

# MBC course notes - Mindfulness of the Body

Week 2

Mahabodhi

10 September 2007

1. The Body ought to be the easiest of the four satipatthanas to bring mindfulness to. After all it is quite noticeable as a part of our experience. But as in the modern world we do spend a lot of time in our heads, and getting back into our body can feel unfamiliar not to say counterintuitive at times. Nevertheless if we want to relax tension we have no choice but to get into the body (and make sure we stay there and don't drift off somewhere else).
2. One of the ways we can make sure we are in the body satipatthana is to make sure our attention is **in the present moment**. Mindfulness of the Body is mindfulness of what is tangible (which means *touch-able*) and this only exists in the present moment. Short of what is the body's present moment experience everything else (in relation to the body) is fantasy. Hence the inclusion of the mindfulness of breathing in the body section of the Satipatthana Sutta. In the mindfulness of breathing we practice being in the present moment experience of the breath. A way I have found useful to tell whether I am in this present moment experience of the breath is to see if I know what the **detail** of the breath is. If I cannot tell that I am probably being vague, and in fact not there (in the body satipatthana). This shows up in the Satipatthana Sutta where the practitioner is asked to 'know a long breath as a long breath... a short breath as a short breath'.
3. Once we are there with the body satipatthana (via the breath) we can then work with the material we have - relaxing or energising or calming the body (possibly by using the breath, or by adjusting our meditation posture).
4. It is interesting to look at an idea from Art - called 'Truth to Materials' - in relation to the body satipatthana. What 'Truth to Materials' means is that an artist will use materials appropriate to the task - bearing in mind their properties. We can apply this to when we are being mindful of the body. The body is our material, and if we to be true to it we have to respect its properties - which means usually going slower than our thoughts might like. If we are unable to slow down it may be a sign we are not in our bodies.

*Homework: Do at least six periods of half an hour each during the week -and in those deliberately do something much slower than you would normally like (it may be slow Thai walking meditation). Notice the effects and share them with the group next week.*







