

SATIPAṬṬHĀNA
AND
SAMĀDHI



BHIKKHU BRAHMĀLI

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PREFACE

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most common unquestioned assumptions among Buddhist meditators is that *satipaṭṭhāna* is synonymous with *vipassanā*. This assumption, it seems, often is a result of reading the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas¹ in isolation without carefully considering the context in which *satipaṭṭhāna* is used throughout the *suttas*. When the broader view of the entire Sutta Piṭaka is taken into account, it becomes clear that such an assumption is, at best, only partially correct.² In this short study I will investigate the various contexts in which *satipaṭṭhāna* appear and in particular consider its relationship with *samādhi*.³

¹“The Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas” is a reference to DN22 and MN10

²I follow the advice given in the four great standards, DN16.4.8-11, which is to use only the word of the Buddha as the final authority in settling controversial points of Dhamma. For the purposes of this paper, I take the following parts of the Pali Canon as the word of the Buddha: The Dīgha Nikāya (DN), the Majjhima Nikāya (MN), the Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN), and the Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN).

³Whenever *samādhi* is used on its own in the *suttas*, it almost always includes the four *jhānas*. Moreover, although other types of *samādhi* are mentioned in the Pali Canon, by far the most common type of *samādhi* is the four *jhānas*. Thus, in this paper, whenever I use the term *samādhi*, I mainly refer to the four *jhānas*.

SAMĀDHI AND THE SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTAS

The Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas are often understood as being only concerned with *vipassanā* meditation. But there is nothing intrinsic to the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas that allows one to conclude thus. Indeed, there are several aspects of these *suttas* that point to *satipaṭṭhāna* also being concerned with *samatha* and *samādhi*, calm and stillness.

The first of these aspects is the inclusion of the first tetrad of the Ānāpānasati Sutta in the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas.

Ānāpānasati is usually regarded as a *samādhi* practice, and there seems to be no reason why it should be regarded otherwise here.⁴ Moreover, the Ānāpānasati Sutta states that each of its four tetrads fulfils each of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.⁵ It then concludes:

⁴The first three tetrads of the Ānāpānasati Sutta are generally understood (also by the Commentary) to be *samādhi* practices. Moreover, the *suttas* contain phrases such as *ānāpānasati-samādhi*, “concentration through mindfulness of breathing,” e.g. at SN54:7.

⁵See MN118.23-28.

“Bhikkhus, that is how mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, fulfils the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.”⁶

And it is not only the *ānāpānasati* part of the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas which relates to *samādhi*. The cemetery contemplations, for example, are elsewhere specifically said to be *samādhi* practices:

“And, monks, what is the effort of guarding? Here, monks, a monk guards a favourable object of *samādhi* which is present in him: the perception of a skeleton, the perception of a worm-infested corpse, the perception of a livid corpse, the perception of a festering corpse, the perception of a fissured corpse, the perception of a bloated corpse.”⁷

Indeed, it seems that all the satipaṭṭhāna practices have a samādhi aspect. Take the standard passage which concludes each exercise of the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas:

“In this way he contemplates an aspect of the body internally, or he contemplates an aspect of the body externally, or he contemplates an aspect

⁶ *Evam bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evam bahulikatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti.* MN118.28.

Depending on availability and suitability, I use either Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi's translations or supply my own.

⁷ *Katamañca, bhikkhave, anurakkhaṇāppadhānaṃ? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu uppannaṃ bhaddakaṃ samādhinimittaṃ anurakkhati aṭṭhikasāññaṃ puḷavakasaññaṃ vinīlakasaññaṃ vicchiddakasaññaṃ uddhumātakasaññaṃ.* AN4:14

of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena internally and externally.”⁸

Then consider the following passage which relates the internal contemplation directly to *samādhi*:

“Here a monk contemplates an aspect of the body internally, energetic, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed desire and aversion for the world. Contemplating an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena internally, he is rightly stilled (*sammā samādhiyati*), rightly purified.”⁹

⁸ *Iti ajjhattaṃ vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, ajjhattabahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati. Iti ajjhattaṃ vā vedanāsu vedanānupassī ... citta cittānupassī ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati, bahiddhā vā dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati, ajjhatta-bahiddhā vā dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati.* MN10.5

The inclusion of the arising and passing away section immediately after the above might be taken to mean that this is all about insight. However, it seems that the initial part on contemplating internally and externally can be done independently of the contemplation of arising and passing away, see e.g. DN18.26.

