

NOTE: This is an ongoing evolving support work for Serenity and Insight Meditation (This is the Tranquil Wisdom Meditation taught by Most Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi which he now prefers to call Serenity and Insight Meditation as yoked together in the suttas. The results of using this meditation are different from using concentration or absorption meditation approaches.

This list will be taken down and replaced continuously with updated versions as it evolves ...

Source : <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dhammasukha>

This covers up to Nov 27-2008 edit

“Serenity and Insight Meditation support terminology list”

Here is offered help with the working definitions of things and it gives some of the supporting pali terms along side. This is an ongoing work. SK

A

Attention is the observation and recognition of whatever arises in the present moment. In other words this is an aspect of mindfulness.

Awakening- (*Nibbana*)- In Buddhism this refers to waking up from the ‘dream’ we live in or the ‘delusion’ we have of the personal nature of everything; the idea of a self. Awakening to the impersonal perspective of everything means living without taking anything personally. It removes the “I”, “ME”, “MY”, “MINE” from the situation and brings impersonal objective balance back into it as we realize things for just what they are and nothing more. Full awakening means that you discover this perspective and then you can fully keep it going all the time on its own! In this state ones mind cannot become disturbed because now they are able to lovingly accept anything that arises in the moment just as it is and nothing more. They are seeing everything clearly.

Awareness- Full Awareness –(*Samapajjana*) actually, this is what is called knowledge and vision (*samapajjana*) in the suttas, and of course included mindfulness (*sati*) and it included understanding of every sense door as it arises and the knowing of this impersonal process to be a part of dependent origination (*paticca samupadda*). Full awareness can also mean ‘to get to know’.

Being alert to what arises and how it arises. In the case of doing the meditation (*bhavana*), it’s being aware (alert and attentive) of the links as they are happening and of the mind and body tension that arises as feeling link moves into craving link.

Remember that Craving manifests as tension and tightness in the mind and body. Having alert senses, one can detect this at the earliest point which allows the meditator to release earlier and earlier in the process.

Don’t get Full Awareness mixed up with Consciousness. It’s not the same. Or mindfulness either.

B

C

Contact- (*phassa*) is when, for example, the good working eye hits color and form then eye-consciousness arises and the meeting of these three things is called contact. This means that when the internal physical eye hits an external object of color and form then the mental eye-consciousness arises and these three things when they meet together this is called contact.

Collectedness- (*samadhi*) Collectedness refers to a collected mind. A collected mind is a mind unified for the purpose of watching the movements of mind's attention. This is a very specific degree and light quality of concentration and is usually misunderstood if we just use the word concentration..

Compassion- (*karuna*)“seeing another person in pain, allowing them the space to have their pain and loving them anyway. “

If you go into a hospital, you walk into a hospital room where there is somebody that's dying of cancer or has an extreme amount of pain. The first thing that most people try to do when they walk into a room where there is a lot of pain is try to take that pain from them, by making themselves feel bad. “Oh you poor dear, I'm so sorry you're like this.” That is indulging in pity. That has nothing to do with compassion. Compassion is walking into the room, seeing that they have that pain, and radiating love to them. Not focusing on their problem, focusing on Loving-Kindness. Keeping your mind uplifted.

Now what happens when you do that? That other person will start to let go of the dislike of the pain and their mind will start to become uplifted and then you're actually helping that person. It's a real tricky thing between pity and compassion. Pity is trying to take away somebody else's pain so that they feel better and you feel lousy, and that doesn't help them at all. But compassion is allowing them the space to be whatever way they're going to be, and loving them. Focusing on radiating a feeling of acceptance, radiating a feeling of openness, and happiness.

D

The Process of Dependent Origination- (*Paticca Samuppada*) This process, which is entirely Impersonal in nature, is HOW things actually are in a nutshell. The process usually consists of 12 links which are in a circle or wheel. They actually do not have a precise beginning. One who has knowledge of these links and understands how the process operates can become free of the stress and tension that arises because of not knowing HOW things actually work or the true nature of things.

