

THE SEVEN FACTORS OF AWAKENING

Satta Sambojjhanga

THE SEVEN FACTORS OF AWAKENING - (BOJJHANGA)

- The seven factors of awakening are qualities of mind that lead to awakening.
- These factors are found throughout Buddhist teachings, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and the *Bojjhaṅga Sutta* in the *Samyutta Nikaya*.



THE SEVEN TREASURES OF THE BUDDHA (TATHAGATA)

From the texts: "And, Lord, all the Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of the future will abandon the five hindrances, the mental defilements that weaken wisdom; will well establish their minds in the four foundations of mindfulness; will duly cultivate the seven factors of enlightenment, and will be fully enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment."

Maha-parinibbana Sutta: Last Days of the Buddha

THE SEVEN TREASURES OF THE BUDDHA (THATHAGATA)

Saṃyutta Nikāya

Connected Discourses on the Factors of Enlightenment

46.44. Unwise

Then a certain bhikkhu approached the Blessed One ... and said to him:

“Venerable sir, it is said, ‘an unwise dolt, an unwise dolt.’
In what way, venerable sir, is one called ‘an unwise dolt’?”

“Bhikkhus, it is because one has not developed and cultivated the seven factors of enlightenment that one is called ‘an unwise dolt.’”



1. Mindfulness (Sati)

**2. Investigation of Dhammas
(Dhamma Vicaya)**

3. Energy (Viriya)

4. Joy (Piti)

5. Tranquility (Passaddhi)

6. Concentration (Samadhi)

7. Equanimity (Upekkha)

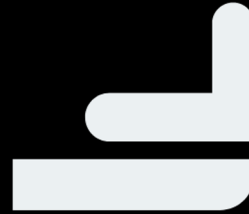
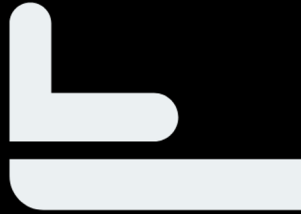
THE PROGRESSION IS A NATURAL AND SYSTEMATIC UNFOLDING:

1. **Mindfulness** is the starting point, creating a stable and attentive awareness.
2. **Investigation of Dhamma** arises from mindfulness, leading to insight and understanding.
3. **Energy** is generated from the interest and insights gained through investigation.
4. **Joy** arises as a result of sustained practice and the insights gained.
5. **Tranquility** follows as joy becomes more refined and leads to inner peace.
6. **Concentration** develops from the calm and stable foundation of tranquility.
7. **Equanimity** is the final factor, representing a balanced and undisturbed state of mind.

Each factor supports and enhances the others, creating a harmonious and comprehensive path to enlightenment.

Energizing Factors

- 2. Investigation of Dhammas (Dhamma Vicaya)
- 3. Energy (Viriya)
- 4. Joy (Piti)



- 5. Tranquility (Passaddhi)
- 6. Concentration (Samadhi)
- 7. Equanimity (Upekkha)

Calming Factors

1. Mindfulness (Sati)

see-saw balance

WORDS OF THE BUDDHA: 46.53. FIRE

i. The sluggish mind: untimely

“On an occasion, bhikkhus, when the mind becomes sluggish, it is untimely to develop the enlightenment factor of tranquillity, the enlightenment factor of concentration, and the enlightenment factor of equanimity. For what reason? Because the mind is sluggish, bhikkhus, and it is difficult to arouse it with those things.

“Suppose, bhikkhus, a man wants to make a small fire flare up. If he throws wet grass, wet cowdung, and wet timber into it, sprays it with water, and scatters soil over it, would he be able to make that small fire flare up?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“So too, bhikkhus, on an occasion when the mind becomes sluggish, it is untimely to develop the enlightenment factor of tranquillity, the enlightenment factor of concentration, and the enlightenment factor of equanimity. For what reason? Because the mind is sluggish, bhikkhus, and it is difficult to arouse it with those things.