⁹ *Idha bho bhikkhu ajjhattaṃ kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiññhā domanassaṃ. Ajjhattaṃ kāye kāyānupassī ... vedanāsu vedanānupassī ... citta cittānupassī ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharanto tatha sammā samādhiyati sammā vipasīdati.* DN18.26
Rightly concentrated, *sammā-samādhiyati*, refers to the *jhānas*.

SATIPAṬṬHĀNA AND SAMĀDHI OUTSIDE OF THE SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTAS

The above should be sufficient to at least suggest that *samādhi* is an integral part of *satipaṭṭhāna*. However, to be able to make a strong case for this relationship, and to consider in more detail what it involves, it is necessary to look beyond the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas to the broader use of *satipaṭṭhāna* in the Sutta Piṭaka.

In the threefold division of the Buddhist Path, into *sīla* (virtue), *samādhi*, and *paññā* (wisdom), *satipaṭṭhāna* is classified under *samādhi*, not under *paññā*:

“Right effort, right mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*),¹⁰
and right *samādhi* (the *jhānas*)¹¹ - these states are
included in the category of *samādhi*. Right view

¹⁰Right mindfulness, *sammāsati*, is always defined as the four *satipaṭṭhānas*; see e.g. SN45.8.

¹¹*Sammāsamādhi*, right stillness, is always defined as the four *jhānas*, see e.g. SN45.8.

and right intention—these qualities are included in the category of wisdom.”¹²

If *satipaṭṭhāna* were equivalent or closely related to *vipassanā* rather than *samādhi*, would it not be included in the category of wisdom rather than the category of *samādhi*?¹³

The most important relationship between *satipaṭṭhāna* and *samādhi* that emerges from a broad reading of the *suttas* is that the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* leads to *samādhi*.¹⁴

“The four *satipaṭṭhānas* are the bases of *samādhi*.”¹⁵

“The repetition, development, and cultivation of these same qualities (*satipaṭṭhāna* and right effort) is the development of *samādhi*.”¹⁶

“‘I will contemplate an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena,¹⁷ energetic, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed desire and aversion for the world.’ It is in this way, monk, that you should train.

¹² *Yo ca sammā-vāyāmo yā ca sammā-sati yo ca sammā- samādhi, ime dhammā samādhikkhandhe saṅgahitā; yā ca sammā-diṭṭhi yo ca sammā-saṅkappo, ime dhammā paññākkhandhe saṅgahitā ti.* MN44.11

¹³ That *vipassanā* and wisdom are closely related is shown by a passage which states that when *vipassanā* is developed, wisdom is developed: *Vipassanā, bhikkhave, bhāvitā kamatthamanubhoti?* AN2:31

¹⁴ I use “*satipaṭṭhāna* leads to *samādhi*” and “*satipaṭṭhāna* is a *samādhi* practice” synonymously.

¹⁵ *Cattāro satipaṭṭhāne samādhi-nimittā.* MN44.12

¹⁶ *Yā tesamnye va dhammānaṃ āsevanā bhāvanā bahulīkammaṃ, ayaṃ ettha samādhībhāvanā.* MN44.12

¹⁷ i.e. the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.

“When, monk, this *samādhi* has been developed and made much of in this way, you should develop this *samādhi* with initial and sustained application, you should develop it without initial application but with a remainder of sustained application, you should develop it without initial and sustained application, you should develop it with rapture, you should develop it with comfort, you should develop it with equanimity.”¹⁸

The last part, “initial and sustained application ... with equanimity,” is a reference to the *jhānas*.¹⁹ Note how *sati-paṭṭhāna* practice is first called “this *samādhi*” and then said to lead on to the *jhānas*.

“So too, monks, here some foolish, incompetent, unskilful monk contemplates an aspect of the

¹⁸*Kāye kāyānupassī ... vedanāsu vedanānupassī ... citte cittānupassī ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharissāmi ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiijhā-domanassanti. Evañhi te, bhikkhu, sikkhitabbaṃ. Yato kho te, bhikkhu, ayaṃ samādhi evaṃ bhāvito hoti bahulīkato, tato tvaṃ, bhikkhu, imaṃ samādhiṃ savitakkasavicārampi bhāveyyāsi, avitakkavicāramattampi bhāveyyāsi, avitakkaavicārampi bhāveyyāsi, sappītikampi bhāveyyāsi, nippītikampi bhāveyyāsi, sātasaḥagatampi bhāveyyāsi, upekkhāsahagatampi bhāveyyāsi. AN8:63*

