

An introduction to

THE FOURFOLD ESTABLISHING OF MINDFULNESS

Revised transcript of a teaching by Lama Lhundrup, France

Introduction

As always when listening to a teaching we first of all develop the motivation of bodhicitta, the awakened mind intend on the greatest possible benefit for all sentient beings: enlightenment. In order to realise this and to establish all beings in that state we engage in dharma study and practice.

The Buddha taught the fourfold establishing of mindfulness as the basis of all meditation practice in the *Satipatthana Sutta*, the tenth sutra of the middle length collection (Majjhima Nikaya) of the Pali canon.¹ This sutra is the basis for the mindfulness practices of all Buddhist schools. Further explanations are found in the *Anapanasati Sutta*, where the Buddha talks about mindfulness of breath as a means to develop all four kinds of mindfulness, and in the *Kayagatasati Sutta*, where he develops the instructions on how to practise mindfulness of body by giving many examples. These three sutras together are the heart of mindfulness practice in the Theravada tradition.² Gampopa mentions the fourfold establishing of mindfulness in the *Precious Ornament of Liberation* as the factors to be developed right from the beginning of one's practice as one is entering the smaller path of accumulation. They constitute the first four of the 37 factors of enlightenment and form the "path of fully investigating entities".

Here, in the context of this brief introduction, we will not discuss all aspects of mindfulness but concentrate on what the Buddha called the "Fourfold establishing". Mindfulness itself would be a still vaster subject as it includes virtually all practices starting with being mindful of the preciousness of our human existence, impermanence, cause and effect, suffering, continuing with a mindfulness of the qualities of refuge, of bodhicitta, of the masters, yidams, and protectors, and finally being mindful of *mahamudra*, the nature of things itself. Mindfulness is what makes our practice work. Without it, no practice whatsoever will have a profound effect.

When explaining the fourfold establishing of mindfulness the Buddha first talks about the motivation to develop: the wish to obtain complete liberation, nirvana, the complete purification of clinging to a self which means the same as going beyond all suffering, beyond all worries and complaints into true happiness. He then says that in order to practise the fourfold establishing of mindfulness, no matter which one we intend to practise, we should go to a secluded place, sit with crossed legs, and with a very straight upper body first let our mindfulness gather in front of us – not necessarily with the help of an object, but simply through resting with unwavering, steady eyes. Then, through contemplating the nature of samsara, we should relinquish all desire, all wanting, all clinging to the cycle of existence and dissolve all sadness and evil-mindedness. With "sadness" the Buddha meant the sadness which arises in the beginning when we take the resolution to leave samsara behind, the sadness which is uneasiness due to leaving our beloved attachments. There should be no such sadness in our mind when we are letting go of the causes of suffering (!), but rather the great joy of a

¹ An English translation of this sutra from Pali and Chinese can be found in *Thich Nhat Hanh*, Transformation & Healing, Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, Parallax Press, 1990; in German: Umarme Deine Wut, Theseus, 2. Auflage 1993. Thich Nhat Hanh also gives extensive explanations and direct meditation instructions.

A French translation (from the original book in English) together with extensive explanations is found in: *Nyanaponika Thera*, Satipatthana, Le Cœur de la Méditation Bouddhiste, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Paris, 1976

The teaching is based on the German translation of this and the following sutras in: Die Lehrreden des Buddha aus der Mittleren Sammlung, Jhana Verlag, Neuübersetzung von Kay Zumwinkel, 2001, 3 Bände

² I am indebted to my former Burmese teacher *Saya U Chit Thin* who repeatedly instructed us on mindfulness using these sutras as his main reference point. Further instructions on this I received from the Indian teacher *Anagarika Munindra*.

The teaching is based on the German translation of these sutras in: Die Lehrreden des Buddha aus der Mittleren Sammlung, Jhana Verlag, Neuübersetzung von Kay Zumwinkel, 2001, 3 Bände

firm resolve to go towards liberation and to become able to make it accessible to all others as well. In order to practise mindfulness it is very helpful to have the support of a joyful aspiration.

Mindfulness is the practice of those who are happy to get out of samsara. Our basic attitude of mind should be free of clinging to this world. Having this as our basis we can develop the fourfold establishing of mindfulness. For this we have to practise with diligence and with a clear, precise knowing of what we are doing, with clearly understood instructions on our meditation. Mindfulness means not to be forgetful, not forgetting the object of one's intention. Mindfulness needs to be accompanied by equanimity, a stable mind, not impressed by whatever might appear in mind, and it should be continuous, without interruption; not sometimes mindful and sometimes not. A continuous mindfulness is actually based on a deep letting go, just as Gendun Rinpoche always instructed us. Mindfulness establishes itself naturally when we have no interest for the world and let go of our worldly preoccupation.

But there could also be spiritual preoccupations that create obstacles: a strong wanting to let go, one is struggling to find relaxation with the hope to attain something and the fear not to obtain it. When there is too much wanting we will soon reject mindfulness practice, since we will not be able to enter authentic relaxation. Wanting agitates the mind, and so do hope and fear.

The Buddha taught a fourfold establishing of mindfulness which is set out in a progressive order and serves as the foundation to discover liberation:

- mindfulness of body
- mindfulness of feelings
- mindfulness of mind
- mindfulness of dharmas

The mindfulness developed with these practices is always the same: to be aware of what is. But the methods used to develop and keep the mindfulness change and become increasingly more subtle.³

I. Establishing mindfulness of body

The basic instruction of the Buddha on mindfulness of body⁴ is: "Regard the body as body." It means to regard whatever is body, whatever has form, as being simply a physical form and not *my* body, *my* form, not to identify with the body, but just to regard it as body, an agglomeration of physical constituents. To see what the experience of these physical constituents is like is the next step of this meditation.

The initial instructions for this mindfulness could be condensed into the question: "*What do the senses perceive?*" This refers to the five physical senses (without the mental sense): whatever can be experienced through touching (inner physical perception), hearing, smelling, tasting, and seeing.

There are many ways to develop mindfulness of the body. All are meant to lead to non-identification with the first skandha of body or form. The most important of these methods is the meditation on the breath. But first we will give the list of other meditations which can be done according to the Buddha.⁵

- meditation on the impermanence of all body feelings and of all forms including the contemplation of the causes of their appearance and dissolution
- meditation on the non-attractiveness of the body which is made up of many, not very attractive parts like bones, blood, flesh, tendons, mucus, excrements etc.

