practical guide for beginners in insight meditation. Veteran meditators too can benefit much from this book. It provides all the necessary information that one should know about the practice of insight meditation: basic instructions, how to deal with hindrances, obstacles and problems, how to balance the mental controlling-faculties, the different types of concentration, difference between tranquility and insight meditation, important points for progress in the practice, etc.
- S.N. Goenka & William Hart, *The Art of Living: Vipassanā Meditation*, VIPASSANĀ PUBLICATIONS, 1990. Prepared from the discourses given to thousands of students around the world by one of his students, this book serves as a thorough introduction to Goenka's method of insight meditation.
- S.N. Goenka, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Discourses*, VIPASSANĀ RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS, 1998. Goenka's comments and elaboration on the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.
- Joseph Goldstein, *Insight Meditation – The Practice of Freedom*, SHAMBALA PUBLICATIONS, 1994. The fruit of some twenty years' experience leading Buddhist meditation retreats, this book touches on a wide range of topics raised repeatedly by meditators.
- Joseph Goldstein, *The Experience of Insight*, SHAMBALA PUBLICATIONS, 1987. A modern classic of practical instructions for Buddhist meditation.
- Joseph Goldstein & Jack Kornfield, *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom*, SHAMBALA PUBLICATIONS, 1988. A practical guide to meditation based on talks given at several intensive retreats.
- Jack Kornfield, *Living Buddhist Masters*, BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, 1988. Introduces readers to the method of meditation of 12 meditation masters such as Ajahn Chah, Mahāsi Sayadaw and Ajahn Mahā Boowa.



ALSO BY SAYADAW U SĪLĀNANDA

- The Four Foundations of Mindfulness
WISDOM PUBLICATIONS, 1990 • Boston, USA • ISBN 0-86171-092-4
- Paritta Pāḷi & Protective Verses: A Collection of Eleven Protective Suttas & An English Translation
INWARD PATH PUBLISHER, 1998 • Penang, Malaysia • ISBN 983-9439-21-9 (IJ014/98)
- Volition: An Introduction to the Law of Kamma
INWARD PATH PUBLISHER, 1998 • Penang, Malaysia • ISBN 983-9439-20-0 (IJ015/98)
- No Inner Core: An Introduction to the Doctrine of Anattā
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- The Man who called Himself Tathāgata
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- The Three Characteristics
INWARD PATH PUBLISHER, 2000 • Penang, Malaysia • ISBN 983-9439-48-0 (IJ049/00)
- The Benefits of Walking Meditation (english & chinese edition)
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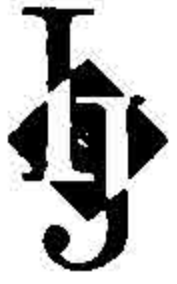
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THIS WORK as its sub-title suggests is an exposition of the summary of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Great Discourse On the Foundations of Mindfulness). It is transcribed from a talk given by Sayadaw U Sīlānanda at the Buddha Sāsana Yeikthā, Seven Bridge, Ontario, Canada.

The summary here refers to the opening passage in this discourse which begins with the Buddha laying claim to the efficacy of Satipaṭṭhāna as the only way for obtaining seven benefits — beginning with the purification of beings and among which is the realization of Nibbāna — the acme of the Buddhist path of mental culture. The Buddha then goes on to give a summary of the method for the establishing of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) with reference to body, feeling, consciousness and *dhamma*. These four — collectively called the four foundations of mindfulness — are the four objective domains for contemplation with mindfulness in Satipaṭṭhāna meditation practice. In the summary the Buddha listed out the mental factors, such as energetic effort, mindfulness, etc. that the meditator must bring to bear in his work of meditation. He also stated very concisely how Satipaṭṭhāna meditation is to be carried out. Due to its conciseness the meaning of this passage may not be at once clear or apparent. An exposition of its meaning is therefore helpful to uncover its meaning.

Drawing from his vast knowledge of the Pali canonical and commentarial texts as well as his years of experience teaching Satipaṭṭhāna meditation, Sayadaw U Sīlānanda gives us — in a very simple language — lucid explanation of the meaning of each and every word in the summary passage as well as its significance and implication in the actual work of Satipaṭṭhāna meditation. As he said it is very important for a Satipaṭṭhāna meditator to understand this passage correctly and clearly. Understanding even this much they will have a firm understanding of the practice and how to carry it out.



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