Saṃyutta Nikāya

Connected Discourses on the Factors of Enlightenment

WORDS OF THE BUDDHA: 46.53. FIRE

ii. The sluggish mind: timely

“On an occasion, bhikkhus, when the mind becomes sluggish, it is timely to develop the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states, the enlightenment factor of energy, and the enlightenment factor of rapture. For what reason? Because the mind is sluggish, bhikkhus, and it is easy to arouse it with those things.

“Suppose, bhikkhus, a man wants to make a small fire flare up. If he throws dry grass, dry cowdung, and dry timber into it, blows on it, and does not scatter soil over it, would he be able to make that small fire flare up?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“So too, bhikkhus, on an occasion when the mind becomes sluggish, it is timely to develop the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states, the enlightenment factor of energy, and the enlightenment factor of rapture. For what reason? Because the mind is sluggish, bhikkhus, and it is easy to arouse it with those things.

Saṃyutta Nikāya

Connected Discourses on the Factors of Enlightenment

WORDS OF THE BUDDHA: 46.53. FIRE

iii. The excited mind: untimely

“On an occasion, bhikkhus, when the mind becomes excited, it is untimely to develop the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states, the enlightenment factor of energy, and the enlightenment factor of rapture. For what reason? Because the mind is excited, bhikkhus, and it is difficult to calm it down with those things.

“Suppose, bhikkhus, a man wants to extinguish a great bonfire. If he throws dry grass, dry cowdung, and dry timber into it, blows on it, and does not scatter soil over it, would he be able to extinguish that great bonfire?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“So too, bhikkhus, on an occasion when the mind becomes excited, it is untimely to develop the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states, the enlightenment factor of energy, and the enlightenment factor of rapture. For what reason? Because the mind is excited, bhikkhus, and it is difficult to calm it down with those things.

Saṃyutta Nikāya
Connected Discourses on the Factors of Enlightenment

WORDS OF THE BUDDHA: 46.53. FIRE

iv. The excited mind: timely

“On an occasion, bhikkhus, when the mind becomes excited, it is timely to develop the enlightenment factor of tranquillity, the enlightenment factor of concentration, and the enlightenment factor of equanimity. For what reason? Because the mind is excited, bhikkhus, and it is easy to calm it down with those things.

“Suppose, bhikkhus, a man wants to extinguish a great bonfire. If he throws wet grass, wet cowdung, and wet timber into it, sprays it with water, and scatters soil over it, would he be able to extinguish that great bonfire?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

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“But mindfulness, bhikkhus, I say is always useful.”

Saṃyutta Nikāya
Connected Discourses on the Factors of Enlightenment

MINDFULNESS (SATI)

- Mindfulness is the one factor that the Buddha said is always useful, there can never be too much mindfulness.
- Unlike all the other factors of enlightenment, and all the other wholesome factors, which need to be in balance with one another.
- we can have too much wisdom out of balance with faith, we can have too much concentration out of balance with energy, and vice versa.
- But mindfulness is always appropriate in every situation.



MINDFULNESS (SATI) - DEFINITION

Sati (Pali: सति; Sanskrit: स्मृति smṛti), literally "memory" or "retention", commonly translated as mindfulness, "to remember to observe," is an essential part of Buddhist practice.

MINDFULNESS (SATI) – FIRST FACTOR

Mindfulness is the first and primary factor that primes enlightenment. From the scholar RML Gethin, It has four aspects:

1. Stability/presence: Not forgetting the present moment experience
2. Guarding: mindfulness stands near, and guards the senses, guards the mind
3. watching unwholesome states: calling to mind and remembering what is skillful and what is not,
4. inquiry/awakening: close association with wisdom that is seeing things as they are



MINDFULNESS (SATI)

- Mindfulness remembers skillful and unskillful states, giving rise to reflection which help avoid unwholesome actions.
- These "guardians" can transform into beautiful qualities with wisdom.