³ To clarify terms: *sati* in Pali is the equivalent of *smṛti* in Sanskrit and *dran-pa* in Tibetan which is translated as mindfulness, attention or recollection; *upatthāna* in Pali is the equivalent of *upasthāna* in Sanskrit and *nye-bar-bzhag-pa* in Tibetan which is translated as establishing, applying, closely adhering to, keeping present or entering into. When the two words are joined the opening vowel "u" is dropped which gives: *sati-patthana*: establishing mindfulness.

⁴ Körper: *lus* (spoken *lū*) in Tibetan and *kaya* in Sanskrit

⁵ Such a list may seem little inspiring and rather academic, but here the aim is simply to give an overview as the Buddha himself did it in the sutra. To convey us the juice of each of these practices is the task of our meditation teachers.

- meditation on the fact that the body is composed of the elements earth, water, fire, and wind which leads to an understanding of the interdependence of physical phenomena
- the traditional contemplation of the charnel grounds, where one contemplates corpses in different stages of decay: very fresh, one hour old, a few hours old, a day, three days, a week, a month, down to the last dust after years of decomposition. And at every step one should remind oneself: "My own body is of the same nature as this body. As soon as the breath stops, it will not be any different from these corpses, since it is also a composed phenomenon." The contemplation of what one sees in the charnel ground or what one imagines in one's visualisation should at every step be brought in connection with one's own body to which one clings so much. One should become completely aware of the conditioned, impermanent nature of this body.

All of these meditations are also mentioned by Gampopa in the *Precious Ornament of Liberation*. They are important remedies for desire and ignorance. Further meditations to develop mindfulness of body are:

- meditation on feelings of well-being and joy in the body using physical meditation experiences
- meditation on how the body is subject to climatic influences, to heat and cold, to hunger and thirst, sometimes feeling heavy, sometimes light etc.
- mindfulness while moving with the body, walking, sitting down, lying, eating etc. ⁶

It is actually very important to be mindful of our physical movements. If we are not even mindful of our body, how mindful will we be of our mind? Physical movements are few and actually quite slow, while mental movements are many and extremely quick. The point of practising mindfulness of body is to develop the capacity to refrain from unwholesome acts with body and speech, to settle the mind and to gradually arrive at a mindfulness of mind itself which is the chief of all actions, the starting point for all creation of karma. Mindfulness of the body is definitely easier to practise than mindfulness of mind.

Mindfulness of breathing

- The Buddha taught extensively about mindfulness of breath. Body mindfulness in relation to breath means to be aware of breathing in when breathing in, and to be aware of breathing out when breathing out. To know that one is a short breath and another is a long breath.
- Mindfulness of breathing further includes experiencing fully what the Buddha called the "breath-body". This is a term which refers to the whole body of subtle energy movement, the circulation of the inner breath as one is meditating the outer breath. We do not limit ourselves to watching the breath at the nose or as it makes the abdomen rise. We extend our awareness of breathing to include the whole body. The whole breath-body is breathing. In this way one should use the meditation on breath to calm down physical clinging. One can also calm down physical sensations with this mindfulness. Up to here this belongs to mindfulness of the *body*.
- The Buddha further taught mindfulness of breath as including all four aspects of mindfulness. He showed that while being mindful of the breath one can be mindful at the same time of the sensations, the *feelings* arising in relation to all six senses. As one is connected with the breath one can also be mindful of the different meditative absorptions with their experiences of physical joy, mental joy, end of analysis, and so on. This is also classified as mindfulness of feelings. But to be mindful of them does not mean to cultivate them, it just means to be aware and not to cling. The use of these states is only to open up our innate wisdom which will help us to go beyond them.

⁶ Some teachers put great emphasis on this outer level of mindfulness training. My teacher Anagarika Munindra in Bodhgaya for example, once when I came for interview, observed me as I was entering the room. He then told me: "You were mindful the first five steps, then you lost your mindfulness until you set down on the cushion, and only then you regained your mindfulness. Go back out and try again." He was astonishingly precise. His assistants would watch us while we were eating to see, if we were eating mindfully: mindful of the movements of the hand, the swallowing of the food, its taste and so on. He also let us practise long hours of walking meditation.

- While meditating on the breath one can also be mindful of the *mind*. This includes, according to the Buddha, first of all to fully experience the mind (to be in full contact with the various states of mind, not to be distracted); secondly, to increase the joy of one's mind, thirdly to focus the mind and fourthly to liberate the mind.
- Being mindful of *dharma*s linked to mindfulness of breathing includes meditation on impermanence, on renunciation, on the coming-to-the-end of clinging and on complete letting go.

All of this was taught in the *Anapanasati Sutra*, where it is indicated that the breath can actually serve as the key method to develop all four aspects of mindfulness.

For the interested practitioner we include here some oral Instructions of Gendun Rinpoche on mindfulness of breathing:⁷

“When we follow the movement of our breathing in and out, it should be left quite natural, just as it is. We should not force either the body or the mind in any way at all but remain completely relaxed and simply let the mind become aware of the coming and going of the breath, without any distraction, any other thoughts, anything else catching our attention. Let the mind merge with the movement more and more until it is completely absorbed in it. Do this first for 21 breathing cycles, without distraction, and then for a greater number, all the time staying attentive.

Staying attentive does not mean concentrating fixedly on the breathing while saying to oneself, „I mustn't lose the movement, and I must stay concentrated...“. If we start this kind of discursive thinking, it will create a level of mental agitation which will disturb the natural movement of the breathing and of the meditation. We are no longer meditating, we are commenting on the meditation. We lose our sense of being absorbed in the meditation.

What we have to do is simply be aware of the breathing, feel it, experience it physically and mentally. We should follow it without doing anything else, without comment, without trying to change it or modify it in any way. For that we have to be very relaxed, very quiet, and practice gently, regularly. Doing this, we wait for the calm that will allow us to penetrate more deeply into the meditation to develop.”

Do I want to dream or do I want to be present?

If we summarise Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching⁸ on the mindfulness of body, we should ask ourselves: “Do I want to dream or do I want to be present?” If you want to dream, don't practise mindfulness of body, it might wake you up. However, if you want to be present, practise mindfulness of body. Being mindful of the body means to really come in contact and establish a direct connection with our body. It means to sit on the earth and walk on the earth instead of being in our clouds of imagination.

