

The mindfulness also needs to be adapted to different modes, and these different modes depend on the situations where we are.

So we were talking also about the gradual training, and one of the disciples who was actually number one with regard to the gradual training in his teaching was actually his son, Rahula, the young child. So he became a monk when he was very young and he was so enthusiastic just to be in that environment and it was so conducive for him. But he was so young that he just wanted to do just what had to be done. So he learned the rules properly, and his behavior was really, everything was very meticulous. Everything he was doing, he was trying to do it as perfectly as possible, with a lot of mindfulness.

So if we look at the ways the instructions to Rahula were actually stretched over the time of his being a monastic then we can see a little bit of a difference. So at the beginning he was just a young child, and then he just learned how to behave like the other people in the same community. So Sila, actually, has to do with conventional reality. We have to adapt to our environment, also to the values of our society, all the cultural set up in which we are living. So in this case it was the monastic community.

So then, the more we grow, the more we start to reflect about things. Causality. So, purposely he was asked to reflect about things. The Buddha was admonishing him and giving him advice. He was telling him, now you have to reflect before you do an action, physical action or mental action or verbal action. You have to reflect before, during the action, and after the action. So the reflection has to do with if it is suitable. If that action, physical, mental or verbal is going to harm yourself, and is it going to be harming other people and beneficial for yourself or beneficial for other people.

So the reflection had to be there. So now we start to involve a little bit the aspect of sampajanna. That means clear comprehension. Mindfulness is there, but the context and also the relationship with events has to be included.

So the definition of mindfulness, that is sati, I will simply translate it as the quality of presence. So sati is a quality of presence. But sati also has the kind of quality of remembering, remembrance. So we are very much aware, very much present, but also there is a type of contextualisation which is happening with our mind and then sati is remembering something. That means, it's always a historical present. So that means that you are aware of the present moment, but the past is not ignored, and the future also is not ignored.

So, what actually is sati remembering? Sati is remembering what has to be done, what should be done, what would be better to be doing in that particular instant, that particular situation, that particular moment.

So, this aspect of knowing what to do, how to do, when to do, is related to panna, sampajanna. This is understanding, this is clear comprehension. So sati and sampajanna, mindfulness and clear comprehension very often will come together in the Buddha's teaching.

Now I would like to go to chart number two. We are speaking about the distance from the object. So with the four modes of mindfulness we have governing the sense faculties. Mindfulness and clear comprehension is a little bit closer to the object. Samatha is much closer, in fact it is completely involved with the object. And then vipassana is a little bit further away from the objects.

The objects actually refer to the body, and it refers to the mind, and also it refers to the senses, sense objects.

So the reason that we purposely try to establish a difference of distance in regard to these different modes of mindfulness.

So, in the old days, some of the senior teachers at IMS were learning meditation in India under Munindra. So one time, after a retreat, the yogis were going to a market in a village in India, but they were used to keeping the attention very close to their body. Always inside. And they were

just so much into the meditation mode they were not so used to deal with this external thing. So they could not keep the continuity of the practice when they were going out.

So then Munindra said, no, at that time, you need to use a general mindfulness.

So the general mindfulness that we would have in a situation where we are completely devoted to an internal meditation practice, then it speaks about the governing of the sense faculties and also mindfulness and clear comprehension.

So this morning somebody was very surprised to make the link of how to adapt the mindfulness of intensive practice and then the daily life. Because as you see and as you probably know from having practiced a lot yourself, when we are in intensive practice we develop a lot of sensitivity, and then we are very very fragile, kind of delicate, and then we have difficulty to encounter all these strong impacts of sense objects. So that's why the distance that we allow ourselves in regard to just normal events can be very useful.

And this is also something that has been diagnosed as a difficulty. For example in India in those days when the young teachers of this place were practicing in India then at some point they were in intensive retreat for a while, and then they went out, and there were two teachers together, and then one of them, just by going out of the retreat and being in a public place like that, the person became so troubled, so irritated with all these stimulus, she was too sensitive, so she just vomited. So the other guys said, hmmm, there is a problem there!

