

## Satipaṭṭhāna Online Course

Audio meditation transcription

### Guided Meditation – 2 Elements

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 embodied presence of the mind, we will now proceed through the first two spokes in the wheel of our *satipaṭṭhāna* practice: anatomical parts done swiftly, and elements done slowly.

Beginning with the anatomical parts:

Starting on top of the head, aware of skin.

And from the top of the head to the face.

Neck.

Both shoulders simultaneously.

Both arms.

The hands.

Front of torso.

Back of torso.

Both hips.

The legs.

And the feet.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture, of the skin, cultivating an attitude of non-attachment.

And the flesh:

Beginning with the feet.

Moving up, the legs.

The hips.

The torso.

The hands.

The arms.

The shoulders.

Neck.

And head.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture, of its fleshy parts, cultivating an attitude of non-attachment.

And the bones:

Beginning with the head.

From the head to the neck.

Shoulders.

Arms.

Hands.

Torso.

Hips.

Legs.

And the feet.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture, of its bones, cultivating an attitude of non-attachment.

And the elements:

Earth element: solidity, hardness.

Starting with the head: aware of the head area and knowing there is some earth element. No need to strain or force ourselves trying to distinctly feel or sense the earth element. Enough for our purposes to know that it is there. There is some solidity in this part of the body, particularly evident in the bones, but found throughout the head.

And from the head to the neck, aware of this part of the body with the knowledge there is solidity there, earth element.

And from the neck to one shoulder. Choosing one shoulder, we are aware of this part of the body with the knowledge: there is earth element – that quality of solidity, hardness.

From the shoulder to the upper arm. Earth element.

Lower arm. Earth element.

And the hand. Earth element.

The other shoulder. Earth element.

Upper arm. Earth element.

Lower arm. Earth element.

And the hand. Earth element.

Upper half of torso. Earth element.

Lower half of torso. Earth element.

Choosing one hip. Earth element.

Upper leg. Earth element.

Lower leg. Earth element.

And the foot. Earth element.

Other hip. Earth element.

Upper leg. Earth element.

Lower leg. Earth element.

And the foot. Earth element.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture as pervaded by the earth element, with the understanding, earth element internally, in this body, earth element externally, outside in nature; just the same, no real difference. And this earth element is not something I can truly own, completely control. This earth element is empty -- empty of self.

Water element: principal quality of cohesion, wetness.

And we start off with the foot where we left off, aware of that foot with the knowledge there is some water element there, particularly prominent in the bodily liquids, in the fleshy parts and organs of the body, but water element is found throughout the foot, throughout the whole body.

Aware of this foot and knowing there is water element.

From the foot to the lower leg, water element.

Upper leg, water element.

And the hip, water element.

The other foot, water element.

Lower leg, water element.

Upper leg, water element.

And the hip, water element.

Lower half of torso, water element.

Upper half of torso, water element.

One hand, water element.

Lower arm, water element.

Upper arm, water element.

And the shoulder, water element.

Other hand, water element.

Lower arm, water element.

Upper arm, water element.

Shoulder, water element.

The neck, water element.

And the head, water element.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture, as pervaded by the water element, with the understanding - water element internally, water element externally, just the same. No real difference. And this water element is not something I can truly control, permanently own.

This water element is empty -- empty of a self.

Fire element: the principle, that quality of warmth, temperature.

Starting with the head: we are aware of the head with the knowledge that there is some fire element in there. Temperature is particularly discernible at the skin level, but fire is found throughout the head, throughout the body. Aware of the head with the knowledge there is some fire element, some temperature, some warmth.

And from the head to the neck, fire element.

One shoulder, fire element.

Upper arm, fire element.

Lower arm, fire element.

And the hand, fire element.

Other shoulder, fire element.

Upper arm, fire element.

Lower arm, fire element.

And the hand, fire element.

Upper half of torso, fire element.

Lower half of torso, fire element.

One hip, fire element.

Upper leg, fire element.

Lower leg, fire element.

And the foot, fire element.

Other hip, fire element.