There is a certain simplicity of physical presence which installs itself and lets us find the way out of our concepts. Our complex, conceptual, always thinking mind is calmed down by feeling the simple presence of walking or of being here on the cushion. It means to relax into the body and to just sit or walk or breathe without wanting anything special, without wanting to go anywhere. It is not the destination that counts but being or walking itself. That's enough. Buddha gives us the permission to just be.

Here, on the first level of mindfulness, there is not yet an intention to analyse or understand something, there is just this basic presence which gives rise to an openness. And this is very helpful!

⁷ Lodjong Dossier, p.14

⁸ *Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche*: “Remarks on the Tradition of Mindfulness”, a talk originally given at the first Vajradhatu Seminary in 1973, later revised for publication in “The Four Foundations of Mindfulness”, Garuda IV, 1976, pp. 15–46, Vajradhatu Publications, Boulder (also: 1974 Shambala Publications, Berkeley); reprinted in Ch. Tr.: *The Heart of The Buddha*, Shambhala Publications, Boston & London, 1991, pp. 21–58; in German: Ch. Tr.: *Das Herz des Buddha*. Buddhistische Lebenspraxis im modernen Alltagsleben. Bern (Scherz), 1993, 31–67.

It can also be helpful when you cannot fall asleep at night. You practise a bit of mindfulness of breathing – and relaxation is coming, openness, and it will be easier to fall asleep, because the agitated subtle energies calm down due to the mindfulness of breathing.

So, Chögyam Trungpa says: When we contact this feeling of having a very stable ground, our practice becomes linked to what and where we really are. Then, on this very stable ground of being in contact with what really happens, we can open up – we can open up to the surroundings, and also to other practices. But first we need this stability, a feeling of coming home. Thich Nhat Hanh compares it to a child coming home after a long time of absence. To find back home is already a big step ahead on our path.

Continuing our practice of mindfulness of body in the vajrayana...

Also in our vajrayana practices we work a lot on mindfulness of body. The aim here is to lead us to a complete integration of body, speech and mind, and to come to an understanding of the deeper reality of these three. The training begins with mindfully turning a mala in synchronisation with our mantra recitation. We prostrate with our body at full length being fully aware of the outer movement, doing it just the way it should be, and develop at the same time the mindfulness of its inner meaning of going for refuge etc. The body is used as a support to always find back into a virtuous state of mind or into contemplation or meditation. We offer mandalas or perform mudras at the same time as we are reciting and visualising. In meditation we train in the correct posture and we are using mantras and doing recitations. (In this fourfold classification mindfulness of speech also belongs to mindfulness of body, because it is an outer act.)

Mindfulness of the body also means to be in tune with our body, not to abuse it, but to remark when we are tired, stiff or cold etc., and to adjust our practice accordingly through changes of position, food, drink, clothes, heating, cooling, rest, sleep, exercise, and so on. Actually, to be a yogi also means to know what our body wants to tell us. We should generate an attitude of sensitivity, warmth-heartedness and non-violence towards our body while not falling into laxity and self-cherishing attitudes. Our body is not simply the slave of our practice but actually a very subtle tool to develop awareness. In vajrayana we even say that is the seat of enlightenment.

When visualising ourselves as a buddhaform (yidam) we practise mindfulness of body on a still more subtle level. We refer to a deeper reality of “body” in order to bring us to an awareness of the transparent, non-substantial nature of body and form, and to let go of identifications with this normal physical body. Here, our mindfulness is directed to reality as a buddha sees it, and it will extend our practice of mindfulness beyond all limiting concepts of what we usually consider as “body”. All of this is the integration of basic body awareness into the heightened awareness of vajrayana. It is the natural continuation of the experiences of down-to-earth body mindfulness which becomes more and more tuned in to the subtleties of being. When Body is experienced as the subtle reflection of all that happens within and around, it is perceived as the mirror of the whole universe, it reveals its truly sacred dimension. Everything and everyone is seen as contained in that supreme Body of the yidam-divinity.

Mindfulness of body finally leads us to the understanding that all phenomena, all forms, all ‘bodies’, are free of inherent existence, empty, completely pure, interdependent and transparent – just like reflections on a pure mirror or on clear, unmoving water. This is the true, final simplicity of “just being”, which is the key to mindfulness of body right from the very beginning.

Question: Can we also apply this teaching on mindfulness of body to thoughts?

Answer: Yes. There is actually no difference between outer, physical form and inner form, mental representations or thoughts. As you meditate on the body, you realise that the body is not outside of the mind. And as you meditate on form, you realise that form is not outside, but that there is no difference between thoughts which are purely mental and thoughts which seemingly have an outer support. This is one of the understandings arising due to meditation on mindfulness of the body: the separation line between thoughts, body and outer surrounding dissolves. We can find no more limits to this constantly changing, completely inter-related phenomenon which we call body. Inside-out-

side becomes completely transparent and indistinguishable. That's why meditating on the body can be the source of all realisations.⁹

II. Establishing mindfulness of feelings

The second establishing of mindfulness is the meditation on feelings or sensations¹⁰. And here the Buddha's instruction is again very simple: "Regard feelings as feelings". These are just simple feelings, not *my* feelings. This has given rise to the instruction to mentally say, when there is an agreeable sensation arising: "agreeable sensation", and if disagreeable, to just say: "disagreeable" – end of the story, no further comments.

According to the Buddha what we call mindfulness of feeling is a simple, non-judging awareness of agreeable and disagreeable (even sometimes painful) feelings and of "neutral" feelings, which refers to meditative absorption states (samadhis). And also he instructed us to cultivate the awareness of "worldly" and "spiritual" feelings and of their combinations as agreeable worldly feelings, disagreeable worldly feelings and so on. The instruction can be condensed into the question: "*What is felt inwardly when a sense impression arises?*" The idea here is to just feel, in a direct way, without any commentary – and to see the reactions of immediately judging any experience as agreeable or disagreeable, to become aware of these judgements which are constantly happening in our mind. To become aware of them gives us the possibility to stop the chain.

Our feelings will be accompanied by awareness, and as we are aware of them and the connected judging process, we can find ways to let go of them, one after the other. Due to mindfulness we can avoid further chain reactions with all the connected emotional trouble. Mindfulness of feelings also has the effect that we get to know ourselves better and do not run away from our feelings anymore. They become familiar experiences of great variety but without any special importance. In spite of their great variety they are all the same in one respect: they come and go without leaving traces. This meditation gradually leads to non-identification with the second skandha: feelings or sensations. Feelings will then arise without secondary thoughts that create a connection to an imaginary I or self. They are simply what they are: feelings, a flow of experiences, ever-changing. Do you see any self in this?