¹⁹The various qualities listed are the defining characteristics of the *jhānas*, see g. MN51.20-23. The *samādhi* with initial and sustained application is the first *jhāna*. The *samādhi* without initial but with a remainder of sustained application is mentioned in the *suttas* only rarely and it falls between the first and the second *jhāna*. The *samādhi* without initial and sustained application is the second *jhāna* or above. The *samādhi* without rapture refers to third *jhāna* and above, and so does the *samādhi* with comfort; comfort (*sāta*) here being a synonym for happiness (*sukha*). The *samādhi* with equanimity refer to the fourth *jhāna* and beyond. That the four *jhānas* are meant here is also supported by the Commentary; see Aṅguttara Nikāya Commentary vol.IV, p.142, l. 9-22.

body, energetic, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed desire and aversion for the world. While he contemplates an aspect of the body, his mind does not become stilled (*samādhīyati*) ...

“So too, monks, here some wise, competent, skilful monk contemplates an aspect of the body, energetic, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed desire and aversion for the world. While he contemplates an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena, his mind becomes stilled (*samādhīyati*) ...

“That wise, competent, skilful monk gains pleasant dwellings in this very life, and he gains mindfulness and clear comprehension.”²⁰

The phrase “pleasant dwellings in this very life” is a common synonym in the *suttas* for the four *jhānas*.²¹

²⁰ *Evameva kho, bhikkhave, idhekacco bālo abyatto akusalo bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādo-manassaṃ. Tassa kāye kāyānupassīno viharato cittaṃ na samādhīyati ... vedanāsu ... citte ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Tassa dhammesu dhammānupassīno viharato cittaṃ na samādhīyati ...*

Evameva kho, bhikkhave, idhekacco paṇḍito byatto kusalo bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādo-manassaṃ. Tassa kāye kāyānupassīno viharato cittaṃ samādhīyati ... vedanāsu ... citte ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Tassa dhammesu dhammānupassīno viharato cittaṃ samādhīyati ...

Sa kho so, bhikkhave, paṇḍito byatto kusalo bhikkhu lābhī ceva hoti diṭṭheva dhamme sukhavihārānaṃ, lābhī hoti satisampajañña. SN47:8

²¹ *Katamā ca, bhikkhave, samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulikāṭā diṭṭhadhammasukhavihārāya samvattati? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vivicceva*

Thus a pattern emerges whereby the four *satipaṭṭhānas* constitute the practice and development of *samādhi*, eventually leading to the four *jhānas*, *sammāsamādhi*. This relationship between the *satipaṭṭhānas* and *samādhi* is in fact made very explicit in the *suttas*:

“It is indeed to be expected, venerable sir, that a noble disciple who has faith, energy, and mindfulness, will gain *samādhi*, will gain one-pointedness of mind, when he has created a foundation through relinquishment. That *samādhi* of his, venerable sir, is his faculty of *samādhi*.”²²

“For one of right mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), *sammāsamādhi* (the *jhānas*) springs up.”²³

kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. Vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. Pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca vihāsiṃ, sato ca sampajāno sukhañca kāyena patisamvedeti; yaṃ taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti— ‘upekkhako satimā sukhavihārī’ ti tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkhamasukhaṃ upekkhāsatipārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. e.g. AN4:41.

²² *Saddhassa hi, bhante, ariya-sāvakaassa āradha-vīriyassa upaṭṭhitasatino etaṃ pāṭikaṅkhaṃ yaṃ vossagg’ārammaṇaṃ karitvā labhissati samādhim, labhissati cittaṃ ekaggataṃ. Yo hi’ssa, bhante, samādhī tadassa samādh’indriyaṃ. SN48:50*

The *sati* faculty is normally understood to be the four *satipaṭṭhānas* and the *samādhi* faculty the four *jhānas*, see SN48:8.

²³ *Sammā-satissa sammā-samādhī pahotī ti. SN45:1; and also AN10:103, AN10:105, AN10:121.*

SATIPAṬṬHĀNA AND VIPASSANĀ

The above survey presents the most important evidence on the context in which *satipaṭṭhāna* occurs throughout the *suttas*. Having thus shown that the usual purpose of *satipaṭṭhāna* is the attainment of *samādhi*, it is necessary to consider the relationship between *satipaṭṭhāna* and *vipassanā*.