The process is not always presented with 12 links when talking about it within the suttas. You may find it as 9, 11, 12, or even as many as 23 in one situation which moves it up onto a more advanced level of understanding. Buddhism is a Gradual teaching. Of course it then follows that it is also a gradual learning for the student. So Patience is of the essence of time!

The 12 Links are Aging-and-Death< Birth<Habitual Tendencies (also called by some as Being or Existence)< Clinging< Craving< Feeling< Contact<Six Sense-doors< Mentality/Materiality< Consciousness< Volitional Formations< Ignorance.

For best results the links should be individually examined as follows: What is Death? What is the cause of Death? What is the Cessation of Death? What is the way to the cessation of Death?

And what is Birth? What is the cause of Birth? What is the Cessation of Birth? What is the Way to the cessation of Birth?

Until finally one reaches Ignorance which in fact is caused by Aging-and-Death from the previous life to this one

And so forth down through all of the links.

But the student doesn't stop here. They now take the time to examine further through deduction in the following way: "When what does not exist does Aging-and-Death not come to be? With the cessation of what does the cessation of Aging-and-Death come about?" and by examining in this way there can be a breakthrough by wisdom such as the following: When there is no birth, aging-and-death does not come to be.; with the cessation of birth comes the cessation of aging-and-death.

And so the student can go through this in a deductive way following the noble truths as a pattern of investigation here.

When learning the process of Dependent Origination one should learn it from Aging-Death link down to Ignorance to assist 'discovery' and the proceed further for seeing the whole process as it is clearly.

Dependent Origination is tricky because there are so many levels of presentation. The Buddha most often is presenting the links of Six Sense Doors> Contact> Craving> Clinging> Habitual Tendencies, as he was teaching the meditation. If one is observing the movements of mind's attention while meditating, one will come to see clearly how these links are happening again and again during the meditation. So this is a very close working with the meditation.

Another presentation might only talk specifically about the Contact>Craving>Clinging. Another will emphasize how Craving is the weak link and the one that can break the wheel!

Another presentation showing the 23 would present this on the one hand as the process and then moving into identifying the developmental stages of the learning of the entire teaching. (Upanisa sutta)

But the most useful thing for the meditation is understanding that you are being asked to observe the process in terms of individual arising feelings and coming to sense what happens in the mind and in the body as the links are occurring. In this way one will begin to actually see how things actually are working.

As you go along this will begin to interweave more and you will come to see it more clearly.

Delusion- *atta*- mistaken idea or concept of a self resulting in a personal perspective rather than seeing things through an impersonal perspective which would be "*anatta*"

E

Enlightenment- *vimutti*

F

Feeling “vedana” is mostly thought (by most people) to be a physical aspect of mind. But in fact feeling is always a mental aspect. Whenever a feeling arises, even though it might closely be observed in the physical body, it is actually a mental observation of the physical body. Feeling is pleasant, painful, or neither painful-nor-pleasant (and that can be broken down much more, if you want to see how much more please go to sutta number 59 in the Middle Length Discourses).

G

H

I

Imperturbable- The word “imperturbable” means that the meditator attains to the 4th jhana and is very stable with deep equanimity. Mind is able to see things very easily and does not become attached to them or even get involved with whatever arises. At that time mind is so well balanced that nothing will knock it off balance. This is where the meditator becomes an advanced student. Up until then they are still considered rookies in meditation Hahaha! The way I prefer to teach is that the meditator go on and experience all of the arupa jhanas then have the experience of the Cessation of perception and feeling then when the perception and feeling arises again the meditator will see up close and personal exactly how dependent origination occurs. This is such a profound understanding that right after that Nibbana happens!

Bhante likes the sutta MN-106 – “Way to the Imperturbable” a lot, because the instructions are so clear and precise!

