



The Qualities Pertinent to Awakening: Bringing Mindfulness Home

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Abstract

The thirty-seven qualities pertinent to awakening set the soteriological context for the deployment of mindfulness as described in early Buddhist texts. A comparative study of relevant early discourse passages, extant in different reciter traditions, points to the importance of this set of qualities and their practical relevance, which can be explored in particular with insight meditation related to the six senses. The different facets of early Buddhist meditation theory that emerge in this way converge on the overarching importance of the formal cultivation of mindfulness for progress to liberation.

Keywords Awakening · Awakening factors · *bodhipakkhiyā dhammā* · *bodhipākṣika-dharmā* · Eightfold path · Faculties · *indriya* · Insight meditation · Right endeavor · Right mindfulness · *satipaṭṭhāna* · *smṛtyupasthāna* · *vipassanā*

In order to appreciate the role of mindfulness within the context of early Buddhist psychology and meditation theory, of particular relevance is a set of qualities and practices designated in later tradition as being especially pertinent to progress to awakening (Pāli *bodhipakkhiyā dhammā*, Sanskrit *bodhipākṣika-dharmā*, Chinese 道品法, Tibetan *byang chub kyi chos*). The function and role of the altogether thirty-seven qualities included in this list, which fall into seven sets, provide an overarching framework for the chief soteriological functions of mindfulness within its original Buddhist contemplative setting.

Before exploring this role in more detail, it needs to be briefly noted that mindfulness in early Buddhist discourse is not confined to such purposes, as it can occur in a range of different contexts and can fulfil a variety of functions (Anālayo 2020c). Even a direct precedent to the current employment of mindfulness in health care and related areas can be found in a discourse reporting instruction on mindful eating given by the Buddha to an overweight king (Anālayo 2018a, 2018b).

The chief concern of early Buddhist thought is clearly soteriological, and it is in this setting that mindfulness became prominent, influencing later Buddhist traditions. Nevertheless, this chief concern is not exclusive and leaves room for other employments of mindfulness, however marginal these may have been in ancient times.

The thirty-seven qualities or practices pertinent to awakening can be studied based on surveying references to the whole set in Pāli discourses that in this respect are supported by their extant parallels. Based on an initial appraisal of the set as a whole, the individual members can be examined more closely in order to ascertain their meditative role and relationship to mindfulness.

The Significance of the Qualities Pertinent to Awakening

The qualities pertinent to awakening feature in the context of a comparison of eight properties of the ocean to eight characteristics of the Buddha's teaching, referred to as the "Dharma and discipline." According to ancient Indian beliefs, one of the remarkable features of the ocean is the various treasures that could be found in its depth. Comparable to such treasures are the qualities pertinent to awakening:

In this Dharma and discipline there are many treasures, various treasures. There are these treasures, namely: the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path.

(AN 8.19: *ayaṃ dhammavinayo bahuratano anekaratano, tatr' imāni ratanāni, seyyathīdam cattāro satipaṭṭhānā, cattāro sammappadhānā, cattāro iddhipādā, pañc' indriyāni, pañca balāni, satta bojjhaṅgā, ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*).

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Thus in my right Dharma and discipline, there is an abundance of treasures, countless, precious, different, and many types of gems; it is full within with what are called treasures, namely: the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path.

(MĀ 35: 若我正法律中多有珍寶，無量貴異種種珍琦，充滿其中珍寶名者：謂四念處，四正勤，四如意足，五根，五力，七覺支，八支聖道者；the text is based on adopting the variant 貴 instead of 瓊).

In my teaching there are many types of treasure, namely the treasure of the awakening factor of mindfulness, the treasure of the awakening factor of [investigation] of states, the treasure of the awakening factor of energy, the treasure of the awakening factor of joy, the treasure of the awakening factor of tranquility, the treasure of the awakening factor of concentration, and the treasure of the awakening factor of equipoise.

(EĀ 42.4: 我法中有種種珍寶，所謂念覺意寶，法覺意寶，精進覺意寶，喜覺意寶，猗覺意寶，定覺意寶，護覺意寶).

The parallel versions agree that the monastics delight in the Buddha's teaching on seeing it endowed with these treasures, comparable to those found in the depths of the ocean. In this setting, the function of the qualities pertinent to awakening appears to be closely related to inspiration, as they are precious, comparable to gems, and can motivate disciples to delight in the teaching that contains them.

A difference obtains with the last of the three versions translated above, as it only mentions the seven awakening factors under the heading of treasures found in the Buddha's teaching. However, the same discourse has the whole set of qualities pertinent to awakening under a different heading. This difference might therefore be simply a case of misplacement.

Another spotlight on the importance of these qualities emerges in relation to potential quarrels that may break out about the Buddha's teachings. According to the narrative setting of the passage in question, the leader of another religious group in the ancient Indian setting, the Jains, had recently passed away. After his death, his followers had broken into factions, quarreling with each other. Worried that something similar might happen among Buddhist disciples after the death of their teacher motivates the Buddha's attendant Ānanda to voice his concerns. The Buddha replies by pointing out that quarreling was hardly to be expected in relation to what he had personally realized and taught to his disciples, namely the qualities pertinent to awakening:

Ānanda, regarding those teachings that I have directly known and taught to you, namely the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of

success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path, do you see, Ānanda, even two monastics who make differing assertions about them?

(MN 104: *ye vo mayā dhammā abhiññā desitā, seyyathīdam cattāro satipaṭṭhānā cattāro sammappadhānā cattāro iddhipādā pañc' indriyāni pañca balāni satta bojjaṅgā ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, passasi no tvaṃ, ānanda, imesu dhammesu dve pi bhikkhū nānāvāde ti?*).

Do you see herein [even] two monastics displeased with each other who give rise to dispute ... ? Thus [do you see them disputing about] the collection of my teachings that I have known by myself, awakened to by myself, and realized by myself: the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path?

(MĀ 196: 汝見其中有二比丘，各各異意而起鬪諍 ... 若我法聚自知自覺自作證：四念處，四正勤，四如意足，五根，五力，七覺支，八支聖道).

Another parallel extant as an individual translation into Chinese differs insofar as here the topic is rather that outsiders might wish to quarrel with Buddhist monastics (T 85). This difference could be due either to a misunderstanding of the original or its reworking. In general, individual translations tend to be less reliable for comparative studies than discourses found in the extant *Āgama* collections, where often considerably more information is available about the translators, and the amount of material preserved enables a better overall assessment of the value of its contents. Nevertheless, even in the *Madhyama-āgama* version translated above, the reference to two monastics potentially quarrelling and the listing of the seven sets are no longer directly adjacent to each other (hence the elision of what comes in between) and do not stand in as close and evident a relation to each other as in the Pāli discourse.

The Buddha's query serves to calm Ānanda's worries, making him realize that the concord to be found regarding the qualities pertinent to awakening should be sufficient assurance for the future time when the teacher is no longer alive. Here, the qualities pertinent to awakening are representative of the core of the Buddha's teaching. Moreover, in both versions, the passage is in a way a call to practice, since the list of thirty-seven qualities is presented as the outcome of the Buddha's practice and thereby implicitly as something that can serve to inspire others to practice them as well. To stay with the imagery of the previous passage, the treasures deep down in the ocean need to be revealed and then brought up from that depth, which requires putting the seven sets into practice. As noted by Gethin (1992, p. 235), "the appeal to the seven sets is a matter of appeal to practice and experience rather than an appeal to theory and scripture."

The Potential of the Qualities Pertinent to Awakening

The call to practice already evident in the previous passage becomes more pronounced with another two discourses, which relate the qualities pertinent to awakening to the destruction of the influxes. The early discourses in general recognize three such influxes, which are sensuality, becoming, and ignorance; later tradition adds views as a fourth (Anālayo 2012b). These three influxes are responsible for bondage. Their destruction equals reaching the final goal of early Buddhist soteriology, whereby the practitioner becomes a fully awakened one.

The first of the two passages related to such a destruction of the influxes illustrates meditation practice with the example of a hen brooding on her eggs (Anālayo 2013b). However much the hen may wish that the chicks hatch safely, if she does not sit on the eggs, this will not happen. Similarly, however much someone may wish to gain the destruction of the influxes, without cultivating meditation this will not happen:

What is the reason? It should be said: due to not cultivating. Due to not cultivating what? Due to not cultivating the four establishments of mindfulness, due to not cultivating the four right endeavors, due to not cultivating the four bases of success, due to not cultivating the five faculties, due to not cultivating the five powers, due to not cultivating the seven awakening factors, and due to not cultivating the noble eightfold path.

(SN 22.101: *taṃ kissa hetu? abhāvitattā tissa vacanīyaṃ. kissa abhāvitattā? abhāvitattā catunnaṃ satipaṭṭhānānaṃ, abhāvitattā catunnaṃ sammappadhānānaṃ, abhāvitattā catunnaṃ iddhipādānaṃ, abhāvitattā pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ, abhāvitattā pañcannaṃ balānaṃ, abhāvitattā sattannaṃ bojjaṅgānaṃ, abhāvitattā ariyassa aṭṭhaṅgikassa maggassa*; see also AN 7.67).