Firstly, it should be noted that the prevalence of a direct link between *satipaṭṭhāna* and *samādhi* does not necessarily mean that *satipaṭṭhāna* is all about *samatha* meditation. Rather, it means that, whether one practices *samatha* or *vipassanā*, in both cases the purpose of *satipaṭṭhāna* is the attainment of *samādhi*.

Secondly, the question arises as to what happens after *samādhi*: is there such a thing as post-*samādhi satipaṭṭhāna*, and if so, what does it involve? In this context it is important to note that a number of *suttas* make it clear that *satipaṭṭhāna* practice can take one all the way to the end of the Buddhist Path, for example:

“Bhikkhus, these four *satipaṭṭhānas*, when developed and cultivated, are noble and liberating; they

lead one who acts upon them to the complete destruction of suffering.”²⁴

For *satipaṭṭhāna* to be able to take one to full awakening, it seems required that it must include post-*samādhi vipassanā*, i.e. deep insight.²⁵ But a direct relationship between *satipaṭṭhāna* and *vipassanā* is never explicitly mentioned in the *suttas*.²⁶ To establish such a link it is necessary to broaden

²⁴ *Cattāro me bhikkhave satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulikatā ariyā niyyānikā niyyanti takkarassa sammā-dukkhakkhayāya*. SN47:17; and also SN47:11, SN47:27, SN47:32, SN47:34, SN47:37, SN47:38, SN47:50.

²⁵ By deep insight I mean insight into the five *khandhas* as being affected by the three characteristics; i.e. insight that is capable of giving rise to the four stages of awakening.

²⁶ In fact *vipassanā* is not a very common word in the *suttas*, at least not compared to *satipaṭṭhāna* and particularly not compared to *samādhi*. It is mainly used in the following contexts.

I. Its most frequent use by far is as a pair with *samatha*. In this usage the meaning seems to have a rather broad range and is never specifically related to *satipaṭṭhāna*. See DN33.1.9, DN34.1.3, MN73.18f, MN149.10, MN151.19f, SN35:245, SN41:6, SN43:2, SN45:159, AN2:31, AN2:172, AN2:310, and AN4:254. On a few occasions *samatha* and *vipassanā* form a pair within a longer list of qualities, e.g. at MN43.14 and AN4:147.

II. *Vipassanā* is occasionally used in the phrase *vipassanāya samannāgato*, “possessed of insight.” Again, it is not explicitly related to *satipaṭṭhāna*. See MN6, MN32.5, and AN10:71.

III. On a couple of occasions *vipassanā* occurs outside of these contexts. At AN2:31 wisdom is said to be developed through developing *vipassanā*; at SN43:12, among a large number of other qualities, *vipassanā* is said to lead to freedom from conditioned phenomena; at AN4:170 *vipassanā* is said to be developed before, after, or together with *samatha*.

IV. *Vipassanā* is also found in a few compounds. At AN4:92-94, AN9:4, and AN10:54 we find the compound *adhipaññā-dhamma-vipassanāya*, “insight into things relating to the higher wisdom,” and at MN111 *anupada-dhamma-vipassanā*, “step by step insight into things.”

the inquiry to include other terms that also signify insight, such as *ñāṇa*, *dassana*, and *yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana*. This broadened inquiry brings to light the following interesting passage:

“Come, friends, contemplate an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena, energetic, clearly comprehending, unified, serene, stilled, with one-pointed mind, in order to know the body according to reality (*yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa*).”²⁷

Note how this passage differs significantly from the standard *satipaṭṭhāna* formula found almost everywhere else. It is two differences in particular that are important in the context of this study: Firstly, the insight aspect relates to the deep insights of seeing reality as it actually is (*yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa*); secondly, using a string of related terms - unified, serene, stilled, with one-pointed mind - the passage puts a strong emphasis on *samādhi*. The implication is that *satipaṭṭhāna* should be practiced for the purpose of deep insight only after *samādhi* has been achieved.²⁸ It thus seems clear that there

V. Finally, occasionally one finds the verbal form *vipassati*, e.g. DN32.3 and MN131-134.

In all the above there is no obvious linkage between *vipassanā* and *sati-paṭṭhāna*.