You can look on your feelings from within, as a personal experience, or from without, as if someone else was experiencing them, as if looking on yourself from the point of view of an outer observer. Both ways of practising are taught and both are ok. But according to the Buddha we should look also what gives rise to feelings and what causes their dissolution. We investigate into impermanence and the conditioned nature of feelings. We take an intelligent look into feelings. It is non-judging, and because this creates a certain space, the non-judging allows for an understanding to arise. We see how pleasure is arising and how suffering is arising. We see how pleasure goes away and how suffering goes away.

So this is one way of practising with feelings, using our intelligence and our curiosity to investigate, and the other way is to be simply aware of what is happening: only being aware, no need for an effort to understand something, just as in the basic mindfulness of body: a very simple mind, nothing more. First one should establish basic mindfulness of feelings, becoming aware of their coming and going, and then occasionally one investigates into the causes and factors of the arising and disappearing of feelings, judgements etc. One can, if one wishes, take each of the different senses as a support for the mindfulness of feeling and see how mind immediately judges these feelings. We take sounds as our support, odours, tastes, physical sensations, the moving wind, an itching sensation – all kinds of supports, and each time we look what this does in mind.

⁹ According to Mingyur (Edward Podvoll) Goethe once wrote the following passage: "There is no inside and no outside. Outside is inside, inside is outside." Maybe one of the readers knows the source?

¹⁰ Feeling/sensation: *tshor-ba* in Tibetan (spoken *tsorwa*) and *vedana* in Sanskrit

We notice all the thousands and millions of judgements going on in our mind; and what usually happens is: we become thoroughly disgusted with ourselves, with all this liking and disliking. But what to do? It has been going on for a long time already. Now we become aware of it, that's great!, and soon we will be able to relax with it, and then actually we will be able to let go of it from time to time, until we come to truly enjoy the non-judging mind. Then there is no more struggling to let go. It becomes our preferred mode of being.

Question: Is this being mindful of judgements or still mindfulness of feelings?

Answer: They are interconnected. If you can just remain on the level of feelings, you are already an advanced practitioner. Normally we are caught in judging before we even realise it. You will for example see that as soon as you hear the sound of a tractor, there will be a naming "tractor". You think that the naming is the thought immediately after the sense perception. But before this rather complex naming has happened, you have already, more or less unconsciously, judged the sound as being agreeable or disagreeable. In meditation you will see all of this. Mindfulness of feelings is actually in the beginning a mindfulness of how every feeling triggers off a chain of reactions. Later then, as a more simple awareness installs itself, you will come to the level of simply feeling feelings, without further comments, and the difference between the sound of a tractor and the lovely voice of a woman becomes less and less.

Question: Agreeable – disagreeable comes before the naming?

Answer: Yes, long before. A name is already a complex concept. You have already made the difference between this sound and all the other sounds, sounds of cars, sounds of animals and so on, which you know. You have already zoomed in. You've gone back to your memory, compared with similar sounds which you knew and heard in the past. You compared and, while taking into account still more factors of the situation, you said: "This is probably a tractor." So there is a lot, which has gone on. Agreeable – disagreeable is the first, immediate reaction of the mind to the sense-perception. It is the reaction which will decide whether we take a protective or open attitude towards the situation.

How can survival come alive?

Summarising Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching, the central question of this mindfulness would be: "How can the basic survival instinct become mindfulness of life?" Normally, all our actions (breathing, eating, clothing...) are motivated by our basic instinct to survive, and all our interpretations of feelings are done in relation to wanting to survive. I judge all of what I hear, feel and so on as either being dangerous or not dangerous. "Can this be a help to me, can I profit from this, or might it trouble me, take something away from me, make me poorer?" This survival trip continues all the time unconsciously in our mind.

Mindfulness of feelings teaches us to simply be aware and to notice that we are *already* surviving. Every feeling, every sensation signals us that we are alive! And we notice that life just continues from instant to instant without any effort from our side. In this way we get out of these constant worries connected to sensations. There is a little hunger arising, but one doesn't have to react immediately. We just observe this lively feeling of hunger come and go, and then of course we can also do something about it. When there is a bang somewhere, we do not need to tense up, we can just observe. There is no need to always tense up when something is happening.

Some quotes from Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche: "Survival instinct is transmuted into a sense of being... and mindfulness becomes a basic acknowledgement of existing. Meditation becomes inseparable from the instinct to live... and that instinct can be seen as containing awareness, meditation, and mindfulness. The life force that keeps us alive and that manifests continually in our stream of consciousness itself becomes the practice of mindfulness. ... We can simply tune in to our process of life... Just living is enough without reassuring yourself that you are living. If you don't stop [the process] to make sure, living becomes very clear-cut, very alive and very precise. ...Meditation is the total experience of any living being which has the instinct to survive!"

Living fully means, being fully present in the moment without worrying thoughts that prevent direct contact. Trungpa Rinpoche advises us to simply remark what is, to shortly zoom into it and immediately let go. Touch and let go! This means that we touch, we get to know, we see, but we let go quick enough to always be in the freshness of the moment. And it is this freshness, which opens up to the flow of life. Life is a flow of sensations, a flow of feelings. Life is a constant flow of perceptions, feelings and sensations. Instead of falling into fear we develop a basic confidence that we do not need to control all these sensations. We don't need to hold on to some and push away others. We can allow ourselves to let the flow happen in our mind. This is the basic notion of relaxing into mindfulness of feelings.

For this there has to be a giving up of wanting to manipulate the world on this very basic level. Our ordinary survival trip makes us want to manipulate the situation: "This I want, this I don't want." In basic mindfulness there are no such second thoughts, there is no personal, ego-centred interest in our contact with life. It is a very simple presence.

Ego-centred mindfulness however is exactly the opposite: the watchman on the tower who is always on the lookout for opportunities or enemies. This is 'survival mindfulness' in which there is no equanimity and letting go. We should not cultivate mindfulness as a further elaboration of our survival skills, but I suspect that this is offered in some of those meditation seminars for managers. We do not practise meditation in order to become more performing so that we can better snatch away opportunities from others.