So the problem is the adjustment, how do we shift gears from very quiet retreat inside ourselves, and then deal with the external world like that. So these types of modes that the texts are actually speaking about are very practical, and then you have to see for yourself to which extent these explanations make sense.

But I think that it's interesting that we don't always need to be in intensive practice to progress. We can learn from everywhere, and actually the possibility to adapt, to adjust, this is where progress is a mark, this is where we find we have made progress.

Now the world is changing so fast, so it is not only the degree of the knowledge that we accumulate that will make us wiser, it is the degree of our adaptability to the change. This is what we have to remind ourselves, we have to be quite flexible because it's changing quite fast.

So again we will talk about clear comprehension. So the role of mindfulness when we are talking about guarding the sense door is just to protect our mind. The role of mindfulness will just be to protect our mind. But it is not enough. We have to also understand what we are doing, and for which purpose we are doing that and if it's suitable and things like this.

So, sometimes also, we don't know what to do. So sometimes we think oh, if I had a manager with me who will tell me oh you say like this, now you say like that, now you sit like this, now you go to the hall, now this is the work you need to do and all that in our life, it would be so peaceful, just to have a manager who is taking everything and then we have to obey. It would be much more simple.

But the manager is ourselves. The manager is the aspect of wisdom that is coming, that can come, that we can invite together with mindfulness.

So mindfulness, sati, is to be present in a situation. Clear comprehension will tell us what to do about it, what not to do about it, when to do it, and also how to do it. So the time also can be considered to be part of this aspect of clearly comprehending.

There is a story in the commentaries, and it's a story about an old monk, and he was very old and he was very famous, and he was a teacher. And he was on his death bed, so very close to death, and at some point, some of his close disciples they came to him and they said now you have a big crowd coming to see you and they think you are an arahant and you are a saintly person. But, actually, I think you told us it's not the case.

Then he told them, wait a minute, wait a minute, and he just sat in his bed and cluk, like that. And he said, ok, now I am an arahant. And they said, what's that? Now you practice your whole life and just switch like this? What happened? And he said to them, the big deal is not to become enlightened, the big difficulty was not to become an arahant, the most challenging thing in my life was to have mindfulness and clear comprehension, this was very difficult.

He was reputed to have so much mindfulness and so much clear comprehension that sometimes he will do something and then, not being clearly aware of what he was doing, he will just start again, just to put everything together.

So mindfulness and clear comprehension, it has to do with the actions, as we will see from the quote that is given, it has to do with physical actions mostly, but the more we pay attention to physical actions, the more we become aware, more and more about the quality of the mind.

So, life, if we look at life, life is just movement. We are moving all the time. We are going here, we are going there, we have to do this, we have to do that and speak. And then even when we are sitting, there is movement. We move the eyes, we move the mouth, we move the shoulders, so movement is just part of life.

So the more we pay attention to the physical movements, the more we become aware of the mental movement. So here the clear comprehension has to do with the suitability, the appropriateness or purpose of our physical actions. But the more and more we practice the more we will include these two aspects of purpose and suitability in regard to our mind. So to the extent that we can control.

Like we can control our sila, our physical behavior. We can control also the specific actions that we are doing more than sila. And we can also to some extent control the actions of our mind. So we can, somehow, be clear enough to see the movement of the mind and to discipline the mind so it's more conducive, it's more beneficial. So, some aspect of the clear comprehension definitely will involve the practice of meditation and the possibility to adjust to some situations. So some situations will have to be adjusted concretely with actions, but also some situations will have to be adjusted with the mind. So the attitude, and also all types of set-up that relate to our mind, will refer to clear comprehension.

Now I will not go into the details of the commentaries explanation of sampajanna, it's just a very general basic, so that you know a little bit about guarding the senses and clear comprehension.