²⁷ *Etha tumhe, āvuso, kāye kāyānupassino viharatha ātāpino sampajānā ekodibhūtā vippasannacittā samāhitā ekaggacittā, kāyassa yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇāya; vedanāsu ... citte ... dhammesu dhammānupassino viharatha ātāpino sampajānā ekodibhūtā vippasannacittā samāhitā ekaggacittā, dhammānaṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇāya.* SN47:4

²⁸ I. The various terms signifying *samādhi* are adjectives to *kāyānupassino*. The meaning is therefore that one should dwell contemplating the body (etc.) after these qualities, i.e. *samādhi*, have been established.

is such a thing as post-*samādhi satipaṭṭhāna* and that its purpose is *deep* insight.²⁹

II. That *satipaṭṭhāna* as a deep insight practice only begins after *samādhi* has been attained is not surprising. In the *suttas* it is always *samādhi* which is the condition for *yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana*, e.g.: *sammāsamādhimhi asati sammāsamādhi-vipannassa hat'ūpanisaṃ hoti yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassanaṃ*, “when right *samādhi* is not existing, for one failing in right *samādhi*, the cause is destroyed for knowledge and vision of things as they really are;” AN10:3. See also AN10:103, AN10:105, and AN10:121.

This relationship between *samādhi* and *yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana* may also explain why a direct link between *satipaṭṭhāna* and insight is so rarely expressed in the *suttas*. It seems likely that after *samādhi yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana* is used in place of *satipaṭṭhāna* so as to indicate more precisely what is happening at this stage. Elsewhere, e.g. MN117.34, *sammā-ñāṇa* is used in a similar way. *Yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana* may thus be regarded as a subset and a specialised aspect of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

MN64.9-16 gives a clear example of the sort of insight practice that comes after *samādhi*: after emerging from the *jhānas* one is to reflect on them as being affected by the three characteristics. Although *satipaṭṭhāna* is never mentioned, this practice would seem to fall squarely within *cit-tānupassanā*, “contemplation of the mind.”

²⁹It should also be noted that although the emphasis of *satipaṭṭhāna* is on *vipassanā* at this stage, this does not preclude *satipaṭṭhāna* from being helpful for the further development of *samādhi*. And the deeper the *samādhi* the more powerful the subsequent *vipassanā* practice will be.

TWO STAGES OF SATIPAṬṬHĀNA

From the above it emerges that *satipaṭṭhāna* normally should be considered as a practice leading to *samādhi* and under special circumstances as a practice leading to deep insight. Furthermore, it appears that these two aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna* can be divided into two quite distinct stages. In accordance with the natural progression of meditation practice,³⁰ the first stage of *satipaṭṭhāna* is about attaining *samādhi*. Once *samādhi* has been achieved (i.e. the necessary condition for deep insight is in place), the mind is equipped to uncover the true nature of the five aspects of personality³¹ and realise the successive stages of awakening. This is the second stage of *satipaṭṭhāna*. Such a two-stage division of *satipaṭṭhāna* is in fact explicitly described in the *suttas*:

“... so these four focuses of mindfulness (*sati-paṭṭhāna*) are the bindings for the mind of the noble disciple in order to subdue his habits from lay life, to subdue his distress, fatigue, and fever

³⁰i.e., that *samādhi* is a precondition for deep insight. See Conclusion below.

³¹i.e., the five *khandhas*, the standard analysis in the *suttas* of a living being.

from lay life, and in order that he may attain the true way and realise extinguishment (*nibbāna*).

“Then the Tathāgata trains him further: ‘Come, bhikkhu, contemplate an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena, but do not think thoughts of sense desire.’”³²

Here the first stage of *satipaṭṭhāna* serves the purpose of abandoning refined hindrances.³³ This is part of the path

³² *Evameva kho, aggivessana, ariyasāvakaṣṣa ime cattāro satipaṭṭhānā cetaso upanibandhanā honti gehasitānañceva silānaṃ abhinim-madanāya gehasitānañceva sarasaṅkappānaṃ abhinim-madanāya gehasitānañceva darathakilamathaparilāhānaṃ abhinim-madanāya nāyassa adhiḡamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya.*

Tameṇaṃ tathāgato uttarim vīneti—“ ehi tvaṃ, bhikkhu, kāye kāyānu-passī viharāhi, mā ca kāmūpasamhitam vitakkaṃ vitakkesi. Vedanāsu ... citte ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharāhi, mā ca kāmūpasamhitam vitakkaṃ vitakkesi.” MN125.23-24

On the reading *kāmūpasamhitam* rather than *kāyūpasamhitam* see Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, note 1177. SN47:10 too appears to be showing a similar split between *satipaṭṭhāna* before and after *samādhi*.