Chögyam Trungpa says, to hold on to feelings of life brings the feeling of death. If we grasp onto life we are already half dead. That is the motor of depression. Grasping onto life, kills life. The holding on to some aspect of our life due to our urge to survive takes us far away from what is actually happening. We are in our personal dark room of clinging. And this darkness we are holding onto. When we let go of this clinging we immediately get the feeling: "Oh, as if I hadn't seen the sky for a long time. Oh, the freshness of the wind!" Suddenly simple, fresh presence begins to re-enter our awareness. When this happens it is the sign that our depression is coming to an end. When the freshness of the moment comes back, this is the end of death and the beginning of joy.

Actually, we grasp because we are afraid of death. But if we manage to just be there and relax, mindful of one breath after the other, we will know that we have survived yet another moment and that we can permit ourselves to relax the next moment as well. No need to grasp. Thich Nhat Hanh says: "Working mindfully with disagreeable feelings grants us insight and wisdom." Yes, the wisdom of no fear to die, the insight into the truth of non-self, and the courage to patiently face one feeling after the other knowing that due to mindfulness there is no need to fear that we will be overwhelmed by them.

For mahayana practice it is very important to open up to feelings, because every contact with another person brings feelings, agreeable and disagreeable ones, all kinds of emotions. You cannot be a bodhisattva without opening up to feelings. How will we be able to help others, if we are not open to feelings and willing to let them pass through? How will we be able to face all the problems of beings to liberate, if we cling to experiences? It is also important that our mindfulness is not a cold observer, but rather, to quote again Thich Nhat Hanh: "like a lamp shedding light – not a judge", and: "like an older sister lovingly taking care of her younger brother or sister". A lamp does not only give light but also warmth. In the same way our mindfulness is not only an expression of wisdom but also of compassion and love. We smile at ourselves and occasionally give ourselves a hug: a compassionate approach to samsara; bodhicitta applied to *all* beings, including ourselves!

Continuing our practice of mindfulness of feelings in the vajrayana...

In the vajrayana we consciously open up to feelings, we invite them as part of many practices. For example, when we celebrate a feast offering (tsok) together, this gives rise to intense feelings of all kinds and related to all senses. There is an opening up to sense-impressions, an entering into life. Also the practice of setting up a shrine and making it very beautiful is an expression of appreciating

feelings, visual forms in that case. Music, incense, singing, playing instruments... – actually, in the tantra we are encouraging feelings to become stronger in order to see better their true nature. We see them as messengers of wisdom.

True mindfulness of feelings is to see their true nature. On the first level of mindfulness of feelings we simply realise the presence of a feeling: *Anger is there*. Then we see its impermanence: *Anger is already gone!* Then we see its interdependent origination, the fact that it is not just arising out of the blue, but in chains of cause and effect: *Anger arose when clinging to an experience judged as disagreeable etc.* And due to seeing the interdependence of feelings we also see that they are illusory, devoid of a lasting essence: if they are gone, they are gone, they don't leave any traces, they do not occupy any space anymore. *Anger is gone and seems like a bad dream which has passed. I cannot even find it any more.* And then we understand from within that this can be called emptiness, the emptiness of feelings: *In all of this anger there is no self. Looking into it as it arises, there is nothing to see. When looking into it, it is seen no more, as if a bubble was pierced.*

On the vajrayana path we see all of these feelings as the experiences of the meditation buddha-form (yidam) or of the lama. We meditate on these feelings not as being our *own* feelings, but the feelings of the yidam in the space of primordial awareness. There is no more need to worry: feelings arise as the play of awareness in endless space. We come in touch with the true nature of feelings: constantly changing, just like the wind in constant movement; constant activity without any substance – and, if not clung to, this movement is seen as the expression of joy, of great bliss, the perfection of whatever is appearing. It is the expression of the great compassion of non-clinging enlightened mind without self, without any reference point, which is constantly active for sentient beings. It is the spontaneously creative aspect of mind's nature. When there are no dualistic reactions to these movements, these feelings, they are understood to be perfect by nature. There is nothing to be changed in these feelings, since they are the spontaneous, unceasing creativity of mind itself. This is truly “being alive”, fully open, without any clinging.

III. Establishing mindfulness of mind

Again, the instruction of the Buddha for mindfulness of mind¹¹ is simple: “Look at mind as mind”. Not as *my* mind! The Buddha was very simple in his teaching, very straightforward, but when putting his advice into practice one quickly sees how profound his teaching is. The instructions to this third mindfulness could be condensed into the question: *How is the mind right now?*

The Buddha asks: Is there desire, is there hatred, and is there ignorance? Is this mind of the present moment small (narrow) or wide? Is it concentrated or distracted? Is it a noble or a samsaric mind? Is it surpassable (limited) or unsurpassable? Is it liberated or not liberated? Tensed or relaxed?

The Buddha taught the first level of mindfulness of mind as being a simple, non-judging mindfulness of the present mental state. Look into the mind as if looking into a mirror, and you will see: “Ah, quite tense” or “Oh, quite open” or whatever: desire, hatred and so on – simply note what is present.

Then mindfulness goes a step further to examine the causes for the appearance and dissolution of the various states of mind. To learn in this way about mental states and their conditioned nature will then help to quicken our letting go of a given situation. We will know how we can encourage wholesome states of mind to arise and what will be favourable to the quick disappearance of unwholesome states. Due to this mindfulness of mind we also begin to know the qualities and capacities of mind. Emotional wounds begin to heal and knots in our mind are loosening.

Basically, mindfulness of mind always remains a simple mindful presence without investigation. The investigation we talk of is not a conceptual thinking about mind. It means to be present in such a way that you notice the arising of an emotion, you notice the thoughts just before its arising which trigger the emotional reaction, you notice your body sensations, images etc. before the emotion, during, and afterwards. Because we are aware of the mind we notice how a mental state disappears, what thought precede its disappearance. We see for example for desire that it disappears at the time when we contemplate impermanence or generosity, or that it simply disappeared when we had another thought which was stronger, more interesting. We notice many things about how the mind works, and this is what stimulates wisdom and understanding. There is a trace of understanding which rests after having witnessed the mind's working. We do not search for this understanding, it is enough to be mindful, and the rest is automatic.

Mindfulness of mind is already quite subtle; we have to be increasingly relaxed to notice these workings of our mind. This is not a gross level mindfulness anymore. Going from mindfulness of body to feelings and then to mind, we need more experience in not interfering with what we observe. Normal practitioners cannot start with their mindfulness training directly on the level of mind; they have to start on the level of the body and feelings. In the beginning it might already be difficult enough to just watch the breath without manipulating its rhythm and depth.