What is the reason? It should be said: due to not cultivating. Due to not cultivating what? Due to not cultivating wholesome states. Due to not cultivating what wholesome states? [Due to not cultivating] the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the four absorptions, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path.

(Glass 2007, p. 243: *ta kiṣa edu? abhavi(ḍatva taṣa vacaṇ)io. kiṣa abhavidatva? abhavidatva kuśalaṇa dharmaṇa. kadareṣe kuśalaṇa dharmaṇa abhavidatv(a? cadona spadoṭha)ṇaṇa cadona samepaṣaṇaṇa cadona hirdhaupaḍaṇa cadona jaṇaṇa pacana idriaṇa pacana bal(a)ṇ(a satana beja)gaṇa ariasa aṭṭhagaṣa magaṣa*).

Why is that? It is because of not cultivating. Not cultivating what? That is, not cultivating the establishments of mindfulness, the right endeavors, the bases of success, the faculties, the powers, the awakening [factors], and the [noble eightfold] path.

(SĀ 263: 所以者何? 不修習故。不修習何等? 謂不修習念處, 正勤, 如意足, 根, 力, 覺, 道)。

In contrast, a practitioner who does cultivate the qualities pertinent to awakening will progress to awakening, just as the chicks will hatch safely if the hen properly incubates them. The image provided in this way could even be taken literally to point to the need to sit in meditation, comparable to a hen sitting on her eggs. In the context of this comparison, the qualities pertinent to awakening could then be related to the yolk, surrounded by the egg shell of ignorance. On this correlation, the potential of awakening needs to be nurtured and incubated in order for emergence from ignorance to take place.

A minor but significant difference between the three discourse versions surveyed above occurs in the actual listing given in the second version, which is based on a Gāndhārī fragment. This listing includes the four absorptions. A quotation of the present discourse in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, however, concurs with the other two versions in not including the four absorptions (T 1448: 為不修習四念住故, 四正斷, 四神足, 五根, 五力, 七覺分支, 八聖道等). An addition of the four absorptions can also be found in listings of the same qualities in the *Dīrgha-āgama* (Salomon 2018; see also Anālayo 2020a).

Leaving aside this evidently later addition, however, the parallels agree closely on presenting the qualities pertinent to awakening as the key for progress to the final goal. The requirement for reaching that goal should be as obvious as the need for the hen to incubate her egg so that the chicks will hatch.

Another passage similarly concerned with the destruction of the influxes sets out with a monastic who is uncertain about how to reach that goal. The Buddha realizes this and, in order to clarify how the desired progress can be achieved, expounds the matter in the following way:

Monastics, I have analytically taught you the Dharma. I have analytically taught you the four establishments of mindfulness, I have analytically taught you the four right endeavors, I have analytically taught you the four bases of success, I have analytically taught you the five faculties, I have analytically taught you the five powers, I have analytically taught you the seven awakening factors, and I have analytically taught you the eightfold noble path. Monastics, I have analytically taught you the Dharma. Monastics, in this way having analytically taught you the Dharma, yet, in the mind of a certain monastic here this thought arose: ‘What should one then know, what should one see, so that there will be the immediate destruction of the influxes?’

(SN 22.81: *vicayaso desito, bhikkhave, mayā dhammo; vicayaso desitā cattāro satipaṭṭhānā, vicayaso desitā cattāro sammappadhānā, vicayaso desitā cattāro iddhipādā, vicayaso desitāni pañc’ indriyāni, vicayaso desitāni pañca balāni, vicayaso desitā satta bojjaṅgā, vicayaso desito ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo. evaṃ vicayaso kho desito, bhikkhave, mayā dhammo. evaṃ vicayaso desite kho, bhikkhave, mayā dhamme, atha ca pan’ idh’ ekaccassa bhikkhuno evaṃ cetaso parivitatko udapādi: kathaṃ nu kho jānato kathaṃ passato anantarā āsavānaṃ khayō hoṭī ti?*).

‘How does one understand, how does one see so as to attain the destruction of the influxes quickly?’ I have already taught you the Dharma: You should well contemplate the aggregates, namely [based on cultivating] the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the eight factors of the noble path.

(SĀ 57: 云何知, 云何見, 疾得漏盡? 者, 我已說法言: 當善觀察諸陰, 所謂四念處, 四正勤, 四如意足, 五根, 五力, 七覺分, 八聖道分).

How does one understand, how does one see so as to attain the destruction of the influxes? I have taught you the Dharma, how the aggregates should be thoroughly contemplated, namely [based on cultivating] the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the eight factors of the noble path.

(Up 2042: *ji ltar shes shing ji ltar mthong ba’i rjes la zag pa zad par ’gyur zhes bya ba’o? ngas khyed la phung po rab tu rnam par ’byed pa zhes bya ba’i chos bshad par bya ste, ’di lta ste dran pa nye bar gzhag pa bzhi dang, yang dag par spong ba bzhi dang, rdzu ’phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi dang, dbang po lnga dang, stobs lnga dang, byang chub kyi yan lag bdun dang, ’phags pa’i lam yan lag brgyad de;* see also Dhammadinnā 2014, p. 108)

The *Saṃyukta-āgama* and Tibetan versions have an additional reference to the “aggregates” that should be well contemplated, presumably as an actual meditation topic to which the cultivation of the qualities pertinent to awakening can be directed. The same type of reference recurs in a quotation of this discourse found in the *Dharmaskandha*, an important Abhidharma work of the Sarvāstivāda tradition (Dietz 1984, p. 52: *desitā vo bhikkhavo mayā dharmmāḥ skandhānāṃ pravacayāya*), where this similarly leads over to the list of the thirty-seven qualities. The providing of such an orientation point for the cultivation of the qualities pertinent to awakening is not found in the Pāli version.

The Qualities Pertinent to Awakening During Insight Meditation

An instance where the parallels agree on mentioning the meditative topic that forms the setting for implementing the thirty-seven qualities is the *Mahāsaḷāyatānika-sutta*, which has a parallel in the *Madhyama-āgama* and another parallel extant in Tibetan translation. The parallel versions present the cultivation of insight in relation to the six senses as the reference point for the qualities pertinent to awakening. For the sense door of the eye, the successful cultivation of insight takes the following form:

And then, monastics, knowing and seeing the eye as it really is, knowing and seeing forms as they really are, knowing and seeing eye-consciousness as it really is, knowing and seeing eye-contact as it really is, and also knowing and seeing as it really is what arises in dependence on eye-contact and is felt as pleasant, painful, and neutral, one is not infatuated with the eye, not infatuated with forms, not infatuated with eye-consciousness, not infatuated with eye-contact, and also not infatuated with what arises in dependence on eye-contact and is felt as pleasant, painful, and neutral.

(MN 149: *cakkhuñ ca kho, bhikkhave, jānaṃ passaṃ yathābhūtaṃ, rūpe jānaṃ passaṃ yathābhūtaṃ, cakkhuvīññānaṃ jānaṃ passaṃ yathābhūtaṃ, cakkhusamphassaṃ jānaṃ passaṃ yathābhūtaṃ, yam p’ idaṃ cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā tam pi jānaṃ passaṃ yathābhūtaṃ, cakkhusmiṃ na sārājati, rūpesu na sārājati, cakkhuvīññāne na sārājati, cakkhusamphasse na sārājati, yam p’ idaṃ cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā tasmim pi na sārājati*).

Thus one has knowledge and vision as it really is in relation to the eye, and one has thus knowledge and vision as it really is in relation to forms, to eye-consciousness, to eye-contact, and to feeling tone arisen in dependence on eye-contact, experienced within as painful, as pleasant, or as neutral. Having [such knowledge and] vision in relation to the eye, one is not defiled by attachment, and one is thus not defiled by attachment in relation to forms, to eye-consciousness, to eye-contact, and to feeling tone arisen in dependence on eye-contact, experienced within as painful, as pleasant, or as neutral.

(SĀ 305: 若於眼如實知見, 若色, 眼識, 眼觸, 眼觸因緣生受, 內覺若苦, 若樂, 不苦不樂, 如實知見. 見已於眼不染著, 若色, 眼識, 眼觸, 眼觸因緣生受, 內覺若苦, 若樂, 不苦不樂, 不染著).

Monastics, seeing with understanding eye and forms as they really are and seeing with understanding and vision eye-consciousness, eye-contact, and pleasant, painful, or neutral feeling tone arisen in dependence on eye-contact, elation does not arise in regard to them.

(Up 4006: *dge slong dag mig dang gzugs yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin rab tu shes shing, mig gi rnam par shes pa dang, mig gi 'dus te reg pa dang, mig gi 'dus te reg pa'i rkyen gyis byung ba'i tshor ba bde ba 'am, sdug bsngal ba 'am, bde ba yang ma yin sdug bsngal ba yang ma yin pa yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin shes shing mthong na, de la yang dag par dga' bar mi 'gyur ro*).

In this way, through knowledge and vision of each aspect of visual experience, infatuation, attachment, and elation can be avoided. The parallel versions apply the same to the other sense doors.