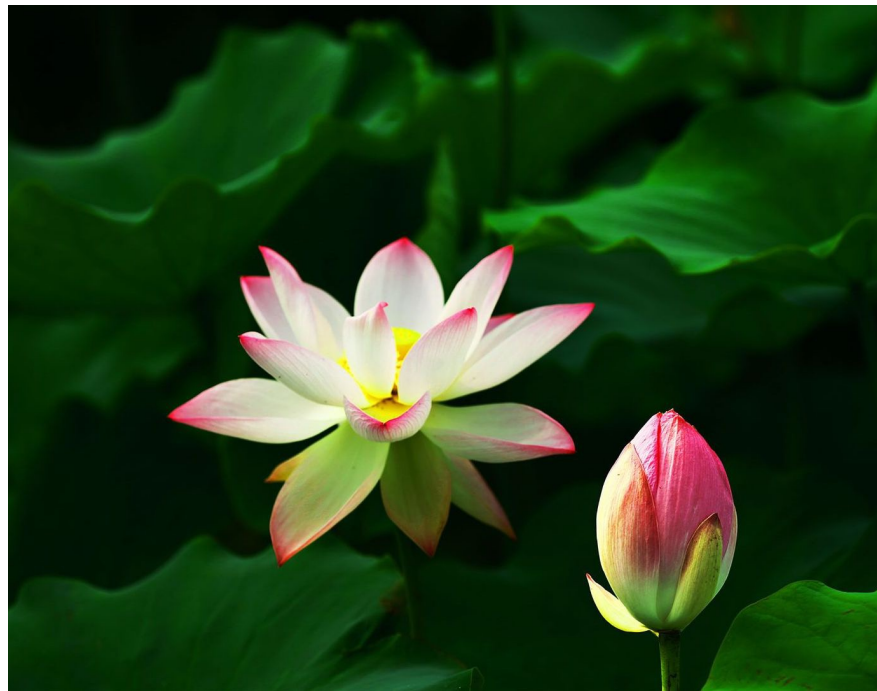


THE BUDDHA'S WORDS: BOJJHANGA SUTTA (SN 46.53)

"And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of mindfulness? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is mindful; he possesses supreme mindfulness and discrimination, remembering and able to call to mind even things that were done and said long ago. He develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness depending on seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release." (SN 46.53)

MINDFULNESS (SATI)

- Bare attention and clear comprehension link mindfulness to wisdom.
- Bare attention simply notices present experiences without elaboration.
- Clear comprehension considers purpose, timing, and a broader perspective.
- Seeing things precisely and accurately from all sides, or from different perspectives.



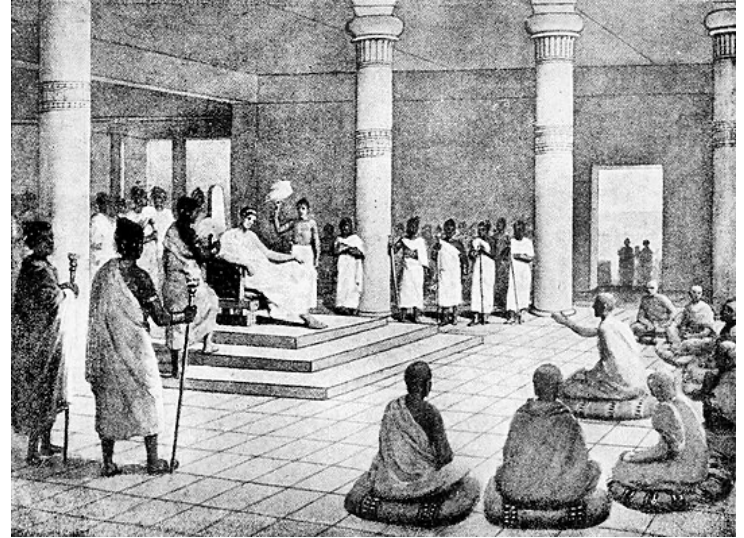
MINDFULNESS (SATI) – THREE FOLD PROCESS

- Cultivating the seven factors follows a threefold process:
 - See if they're present
 - Understand conditions for arising
 - Develop perfection/practice
- Mindful awareness helps us cultivate each factor to its fullest potential and integrate them into daily life.



INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMAS (DHAMMAVICAYA)

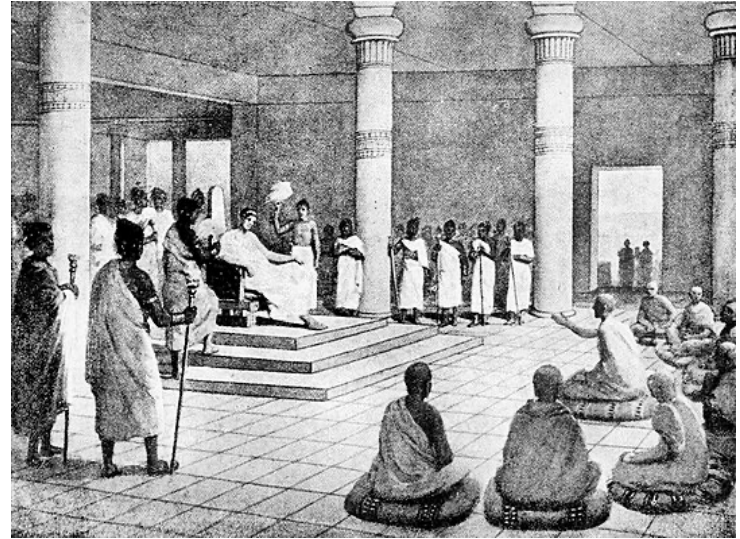
From a commentary on Buddhist teachings called the Questions of King Milinda, is a dialogue between a Bactrian Greek king, Milinda, who plays the 'Devil's Advocate' and a Buddhist sage, Nàgasena. The topics covered include most of those questions commonly asked by Westerners



INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMAS (DHAMMAVICAYA)

In one of these dialogues, Milinda asks Nàgasena by how many of the factors of enlightenment does one actually awaken and Nàgasena answers that it is by means of just one, namely the factor of investigating the dhammas.

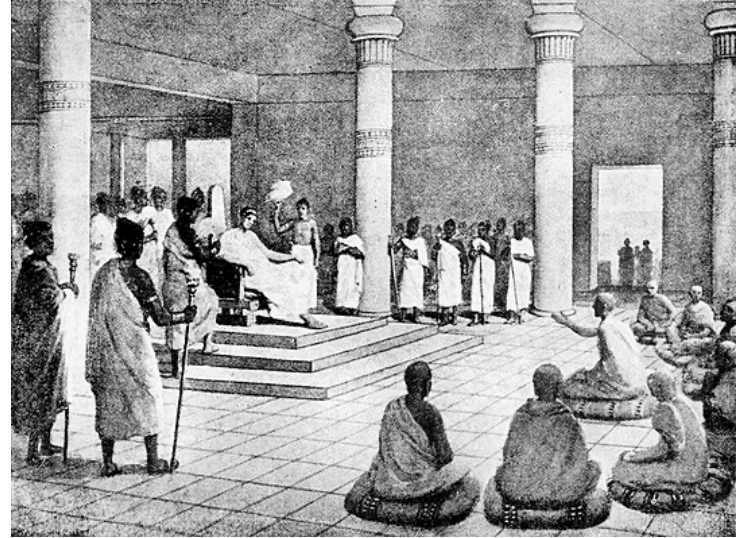
So why asks, King Milinda, does the Buddhist speak of seven factors of awakening? Nàgasena responds. Does a sword placed in its sheath and not grasped in the hand succeed in cutting what needs to be cut? If the sword stays in its sheath, is it able to cut anything?



INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMAS (DHAMMAVICAYA)

Certainly not the King replied. In exactly the same way, your majesty, one cannot awaken by means of Dhamma discrimination without the other six awakening factors. The other six factors are needed to unsheath and wield the sword of wisdom, but it's wisdom which cuts through delusion.

It's crucial that we understand the activity of investigation, the activity of inquiry. The other factors support the sword, but we need that sort of wisdom to cut through the delusion.



INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMAS (DHAMMAVICAYA)

- Investigation of Dhamma (dhammavicaya) is the second factor, developing truth-discerning wisdom by inquiring into skillful/unskillful qualities.



INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMAS (DHAMMAVICAYA)

- We can investigate motivations behind actions, emotional states, and personality tendencies to understand them clearly.



INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMAS (DHAMMAVICAYA)

- Insight into impermanence, suffering, and selflessness arises through contemplating the three characteristics.
 - Impermanence (anicca) - All conditioned phenomena are subject to change and decay.
 - Suffering (dukkha) - Clinging to impermanent things causes dissatisfaction and suffering.
 - Non-self (anatta) - Phenomena lack a permanent, independent self; there is only a process of mental and physical events.



INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMAS (DHAMMAVICAYA)

- Direct investigation into the nature of the mind reveals its empty, selfless nature and leads to liberation.



ENERGY (VIRIYA)

- The third factor of enlightenment is energy (vīrya)
- Mindfulness leads to investigation, inquiry, and tireless energy



WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

We can understand the progression of these factors, with one leading to the next, through these words of the Buddha:

Abiding thus mindful [of body, feelings, mind, and categories of experience—the four satipaṭṭhānas], one investigates and examines that state with wisdom, and embarks upon a full inquiry into it.

In one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it, tireless energy is aroused. On whatever occasion tireless energy is aroused . . . on that occasion the energy enlightenment factor is aroused . . . ; and one develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment.¹ (Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, **The Middle Length Discourses**, 947.)

ENERGY (VIRIYA)

3. Energy (Viriya): The persistent and diligent effort exerted to overcome unwholesome tendencies, develop wholesome qualities, and progress on the path.

Takes form of energy, effort, courage, strength, vitality, and perseverance.

Energy "shores up" the mind and preserves wholesome qualities



ENERGY (VIRIYA)

Courage is a manifestation of viriya.

It enables individuals to face challenges and difficulties without retreating.

Courage doesn't mean absence of fear but acting in spite of it.



ENERGY (VIRIYA)

- Finding the balance between effort and relaxation in meditation
- Right Effort



ENERGY (VIRIYA)

- Spiritual urgency causes the energy factor to arise
- Contemplating reflections like impermanence to develop urgency



WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Buddha emphasized energy in the Dhammapada when he said that when we practice, wisdom grows; and when we don't practice, it wanes. It is the factor of energy that keeps us on a trajectory of awakening, where no skillful dhammas are lost.

It is in this shoring up of wholesome states that viriya also manifests as strength.

“And what is the faculty of strength? Here, the noble disciple dwells as one who has produced strength; for the sake of abandoning unskillful dhammas and arousing skillful dhammas one is firm, of steady valor, un-relinquishing in purpose with regard to skillful dhammas.”³ (Quoted in Gethin, 117.)

WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

When still a bodhisattva striving for Buddhahood, Siddhartha made the following well-known resolve:

Let only my skin, and sinews, and bones remain, and let my flesh and blood in the body dry up, I shall not permit the course of my effort to stop until I win that which may be won by human ability, human effort and human exertion.⁴ (Ledi Sayadaw, The Manuals of Buddhism (Yangon, Myanmar: Mother Ayeyarwaddy Publishing House, 2004), 316.)

JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) – WHAT IS IT?