Remaining indifferent or becoming interested?

If we condense Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching on this point into a headline, it could be: *Do I remain indifferent or do I become interested?* What attitude do I take towards my life, towards my mind? Am I interested to know the mind and to get out of samsara? Or am I indifferent to these questions and prefer ignorance and stupidity? Stupidity means to be indifferent to what is happening, not to care about one's own future or about others etc. To Trungpa Rinpoche the whole teaching about mindfulness of mind is about “mindfulness of effort”.

The point here is to practise with balanced and determined effort, and such right effort is based on right motivation. According to Gendun Rinpoche, when we develop the motivation of bodhicitta – a truly selfless, compassionate, and most profound dedication to enlightenment – right effort and

¹¹ mind: *sems* in Tibetan (spoken *sem*) and *citta* in Sanskrit

right mindfulness will come naturally, and meditation will be easy. Bodhicitta is the key to mindfulness and insight.

In order to reach enlightenment, true awakening, we need this true mindfulness, which is an intelligent mindfulness combined with the unwavering, authentic effort of compassion. This effort is free of the over-enthusiasm of ambitions and without the heaviness of pressure and the feelings of duty. We do not practise out of duty or out of ambition. True effort will not arise due to an order, an obligation or just because one wants to get somewhere.

In the scriptures right effort is compared to an elephant: an elephant that walks steadily and cannot be stopped. He walks with confidence and certainty, and his mindfulness is completely balanced. With panoramic awareness he walks through the jungle. He is interested in the jungle, not absent-minded, his senses are very keen. This open-minded interest, however, does not make him lose his inner balance. This image is not used only because the elephant is very tall, you could also take a turtle as an example. What is pointed out here is this certainty without hurry and wanting. The movement within space is itself what one is interested in. Mindfulness in tune with movement is what leads to liberation. It is a sure movement that cannot be stopped, full of dignity, not agitated, with a panoramic view, and it has a playful lightness and intelligence to it. It is sensitive, but not hesitating. It is serious, but not too serious. It is decisive, but not tense. This gets the mind out of its dream world. We look into the mind's working, and we look into the reality of mind.

At first we use our observer, the abstract, non-emotional observer to know the mind. We use dualistic functioning in order to better know the mind. There is nothing wrong with using dualistic mind processes: we can use this observer to get out of emotions instead of entangling us more and more. Observing will help us to get out of the emotional jungle into a non-judging presence, from moment to moment, without comments.

Trungpa Rinpoche describes sudden moments of direct seeing which then appear, little gaps that open up to a deeper insight. These moments only happen on the basis of discipline, a disciplined elephant-like mind which is not distracted. While walking as the elephant through the forest of our mind, being continuously in touch with what is happening, there will naturally be these moments of insight, just as when the light is coming through the little openings in the forest. Suddenly we see very clearly. In the middle of darkness and confusion there are moments of direct seeing. There can be a non-conceptual understanding of how mind functions, and there can be ultimate non-conceptuality, it doesn't matter what these flashes open up to. There are those moments or flashes of clarity. If we are aware, in almost every meditation session there is a little understanding, a little flash of something that comes through. These many flashes are over the course of time what makes the progress of practitioners, their increasing understanding. Walk as the elephant and you will see it happens in everyone's mind. It is natural. It is due to letting go.

Trungpa Rinpoche says that this discipline, which is the ground for these moments of clarity, is a feeling of being committed to enter contact with reality. To enter contact with *this*, this undefinable reality which cannot be described. He gives the illustrative examples of someone falling in love and of a hunter in the forest.

Falling in love means that we are basically open to this experience; we are present and basically prepared. Then, in the presence of some person, suddenly there is *this*, something different, something awakening all our faculties, making us fully alive. Even the simple presence of this person in the room in the middle of a crowd is noticed as just *this*, we cannot really say what exactly, but it makes us be fully present. Of course, this is only an example on the relative level, but it is similar to these moments of clarity, of knowing the mind: we notice *this*, this indescribable dimension, even less describable than the feeling of falling in love. You can also call it: *That!* That which cannot be shown. That where the self, the observer is absent. One day we suddenly understand... "Oh yes, that!", and we know what the teachers were always talking about: That! You cannot use names, it is just that.

It is also similar to a hunter in the forest: He walks in the forest, his senses wide open... and then he notices something, there is a flash of intuitive knowing... and he knows... there... *that...this...*

He doesn't know, if it is a rabbit or a deer, his intuitive knowing has not yet led to any conclusion or identification. With the hunter's instinct he just knows: That's it! And then he follows up on this... This example shows the discipline of constant mindful presence as the basis for the appearance of *that*. And in this constant presence our inner wisdom appears and becomes active and one moment we know: "Yes, this is authentic, this is what dharma is all about." We begin to understand *that*. There is a pre-conceptual understanding and knowing. This is what these moments of clarity are about when the clouds rip apart for a moment and the mind opens to a true, almost magic perception of suchness. To be mindful means to be present, but not as a watchman, who is controlling a situation. It is being present with a very wakeful intelligence – and this is the difference between being interested or indifferent.

These flashes do not only concern the very nature of mind. There are also flash-like moments of insight of a more conceptual nature where we understand for example the working of emotions, of karma etc. However, insight does not occur for everyone in flashes. Many practitioners understand *that* in a process of a gradual dawning of intuitive insight, like the sun appearing from behind the morning mist. If this is the case, the individual flashes of direct contact go mostly unnoticed, but they leave traces of deepening understanding, until one day one will remark, as Gendun Rinpoche often said, that "the sun has risen" and that, although one has not consciously had these flashes, all doubts have disappeared.

In Mahayana we take this mindfulness of mind as our main practice to know at all times what our present motivation is: self-centred or altruistic? Am I in touch with bodhicitta or on a self-centred trip? Do I care about others? Is the heart open? Mindfulness of higher motivation is the specific aspect which the mahayana emphasises in mindfulness of mind; otherwise the practice is the same. Since motivation is the root of enlightenment, this aspect of being aware of one's motivation is extremely important.

Continuing our practice of mindfulness of mind in the vajrayana...