Insight- (vipassana)

J

Jhana- level of understanding; stage of meditation

K

knowledge- (N~ana in Pali pronounced nyana. The “n” sounds like the “N” in onion). If one doesn't know and see, in other words, one does not grasp and know how to use something, then they are in ignorance about it. In this meditation practice one has a personal experiential investigation that you perform during which you may recognize one of the pieces that you are

being taught about in the Dhamma talks and this is 'acquired knowledge'. (This is "immediately effective" and is "seen here and now" [**sandittika**])Our journey to knowledge has to do with 'coming to see' (**ehipassikho – which is the invitation to inspect and "come and see" for yourself**) the 4 Noble truths and the (**impersonal – anatta**) process of Dependent Origination (**paticca samuppada**)

L

M

Meditation- (*bhavana* in Pali and which has another definition of "mental development"). For our purposes the definition of Meditation is →Observing the movements of mind's attention moment –to-moment, object-to-object for the express purpose of understanding clearly the impersonal process of Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths. By doing this one automatically realizes completely the three characteristics clearly of *anicca, dukkha, and anatta or Impermanence, the nature of suffering, and the difference between the personal and impersonal perspectives of everything.*

Mindfulness- (Sati) The act of remembering to recognize and release any distraction that pulls mind's attention away from the object of meditation ALL THE TIME; remembering to observe the movements of mind's attention moment-to-moment ALL THE TIME.

Mentality/Materiality – (nama/rupa)

This is taken from the Samyutta Nikaya Page 535 Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation, it says: "And what is mentality/materiality (or name and form)? Feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention: this is called mentality (name). The four great elements and the form derived from these four great elements: this is called materiality (form). Thus this mentality (name) and this materiality (form) are together called mentality/materiality (name/ form)."

I have changed the old translation of name and form to the better translation of mentality/materiality because it is actually a little closer to the true meaning in Pali. So, what does this mean? The **feeling, perception, volition, contact and attention** are mental aspects that do arise in one's meditation practice.

Feeling is mostly thought (by most people) to be a physical aspect of mind. But in fact feeling is always a mental aspect. Whenever feeling arises even though it might closely be observed in the physical body it is actually a mental observation of the physical body. Feeling is pleasant, painful, neither painful nor pleasant (and that can be broken down much more, if you want to see how much more please go to sutta number 59 in the Middle Length Discourses).

Perception is the aspect of mind that names what is being observed, in other words if you see a cup sitting on a table - it is the perception that names that cup as being a cup. Perception is the aspect of mind that names all internal and external things that arises. Perception also has memory involved with it.

Volition is the mental aspect of choice in what to do with whatever arises. I.E. It is a choice to see whatever arises as being personal or impersonal - if one takes whatever arises as being a personal self ("I", "Me", "Mine") then the meditator can look forward to seeing a lot of dissatisfaction and suffering (dukkha) arising right after that. Or if one uses their volition to see whatever arises as being a part of an impersonal process then one can look forward to having relief and happiness arising (sukha).

Contact is when, for example, the good working eye hits color and form then eye-consciousness arises and the meeting of these three things is called contact. This means that when the internal physical eye hits an external object of color and form then the mental eye-consciousness arises and these three things when they meet together this is called contact.

Attention is the observation and recognition of whatever arises in the present moment. In other words this is an aspect of mindfulness.

The 4 Great Elements are the earth element, the fire element, the water element, and the air element. These are the elements which makes up all material form.

If you are doing the breathing meditation it is very necessary to relax any tension or tightness on the in breath and the out breath. Now what does this mean? There is a very subtle tightness that we all carry around with us in our head, especially. And this needs to be recognized and relaxed. When mind becomes distracted the subtle tightness becomes even more noticable and needs to be relaxed. When one relaxes the tightness in their head there is a feeling of openness and kind of like an expansion feeling and right after that mind becomes very calm, clear and exceptionally observant.