- The fourth factor of awakening, rapture (Piti), refreshes and delights the mind and body through intense energy and anticipation.
- It is incompatible with ill will.
- If somebody is sitting in a chair, there's no space for someone else to sit in it. When rapture has taken its seat, there's no room for ill will to sit down.
- Translated as rapture, joy, rapt interest, happiness, pleasurable interest, delight



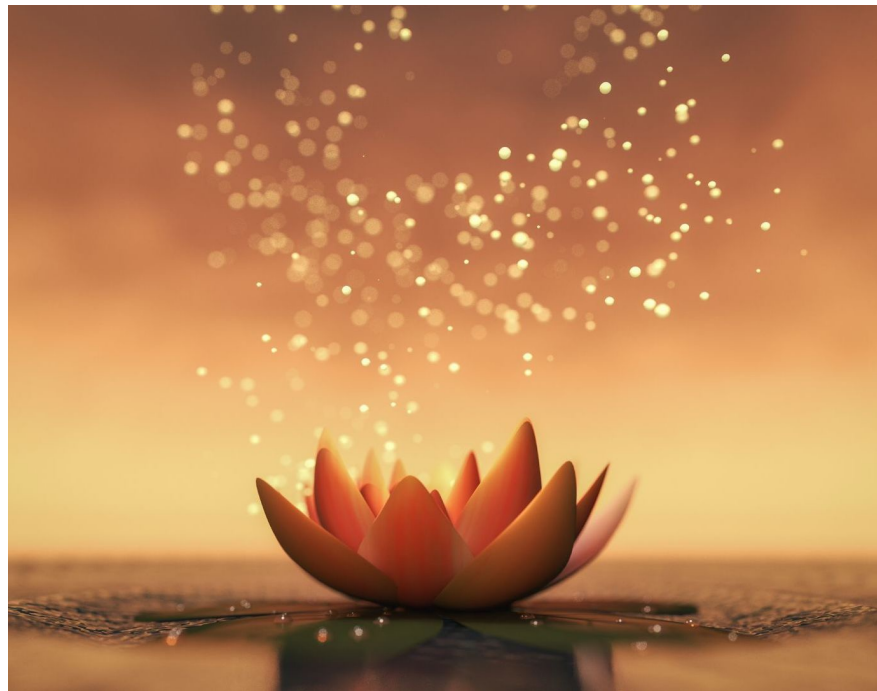
JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - PROGRESS

- Anapanasati Sutta mindfulness of breathing the Buddha described the sequence
- Rapture arises from tireless energy,
- energy comes about through investigation and inquiry of the wisdom factor.
- The factor of truth discerning wisdom/Investigation comes about through continuous mindfulness.
- Understanding brings a joy that sustains interest in practice.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) – HOW DOES IT FEEL?

- Rapture has an intense energy to it.
- Energy of arousal,
- Energy of anticipation.
- For example:
- You have been on this long trek across a hot desert, you know, and you're tired, and you're thirsty. just dragging yourself one step after another. And then off in the distance, you see an oasis, and the Oasis is for real, it's not a mirage, And so you see this oasis? What would your mind feel like when you saw the oasis?
- That's rapture, the anticipatory interest in happiness in seeing it.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) – WE ARE TALKING ABOUT NON-WORLDLY

- Worldly rapture is associated with sense pleasures
- Non-Worldly rapture arises from seclusion, renunciation, and overcoming the hindrances through concentration and wisdom.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) – FIVE GRADES

- The five grades are
- minor rapture felt as sensations,
- momentary flashes,
- wave-like showers,
- an uplifting floating feeling, and a
- pervading happiness filling the whole body.
- Powerful rapture energies can cause floating sensations.



THE BUDDHA'S WORDS: DHAMMAPADA 354

The gift of Dharma surpasses all gifts.

The taste of Dharma surpasses all tastes.

The delight in Dharma surpasses all delights.

The destruction of craving conquers all suffering.

(translated by Gil Fronsdal)

JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - RISK

- Heightened experiences risk subtle attachment
- where insight is "adorned" with rapture,
- leading to wrong view that experiences are permanent
- or a sign of ultimate freedom.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - RISK

- Insight meditation can lead to subtle attachment where the mind "clings" to insight
- and cannot discern the attachment as a defilement obscuring true liberation.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) – WHAT IS NEEDED?