This morning also we were mentioning about the intention. So now I speak about the actions. So closer we are to the actions, the more we become aware of what is making the body move. So what is making the body and the speech and all that move? Of course we have the physical energy that is coming from the food or the temperature. But also, mostly, we have the mind. So the mind is very closely related to the body. So when we are very careful with the precepts or the way of life that we have decided to adapt in a certain society, the more we are careful about what we are doing, the more we become aware also of that mental type of dynamic.

That means we are aware of our intentions, what is the quality of our mind, why are we doing things? So the more we are aware of that, the more we see the importance of giving quality not only to the actions, but to the back-ground of it, the motivation of it. That means our intentions. So at some point, even in the level of just ethics, just sila, virtue, even there the mind starts to be involved. So there is an aspect of morality that is involving cetana, the will, the volition, the motivation, the intention.

So, now we are with clear comprehension. So in everything we are doing, we have to be very much aware of that. But also, the closer we become aware of that, then also we can be aware of the motivation, that means the volition behind that. And then as the volition becomes clearer and clearer, then there is a kind of a purification that is happening and then everything becomes much easier because what is motivating our actions is clear.

So, for example, just the aspect of metta, already the motivation of caring or loving or being compassionate, this is already part of our practice when we are doing sila. So we are observing

the precepts, but actually, observing the precepts has a very strong motivation of compassion. We don't steal because we respect other people. We don't lie because we respect other people. So the loving kindness, the care that we are giving to that has a big deal of positive motivation.

So first we have a little bit of restraint, we are guarding the senses, and then clear comprehension is adding a little bit more into that.

We have mindfulness and clear comprehension in two suttas, the Satipatthana Sutta and also the Dantabhumi sutta, the entire gradual training, so we see that there will be a difference. So the difference actually will be, what is clear comprehension? Clear comprehension refers to, it refers to understanding, it refers to panna, it refers to sammadhitthi, so the clear comprehension will influence the mindfulness. That means that the modes of mindfulness will have the level that panna is attributing to the situation in which mindfulness is reminding oneself.

So mindfulness is in a situation, and then clear comprehension, will tell us what to do. So clear comprehension being panna, sammadhitthi, you have many levels So we have many levels of sammadhitthi, so depending on our insight, depending also on how we are seeing things, mindfulness will be a little bit different. So that's why, here, the mindfulness and clear comprehension that we see in the satipatthana sutta will be different than the mindfulness and clear comprehension that is actually explained before in the official satipatthana practice that we see in the other version, like in the Majjhima Nikaya in 125.

On page number 5, first we have the protecting virtues, and then the result which is coming out of that is a bliss that is blameless, so it's important to remember that just by behaving properly and then we don't have remorse and it's a kind of peace of mind that is very valuable. And then the second one about governing the sense faculties. So we have seen the detail about the practice, and then also we have been reminded about a result that is coming out of that, that is a bliss that is unsullied.

So we have to see also, when we protect our mind, how do we feel about that, when we are able to not accept strangers that are made trouble in the mind, so how do we feel about that? So this is guarding the sense faculties.

So, now the next paragraph is about mindfulness and clear comprehension.

“He becomes one who acts with mindfulness and clear comprehension when going forward and returning, who acts with mindfulness and clear-comprehension when looking ahead and looking away, when flexing and extending his limbs, when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl. When eating, drinking, consuming food and tasting. When defecating and urinating. When walking, sitting, standing, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silence, he acts with mindfulness and clear comprehension.

So we see that what is described in a very simple way in this paragraph refers a lot to comportment. Of course we are talking about monastics, so you might not have a bowl, you might not have a robe and these kinds of things. But it just means whatever role we are involved in in life, putting our coat, putting our plate and things like this, going to the bathroom, then in these activities we have to develop mindfulness and clear comprehension.

But the text is striking, as it refers to the physical activities, wearing the robes and then eating, drinking and then defecating, walking, standing, falling asleep and sitting, all this is about the physical posture, and also what is happening between these four postures of standing, sitting, lying down and walking. What is happening between these things. So the movement of the body will be the base on which mindfulness and clear comprehension is going to developed.