Upper leg, fire element.

Lower leg, fire element.

And the foot, fire element.

And we are aware of this whole body in the sitting posture, as pervaded by the fire element, with the understanding - fire element internally, fire element externally, just the same. No real difference. And this fire element is not something I can permanently own, truly control. This fire element is empty -- empty of a self.

And the wind element: the principle, the quality of motion, oscillation, vibration.

Starting with the foot where we left off. Aware of the foot with the knowledge there is some motion going on in there, some wind element. The most prominent manifestation of the wind element in this body is the process of breathing, but the wind element is found throughout the foot, throughout the whole body. Aware of the foot with the knowledge that there is some wind element.

And from the foot to the lower leg, wind element.

Upper leg, wind element.

And the hip, wind element.

And the other foot, wind element.

Lower leg, wind element.

Upper leg, wind element.

And the hip, wind element.

Lower half of torso, wind element.

Upper half of torso, wind element.

One hand, wind element.

Lower arm, wind element.

Upper arm, wind element.

The shoulder, wind element.

The other hand, wind element.

Lower arm, wind element.

Upper arm, wind element.

And the shoulder, wind element.

The neck, wind element.

And the head, wind element.

And we are aware of this whole body in this sitting posture, as pervaded by the wind element, with the understanding - wind element internally, wind element externally, just the same. No real

difference. And this wind element is not something I can permanently own, truly control. This wind element is empty -- empty of self.

This body, made up of a combination of earth, water, fire, and wind elements; empty body, empty of self. And being empty, so dependent on supply of these elements from the outside: earth element in the form of food, water element in the form of beverage, fire element in the form of warmth, clothing, heating, and wind element in the form of breathing. So dependent. And most dependent on the most ephemeral of these four elements: the wind element, the constant supply of oxygen. So dependent.

And having cultivated non-attachment through contemplation of the anatomical parts, and insight into emptiness, the emptiness of this body, through contemplation of the elements, and having rooted mindfulness well in the body through this continuous body scan, we are now ready to proceed to open awareness, based on our foundation in whole-body awareness, whole-body mindfulness, opening up to experience at any of the sense doors in whatever way it unfolds; just aware. Just aware without choosing, rejecting, liking, disliking. Balanced awareness. And aware of change, changing phenomena. Impermanence. Rising, passing, rising, passing, rising and passing away. Impermanence.

And as we keep practicing like this, sooner or later mind is bound to get distracted. As soon as we realize, smilingly, without a trace of negativity or aversion, smilingly we come back, come back to the only time when we can live, the present moment. Realizing, oh look, mind has taken me for a ride. And if this was just a short distraction, somewhat like meeting somebody on the road, saying hello, and then moving on, we just come back to present moment. But if it was a longer distraction, somewhat like meeting somebody on the road and then sitting down for a longer chat, we discern the emptiness of the distraction; the empty nature of the daydream, fantasy, memory, imagination, that has taken us away from the present moment. Just as the body is empty, so the mind is empty. And this distraction, this fantasy, this memory, just feelings bubbling up, just perception creating a mirage, and the mind's intention against our purposes to continue with this distraction, like a plantain tree without any solid essence. And consciousness, aware of this all, just like a magical illusion, empty. And having discerned the emptiness of this distraction we decide whether this contemplation of the empty nature has sufficed for rooting us in the present moment so that we can open up again to open awareness or whether maybe it is better to give the mind something to do, do another body scan, getting the mind occupied. And with this gradual scan, going part by part, making it easy for us to notice when the mind

wanders away. At times we might even decide to start all the way back with the anatomical parts; working creatively, attuned to the needs of the mind in the present moment -- that is mindfulness, that monitoring ability, knowing what is suitable. And sooner or later we are back to open awareness again. Open awareness, mindfulness firmly rooted in the body. Anything that manifests at any of the senses doors is experienced as impermanent, as changing phenomena.

Planting the seeds of wisdom, growing the seeds of insight, step by step we are progressing on the path to full realization of emptiness.

Keep practicing like this.