

Satipaṭṭhāna Online Course

Audio meditation transcription

Guided Meditation – 1 Anatomy

We are aware of the body in the sitting posture, and we let the mind rest on the body just as the body rests on the cushion.

And without losing this whole body awareness, we will now proceed to practice the first spoke in the wheel of our *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation: contemplation of the anatomical parts, simplified to skin, flesh, and bones, undertaken with the help of three body scans.

Starting on top of the head, we are aware of the scalp area with the knowledge that there is skin. No need to force or strain ourselves to distinctly sense skin in this part of the body; enough for our purposes if we are just aware of this part of the body with the knowledge there is skin.

From the scalp area we shift to the face, the facial area, aware of this part of the body knowing there is skin.

From the face to the neck, aware of this part of the body with the knowledge there is skin.

From the neck to one shoulder, left or right doesn't matter, choosing one shoulder, aware of that part of the body with the knowledge there is skin.

From the shoulder to the upper arm, skin.

Lower arm, skin.

And the hand, skin.

Shifting attention to the other shoulder, skin.

Upper arm, skin.

Lower arm, skin.

And the hand, skin.

Shifting attention to the upper half of the front of the torso, front of the torso, upper half, knowing that there is skin in that part of the body.

From the upper half to the lower half, lower half of front of torso, knowing there is skin.

Shifting attention to the back of the torso, upper half, upper half back of torso, knowing there is skin. And the lower half of the back of the torso, skin.

Shifting attention to one of the hips, left or right doesn't matter, choosing one hip area, knowing that there is skin.

From the hip to the upper leg, skin.

Lower leg, skin.

And the foot, skin.

The other hip, skin.

Upper leg, skin.

Lower leg, skin.

And the foot, skin.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture as covered by skin. Skin including hairs and nails. And we cultivate an attitude of non-attachment towards the skin, similar to looking at various grains in a bag, in a bag used for sowing. Balanced attitude, non-attachment: just skin, after all.

And the next scan, for flesh, we start where we left off, that foot where we ended the scan for the skin, we start with that foot, aware of that part of the body with the knowledge there is some flesh: muscles, tendons, whatever it is, there is some flesh in this part of the body.

And from the foot to the lower leg, aware of that part of the body and knowing there is flesh.

Upper leg, flesh.

And the hip, flesh.

The other foot, flesh.

Lower leg, flesh.

Upper leg, flesh.

And the hip, flesh.

Lower half of torso, flesh.

Upper half of torso, flesh.

Shifting attention to one hand, left or right doesn't matter, aware of that hand with the knowledge there is flesh in that part of the body.

And from the hand to the lower arm, flesh.

Upper arm, flesh.

And the shoulder, flesh.

Shifting attention to the other hand, flesh.

Lower arm, flesh.

Upper arm, flesh.

Shoulder, flesh.

Neck, flesh.

And the head, flesh.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture of its fleshy parts: muscles, tendons, organs, whatever it is, all included under flesh. And we cultivate an attitude of non-attachment, similar to looking at various grains. Just flesh after all.

And the bones.

Starting with the head.

Aware of the head knowing that there are bones. The skull, the teeth: just bones.

No need to strain in an attempt to distinctly sense every single bone, enough for our purposes just to be aware of that part of the body and knowing that there are bones.

From the head to the neck, bones.

From the neck to one shoulder, bones.

Upper arm, bones.

Lower arm, bones.

And the hand, bones.

The other shoulder, bones.

Upper arm, bones.

Lower arm, bones.

And the hand, bones.

Upper half of torso, bones.

Lower half of torso, bones.

One hip, bones.

Upper leg, bones.

Lower leg, bones.

And the foot, bones.

The other hip, bones.

Upper leg, bones.

Lower leg, bones.

And the foot, bones.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture of its bones. Cultivating an attitude of non-attachment similar to looking at various grains. Just bones after all.

Just skin, flesh, and bones.

And having cultivated an attitude of non-attachment, and also rooted mindfulness in whole body awareness, we are now ready to open up to open awareness.

Open awareness of anything that might manifest at any of the six sense doors. Just aware of it. With the strong post of whole body awareness firmly rooted, we are able to open up to six sense door experience in whatever way it unfolds.

Just aware.

And aware of it as changing phenomena. Whatever manifests, it is impermanent. Just the flow of experience, its process character, that is what we keep knowing, understanding. Changing phenomena, just a flow, just a flux.

And sooner or later, mind is bound to get distracted.

Whenever we notice, smilingly, smilingly we realize, "oh, mind has taken me for a ride".

And with that inner smile, free from aversion, negativity, we just come back to the present moment, with the understanding, present moment is the only time when I can truly live. I cannot live in the past, I cannot live in the future. Present moment, here and now, is the only time for me.

And if that distraction was a shorter one, we simply come back to the present moment. But if it was a long distraction--mind has really taken us for a long ride, we completely forgot about our practice--then we might decide to do another body scan, cultivating non-attachment, and also giving mindfulness a chance to be rooted again through this gradual moving through the body. And depending on the situation and on our personal preferences, we might do the scan slow or fast, moving both limbs simultaneously, simultaneously through the arms and the legs, or else taking them singly. Working creatively, observing the situation and deciding what is the most appropriate means of practice at this time.

And after having done a scan we come back to open awareness: just mindful of whatever manifests at any of the sense doors, and aware of it as impermanent, as changing phenomena.

Planting the seeds of wisdom, growing the seeds of insight. Step by step we gradually progress and move forward to the final goal of total non-attachment.

Keep practicing like this.