In the vajrayana we meditate on the mind of the lama. Through the practice of guru yoga all of what is perceived is integrated in this dimension of the mind of the lama. All mental states, whatever we notice: closed or open states of mind, desire, hatred, and so on – all of these states are now seen as the expression of the lama's or the yidam's mind. If we really practise all mental states as the lama's mind, we have to let go of judging and labelling them as "good" and "bad" thoughts, and we will necessarily have to let go of identifying ourselves with "my" emotions. If taking the instructions on guru yoga seriously, we cannot remain on the surface but have to go to the essence of things. How else will we discover the purity of all these mental states, the nature of the lama's mind?

Again, the key point is to just observe and be confident in the primordial lama nature of all mental events. We are told that there is no single thought which does not partake of this primordially pure dimension. Having confidence in this transmission, we practise all arising thoughts as the lama's thoughts, the expression of ultimate wisdom. And gradually an understanding dawns upon us what this inexpressible dimension is that is called the lama's or the yidam's mind. We realise that there is an unchanging dimension which pervades the whole mental play. This dimension, beyond words, is completely stable and reliable, just like the earth – not because it is so solid, but because it has no substance whatsoever. The absence of self is true stability, the basic ground, the all-underlying matrix that cannot be defined as existing or non-existing. This basic dimension is equally present in all of mind, in every mental movement and in the mind of everyone. It is the equal nature of the emptiness of all phenomena which marks their equality independent of surface appearances. It is the stability of the fundamental, natural state. To be aware of this, without any distraction into dualistic grasping, is the highest form of mindfulness of mind, the result of truly "being interested" in what mind is.

IV. Establishing mindfulness of dharms

Again the Buddha's instruction is simple: "See dharms as dharms"¹², which could be elaborated as: See the inter-relatedness of everything in the world! See its emptiness. There is no self, no I, no lasting identity in any aspect of this world.

We find this term translated as mindfulness of "mental objects" or "mental factors", but according to the sources it is clear that this mindfulness does not only refer to what we usually call the "51 mental factors" which compose the fifth skandha. These are already included in the previous mindfulness of mind which covers everything happening in mind that was not included in body and feelings. Here, according to the sutras, mindfulness is directed to all dharms in the broadest sense of the term: an overall investigation into the *truth* (dharma) of the Buddha's *teaching* (dharma) based on whatever *phenomenon* (dharma) arises in mind. And the basic question that underlies all dharma investigation is: *What gives rise to samsara and how does nirvana arise?*

On this level of mindfulness practice the Buddha encourages us to turn our well-trained non-judging mindfulness to the overall situation of our imprisonment in samsara. We are told to investigate into the major dharma teachings: Are the five obstacles present or absent? Is there a self in any of the five skandhas or in the six senses? Are the seven branches of enlightenment present, and how do they lead us out of samsara? What is the meaning of the four noble truths? It is as if the Buddha encouraged us to draw the final line, to establish complete certainty concerning the insights arising due to the practice of the first three forms of mindfulness.

To know if the *five obstacles* to liberation are present means to ask oneself: Are there present in my mind, at any given point of my practice: (1) sense desire? (2) malevolence? (3) dullness or stupor? (4) restlessness or agitation due to regrets? and (5) doubts? These are the five major obstacles to enlightenment. To know if they are present is very important, because they have great force to overthrow our practice, if we are not aware of them. Being aware of them gives us the chance to do something intelligent about them: neither following nor suppressing, but purifying and liberating them.

In order to accomplish this mindfulness of dharms has to go further than mere observation. We have to find out: How do these obstacles arise? How are they overcome? How will they not arise anymore in the future? What can I do towards this goal?

This is very intelligent mindfulness. It is using the best of the intellect – sometimes the investigation is done in a conceptual way, and at other times in a non-conceptual way, with the help of these spontaneous flashes of insight. Everything arising in mind is investigated into in relation to the causes of its appearance and the causes of its dissolution.

One also looks into the *five skandhas* to which we cling as being the self, the "I". We cultivate the mindfulness of how form, sensation, perception-differentiation, karmic formations and consciousness arise and disappear. Both aspects are being looked into to completely understand their functioning. In this way ignorance is uprooted.

Then there is the investigation into the *six senses*: How do eye and visual forms work together with consciousness? How do ear, sounds and hearing consciousness arise as a momentary unit of functioning? How does the impression of smells arise in relation to nose, olfactory consciousness and outer objects? How do tongue, taste and gustatory consciousness interrelate? What is the play of the other body senses, their objects and mind like? How does the perception of mental objects arise? And how in relation to all of them is one fettered, chained in samsara? How are these fetters cut through? How is liberation achieved? How can one be sure that these fetters, these chains do not arise any more in the future?

This sounds like a lot of questions, a lot of work. But actually, these questions arise naturally in our mind as we continue to meditate and listen to the teachings, and we will not resolve them by the

¹² *dharms*: *chos* in Tibetan (spoken *chö*) and *dharma* in Sanskrit, a term which means truth, teaching, mental objects and phenomena.

mere wish to know the answers. The answers will come due to intelligently relaxing and opening up to the blessing of the buddhas. All the Buddha's teaching on the different aspects of mind and the world will be understood by relaxing into the all-knowing dimension which is also called the "blessing" of the buddhas. And all these questions condense into one: What is the self? or, in other words: What is the nature of mind? If we find the answer to that, then all important questions will be solved.

In that same *Satipatthana* Sutra, as a counterpart to looking into the obstacles to liberation, the Buddha taught to investigate into the *seven links or factors of enlightenment*: (1) Mindfulness, (2) discrimination, (3) energetic perseverance, (4) joy, (5) the calm of a trained mind, (6) meditative absorption (samadhi), and (7) equanimity. – Are these factors present in our mind or not? How do they arise? What makes them arise more and more?

Then finally, at the end of the sutra, the Buddha suggests: "You can also meditate about the four noble truths: (1) Is suffering present? (2) Why does it arise? (3) Can it disappear?, and finally: (4) What is the path for its dissolution, how can it be made to disappear?"

This last instruction to meditate on the four noble truths is actually the culmination point of mindfulness of dharmas. According to Gampopa in the *Precious Ornament of Liberation* (chapter 18) the understanding of the four noble truths arises on the path of junction¹³ as a result of having established deep, all-encompassing mindfulness. This understanding is still tainted by conceptual, dualistic mind but prepares the ground for the actual realisation of the four truths on the path of seeing. The four truths gradually dawn on us until there is a complete understanding, just like the sun gradually rising. These four noble truths are the summary of the answer to the above question: What chains us to samsara and what gives rise to enlightenment? Their understanding is the culmination point of the teachings on how to develop mindfulness. This is what one has to investigate. It is the *one* question; if one has understood this, then one is liberated. If one has understood it completely, one is a Buddha. By the way, it is the same question as wanting to know the self or the mind...

