

1st and 2nd Contemplations of the Body (*Kaya*) Tetrad

Establishing the jhana factors of:

- *Vitakka* – aiming the mind, thinking of
- *Vicara* – sustaining attention, experiencing, thinking about
- *Ekaggata* – one-pointedness, or provisionally, the ability to pay attention

In the first two contemplations of the Anapansati Sutta we are training the mind to: aim at the breath, experience the breath, and stay engaged with the experience of breathing.

Precise attention to detail alongside a quality of appreciative awareness.

There are three aspects of breathing we can turn our attention to:

- Location
- Duration
- Quality

Pay attention! The breath can become subtler the more your attention is absorbed in it (like the ring of a gong becoming softer). You can lose the breath as object of attention in this transition. Be aware and adjust your attention accordingly. If you lose the breath entirely, start over. Re-aim the mind to find where the breath is and then engage with its qualities. The same is true when you become aware that you have become distracted from the breath. Simply start over with patience and kindness.

LOCATION

1. Where the breath is most physically apparent
This place will change over time and you move your attention in response
2. Following or pursuing the in-breath and out-breath
If this gets tiring when you get more concentrated, switch to #3, guarding below
 - Follow the in-breath by sweeping your awareness along with the breath from nostril to navel (or chest) to abdomen
 - Follow the out-breath from abdomen to navel (or chest) to nostril
3. Guarding a specific point and leaving the attention there
This method is especially beneficial for establishing the one-pointed aspect of *ekaggata*
 - a. Tip of the nostril (as in the fourth stage of the four stage Mindfulness of Breathing)
 - Chi-I (538-597, systematizer of Tien Tai tradition) in his work Jhana for Beginners recommends this if one was sleepy
 - b. Abdomen
 - Chi-I recommended this if one's mind was very distracted with thinking
 - c. Or where the breath is most physically apparent at the outset of the practice

DURATION – Long and Short Breaths

- There is no universal, absolute measure of what is a long or short breath
- What constitutes a relatively long or short breath can differ from sit to sit and will differ from person to person
- Don't worry about getting "the right answer"

1. Using counting as an expedient:

- a. Count at a consistent pace
- b. Notice how long a breath is by the number you get to (1, 2, 3, ...)
- c. Notice how the breaths change (e.g., from a breath of a duration of three counts to a breath of duration of five counts)

2. Sensing the duration

- Sensing the relative length or shortness of each breath intuitively without counting
 - Does the breath feel long or short?
 - What the duration of this breath feel like relative to the previous breaths?

QUALITY

- Again, there is no right answer
- Just notice what is happening? What is the quality, the texture, the characteristic of this breath?

Noticing, is the breath:

- Course or fine?
- Smooth or bumpy?
- Easy or forced?

You might notice other characteristics than those listed above. That's fine. Just notice.

The noticing uses our tactile sense. It might be enough to just know the quality of the breath in the body through the sense of touch without giving it a name. At other times, using a simple label might make the experience clearer. You can use the words in the list above or others that describe the quality of the breath. Focus on the precise experiencing rather than finding the precisely correct word (don't make the noting a complication).

THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF LOCATION, DURATION AND QUALITY

Notice how these three aspects of the breath mutually affect each other.

When there's a long breath:

- Where in the body do you feel it?
- What's its quality?

When there's a short breath:

- Where in the body do you feel it?
- What's its quality?