

**Dedicated Practitioners Program
Reading and Homework for November 2002**

This month we turn our attention to some of the themes of the upcoming November DPP retreat. The retreat will be on the Satipatthana Sutta, compassion, the paramis and the kilesas. For this month's homework, we will focus on the study and practice of the Satipatthana Sutta and the paramis.

The Satipatthana Sutta is the foundation text for the practice of mindfulness meditation. In it, you will find basic descriptions of practices for mindfulness of breath, body and mental phenomena that we are all familiar with, as well as some practices you may not be that familiar with. The paramis are a list of ten qualities that are necessary to develop to become a fully enlightened Buddha. They epitomize the Bodhisattva Path. The Buddha is said to have perfected these qualities during many previous lifetimes, as documented in the Jataka tales. They are very pertinent to practice in daily life.

Readings: The Foundations of Mindfulness, Satipatthana Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya 10, available on-line at <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/majjhima/mn010b.html>. "The Periodic Table of Virtue" (attached and on the DPP web site) from Sylvia Boorstein's new book on the paramis, *For Goodness Sake*. "The Paramis: A Historical Background" by Guy Armstrong (attached and on the DPP web site.)

Reflections

The Paramis

1. The "Periodic Table of Virtues" represents Sylvia's understandings and insights. Do you feel that what she proposes as the motivating insights that inspire each particular quality are in fact what inspires that quality in you? Reflect on what has been true for you in the development and practice of the paramis.
2. The Paramis can be seen as permutations and combinations of each other. For example, they are all forms of generosity: when I tell you the truth I give you the gift of a level playing field--equal, true information; and they are all holograms or permutations of every other quality as well. All ten are forms of metta, all ten are expressions of the truth, all ten are expressions of wisdom. Do you feel that this is true? If so, how?
3. Which paramis do you feel you are relatively strong in? Have they developed spontaneously or through practice? Which ones do you think need more cultivation? Can you think of specific practices to develop them?

The Satipatthana Sutta

4. Which foundation(s) (or parts thereof) do you practice the most? Why? Which foundations do you feel you could benefit from practicing more? What might those benefits be?
5. How do you understand the practice of the elements in the First Foundation? Are you able to practice mindfulness of the elements? How do you do this?
6. What is your understanding of the Fourth Foundation? Do you practice it? If so, how?

Practices

Week	Foundation	Suggestions
1	Body	Choose either the breath or body sensations for the entire week. With body sensations, approach with either an open awareness (experiment with noting qualities such as tingling, pulsing, warm, cool, pressure, heaviness, lightness) or U Ba Khin sweeping.
2	Feeling	Note an aspect of your experience with open awareness. Then note its feeling tone (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral).
3	Mind	Notice the qualities of greed, aversion, delusion and non-greed, non-aversion, non-delusion in the heart and mind. Recall that unwholesome mind states are composed of combinations of the former, wholesome mind states of the latter.
4	Dhammas	Pick just one of the lists of dhammas in the sutta (hindrances, aggregates, sense bases, enlightenment factors, noble truths) to pay attention to for the week. Anchor your attention simply in presence. Notice your perception of these factors throughout your meditations.

Please schedule a time to connect with your dharma buddy for a discussion of this month's reflections and practices, and for an interview with your mentor if you are receiving monthly interviews.