- The insight of discerning what is and is not the path is needed to avoid wrong direction
- through properly understanding impermanence and non-self of all experiences.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) – WHAT IS NEEDED?

- Rapture can be cultivated by recognizing sensations
- but investigating the mind's relationship to them
- without craving, desire, conceit or disappointment when they fade.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) – DON'T WORRY, PRACTICE SINCERELY

- Measuring progress causes internal turmoil and is useless in Dharma practice.
- Instead, be sincere in each moment with full effort.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - REFLECTION

- Reflecting on the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha with mindfulness, interest and devotion gives rise to rapture, energy and inspiration.
- The purpose of the reflection is to make a heart connection. With the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha the three jewels.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - REFLECTION

- Cultivating rapture through reflection on morality and integrity (sīla)
- Reflecting on commitment to non-harming and specific moments of restraint



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - REFLECTION

- Appreciating one's sīla (ethical conduct) over a lifetime
- Paying attention to the feeling in the mind during moments of action that align with one's highest values can lead to rapture.



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - REFLECTION

- Cultivating joy through generosity
- Reflecting on past acts of generosity and the feelings experienced
- Appreciating generosity in oneself and others



THE BUDDHA'S WORDS: DHAMMAPADA

“Happiness is Virtue lasting through old age”

333. Good is virtue until life's end, good is faith that is steadfast, good is the acquisition of wisdom, and good is the avoidance of evil.

Dhp XXIII PTS: [Dhp 320-333](#)

Nagavagga: The Elephant
translated from the Pali by
Acharya Buddharakkhita

JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - REFLECTION

- Reflection on Buddhist teachings on merit (**puñña**) and rebirth
- Reflecting on celestial realms to soften the heart for deeper teachings (the devas)
- Understanding two types of merit: mundane and supramundane, liberation
- Cultivating faith, sila, virtue, generosity and wisdom leads to immense merit
- Reflecting on these can bring Dharma joy and rapture



THE BUDDHA'S WORDS: ANGUTTARA NIKĀYA

“When, bhikkhus, a noble disciple possesses these four streams of merit, streams of the wholesome, it is not easy to measure his merit thus: ‘Just so much is his stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness ... that leads to ... one’s welfare and happiness’; rather, it is reckoned simply as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.

“Bhikkhus, just as it is not easy to measure the water in the great ocean thus: ‘There are so many gallons of water,’ or ‘There are so many hundreds of gallons of water,’ or ‘There are so many thousands of gallons of water,’ or ‘There are so many hundreds of thousands of gallons of water,’ but rather it is reckoned simply as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of water; so too, when a noble disciple possesses these four streams of merit ... it is reckoned simply as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.”

Aṅguttara Nikāya
The Book of the Fours
4.51. Streams of Merit (1)

JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - REFLECTION

- Investigating moments of peace and freedom from defilements (momentary freedom)
- Noticing the difference between being caught in defilements vs released
- Inspiring further understanding of what is possible



JOY/RAPTURE (PITI) - REFLECTION

- Reflecting on descriptions of Nibbana can bring joy and even enlightenment
- Contemplating words like unborn, deathless, purity, freedom, unailing, unafflicted, dispassion, serene



THE BUDDHA'S WORDS: DHAMMAPADA 331:333 HAPPINESS

Happiness is having friends when need arises.
Happiness is contentment with whatever there is.
Happiness is merit at the end of one's life.
Happiness is the abandoning of all suffering.
In the world, respect for one's mother is happiness,
As is respect for one's father.
In the world, respect for renunciants is happiness,
As is respect for brahmins.
Happiness is virtue lasting through old age.
Happiness is steadfast faith.
Happiness is the attainment of wisdom.
Not doing evil is happiness. (translated by Gil Fronsdal)