Anytime mind is distracted there is a process that takes place first there is a feeling (pleasant, painful or neither painful not pleasant) next very quickly there arises a tightness in one's mind and body (especially in the head) this is called craving. Right after that thoughts begin to arises and this is called clinging. So if one relaxes and feels the open expansion in their body (head especially) and mind the clinging won't arise, and mind is clear and observant. This is why the instructions say to relax on the in-breath and to relax on the out-breath. (BV)

O

observation- Watching or keeping a close check on what happens as your attention is on an object of meditation as a home-base, and then mind's attention begins to move as a thought or feeling arises. The "mind's eye" or "wisdom's eye as the Buddha called it" is closely watching what is going on concerning the movements of mind's attention. As thoughts coming up slow down a bit, one can actually watch the birth of a thought and HOW it actually arises. This is the clear and skilled observation that you are learning how to do.

P

Perception is the aspect of mind that names what is being observed, in other words if you see a cup sitting on a table - it is the perception that names that cup as being a cup. Perception is the aspect of mind that names all internal and external things that arises. Perception also has memory involved with it.

Q

R

recognition- (It is interesting to note the difference between 'cognize' which is "coming to know" and 'recognize' which means "to know again". When one sees something very clearly during the meditation or during a time of contemplation outside of the sitting practice. "She was washing her feet in the stream and as the droplets of water passed away she recognized (**saw for herself again and again**) Impermanence clearly in a profound way."

S

T

Truths- The Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths are basically:

1. **There is Suffering;**
2. **There is a Cause of Suffering;**
3. **There is a Cessation of Suffering;**
4. **There is a Way (Path) to the Cessation of Suffering.**

This is the way one usually sees the Truths presented in the texts. On the gross level, it's true that it stands as 'information' or a synopsis of the teachings.

However. On a deeper level, the 4 Noble Truths are something else too. They are TOOLS indicating a precise pattern for investigation the Buddha used in his meditation practice. If we look into the Samyutta Nikaya, in the book of Causation- "Origination", one can see precisely HOW the Buddha did his personal investigation using a pattern of deductive reasoning to clearly understand each of the links of Dependent Origination before he actually saw them. In other suttas he also follows this pattern to investigate ANY part of the teachings, such as the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. This method of investigation has been preserved for us which puts the 4 Noble Truths right out there in

front for a VERY GOOD REASON. Within the texts they do indeed still exist predominantly today for us to figure out that they were indispensable tools for our personal research project of meditation.

U

V

vision- Having actually seen the links of the impersonal (**anatta**) process of Dependent Origination (**paticca samuppada**). When you see the term “knowledge and vision”, this is when you actually experience the clear knowledge – (**n~ana– this word over the years has come to mean insight knowledge also and the true question is, “insight into what?”. The answer is always is “of precisely how the 4 Noble Truths works to let go of all of the links of Dependent Origination).** of the links as it’s going on, And you fully digest this information, you have acquired insight ‘knowledge’. In the texts we find this as i.e “he saw the links and has acquired knowledge and vision.”

Volition is the mental aspect of choice in what to do with whatever arises. I.E. It is a choice to see whatever arises as being personal or impersonal - if one takes whatever arises as being a personal self ("I", "Me", "Mine") then the meditator can look forward to seeing a lot of dissatisfaction and suffering (dukkha) arising right after that. Or if one uses their volition to see whatever arises as being a part of an impersonal process then one can look forward to having relief and happiness arising (sukha).

W

Wisdom- (panna) there are many phrases within the suttas using the word ‘wisdom’ and they usually turn out to be referring to in some context ‘the impersonal process of Dependent Origination’. Such phrases appear as: ”**He sees with Wisdom**”, ”**Seeing with Wisdom**”, ”**...And his taints were destroyed by his seeing with Wisdom...**”, ”**Wisdom**”, or ”**He is Wise.**”

If we can remember these instances are referring to the process of D.O. in some way as we read the various suttas, then our minds can open up to a new understanding of this process which was, along with the Four Noble Truths, at the core of the teaching of the Buddha .