Inspired by Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching, we could summarise the instructions on mindfulness of dharmas into the question:

What does reality look like in detail?

The first three mindfulnesses were already an investigation into reality, but now it becomes very detailed, very subtle, and very precise. It is the complete precision of a very stable mind, which investigates into reality. And this investigation is done by mind itself as the non-moving observer. We sit in meditation and let the agitated observer completely calm down, it doesn't have to do anything. We let reality come towards us. It is not that the observer would have to go and search for reality. We let it come by itself and it is in this way that the understanding arises.

With a very light, awake intelligence we open up to the basic problems of samsara. The list of problems is long: the five obstacles are a problem, identification with the skandhas is a problem, and attachment to the senses is a problem, and so on. We investigate into problems that give rise to suffering. We don't just deal with anything; we deal with the basic problems of existence. But we nevertheless remain in freshness all the time, in meditative equipoise, the balance of wakefulness and relaxation: not too tense, not too loose. Trungpa says: It is like being in a room and having the windows wide open. You look out, but you don't run out. You stay. You look and you see. And you share the freshness of the world, but you don't get entangled in the world. Look what happens and remain free of clinging. We look right into the present moment. Very precisely.

This is very personal, very intimate; it goes into the heart of our existence. We cannot run away anymore. It is very strong. Since we follow through with this very precise observation from moment to moment, being really aware, we begin to get a complete picture of what is, of the reality of our mind. All our neurotic games are all completely obvious. They become so obvious; we cannot hide from ourselves anymore.

¹³ The *path of junction* follows the path of accumulation. It is the path of deepening our practice of mental calm and applying the methods of intuitive insight until true insight arises which is the moment of entering onto the path of seeing.

At the same time as all these illusions become so terribly obvious, we also discover deeper kindness and simplicity. This goes together. We see the neurotic game, but – thanks to mindfulness – we also discover new levels of acceptance of ourselves and simplicity. The solutions appear at the same time that the problem becomes clearly visible, or at least shortly after. It is not the same for everyone and all circumstances. Initially there might be a shock to see everything so clearly but then comes the letting go by the trained meditator which is already the healing process.

Sometimes indeed, we are overwhelmed with problems and with seeing who we are without having this deep relaxation and mindfulness. When this is the case, we really have to develop more mental calm (shine, shamatha). We need to develop the basic mindfulness which enables us to find an inner balance after our unpleasant discoveries. In those times it would not be wise to try to push through and insist on more formal meditation. We should rather create space for integration: relax the posture, take a walk, talk to a good friend, do some physical exercise, and only make short sessions that keep the mindfulness going. With this we will find back into simple being, simply accepting whatever arises.

Our newly discovered simplicity will develop into a very direct, uncomplicated approach to life and meditation, without second thoughts, and will finally have the effect of becoming one with mindfulness. Simplicity becomes mindfulness. There is no more observer and observed: mental movement and awareness become one. This is the point where mindfulness becomes pristine awareness, the entrance to the realm of deep insight (lhaktong, vipashyana) which will develop into *ma-hamudra*, the path of true awareness where appearances and awareness arise simultaneously without distinction.

Continuing our practice of mindfulness of dharmas in the vajrayana...

In the vajrayana, the meditation on these fundamental questions is built in into every practice in a more or less obvious way. This is not the place to elaborate on this, since it is part of separate teachings. There are meditations on the innate purity of the elements, skandhas, sense processes and emotions. All vajrayana mandalas are the expression of this by pointing out the presence of the five buddha families in all of our experience.

Just as for the other levels of mindfulness we turn towards the vision of the buddhas and look at these seeming problems of samsara with an enlightened eye. From this enlightened point of view, there are no obstacles anywhere; they are empty and thus pure by nature. The sense delights, skandhas, all our attachments are transformed into offerings to enlightened awareness. Obstacles are overcome by directly looking into their true nature. Discovering them as empty of self nature, there can be no more harm as there is no more clinging. The phenomena of the six senses are perceived in their multiplicity, their great variety, but simultaneously there is an awareness of their one and same nature. Pristine awareness sees – as was already explained before – the always same, permanent aspect in this changing play of phenomena. This enlightened discriminating awareness is mindfulness of dharmas which knows their diversity at the same time as knowing their true nature. It consumes all clinging to apparent diversity in the almighty fire of knowing their one, empty nature. The careful investigation into every aspect of reality which is characteristic of the fourth mindfulness leads in this way to an understanding encompassing all of reality.

In the vajrayana many guidelines are given to ensure the practitioner's entry into this realm of pure and sacred vision without deviating into self-centred projections of seeming purity. Practising with tantric methods our mindfulness of dharmas becomes mindfulness of pure vision, mindfulness of the highest truth. This happens almost by itself due to the blessing of the lineage. What we have to contribute from our side for this to happen is continuous practice, devotion and the previously described mindfulness of motivation.

Conclusion

In the beginning these four mindfulnesses are rather four non-mindfulnesses, four forms of distraction into non-truth, because we are still caught in dualistic mindfulness and not mindful of reality as such. However, as we use the energy of vigilance to develop deeper forms of mindfulness, pure awareness will naturally manifest. One moves from a mindfulness of relative aspects to a more and more subtle awareness of what actually is, until pure awareness of primordial reality opens up. We start with the day-to-day emotional and physical aspects – and as long as they manifest, there is no other place to start – and from there we continue diligently until we have travelled the whole path that the Buddha laid out. On this path we gradually let go of our paranoid relationship to the world, our survival trip; we learn to open up, develop confidence, develop a compassionate relation with body and mind, blessing enters our being, and so on...

It shows a great lack of understanding, if one looks down on any aspect of the practice of mindfulness, since each of it includes all. To make the point we could say that mindfulness of body is the highest of all practices. Body and breath are the container of all secrets. If we look down on such simple practices as being mindful of the breath or the body, it only means that we have not yet discovered these secrets. The Buddha's teaching on the four mindfulnesses includes the whole path towards enlightenment. It is part of all teachings we receive, even if it is not specifically mentioned. One reason for this is that the four mindfulnesses are not four separate practices but are practised all at the same time according to one's capacities.

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