The more we practice it, the more we are aware of the quality of the mind and also about the movement of the mind, so that we can somehow have a wise application of what needs to be done with this mind, when. So, what is the quality of this mind and then what can I do about that. How can I improve, which type of situations also will be more conducive for my practice.

There is also a detail here that we need to be aware of, that we can choose somehow our environment. Like now you have decided to come here, and to practice here in this meditation centre. So this is a choice. You could have gone to the beach or something like that, but you found a place like that more conducive to you. So it doesn't mean that just because we restrain our sense faculties that we have to just accept whatever is happening just in a stoic way, but we can also choose what we want to do, where we want to eat and what we want to eat and stuff like that.

So the same thing with the mind, it comes not just to be aware, but make a right selection when it is possible to change the situation. So we should not worry sometimes if we think that a situation or a posture or a place or even people who we are with are conducive for our practice or not so beneficial for our practice. So we don't need we can make kind of a selection.

So clear comprehension is just to realise where we are now. So we can start with the posture, and then also we come to have a knowledge about where we are now in regard to the mind. And then depending on the situation we can do something about that by way of changing something.

So it starts with observation. Observation is really the fundamental. So we are here and then we allow everything to be, and then we observe. And also we relax. So what it means to relax. So just relax when you are sitting here and just relax when you are standing, and just relax also when you are walking, relaxation actually is related to the body. So we relax and we are aware of the position automatically, so we come closer to the object of meditation. But also we can relax in regard to the mind. And then the more we relax the more we are able to observe properly and by observing properly we understand things a little bit more clearly and then we know what to do about it. So this comes to that.

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Perception is very difficult to place in time separated from vedana. Sometimes it can become before the feeling and sometimes it can become after the feeling. But all is triggered by the experience, by contact. Like if we are very aware of a situation, or if we are very much aware of what is happening in the present moment, then you come to the experience of it, and then we see how we are conditioned by our previous perception and then also how we are conditioning our perception again with new concepts and then new evaluations and then from these perceptions how we feel. Like the emotional tone to it will be the feeling, the vedana. So how perception is influencing vedana, and how vedana also is influencing perception.

So all that is a circle. So you don't say phassa is happening and then we have sanna and then we have vedana. If you start from vedana then you will have tanha, then you will have upadana. But you can start from anywhere of the points that you have defined in your circle and then it will come back to the thing. Because it is circling around. So if you start with perception, then perception will influence the contact that will happen later on, and it will influence the quality of the experience that will happen later on. But it's all a packet. The mind is just happening, it's a whole process somehow complete by itself. So if we are aware of the present moment, then all of these things are coming there. So the more quality we have with our observation the more we understand the dynamic of the synthesis that is this complex amalgum of mental and physical phenomena.

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If I understand correction, the instructions for practice has been basically guarding the mind in all postures. And what is the instruction now?

Now, we have to pay a little bit more attention to the body, the physical movement, and also in regard to the physical movement then we have to see, ok now, what am I doing. So whatever we are doing, if you read again the text that I just read when you are walking, you are clearly comprehending, when you are eating you are clearly comprehending, so that means whatever physical actions we are involved in, then we put the clear comprehension.

And then the clear comprehension will tell us, ok now, this is what we are doing this thing, and you will also have the possibility to evaluate a kind of suitability or not suitability. So, say it's freezing and then you go out and eat your lunch outside, then it's not suitable. So then in regard to all our actions we see that some things are suitable to do in specific places and sometimes the suitability will not be there.

So it has to be contextualised somehow, as to why we are doing things and also how we are doing them in regard to the body and also the suitability in regard to the mind. So we have to clearly comprehend what you are doing in everything.

So it doesn't have to be complicated, it means that you are just aware of what you are doing. So you brush your teeth, you just brush your teeth, so you are aware 'now I'm brushing my teeth', and then you know why you are brushing your teeth, so after five or ten minutes you will stop, because you don't need to spend the whole day brushing your teeth. So like that. So you will be able to differentiate the purpose and also put your actions in the big picture and also in the schedule. Sometimes to brush your teeth, and take your bath and things like this. All of the activities will fit much more into a global structure.