The passage clearly describes a mature level of insight. What makes this description significant for the present exploration is that the three versions continue with the bold declaration that, by dint of such insight, the whole set of qualities pertinent to awakening are being cultivated:

The view of one [who knows and sees] as it really is, that is such a one's right view; the intention of one [who knows and sees] as it really is, that is such a one's right intention; the endeavor of one [who knows and sees] as it really is, that is such a one's right endeavor; the mindfulness of one [who knows and sees] as it really is, that is such a one's right mindfulness; and the concentration of one [who knows and sees] as it really is, that is such a one's right concentration. And earlier such a one's bodily action, verbal action, and livelihood have been well purified. Thus this noble eightfold path goes to fulfilment by cultivation. In one for whom this noble eightfold path goes thus to fulfilment by cultivation, the four establishments of mindfulness also go to fulfilment by cultivation, the four right endeavors also go to fulfilment by cultivation, the four bases of success also go to fulfilment by cultivation, the five faculties also go to fulfilment by cultivation, the five powers also go to fulfilment by cultivation, and the seven awakening factors also go to fulfilment by cultivation.

(MN 149: *yā yathābhūtaṣṣa diṭṭhi sā' ssa hoti sammādiṭṭhi; yo yathābhūtaṣṣa saṅkappo svāssa hoti sammāsaṅkappo; yo yathābhūtaṣṣa vāyāmo svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo; yā yathābhūtaṣṣa sati sā' ssa hoti sammāsati; yo yathābhūtaṣṣa samādhi svāssa hoti sammāsamādhi. pubbe va kho pan' assa kāyakammaṃ vacīkammaṃ ājīvo supariśuddho hoti. evaṃ assāyaṃ ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchati. tassa evaṃ imaṃ ariyaṃ aṭṭhaṅgikaṃ maggaṃ bhāvayato cattāro pi satipaṭṭhānā bhāvanā pāripūriṃ*

gacchanti, cattāro pi sammappadhānā bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchanti, cattāro pi iddhipādā bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchanti, pañca pi indriyāni bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchanti, pañca pi balāni bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchanti, satta pi bojjhaṅgā bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchanti).

One who has knowledge in this way and vision in this way is called one who cultivates the fulfilment of right view, right intention, right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Previously, what are designated as right speech, right action, and right livelihood have been purified and cultivated to fulfilment. This is called the purification and fulfilment of the cultivation of the noble eight[fold] path. The noble eight[fold] path having been cultivated and fulfilled, the four establishments of mindfulness are cultivated and fulfilled, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, and the seven awakening factors are cultivated and fulfilled.

(SĀ 305: 作如是知, 如是見者, 名為正見修習滿足, 正志, 正方便, 正念, 正定. 前說正語, 正業, 正命清淨修習滿足. 是名修習八聖道清淨滿足. 八聖道修習滿足已, 四念處修習滿足, 四正勤, 四如意足, 五根, 五力, 七覺分修習滿足).

In one who understands in that way and sees in that way the noble eightfold path is cultivated and fulfilled. Right view is cultivated and fulfilled, right intention, right speech, right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right concentration are cultivated and fulfilled. The right action and livelihood of such a one have previously been fulfilled. The noble eightfold path being cultivated and fulfilled in proper order like that, conversely the four establishments of mindfulness are cultivated and fulfilled, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, and the seven awakening factors are cultivated and fulfilled.

(Up 4006: *de de ltar shes shing de ltar mthong na 'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur te. yang dag pa'i lta ba sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur zhing yang dag pa'i rtog pa dang, yang dag pa'i ngag dang, yang dag pa'i rtsol ba dang, yang dag pa'i dran pa dang, yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur te. 'di'i yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha' dang 'tsho ba dag ni sngon nyid du yongs su dag cing byang bar gyur te. de ltar na go rims las zlog par 'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur ro, dran pa nye bar gzhang pa bzhi sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur ro, yang dag par spong ba bzhi dang, rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi dang, dbang po lnga dang, stobs lnga dang, byang chub kyi yan lag bdun sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur ro; the translation “conversely” is conjectural; the original is cryptic).*

A minor difference occurs in the last version, where right speech has become part of the actual insight practice, whereas in the other two versions right speech, together with right action and right livelihood, has been fulfilled previously. As this is the more coherent presentation, it seems fair to assume that in the course of transmission the term “right speech” (*yang dag pa'i ngag dang*) accidentally shifted place and thereby ended up in the wrong context.

The eightfold path emerges in all three versions as what sets the context for actual meditative practice. During formal meditation, one will usually not speak or engage in action, let alone earn one's living, wherefore these factors need to be purified earlier. But the other five factors can all come to fulfilment during such insight meditation. The same then holds for the rest of the thirty-seven qualities pertinent to awakening. Based on the above discourse, all of these can be considered facets of insight meditation in relation to the senses, as long as this is undertaken in such a way as to result in knowledge and vision as it really is, thereby engendering the overcoming of infatuation, attachment, and elation in regard to what is experienced at any sense door.

This in turn sets the context for an evaluation of the seven sets that make up the list of thirty-seven qualities pertinent to awakening. Each of these should be applicable to the situation described in this discourse, in the sense of offering a contribution to, and being part of, a meditative dwelling that remains free from infatuation, attachment, and elation in relation to any type of sensory experience. This provides a reference point for exploring these seven sets.

The Four Establishments of Mindfulness

The first of the seven sets that make up the thirty-seven qualities pertinent to awakening is the four establishments of mindfulness. These receive a detailed coverage in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and its two Chinese *Āgama* parallels (Anālayo 2013b). An exercise found in two out of these three versions, which due to not occurring in all three is probably not part of the earliest formulation of this discourse, is of direct relevance to the exposition in the *Mahāsaḷāyatānika-sutta* and its parallels, as it also concerns the six senses. The relevant instructions for the first sense door of the eye proceed in this manner:

One knows the eye, one knows forms, and one knows the fetter that arises dependent on both; and one knows how a not arisen fetter arises, one knows how an arisen fetter is removed, and one knows how a removed fetter does not arise in the future.

(MN 10: *cakkhuñ ca pajānāti, rūpe ca pajānāti, yañ ca tad ubhayaṃ paṭicca uppajjati saṃyojanaṃ tañ ca pajānāti, yathā ca anuppannaṃ saṃyojanassa uppādo hoti tañ ca*

pajānāti, yathā ca uppannaṃ saṃyojanassa pahānaṃ hoti tañ ca pajānāti, yathā ca pahānaṃ saṃyojanassa āyatim anuppādo hoti tañ ca pajānāti).

In dependence on the eye and forms a fetter arises internally. Actually having a fetter internally, a monastic knows, as it really is, that there is a fetter internally; actually not having a fetter internally, [a monastic] knows, as it really is, that there is no fetter internally. [A monastic] thus knows, as it really is, how a not arisen fetter arises internally; and thus knows, as it really is, how an internally arisen fetter ceases and does not arise again.

(MĀ 98: 眼緣色生內結。比丘者內實有結，知內有結如真，內實無結，知內無結如真。若未生內結而生者，知如真，若已生內結滅不復生者，知如真)。

This type of practice, which applies similarly to the other sense doors, would be precisely what could lead to dwelling free from infatuation, attachment, and elation in relation to anything experienced at any of the sense doors. Such unwholesome states could be related to the type of fetter that the above instructions are concerned with. In other words, the description in the *Mahāsaḷāyatānika-sutta* and its parallels could be matched to the final stage in the above description when one knows that fetters have ceased.

The proposal that the above exercise from the fourth establishment of mindfulness is particularly pertinent to the case of the *Mahāsaḷāyatānika-sutta* and its parallels is not meant to imply that the other three establishments are irrelevant. Just like all the other of the seven sets of qualities pertinent to awakening, the four establishments of mindfulness interrelate with each other. In the present case, an embodied form of mindfulness that knows the feeling tone and mental state in the present moment could stand in the background of the above contemplation of the fettering force of any of the senses. The point is only that such contemplation, as an implementation of the fourth establishment of mindfulness, would be especially suitable for leading to the type of insight and freedom from attachment described in the *Mahāsaḷāyatānika-sutta* and its parallels.

A minor difference between the two descriptions, translated above, is that the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* explicitly pairs the recognition of the presence of a fetter with a recognition of its absence. Such pairing concords better with the pattern adopted for contemplation of the mind, the hindrances, and the awakening factors in both versions, where mindful recognition of presence leads to mindful recognition of absence (Anālayo 2013b). From a practical viewpoint, however, the present difference would not carry much weight, as the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*'s injunction to know how a fetter is removed and how such a removed fetter does not arise again implies that its absence is being mindfully recognized.

The task of mindfulness to facilitate a recognition of the presence (and absence) of such fetters combines with clear

knowing (*sampajañña*, *samprajanya*, 正知/正智, *shes bzhin*), reflected in the reference in both versions to the need to “know” (Anālayo 2020b). In the present context, such knowing concerns in particular a discerning of conditionality, a feature prominent also in other exercises listed under the fourth establishment of mindfulness.

The potential of the formal cultivation of mindfulness by way of its four establishments to lead to the type of mental purity depicted in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels could in turn be related to an axiomatic statement made in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and both of its Chinese Āgama parallels:

This is the direct path for the purification of living beings.
(MN 10: *ekāyano ayam ... maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā*).

