

TORONTO CENTRE FOR APPLIED BUDDHISM

Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Course

10-Day Exploration of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (MN 10)

Teacher: the Venerable Bhante Kusala, PhD

An on-line course (via Zoom):

10 Fridays, September 20, 2024 to November 22, 2024, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm (ET)

Course Description

The Buddha's Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, Middle Length Discourses Number 10) teaches us how to systematically establish mindfulness in body, feelings, mind, and mental occurrences with the goal of attaining mental purity, overcoming grief and lamentation, to learn the true way, and attain *Nibbana*.

In a span of 10 two-hour sessions of this course, we intend to study the entire discourse with its contents in English translation, and also look into the meaning of important words in the *Sutta* in *Pāli*. The students will also learn how to chant selected important *Pāli* verses of the *Sutta*.

This course is intended for anyone who wishes to learn the Buddha's discourse on establishing mindfulness. It is suitable for students who have experience in Buddhist practice and *suttas* as well as those who have experience with secular mindfulness and now wish to understand mindfulness in its original context.

Each day can focus on deepening the understanding and practice of one aspect of mindfulness. Each day will include a chanting session for the parts covered.

Course Outline

This course structure balances theory with practical exercises, guiding students through each foundation of mindfulness in a progressive and experiential way.

Day 1 (September 20): Introduction to the Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Topics Covered:

- Overview of the *Satipatthana Sutta* (MN 10)
- The importance of mindfulness in Buddhist practice
- The four foundations: body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena
- Setting intentions for the course

Practice:

- Guided mindfulness of breathing meditation (*Anapanasati*)

COURSE OUTLINE

(Subject to Change)

- Introduction to walking meditation

Day 2 (September 27): Mindfulness of the Body (*Kayanupassana*)

Topics Covered:

- The contemplation of the body in the body
- Breath awareness
- Postures (sitting, standing, walking, lying down)
- Reflection on the body's impermanence

Practice:

- Body scan meditation
- Mindful awareness of bodily postures during daily activities

Day 3 (October 4): Mindfulness of Breathing (*Anapanasati*)

Topics Covered:

- Deeper focus on mindfulness of breathing as a foundational practice
- Importance of observing the breath as a means to calm the mind

Practice:

- Extended *Anapanasati* meditation (mindfulness of in-and-out breathing)
- Noting subtle changes in breath, focusing on long and short breaths

Day 4 (October 11): Full Awareness of Activities (Clear Comprehension)

Topics Covered:

- Mindfulness of daily activities (e.g., eating, drinking, walking)
- Clear comprehension in daily life: purpose, suitability, and wisdom
- Integrating mindfulness into routine actions

Practice:

- Mindful eating exercise
- Mindful movement meditation (slow walking)

Day 5 (October 18): Mindfulness of Feelings (*Vedananupassana*)

Topics Covered:

- Observing feelings (pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral)
- Learning not to identify with or cling to feelings
- The impermanence of feelings and their arising and passing away

Practice:

- Noting emotions meditation (acknowledging feelings without attachment)
- Reflection on pleasant and unpleasant sensations

Day 6 (October 25): Mindfulness of Sensory Experiences

Topics Covered:

- Mindfulness of the six senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, mind)
- How sensory experiences influence feelings and perceptions

COURSE OUTLINE

(Subject to Change)

Practice:

- Focused meditation on the five senses
- Noting external and internal stimuli as they arise in meditation

Day 7 (November 1): Mindfulness of the Mind (*Cittanupassana*)

Topics Covered:

- Observing the state of mind (e.g., distracted, focused, joyful, sorrowful)
- Understanding mental states as impermanent and non-self
- Cultivating equanimity toward changing mental states

Practice:

- Noting and labeling the state of mind meditation
- Practicing equanimity and non-attachment to thoughts

Day 8 (November 8): Mindfulness of Mental Objects (*Dhammanupassana*)

Topics Covered:

- Contemplating the five hindrances: desire, ill-will, sloth, restlessness, and doubt
- Contemplation of the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness)
- Observing arising and passing of mental phenomena

Practice:

- Meditation on the hindrances
- Noting the aggregates in the present experience

Day 9 (November 15): Mindfulness of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment

Topics Covered:

- Contemplation of the seven factors: mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, equanimity
- Balancing these factors in meditation and daily life

Practice:

- Meditation focusing on one or more of the seven factors
- Reflection on developing and balancing these factors

Day 10 (November 22): Integration and Conclusion

Topics Covered:

- Recap of the four foundations of mindfulness
- Reflecting on personal growth and challenges throughout the course
- Discussing ways to continue mindfulness practice beyond the course

Practice:

- Extended sitting meditation, incorporating all four foundations
- Group reflection and sharing of insights from the course.

COURSE OUTLINE

(Subject to Change)

Recommended Readings:

1. <https://a.co/d/fXHcUtT>

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta:: A Brief Guide to reading the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta With the Pāli and English Texts

2. The direct path to realization, Analayo

<https://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/pdf/5-personen/analayo/direct-path.pdf>

3. Mindfulness in Plain English, Bhante Gunaratana

https://ia802306.us.archive.org/2/items/mindfulness-in-plain-english-bhante-gunaratana/Mindfulness%20in%20Plain%20English%20-%20Bhante%20Gunaratana_text.pdf

4. MN 10 Satipatthana Sutta

<https://suttacentral.net/mn10/en/sujato>