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Mindfulness of the body, by being mindful of what we are doing. So if you are sitting you know you are just sitting. If you know you are standing, you know you are just standing. If you are doing various activities you know what you are doing, but also you know the purpose of it and also you know the suitability.

So the more you are aware of the physical posture, the more you are aware of the mental activities, so then, that type of contextualisation that you have in regard to purpose and suitability will be applied to the mind. That's why when mindfulness and clear comprehension is really established in regard to physical actions, it will automatically include that aspect in regard to the mind.

So that's why also, we have been guarding the mind. But soon we will start with specific meditation topics and also specific exercises for the mind.

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So it's still a general awareness, with more knowledge about what you are doing and why.

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If we know we can learn from all these aspects of meditation, then our meditation will be clearer. And as we were mentioning this morning, the advantage of going step by step like that is that when you boost the volume, and you say now I'm on the highway and I go very fast, so when at that time you practice deep concentration and also deeper insight meditation, then all the background is clean.

And we know it's not going to have a problem.

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Yes, the knowing is more intuitive. you come closer just to be present. Like we look sometimes at how people are so sped up by working so much outside in the society that they are completely out of the reality of the living moment. So for that reason just bare mindfulness when we come back to the present moment and when we just allow ourselves to be simply in walking I am just walking, sitting I am just sitting, and just make ourselves clear enough with these things.

It's more like a grounding, we get more grounded in the reality. And the thing also is that we are talking from the experience.

The basic Buddhist teachings brings you back to the experience, it is empirical. So that's why we have to experience. So now I am giving some suggestions about the different steps of mindfulness.

. . . . Just allow ourselves to be in these simple moments, with wisdom, that means with understanding, why we are doing things and what is happening. So that clarity of understanding comes just by the simple observation of phenomena. Very often we are searching for something extraordinary and then we are just missing the present moment.

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That's why also, instead of translating restraint we translate governing the senses. Because restraint sometimes has a bad connotation. Also the connotation of suppression. This is not the case, we have to observe the phenomena and be detached from them

Like with the mental objects, as you say, it's very difficult to put some distance or not to allow that to come in the mind because it's already there and it has also come with some previous conditioning. So what do we do about that? We don't look at it, or what shall we do?

So we take some distance, we try not to get identified so much, so not getting involved.

So meditation is giving us the opportunity to question, so this is a habit, should you react like that, or should you think like this? And then this is the observation we are doing about phenomena gives us a kind of distance and this is where governing the sense faculties can have some value in regard to what is happening in the mind.

The mind is just spinning like this, the mind is just thinking of crazy stuff like this or like that, but we can have some distance. We don't need to be taken in by all the images, we can say now this is just like that.

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So if you are in the habit of doing anything physically or verbally now you can just say no. You have the freedom to just say no. It is very difficult, but we can say no no no, I am not going to. Like stealing or lying or some tendencies that are really unwholesome, if there might be some tendencies to do that, we say no.

So the same thing in the mind, we can be very aware of all these types of tendencies and conditioning, but we say no, we are just observing.

So the more we are able to detach ourselves, to take a little bit of distance. This is why I think some distance from the object can very easily be combined in the mental objects and then the mind itself. So you are not involved directly. It's not really yours. You are just observing with some kind of distance.

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The more you pay attention to your actions and also to your thoughts, the more you will see that the movement that is creating all these things has a lot to do with the mind, so this is the intention.

So, now the intention is seen just as the motor, so you see the motivation that is coming for these things is the intention. So you just see that as a general.

But when it comes with the vipassana, you will see that the mind is coming closer to the objects, so at that time we will organise much closer the mental dynamics that these factors are playing in each other. But now, as much as we are clearly comprehending on a general level, that much we are using our clear comprehension to understand intention. But it is good that you see all our actions are motivated by intentions. So to be aware is fine.