

The Maha Satipatthana Sutta: Practical Guide to Buddhist Meditation

NAMITHA NIMBALKAR

Department of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI

CD 112, D 12, Shreerang Society, Thane (W) pin code 400601.

Maharashtra, INDIA

Email Address: namita.nimbalkar@gmail.com

Abstract: The MahaSatipatthānaSutta is acknowledged as an important Sutta that the Buddha taught. The discourse by Buddha in MahaSatipatthānaSutta aids in meditation. It has resulted in development of Vipassana or insight practice in modern times in the Thēravāda Buddhist countries. The ‘insight’ developed leads into the nature of things, leading to the complete liberation of mind, to the realization of the Ultimate Truth, Nirvana. This is essentially Buddhist ‘meditation’, Buddhist mental culture. It is different from the yogic practices which the Buddha had practiced but was not satisfied with. In the MahaSatipatthānaSutta the Buddha gives an analytical method based on mindfulness, awareness, vigilance and observation. It is interesting to note that the ways of ‘meditation’ given in this discourse are not cut off from life, nor do they avoid life; on the contrary they are all connected with our life and its daily activities. The discourse is divided into four main sections: the first section deals with our body (kāya), the second with our feelings and sensations (vēdana), the third with the mind (citta), and the fourth with various moral and intellectual subjects (dhamma). The practice of Buddhist meditation aims to make people realize that they have to live in their actions, in the present moment, and not to live in the past or in the future. The meditation guides us only to be mindful and aware of whatever one may do. This paper will analyse the meaning of Sati, the four focuses of mindfulness, the techniques of Satibhavana in detail.