There is a single path for the purification of living beings.
(MĀ 98: 有一道淨眾生).

There is a one-going path for the purification of the actions of living beings.
(EĀ 12.1: 有一入道淨眾生行).

Among the seven sets of qualities pertinent to awakening, this type of qualification is specific to the four establishments of mindfulness, in the sense of being found in all parallel versions. This confirms the eminent role the formal cultivation of mindfulness has to fulfil in this respect. As pointed out by Gethin (1992, p. 66), “more than any of the remaining sets, the four *satipaṭṭhānas* provide a description of the path right from basics direct to the final goal.”

At the same time, however, just being mindful of the presence of a fetter and how it arises will not necessarily suffice on its own to lead to a removal or cessation of the fetter. For this reason, in order to facilitate progress to the level of consummate insight described in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, the exertion of effort will at times also be required. This need finds explicit recognition in a succinct description of the essential aspects of the four establishments of mindfulness, which takes the following form:

Being diligent, clearly knowing, and mindful, removing greedy desire and sadness in the world.
(SN 52.6: *ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ*).

Being with diligent effort, right mindfulness, and right knowing, overcoming greed and sadness in the world.
(SĀ 537: 精勤方便, 正念, 正知, 調伏世間貪憂).

This shows that, in addition to the need to combine mindfulness with clear knowing, there is also a need to bring in

diligence in the form of making an effort. In the context of the cultivation of an establishment of mindfulness, the role of such effort would be to ensure the continuity of practice. Active measures to counter a fetter do not fall within the domain of formal mindfulness practice itself but rather pertain to another aspect of meditative culture of the mind, which is right endeavor. This is precisely the next topic in the list of qualities pertinent to awakening.

The Four Right Endeavors

Regarding the four right endeavors, some terminological clarification is needed before delving into their actual implementation. In the different listings surveyed above, the second item in the seven sets of qualities pertinent to awakening has been consistently translated as “right endeavor,” even though the actual terminology varies. In some cases, the original does indeed convey this sense. This holds for the Pāli term *sammappadhānā* and its Chinese counterpart in 正勤. At other times, however, Chinese versions of this same item rather speak of “right abandoning,” 正斷, a sense also reflected in the Tibetan rendering *yang dag par spong ba*. Such variations are a recurrent feature of listings of the thirty-seven qualities pertinent to awakening. Gethin (1992, p. 70) explained:

Certainly “four right endeavours” would appear to fit better as a general description of the formula than “four right abandonings,” since all four parts of the formula speak of one who endeavours (*padahati/pradadhāti*) while only the second part explicitly mentions abandoning (*pahanāya/prahānāya*) ... [hence] the most straightforward explanation of the discrepancy ... seems to be to consider *samyak-prahāṇa* as an incorrect back-formation based on a Middle Indo-Aryan form such as *samma-ppahāna* which might equally correspond to Sanskrit *samyak-prahāṇa* or *samyak-pradhāna*.

The consistent employment of the rendering “right endeavor” in the listings surveyed above is based on the assumption that the alternative sense of “right abandoning” is indeed the less appropriate sense and would be due to an incorrect back-formation.

The distinct contribution made by each of the four endeavors to meditative progress can be seen in the following description:

Monastics, there are these four endeavors. What are the four? They are the endeavor to restrain, the endeavor to abandon, the endeavor to cultivate, and the endeavor to protect.

(AN 4.69: *cattār' imāni, bhikkhave, padhānāni. katamāni cattāri? saṃvarappadhānaṃ, pahānappadhānaṃ, bhāvanāppadhānaṃ, anurakkhanappadhānaṃ*).

There are four right endeavors. What are the four? The first is the endeavor to abandon, the second is the endeavor to restrain, the third is the endeavor to protect, and the fourth is the endeavor to cultivate.

(SĀ 877: 有四正斷。何等為四?一者斷斷,二者律儀斷,三者隨護斷,四者修斷)。

Although the Pāli version translated first does not employ the qualification “right,” it continues after the above extract by listing the four right endeavors, making it clear that this difference is of no further relevance. The ensuing detailed exposition takes the following form in the two versions:

Monastics, and what is the endeavor to restrain? Monastics, here a monastic generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies the mind, and endeavors for not arisen bad and unwholesome states not to arise. Monastics, this is called the endeavor to restrain. Monastics, and what is the endeavor to abandon? Monastics, here a monastic generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies the mind, and endeavors for arisen bad and unwholesome states to be abandoned. Monastics, this is called the endeavor to abandon. Monastics, and what is the endeavor to cultivate? Monastics, here a monastic generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies the mind, and endeavors for not arisen wholesome states to arise. Monastics, this is called the endeavor to cultivate. Monastics, and what is the endeavor to protect? Monastics, here a monastic generates desire, makes an effort, arouses energy, applies the mind, and endeavors for arisen wholesome states to remain, not to decline, to increase, to become abundant, to be cultivated, and to be fulfilled. Monastics, this is called the endeavor to protect.

(AN 4.69: *katamañ ca, bhikkhave, saṃvarappadhānaṃ? idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu anuppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ anuppādāya chandaṃ janeti vāyamati viriyaṃ ārabhati cittaṃ paggaṇhāti padahati. idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, saṃvarappadhānaṃ. katamañ ca, bhikkhave, pahānappadhānaṃ? idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu uppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya chandaṃ janeti vāyamati viriyaṃ ārabhati cittaṃ paggaṇhāti padahati. idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, bhāvanāppadhānaṃ? idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu anuppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ uppādāya chandaṃ janeti vāyamati viriyaṃ ārabhati cittaṃ paggaṇhāti padahati. idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave,*

bhāvanāppadhānaṃ. katamañ ca, bhikkhave, anurakkhanappadhānaṃ? idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu uppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ ṭhitiyā asammosāya bhīyyobhāvāya vepullāya bhāvanāya pāripūriyā chandaṃ janeti vāyamati viriyaṃ ārabhati cittaṃ paggaṇhāti padahati. idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anurakkhanappadhānaṃ).

What is the endeavor to abandon? That is, a monastic arouses desire, expedient means, effort, and takes hold of the mind for already arisen bad and unwholesome states to be abandoned. This is [called] the endeavor to abandon. What is the endeavor to restrain? [A monastic] arouses desire, expedient means, effort, and takes hold [of the mind] for not yet arisen bad and unwholesome states not to arise. This is called the endeavor to restrain. What is the endeavor to protect? [A monastic] arouses desire, expedient means, effort, and takes hold [of the mind] for not yet arisen wholesome states to be made to arise. This is called the endeavor to protect. What is the endeavor to cultivate? [A monastic] arouses desire, expedient means, effort, and takes hold [of the mind] for already arisen wholesome states to grow and be cultivated. This is called the endeavor to cultivate.

(SĀ 877: 云何為斷斷? 謂比丘已起惡不善法斷, 生欲, 方便, 精勤, 心攝受, 是為斷斷。云何律儀斷? 未起惡不善法不起, 生欲, 方便, 精勤, 攝受, 是名律儀斷。云何隨護斷? 未起善法令起, 生欲, 方便, 精勤, 攝受, 是名隨護斷。云何修斷? 已起善法增益修習, 生欲, 方便, 精勤, 攝受, 是為修斷; the phrasing is based on adopting a variant that dispenses with a reference to 亦 in the description of the first right endeavor).

A minor difference between the two versions is a matter of sequence. Whereas the Pāli version proceeds from restraining to abandoning, cultivating, and protecting, the Chinese parallel instead begins with abandoning and then turns to restraining, protecting, and cultivating. The two versions thereby agree in first taking up the two endeavors related to what is unwholesome, followed by the two related to what is wholesome. This points to an underlying progression from what is comparably more gross to what is more refined. However, a pattern consistently proceeding according to increasing subtlety is not evident in either version, as such a pattern would begin with abandoning and then follow this by restraining (as in the Chinese version), and after that continue with cultivating and then protecting (as in the Pāli version). Nevertheless, the variations evident in the two parallels in this respect are perhaps of less significance, given that their main import is the same.

From the viewpoint of the instruction on the six senses in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, recognition of the presence of a fetter can be matched with an

unwholesome state in the above description, recognition of a fetter's absence with a wholesome mental state. In the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, this basic recognition leads to understanding how a not yet arisen fetter arises and how, once arisen, it can be removed and prevented from arising again. The information on the conditionality of a fetter gathered in this way is precisely what would support the actual endeavor to “abandon” a fetter, to “restrain,” in the sense of avoiding its rearing, and to “protect” and “cultivate” a condition which mindful supervision recognizes to be, at least for the time being, free from a fetter. In other words, the cultivation of right mindfulness provides the type of feedback that is required for a skillful deployment of right endeavor.

The two right endeavors of protecting and cultivating, combined with the mindful recognition that no fetter is present in the mind, could be related to the exposition in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels. The description of the ability to dwell free from infatuation, attachment, and elation in relation to any sense door concerns indeed a wholesome condition of the mind, free from the fettering forces of sense experience, that can be cultivated and protected by relying on the monitoring function of mindfulness.

The two passages translated above agree that each of the four right efforts requires “desire,” effort or “energy,” and taking hold of the “mind.” These terms correspond to what characterizes the first three of the four bases of success.

The Four Bases of Success

Besides the overlap in terminology just mentioned, the actual formulation of the bases of success speaks of endeavor as a quality relevant to each of the four. This makes it reasonable to assume that these four bases can be related to the preceding item, the four endeavors. The actual formulation of the bases of success combines such endeavor with four types of concentration, which represent the basic rationale for distinguishing the bases of success into four types. Three of these types are desire, energy, and the mind, as already mentioned above, and the fourth is investigation:

One cultivates the base of success that is endowed with intentional endeavor and concentration of desire, one cultivates the base of success that is endowed with intentional endeavor and concentration of energy, one cultivates the base of success that is endowed with intentional endeavor and concentration of the mind, and one cultivates the base of success that is endowed with intentional endeavor and concentration of investigation.

(MN 16: *chandasamādhīpadhānasāṅkhārasamannāgataṃ iddhipādaṃ bhāveti, viriyasamādhīpadhānasāṅkhārasamannāgataṃ iddhipādaṃ bhāveti,*

cittasamādhīpadhānasāṅkhārasamannāgataṃ iddhipādaṃ bhāveti, vīmaṃsāsamādhīpadhānasāṅkhārasamannāgataṃ iddhipādaṃ bhāveti).

One cultivates the base of success in a mind endowed with endeavor and concentration of desire, in dependence on seclusion, in dependence on dispassion, in dependence on cessation, in dependence on abandoning, proceeding toward the unconstructed. One cultivates the base of success [in a mind] endowed with endeavor and concentration of energy, concentration of the mind, and concentration of attention, in dependence on seclusion, in dependence on dispassion, in dependence on cessation, in dependence on abandoning, proceeding toward the unconstructed.

(MĀ 206: 修欲定心成就斷如意足, 依離, 依無欲, 依滅, 依捨, 趣向非品。修精進定, 心定, 思惟定成就斷如意足, 依離, 依無欲, 依滅, 依捨, 趣向非品)。

Instead of investigation,” the *Madhyama-āgama* version translated above speaks of “attention” (思惟, corresponding to *manasikāra* and *yid la byed pa*), a rendering that also occurs regularly in other Chinese *Āgama* discourses. According to the formulations employed in the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra* and the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, however, the fourth base of success is indeed about “investigation,” *mīmāṃsā* (Samtani 1971, p. 31 and Wogihara 1936/1971, p. 602), corresponding to the Pāli term *vīmaṃsā*.

Another difference is that the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse relates the four bases of success to a set of terms that otherwise often occurs in the early discourses in relation to the awakening factors. In its Pāli formulation, this set indicates that the awakening factors should be cultivated in dependence on seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, leading to letting go.

Alongside such variations, the parallel versions can be seen to agree that, besides desire and energy, “the mind” is another modality characteristic of a base of success. The implications of the term in this particular context are not obvious. After all, any of the qualities pertinent to awakening take place in and affect the mind. The same holds for the other three bases of success, namely desire, energy, and investigation (or attention, for that matter). Therefore, it is not clear in what way a bare reference to the mind as such could be differentiated from these three mental qualities.

When viewed from the perspective of the apparent import of the bases of success as singling out modalities for the arousal of concentration in a context related to making an endeavor, desire is straightforward. In its early Buddhist usage, the term “desire” can carry positive and negative connotations. Whereas desire of the sensual type is unwholesome, the desire mentioned in the present context definitely has wholesome connotations. The point would be that, in order to stimulate

endeavor, wholesome desire can provide the required inspiration. This could be, for example, the desire for liberation. Alternatively, instead of desire, the same can be achieved by energy or effort, a basic willingness to put things into practice and stick to them. Such could be a readiness to act that does not need any additional stimulation, such as the arousing of wholesome desire. Yet another alternative would then be investigation, arousing an attitude of interest, curiosity, and inquisitiveness. In fact, in the context of the awakening factors, investigation leads to energy, reflecting a relationship that is probably comparable to the present case.

In contrast to the preceding three, mind as such does not seem to provide a self-evident alternative approach to cultivating a base of success. Developing a perspective on its significance could be achieved by relying on an illustration of the four bases of success provided in a Pāli commentary (Vibh-a 305). The illustration concerns four persons who wish to get appointed by the king to a powerful position. One devotedly attends to the king, another crushes the king's enemy in battle, and yet another provides wise council. These would illustrate desire, energy, and investigation. The fourth person succeeds in gaining an appointment by dint of being of high birth, which automatically ensures that this person will be appointed by the king (at least in the ancient setting). This illustrates the role of mind as a base of success (although there are some divergences in this respect in other Pāli commentaries; see Gethin 1992).

From the viewpoint of this particular commentary, whereas the other three persons had to act in a certain way, the fourth one has no such need. In the same way, perhaps, the concentration required for a base of success can be due to the more active desire, energy, or investigation, but it can also come about by simply relying on a natural quality of the mind as such. Just as someone born in an aristocratic family can rely on high standing to be appointed by the king to a position of power, without needing to struggle in any way, so it would also be possible to gain concentration simply by dint of allowing the mind to rest naturally in itself and thereby become concentrated.

In relation to the context provided by the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, this could then perhaps be related to the cultivation of mindfulness in the form of “bare awareness.” Such practice is already known in early Buddhist texts (Anālayo 2019d). The task here is to stay with whatever is experienced at any sense door as such, without allowing any mental proliferation to take place. Successfully executing this task can lead to deconstructing the way the world is normally experienced and thereby issue in awakening. For such deconstruction to take place, even the slightest trace of interference with experience needs to be avoided. In this setting, all effort has to be aimed at undoing, so to say. The type of concentration required for such purposes could indeed

take the form of an uncontrived collectedness that relies on a natural propensity of the mind in the absence of distraction. Giving room to this particular avenue to awakening would also provide a meaningful rationale for according it a place alongside desire, energy, and investigation.

Be that as it may, as a set the four bases of success can be seen to stand in the background of the four right endeavors, by way of pointing to four modalities for arousing the type of concentration that can support endeavor. Their role is not confined to that, as the early discourses recognize a range of supernormal abilities whose cultivation requires the same four bases of success. But from the viewpoint of the insight meditation described in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, such supernormal abilities are not directly relevant. The main function of the bases of success in the present setting would be to provide support for the deployment of endeavor in support of dwelling free from infatuation, attachment, and elation in relation to sense experience. For this purpose, bare awareness could offer a convenient option, if the above-suggested interpretation of the third base of success is found acceptable.

Just as each of the four right endeavors involves qualities that come up again as distinct bases of success, in the same way each of the bases of success involves two qualities that recur as two of the five faculties and powers, namely energy and concentration. The connection between these sets is further strengthened by the relationship between a base of success as a modality of concentrative strength and the idea of a “faculty” (*indriya/ḍḅang po*) as something that exerts dominance, a nuance also evident in the notion of a “power” (*bala/stobs*).

The Five Faculties and Powers

A definition and explanation of the five faculties provide the following information:

Monastics, there are five faculties. What are the five? They are the faculty of confidence, the faculty of energy, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, and the faculty of wisdom. Monastics, and where can the faculty of confidence be seen? It is in the four limbs of stream-entry; here the faculty of confidence can be seen here. Monastics, and where can the faculty of energy be seen? It is in the four right endeavors; here the faculty of energy can be seen. Monastics, and where can the faculty of mindfulness be seen? It is in the four establishments of mindfulness; here the faculty of mindfulness can be seen. Monastics, and where can the faculty of concentration be seen? It is in the four absorptions; here the faculty of concentration can be seen. Monastics, and where can the faculty of wisdom be seen? It is in the four noble truths; here the faculty of wisdom can be seen.

(SN 48.8: *pañc' imāni, bhikkhave, indriyāni. katamāni pañca? saddhindriyaṃ, viriyindriyaṃ, satindriyaṃ, samādhindriyaṃ, paññindriyaṃ. kattha ca, bhikkhave, saddhindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ? catūsu sotāpattiyaṅgesu, ettha saddhindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. kattha ca, bhikkhave, viriyindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ? catūsu sammappadhānesu, ettha viriyindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. kattha ca, bhikkhave, satindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ? catūsu satipaṭṭhānesu, ettha satindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. kattha ca, bhikkhave, samādhindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ? catūsu jhānesu, ettha samādhindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. kattha ca, bhikkhave, paññindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ? catūsu ariyasaccesu, ettha paññindriyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ).*

There are five faculties. What are the five? They are reckoned to be the faculty of confidence, the faculty of energy, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, and the faculty of wisdom. As to the faculty of confidence, it should be known to be the four types of unshakeable trust. As to the faculty of energy, it should be known to be the four right endeavors. As to the faculty of mindfulness, it should be known to be the four establishments of mindfulness. As to the faculty of concentration, it should be known to be the four absorptions. As to the faculty of wisdom, it should be known to be the four noble truths. (SĀ 646: 有五根。何等為五? 謂信根, 精進根, 念根, 定根, 慧根。信根者, 當知是四不壞淨; 精進根者, 當知是四正斷; 念根者, 當知是四念處; 定根者, 當知是四禪; 慧根者, 當知是四聖諦)。

Although employing different terms, the two parallels explain the faculty of confidence by mentioning the same basic qualities. These can alternatively be referred to as “four limbs of stream-entry,” thereby placing a highlight on the fact that they are acquired with the attainment of the first level of awakening, or else as “four types of unshakeable trust,” which reflects their content: unshakeable trust in the Buddha as an awakened one, in his teaching as leading to awakening, and in his disciples as comprising those who have reached awakening, together with a natural commitment to maintaining ethical conduct as fourth.

Commenting on the widespread translation of this quality as “faith,” Gethin (1992, p. 106–108) observed:

The word “faith” brings in its train a host of theological and philosophical connotations from the traditions of western thought inappropriate to the discussion of *saddhā*, and which can only serve to obscure the nature of its understanding in Buddhist literature ... the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective; the cognitive element is completely secondary ... the objects of *saddhā* and the

related term *pasāda* (trust) are not beliefs but, most commonly, the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃgha.

From the viewpoint of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, confidence in the teachings would seem to be particularly suitable as a quality that can stand in the background of the insight meditation described in this discourse.

Whereas the first faculty introduces a new quality, the next two faculties correspond to the first and second set among the qualities pertinent to awakening, the four establishments of mindfulness and the four right endeavors. From having emerged in the previous set in association with desire, energy, (the nature of) the mind, and investigation, concentration as the fourth faculty now evolves into standing for the attainment of the four absorptions.

When evaluated from the viewpoint of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, relating concentration in the form of the four absorptions to the insight meditation described in this discourse is not entirely straightforward. Although the depth of concentration gained with the absorptions is a matter of discussion, a perusal of the early discourses makes it fair to propose that the four absorptions are of such depth that one would not at the same time be experiencing the objects of the different physical senses (Anālayo 2017; Anālayo 2019c).

Nevertheless, it could be proposed that the experience of the profound degree of inner happiness and equanimity possible through absorption will divest sense objects of their potential attraction and thereby facilitate the type of inner balance described in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels. However, this would imply that absorption attainment should have been developed earlier, which would put the faculty of concentration on a par with right speech, action, and livelihood as qualities that need to be cultivated previously. Instead, the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels give the impression that the faculty of concentration is much rather an integral part of the insight meditation described in this discourse.

The Pāli discourses offer an alternative definition of the faculty of concentration that would be more amenable to the present context. This definition does not refer to absorption attainment and instead indicates that, on having made letting go the object of one's mind, one can gain concentration and mental unification (SN 48.9, SN 48.10, here combined with the four absorptions, SN 48.11, and SN 48.50). However, this definition is not supported by relevant parallels (SĀ 647 and SĀ 659). It follows that only the definition of the faculty of concentration by way of the four absorptions is common among these different transmission lineages.

Compared with the faculty of concentration, the fifth and last faculty of wisdom can more easily be accommodated. Such wisdom is a quality already adumbrated with clear knowing as an integral dimension of the four establishments of mindfulness and with investigation as the fourth base of success. Here, it takes the form of (insight into) the four noble truths. In fact, the description in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta*

and its parallels implicitly brings in the scheme of the four noble truths. The relevant part sets in right after the description of how the insight meditation described earlier fulfils all of the seven sets of the qualities pertinent to awakening:

The states to be understood through direct knowledge, those states one understands through direct knowledge. The states to be abandoned through direct knowledge, those states one abandons through direct knowledge. The states to be cultivated through direct knowledge, those states one cultivates through direct knowledge. The states to be realized through direct knowledge, those states one realizes through direct knowledge.

(MN 149: *so ye dhammā abhiññā pariññeyyā te dhamme abhiññā pariññāti. ye dhammā abhiññā pahātabbā te dhamme abhiññā pajahati. ye dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā te dhamme abhiññā bhāveti. ye dhammā abhiññā sacchikātabbā te dhamme abhiññā sacchikaroti*).

Thus, the states that should be known and should be understood are all known and all understood. Thus, the states that should be known and should be abandoned are all known and all abandoned. Thus, the states that should be known and should be realized are all completely realized. Thus, the states that should be known and should be cultivated have all been cultivated.

(SĀ 305: 若法應知應了者, 悉知悉了; 若法應知應斷者, 悉知悉斷; 若法應知應作證者, 悉皆作證. 若法應知應修習者, 悉已修習).

Whatever states are to be understood through direct knowledge, these states are completely understood through direct knowledge. Whatever states are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, [these states] are completely abandoned through direct knowledge. Whatever states are to be realized through direct knowledge, these states are realized through direct knowledge. Whatever states are to be cultivated through direct knowledge, these states are cultivated through direct knowledge.

(Up 4006: *de chos gang dag mngon par shes par bya ba dang yongs su shes par bya ba'i chos de dag mngon par shes shing yongs su shes so. chos gang mngon par shes nas spang bar bya ba de dag mngon par shes nas rab tu spong ngo. chos gang dag mngon par shes nas mngon sum du bya ba'i chos de dag mngon par shes nas mngon du byed do. chos gang dag mngon par shes nas bsgom par bya ba'i chos de dag mngon par shes nas bsgom par byed do*).

The basic procedure adopted in the *Mahāsaḷāyatānīka-sutta* and its parallels in this way corresponds to the underlying pattern of the four noble truths. A range of texts recording their original delivery report that the Buddha, as part of his first teaching given right after his awakening, made a point of explicitly stating that accomplishing these four functions of understanding, abandoning, realizing, and cultivating in relation to *dukkha* formed the basis for his claim to have reached awakening (Anālayo 2012a; Anālayo 2013a). In this way, the fifth faculty of wisdom stands in a close relation to the exposition given in the *Mahāsaḷāyatānīka-sutta* and its parallels.

The five faculties correspond to the five powers, so that from the viewpoint of their relationship to the *Mahāsaḷāyatānīka-sutta* and its parallels there is nothing additional to be said about them. A Pāli discourse without parallels provides an illustration of the relationship between the faculties and the powers, based on describing an island in the midst of a river (SN 48.43). Depending on where one stands to look at the river, from one perspective, this can give rise to the perception of a single stream of water, but from another perspective, this can instead convey the impression of two streams of water. This implies that there is no substantial difference between the two sets, apart from the use of different terms. The idea that the powers represent a more advanced stage of cultivation of the faculties appears to emerge only in later times, perhaps being an attempt to make sense of their separate mention.

The Seven Awakening Factors

In line with a pattern already evident with previous sets surveyed above, the awakening factors comprise several qualities that have already been covered under the preceding header. In the present case, these are the faculties: energy, mindfulness, and concentration recur verbatim, and the faculty of wisdom could be related to the second awakening factor of investigation.

From the viewpoint of meditation practice, the cultivation of the awakening factors can take off from any of the four establishments of mindfulness. In order to relate the presentation as closely as possible to the *Mahāsaḷāyatānīka-sutta* and its parallels, their gradual development based on the fourth establishment of mindfulness, contemplation of dharmas (in particular of the six senses), seems to be the appropriate choice:

Monastics, at the time when a monastic dwells contemplating dharmas in regard to dharmas, at that time mindfulness is established without loss in the monastic. Monastics, at a time when mindfulness is established in a monastic without loss, at that time the awakening factor of mindfulness is aroused in the monastic, at that time the monastic cultivates the awakening factor of mindfulness, at that time the awakening factor of mindfulness goes to fulfilment in the monastic by cultivation.

(SN 54.16: *yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati, upaṭṭhitāssa tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno sati hoti asammutṭhā. yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno upaṭṭhitā sati hoti asammutṭhā, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, satisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchati*).

[In regard to] dharmas one establishes mindfulness by contemplating dharmas; one has established mindfulness and collected mindfulness that is established without loss. At that time, one diligently cultivates the awakening factor of mindfulness. Having cultivated the awakening factor of mindfulness [in this way], the awakening factor of mindfulness becomes fulfilled.

(SĀ 810: 法法觀念住, 念住已, 繫念住不忘. 爾時方便修念覺分. 修念覺分已, 念覺分滿足).

This shows how the contemplation of an establishment of mindfulness, in the present case the fourth establishment of contemplating dharmas, can serve as a foundation for the arousing of the awakening factor of mindfulness. A minor difference between the two versions, which recurs with subsequent awakening factors, is the explicit mention of diligence in the Chinese parallel. Since contemplation of dharmas, or of any of the other establishments of mindfulness, already requires diligence, the presence of this quality can safely be taken to be implicit in the Pāli version as well. Applied to the case of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, such arousing of the awakening factor of mindfulness could then take place in reliance on insightful contemplation of the senses.

Dwelling mindfully in this way, one discerns, investigates, and makes an examination of that state with wisdom. Monastics, at a time when, dwelling mindfully in this way, a monastic discerns, investigates, and makes an examination of that state with wisdom, at that time the awakening factor of investigation-of-dharmas is aroused in the monastic, at that time the monastic cultivates the awakening factor of investigation-of-dharmas, at that time the awakening factor of investigation-of-dharmas goes to fulfilment in the monastic by cultivation.

(SN 54.16: *so tathā sato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicarati parivīmaṃsam āpajjati. yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathā sato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicarati parivīmaṃsam āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu*

bhāveti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchati).

The awakening factor of mindfulness having been fulfilled, one investigates and examines that state. At that time, one diligently cultivates the awakening factor of investigation-of-dharmas. Having cultivated the awakening factor of investigation-of-dharmas [in this way], the awakening factor of investigation-of-dharmas becomes fulfilled.

(SĀ 810: 念覺滿足已, 於法選擇思量. 爾時方便修擇法覺分. 修擇法覺分已, 擇法覺分滿足).

In terms of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, once the presence of mindfulness had led on to an investigation of the present mental condition (which according to the Pāli version takes place “with wisdom”), then this could take the form of examining if mental balance remains indeed unshaken with anything experienced through the senses, ensuring that there is no trace of infatuation, attachment, or elation.

In one who discerns, investigates, and makes an examination of that state with wisdom, unwavering energy is aroused. Monastics, at a time when unwavering energy is aroused in a monastic who discerns, investigates, and makes an examination of that state with wisdom, at that time the awakening factor of energy is aroused in the monastic, at that time the monastic cultivates the awakening factor of energy, at that time the awakening factor of energy goes to fulfilment in the monastic by cultivation. (SN 54.16: *tassa taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicarato parivīmaṃsam āpajjato āradhhaṃ hoti viriyaṃ asallīnaṃ. yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicarato parivīmaṃsam āpajjato āradhhaṃ hoti viriyaṃ asallīnaṃ, viriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, viriyasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, viriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchati*).

Having investigated, distinguished, and examined that state, one gains diligent energy. At that time, one diligently cultivates the awakening factor of energy. Having cultivated the awakening factor of energy [in this way], the awakening factor of energy becomes fulfilled.

(SĀ 810: 於法選擇分別思量已, 得精勤方便. 爾時方便修習精進覺分. 修精進覺分已, 精進覺分滿足).

The Pāli version offers the additional specification that such energy is unwavering or unshaken. This specification points to a chief task of energy in this context: ensuring continuity. The cultivation of the awakening factors is a matter of balance. A loss of such balance would prevent successfully navigating the

trajectory from the present energy to the ensuing joy. Keeping this in mind will forestall overexertion and ensure that energy will be well adjusted to perform its task of maintaining the momentum of practice without going overboard. In terms of the *Mahāsaḷāyatānīka-sutta* and its parallels, this would then entail energetic maintenance of the continuity of mental balance in relation to anything experienced through the senses.

In one who has aroused energy, unworldly joy arises. Monastics, at a time when unworldly joy arises in a monastic who has aroused energy, at that time the awakening factor of joy is aroused in the monastic, at that time the monastic cultivates the awakening factor of joy, at that time the awakening factor of joy goes to fulfilment in the monastic by cultivation.

(SN 54.16: *āraddhaviriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā. yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno āraddhaviriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, pītisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchati*).

Having become diligent and energetic, the mind becomes glad. At that time, one diligently cultivates the awakening factor of joy. Having cultivated the awakening factor of joy [in this way], the awakening factor of joy becomes fulfilled.

(SĀ 810: 方便精進已, 則心歡喜. 爾時方便修喜覺分. 修喜覺分已, 喜覺分滿足).

The Pāli version offers the additional specification that the joy in question is of an unworldly type. This fits the context of the *Mahāsaḷāyatānīka-sutta* and its parallels particularly well, as joy arisen in the absence of infatuation, attachment, and elation would indeed be of the unworldly type.

In one who is joyous, the body becomes tranquil and the mind becomes tranquil. Monastics, at a time when, in a monastic who is joyous, the body becomes tranquil and the mind becomes tranquil, at that time the awakening factor of tranquility is aroused in the monastic, at that time the monastic cultivates the awakening factor of tranquility, at that time the awakening factor of tranquility goes to fulfilment in the monastic by cultivation.

(SN 54.16: *pīṭimanassa kāyo pi passambhati, cittaṃ pi passambhati. yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pīṭimanassa kāyo pi passambhati cittaṃ pi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno*

bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchati).

Having become glad, body and mind are tranquil and calm. At that time, one diligently cultivates the awakening factor of tranquility. Having cultivated the awakening factor of tranquility [in this way], the awakening factor of tranquility becomes fulfilled.

(SĀ 810: 歡喜已, 身心猗息. 爾時方便修猗覺分. 修猗覺分已, 猗覺分滿足).

The tranquility of body and mind experienced at this juncture results from the proper cultivation of the previous awakening factors. In fact, at the present juncture, a basic shift takes place. Leaving aside mindfulness, which is required at all times (SN 46.53, SĀ 714, and Up 7003), the other six awakening factors fall into two groups. Three have a more energizing nature: investigation, energy, and joy. The other three have a more calming nature: tranquility, concentration, and equipoise. The discourses explicitly recommend that one should monitor one's practice and, whenever the mind gets slightly overactive and excited, more emphasis should be given to the last three. But when the mind tends to become a bit sluggish, the three energizers are commendable (SN 46.53, SĀ 714, and Up 7003; see Anālayo 2013b). The achieving of such mental balance would substantially empower the insight meditation described in the *Mahāsaḷāyatānīka-sutta* and its parallels.

In one whose body is tranquil and who is happy, the mind becomes concentrated. Monastics, at a time when, in a monastic whose body is tranquil and who is happy, the mind becomes concentrated, at that time the awakening factor of concentration is aroused in the monastic, at that time the monastic cultivates the awakening factor of concentration, at that time the awakening factor of concentration goes to fulfilment in the monastic by cultivation.

(SN 54.16: *passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati. yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, samādhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanā pāripūriṃ gacchati*).

Body and mind having become happy, one gains concentration. At that time, one [diligently] cultivates the awakening factor of concentration. Having cultivated the awakening factor of concentration [in this way], the awakening factor of concentration becomes fulfilled. (SĀ 810: 身心樂已, 得三昧. 爾時修定覺分. 修定覺分已, 定覺分滿足).

The two versions agree in mentioning happiness, which together with the previously cultivated joy ensures that the mind naturally settles in concentration. This taps a recurrently mentioned dynamics in the early discourses, according to which the cultivation of wholesome types of joy and happiness has an eminent potential to bring about concentration. From the viewpoint of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, energy, joy, tranquility, and concentration could then be seen to make their collaborative contribution to the continuity of insightful balance in relation to sense experience.

One carefully oversees, without interfering, the mind that has become concentrated in this way. Monastics, at a time when a monastic carefully oversees, without interfering, the mind that has become concentrated in this way, at that time the awakening factor of equipoise is aroused in the monastic, at that time the monastic cultivates the awakening factor of equipoise, at that time the awakening factor of equipoise goes to fulfilment in the monastic by cultivation.

(SN 54.16: *so tathā samāhitam cittam sādhuḥkaṃ ajjupekkhitā hoti. yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathā samāhitam cittam sādhuḥkaṃ ajjupekkhitā hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanā pāripurim gacchati*).

The awakening factor of concentration having been fulfilled, then greed and sadness cease and one attains balance and equipoise. At that time, one diligently cultivates the awakening factor of equipoise. Having cultivated the awakening factor of equipoise [in this way], the awakening factor of equipoise becomes fulfilled (SĀ 810: 定覺分滿足已, 貪憂則滅, 得平等捨, 爾時方便修捨覺分. 修捨覺分已, 捨覺分滿足).

According to the Pāli version, the actual implementation of this awakening factor requires overseeing without interference the mind that has become concentrated, whereas the Chinese parallel shows that equipoise results from the absence of greed and sadness. Applied to the case of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, these two perspectives can be taken to complement each other. The insight meditation described in this discourse has an obvious relationship to the absence of greed and sadness, which naturally relates to overseeing the concentrated mind without interference.

In terms of the insight meditation described in *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, once all awakening factors have been gradually aroused, the task is to complement the affective mental balance in relation to anything experienced at a sense door with the superb balance of the awakening factors.

The Noble Eightfold Path

The noble eightfold path, as the last set among the qualities pertinent to awakening, already came up explicitly in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, which showed that some of its factors require previous cultivation, because they are not directly practicable during insight meditation. Among the seven sets, as noted by Gethin (1992, p. 191), the eightfold path is “in some sense a more fully self-contained system than the other sets.”

Ṭhānissaro (1996/1999, p. 188), however, proposed rather the five faculties as the overarching category, as according to his assessment “all of the 37 factors listed in the Wings to Awakening [i.e. the qualities pertinent to awakening] can be subsumed under the five faculties.” To achieve this correlation, he allocated the path factors of right speech, action, and livelihood to the first faculty of confidence. This proposal conflicts with the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, according to which all five faculties can be cultivated during insight meditation. This does not hold for the three path factors of right speech, action, and livelihood, as these rather need to be established previously. It follows that these three path factors cannot be equated to any of the faculties, contrary to the assumption by Ṭhānissaro (1996/1999, p. 58) that “all seven sets are equivalent to the five faculties.” As already explained by Gethin (1992, p. 191),

The scope of the *ariyo atthaṅgiko maggo* is rather wider than that of the powers and faculties. Right thought [i.e. right intention], speech, action, and livelihood bring in dimensions that, while omitted in the other sets, are certainly of considerable importance in the Nikāyas as a whole. The inclusion of right speech, action and livelihood, and the way these items are defined, explicitly brings in what elsewhere is summed up in the Nikāyas as “morality,” “virtue” or “conduct” (*sīla*).

According to a simile involving the footprint of an elephant, the four noble truths encompass all that is wholesome, just as the footprint of an elephant, due to its large size, encompasses the footprints of all other animals (MN 28 and MĀ 30; Anālayo 2019b). Although this illustration concerns the four truths as a set, it seems reasonable to consider it applicable also to the fourth truth in particular, in that the eightfold path is indeed the overarching category for matters of practice and therefore also for the other six of the seven sets of qualities pertinent to awakening.

Turning to the nature of the eightfold path, its members can be seen to build on each other, comparable in this respect to the depiction of the gradual arousing of the awakening factors:

In one of right view, right intention comes into being; in one of right intention, right speech comes into being; in one of right speech, right action comes into being; in one of right action, right livelihood comes into being; in one of right livelihood, right effort comes into being; in one of right effort, right mindfulness comes into being; in one of right mindfulness, right concentration comes into being.

(SN 45.1: *sammādiṭṭhissa sammāsaṅkappo pahoti, sammāsaṅkappassa sammāvācā pahoti, sammāvācassa sammākammanto pahoti, sammākammantassa sammā-ājīvo pahoti, sammā-ājīvassa sammāvāyāmo pahoti, sammāvāyāmassa sammāsati pahoti, sammāsatisa sammāsamādhi pahoti*).

Right view having arisen, right intention arises, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration, which also arise one after the other.

(SĀ 749: 正見生已, 起正志, 正語, 正業, 正命, 正方便, 正念, 正定, 次第而起).

From right view, right intention arises *up to* right concentration arises.

(Up 4013: *yang dag pa'i lta ba de las yang dag pa'i rtog pa 'byung zhing yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin gyi bar du 'byung bar 'gyur te*; the earlier described case of wrong path factors lists each, hence the present depiction of the right path factors abbreviates the factors that come between intention and concentration).

Another similarity, compared with the awakening factors, is the importance of the first member of the respective list. The first awakening factor of mindfulness stands out among the whole set for being required at all times. A comparable standing obtains for the case of right view, as it provides the all-important directional input for the other path factors. It is based on its establishment that the remainder of the eightfold path unfolds.

Besides the above sequential presentation, there is also an interrelation of the path factors (MN 117, MĀ 189, Up 6080; Anālayo 2019e). This involves right view in the role of discriminating between right and wrong path factors, together with right effort applied to cultivating the former and overcoming the latter. The two are joined by right mindfulness, which serves to monitor what is taking place. This implies that mindfulness is required right from the outset; it would not be a correct reflection of the above sequential presentation if one were to assume that the previous six path factors need to be cultivated first, before embarking on right mindfulness. In this way, the cultivation of right mindfulness is best seen as standing in a dynamic interrelationship with all of the other path factors. Some degree of dynamic interrelationship, rather than a strictly sequential order, is also evident in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, where the three path factors of right speech, action, and

livelihood need to be established previously, whereas the others occur concomitant with the cultivation of meditative insight.

The first path factor of right view, which among the whole set of eight is of overarching importance due to the directional input it provides, can take the form of the four noble truths. This corresponds to the faculty (or power) of wisdom which, as discussed above, is directly relevant to the presentation in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels.

The second factor of right intention is as follows:

Monastics, what is right intention? Monastics, that which is the intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, and the intention of non-harming; that, monastics, is called right intention.

(SN 45.8: *katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo? yo kho, bhikkhave, nekkhammasaṅkappo, abyāpādasāṅkappo, avihimsāsaṅkappo, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo*).

What is right intention? It is reckoned to be the intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, and the intention of non-harming.

(SĀ 784: 何等為正志? 謂出要志, 無患志, 不害志; the formulation in another parallel extant as an individual translation, T 112, differs).

Out of these three types, the intention of renunciation would be particularly relevant to the insight meditation described in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels as what informs inner freedom from infatuation, attachment, and elation.

As already mentioned, the same discourse sets the next three path factors aside as something to be cultivated previously. The ensuing path factors of right effort and right mindfulness correspond to the first two among the seven sets of qualities pertinent to awakening, the four establishments of mindfulness and the four right endeavors.

The last path factor of right concentration seems to have originally been concerned with situating concentration within the context of the other path factors. In other words, the apparently earliest formulation of this path factor would have been the stipulation that concentration should build on right view, etc. The definition of right concentration as being equal to the four absorptions appears to belong to a slightly later stage in the evolution of early Buddhist thought (Anālayo 2019a). The idea of concentration, whatever its depth, cultivated in conjunction with the other path factors fits the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels better than the attainment of the four absorptions which, as already noted above in relation to the faculty of concentration, is less easily applied to such insight meditation.

In fact, the cultivation of concentration as such simply increases the ability of the mind to stay with a particular

object. Without the protective environment provided by the other seven path factors, such an object could in principle also be an unwholesome one. If something triggers anger, for example, this could have quite devastating effects if the mind has previously been trained in the ability to stay focused but not in the ability to discern clearly what is unwholesome (viz. right view) and to monitor closely what is taking place (viz. right mindfulness). This illustrates the importance of contextualizing the cultivation of concentration within the eightfold path in order for it to become “right,” in particular by building on the directional input provided by right view and the supervision afforded through right mindfulness.

The Seven Sets as Converging on Insight

Two of the passages taken up at the outset of this exploration present the main concern of the seven sets of qualities pertinent to awakening to be actual meditative cultivation. For this purpose, the one Pāli discourse that in accordance with extant parallels describes such actual meditative cultivation is the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta*. Consequently, the insight meditation in relation to the senses described in this discourse offers a crucial reference point and framework for understanding the practical significance of the qualities pertinent to awakening.

The correlations suggested below are not meant to confine the qualities pertinent to awakening to this particular type of insight meditation. The point is only that, on following the indications offered in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, certain relationships can be discerned which enable developing a perspective on how the cultivation of the qualities pertinent to awakening could be related to actual insight meditation.

From this viewpoint, the four establishments of mindfulness stand out among the seven sets as most directly relevant to the concerns of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels. None of the other sets has such a direct relationship to the cultivation of insight and mental balance in relation to the senses, except perhaps the awakening factors.

In the context of the four establishments, mindfulness collaborates with diligence, clear knowing, and the mental balance of being free from greed and sadness in the world. The quality of diligence to ensure continuity during actual mindfulness practice can be considered an implementation of the right endeavor to cultivate and protect a wholesome condition of the mind. The teaching on the four endeavors places this into a broader context, by showing that such cultivation and protection builds on the endeavor to abandon what is unwholesome and

prevent its recurrence through restraining. Further information relevant to the topic of diligence and endeavor can be garnered from the four bases of success. Whereas the four right endeavors point to where effort should be applied, the four bases of success reveal how such effort can be sustained. This can take place in reliance on desire, energy, the (nature of the) mind, and investigation.

The five faculties take up the qualities of energy and concentration, broached with the preceding sets of the four right endeavors and the four bases of success. These two faculties naturally complement each other. The same holds for confidence and wisdom, the latter being a mature stage of clear knowing as a basic dimension of formal mindfulness practice. Each of these four faculties could on its own become excessive, wherefore these two pairs should balance each other out. The only exception here is the faculty of mindfulness, of which there can never be too much. In this way, from the viewpoint of the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, the five faculties (or powers) can be understood to contextualize the key quality of mindfulness, showing how it can perform its essential role in the insight meditation described in this discourse by standing at the fulcrum of a point of balance between energy and concentration as well as between confidence and wisdom.

A complementary perspective on the theme of balance of the mind emerges with the seven awakening factors, whose gradual arousal builds up to a supreme degree of equipoise, a point at which greed and sadness have been definitely left behind. In doing so, the awakening factors provide another perspective on the interrelation of mindfulness with wisdom, which here takes the form of investigation. At the same time, they also set energy and concentration within their respective places in a gradual build up that leads from mindfulness to equipoise. This further fleshes out the contribution made by each of these qualities to the insight meditation described in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels.

The finishing touch comes with the eightfold path, which additionally covers the groundwork in ethical conduct that needs to be put in place beforehand, as explicitly indicated in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels. In this way, on following the indication provided in this discourse, the seven sets can be meaningfully related to the cultivation of mindfulness, throwing into relief its importance as what other discourses consider to be the direct path to realization.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval This article does not contain any studies performed by the author with human participants or animals.

Conflict of Interest The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

Abbreviations AN, *Āṅguttara-nikāya*; EĀ, *Ekottarika-āgama* (T 125); MĀ, *Madhyama-āgama* (T 26); MN, *Majjhima-nikāya*; SĀ, *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99); SN, *Samyutta-nikāya*; T, Taishō edition; Up, *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*; Vibh-a, *Sammohavinodanī*.

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