³³ It would seem that “distress, fatigue, and fever based on lay life” refers to the five hindrances, in particular sense desire. The text in question, however, specifies that the five hindrances have already been removed. To make sense of this apparent contradiction, we need to turn to the parallel to MN125 found in the Madhyama Āgama in Chinese translation, MĀ198. This parallel does in fact not include the five hindrances at this stage. Ven. Anālayo argues persuasively that certain elements of the Pali version, including the five hindrances, are corruptions that were not originally present. (See Anālayo’s, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya*, Taipei, 2011, p.719.)

There are also other passages where *satipaṭṭhāna* practice is shown to remove (refined aspects of) the hindrances:

I. “So too, monks, here some wise, competent, skilful monk contemplates an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena, energetic,

leading to *samādhi*. The second stage of *satipaṭṭhāna* is here characterised by sense desire having been abandoned, something suggesting that *samādhi* has been attained.³⁴

clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed desire and aversion for the world. While he contemplates an aspect of phenomena, his mind becomes concentrated, his corruptions are abandoned.”

Evameva kho, bhikkhave, idhekacco paṇḍito byatto kusalo bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ... vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati ... citte cittānupassī viharati ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Tassa dhammesu dhammānupassīno viharato cittaṃ samādhiyati, upakkilesā pahiyanti. SN47:8

Upakkilesa is used in other places to refer to subtle aspects of the hindrances, e.g. the *Upakkilesa Sutta*, MN128.

II. “So too, Ānanda, when a bhikkhu contemplates an aspect of the body ... feelings ... mind ... phenomena he flattens bad unwholesome qualities.”

Evameva kho, ānanda, bhikkhu kāye ... vedanāsu ... citte ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharantopi upahanateva pāpake akusale dhamme. SN54:10

III. “Monks, the four *satipaṭṭhānas* should be developed for the abandoning of these five hindrances.”

Imesaṃ kho, bhikkhave, pañcannaṃ nīvaraṇānaṃ pahānāya ime cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvetabbā. AN9:64

³⁴Note that the description of *satipaṭṭhāna* here (at the second stage) bears a close resemblance to the passage quotes in note 27 above (and the corresponding section in the main text). In the present passage, instead of the terms *ātāpī, sampajāno, satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ* found in the ordinary *satipaṭṭhāna* formula, we find *mā ca kāmūpasamhitam vitakkaṃ vitakkesi*. This indicates that sense desire has been abandoned through *samādhi*. Similarly, in the passage in note 27, *satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ* has been replaced with a string of terms signifying *samādhi*. It therefore seems likely that the two passages refer to the same type of post-*samādhi satipaṭṭhāna*. Also in the present passage, in the subsequent text the first *jhāna* is missing, the training going straight to the second *jhāna*. This suggests that the first *jhāna* is here included in the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. Again, this points to post-*samādhi satipaṭṭhāna*.

CONCLUSION

Almost all *sutta* passages that deal with the place of *sati-paṭṭhāna* in the broader scheme of the Buddhist path, show that *satipaṭṭhāna* is a condition for *samādhi*. It must therefore be concluded that the main purpose of *satipaṭṭhāna* is to bring the mind to *samādhi*. This result is important because it contradicts the common misunderstanding that *satipaṭṭhāna* is only concerned with *vipassanā*.

The second important conclusion that can be drawn from the above discussion is that *satipaṭṭhāna* as a deep insight practice, leading to insight into the true nature of the aspects of personality (*khandhas*), only begins after *samādhi* has been attained. This conclusion is in line with a common theme in the *suttas*:

“When there is right stillness (*sammāsamādhi*), for one who has right stillness, the cause is in place for knowledge and vision of things according to reality (*yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana*).”³⁵

³⁵*Sammāsamādhimhi sati sammāsamādhi-sampannassa upanisa-sampannaṃ hoti yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassanaṃ.* See e.g. AN10:3. This relationship between *samādhi* and *yathā-bhūta-ñāṇa-dassana* is found on numerous occasions throughout the *suttas*. See also note 28.

REFERENCES

AN: Aṅguttara Nikāya. References are to chapter (*nipāta*) number and *sutta* number as in Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation.

DN: Dīgha Nikāya. References are to *sutta* number, section number (only for some *suttas*), and paragraph number as in Maurice Walshe's translation.

MN: Majjhima Nikāya. References are to *sutta* number and paragraph number as in Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation.

SN: Saṃyutta Nikāya. References are to chapter (*saṃyutta*) number and *sutta* number as Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation.