

Sati really does mean 'memory'

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“**M**indfulness” as we now understand it is the result a history of semantic change. This began in ancient times with the Pali word *sati*, which in origin means 'memory', and has somehow given rise to the modern term 'mindfulness', which the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines as “the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.” Moreover, modern scholars have perhaps been far too hasty to dismiss 'memory' as its central meaning in the EBT.¹ I hope to show here that *sati* barely strayed in the early times far afield from this central meaning.

Sati as memory of Dhamma

The word *sati* is a derivation of a root meaning 'memory' or 'recollection' and corresponds to the verb *sarati* 'remember' or 'recollect'. The cognate word in Sanskrit *smṛti* has a similar meaning and is commonly used specifically in reference to memory of the sacred Brahmanic texts, including the *Vedas*, or

1 Bodhi (2011, 2-3) states that *sati* no longer means memory, but something like “lucid awareness of the phenomenal field.” Anālayo (2014, 30-31) dismisses treating *sati* as memory on the grounds that virtually all perception is a matter of remembering patterns learned long ago, that all of us must therefore be mindful, in this sense, virtually all the time. Most authors catalog several distinct definitions of *sati*, generally with “awareness” as the only common factor, e.g., Kuan (2008, 41-56).

even to the body of sacred texts itself, which for many centuries were preserved in rote memory before they were committed to palm leaf. Similarly, the Buddha's teachings were preserved during the Buddha's lifetime and for centuries thereafter by rote memory, then taught, pondered upon and meditated on by drawing on and refining that memory. The Brahmins and the Buddhists are the two groups that best succeeded in preserving their scriptures in this way.

Accordingly, the Buddha offers us the following explicit definition of *sati*:²

And what is the faculty of *sati*? Here, monks, the noble disciple is recollective, possessing utmost recollection and discernment, recalling and bearing in mind even things that were done and said long ago. This is called the faculty of *sati*.³ (SN 48.9)

Stages of memory acquisition and development are described in the *Vimuttāyatana Sutta* (Bases of Liberation).⁴

Bases of liberation

1. The Teacher or a fellow monk in the position of a teacher teaches the *Dhamma* to a *bhikkhu* ...
2. He himself teaches the *Dhamma* to others in detail as he has heard it and learned it ...
3. He recites the *Dhamma* in detail as he has heard it and

2 A similar passage is found at MN 53 i 356.

3 *Katamañca, bhikkhave, sat'indriyaṃ? Idha, bhikkhave, ariya-sāvako satimā hoti paramena sati-nepakkena samannāgato cira katam pi cira bhāsitam pi saritā anussaritā. idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sat'indriyaṃ.*

4 DN 33 iii 241-2 provides a similar passage.

learned it ...

4. He ponders, examines, and mentally inspects the *Dhamma* as he has heard it and learned it ...
5. He has grasped well a certain object of concentration,⁵ attended to it well, sustained it well, and penetrated it well with wisdom ... (AN 5.26)

In the early centuries of Buddhism, in the absence of orthography, the first three stages would have required long hours of rote memorization of literal texts through public and private recitation. This is at least partly because monastics had an obligation to preserve the *Dhamma* orally for future generations. While modern pedagogy tends to discount rote learning, rote memory is still evident in many Asian lands, perhaps particularly in Myanmar, and even in modern circles we adhere to literal texts often in mettā practice:

“May they be free from danger, free from mental suffering, free from physical suffering, ...”

... or particularly in the recollection of the Buddha, recollection of the *Dhamma* and recollection of the *Saṅgha*.⁶

Iti pi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammābuddho ...

These five stages result in successively stronger impressions in memory. Stage 4. represents a significant turning over of memory since it typically adds significant conceptual content integrated into a wide fabric of previously learned conceptual content. Stage 5. refines memory even further by bringing it into the meditative

5 *samādhi-nimittaṃ*.

6 *buddha-anussati, dhamma-anussati, saṅgha-anussati*. Notice the derivative of *sati* in the sense of 'recollection'.

context, where it is paired with our phenomenal experience for closer examination and internalization, to the point that we effectively learn to perceive through the eyes of the Buddha.⁷ In this way, a simple arc integrates Dhamma, memory and meditation.

There are multiple aspects of memory brought out in the bases of liberation: *learning* is the creation of new memory, *memory* when unqualified suggests maintenance, and *recollection* is the retrieval of existing memory. *Rehearsal* strengthens memories through repeated recollection. *Development* recollects and relearns, with processing in between that changes the content of what is remembered. Finally *internalization* achieves a strong integration of memory into perception. Below I will prefer to translate *sati* 'recollection' to 'memory' insofar as it is common to most of the dynamic aspects of memory.

The following passage affords a closer look at the final two stages of the bases of liberation:⁸

Because when one has heard the Dhamma from such *bhikkhus* one dwells withdrawn by way of two kinds of withdrawal—withdrawal of body and withdrawal of mind. Dwelling thus withdrawn, one recollects that Dhamma and thinks it over. Whenever, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* dwelling thus withdrawn recollects that *Dhamma* and thinks it over, on that occasion the awakening factor of recollection⁹ is aroused by the *bhikkhu*. The *bhikkhu* develops the awakening factor of recollection at that time. The *bhikkhu*

7 As Shulman (2014, 106-112) argues, mediation effectively turns *Dhamma* into a mode of perception.

8 See also SN 46.3, 46.38.

9 *sati-sambojjhana*.

perfects the awakening factor of recollection at that time.

Whenever, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwelling thus recollective¹⁰ [] discriminates that *Dhamma* with wisdom, examines it, makes an investigation of it, on that occasion the awakening factor of investigation of phenomena¹¹ is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the awakening factor of investigation of phenomena; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of investigation of phenomena comes to fulfillment by development in the *bhikkhu*. (SN 46.3)

This is a description of the first two of the seven factors of awakening: recollection and investigation of phenomena. This passage is followed by descriptions of the remaining five factors: energy, delight, calm, *samādhi* and equanimity. The first two, which kick off this causal chain, are of primary interest here.¹² The fulfillment of the entire chain sets the context for knowledge and vision and ultimately liberation.

This passage helps us make sense of the word *satipaṭṭhāna*, which can be translated as 'attendance of recollection',¹³ for it pairs recollection of *Dhamma* with the investigation of phenomenal experience. In this sense the recollection is attending to or serving the examination of phenomena so that it can be examined and

10 *sato*.

11 *dhamma-vicaya-sambojjhaṅga*.

12 Cintita (2018) provides more details of this process, including the critical role of *samādhi*.

13 *Sati* 'memory' + *upa* 'near' + *ṭhāna* 'standing'. The compound *upaṭṭhāna* is thereby generally used in the sense of attending to, looking after or serving. Most modern scholars today analyze *satipaṭṭhāna* as *sati* + *upaṭṭhāna* rather than the obsolete alternative *sati* + *paṭṭhāna*., e.g., Anālayo (2006, 29-30), Bodhi (2000, p. 1504). The verb *upaṭṭhahati*, related to *upaṭṭhāna*, is often used in connection with *sati*.

investigated and “penetrated with wisdom.” On the basis of our direct experience our understanding of the *Dhamma* and therefore our memory of the *Dhamma* can be refined and internalized to become part of how we perceive. We will look more at *satipaṭṭhāna* below.¹⁴

Moreover, each of our five bases of liberation, not only the last, is a basis for meditation, which is to say, leads to *samādhī*. as stated in the following pericope which concludes the description of each of these five processes:

In whatever way [he teaches the Dhamma to a bhikkhu¹ [or each of the other five bases of liberation], he experiences inspiration in the meaning and inspiration in the Dhamma. As he does so, joy arises in him. When he is joyful, rapture arises. For one with a rapturous mind, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body feels pleasure. For one feeling pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. This is the [first] [second/third/fourth/fifth] base of liberation, by means of which, if a bhikkhu dwells heedful, ardent, and resolute, his unliberated mind is liberated, his undestroyed taints are utterly destroyed, and he reaches the as-yet-unreached unsurpassed security from bondage.

(AN 5.26)

This description also roughly follows the arc of the seven factors of awakening. It often goes unacknowledged in modern circles

14 Interestingly, the term *satipaṭṭhāna* is also used in one place in reference to the second liberation, that of teaching the Dhamma (MN 137, iii 221-2). Here recollection of the Dhamma seems to attend to the education of students rather than to phenomenal experiences, for rather than the usual four attendances (body, feeling, mind and phenomena), we find three: good students, a mix of good and bad, and bad students. The translation 'attendance of recollection' holds up for this quite distinct case.

that recitation is an integral part of meditation practice.¹⁵

In general, the *Buddhadhamma* is not aloof, abstract or speculative, but rather speaks to the needs of practitioners in real time situations, whether in making behavioral choices or in understanding their phenomenal experience. We can say that it is *situated* in that it brings Dhamma to mind in a manner appropriate to the current situation. It is in situated recollection that memory hits the road of practice. Situated recollection thereby informs (1) our behavioral choices, or (2) our observation of phenomena. Let's call (1) *regulatory recollection*, and (2) *framing recollection*. For instance, in making an ethical choice or settling into meditation we bring precepts or specific instructions to mind to direct our practice. This is regulatory recollection. In investigating craving as it arises we bring teachings to mind about craving, for instance, as a condition for suffering, to understand our experience. This is framing recollection.

Regulatory and framing recollection are not different kinds of memory per se, but reflect different kinds of *Dhammic* content. Nonetheless, they do manifest somewhat differently in practice, as we will see below. Also, not all recollection of *Dhamma* is situated, for example, recollecting the qualities of the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṅgha*. Although these recollections can fulfill the development of refuge, an essential prerequisite for the success of this practice, the content of recollection is independent of the current situation.¹⁶

15 In modern terms it would likely be classified as “*samatha*” practice, that is, leading to *jhāna* but not to significant insight or deep internalization.

16 Gethin (2011, 270) points out that, while we are remembering to keep the breath in mind, this practice is backed up by a nested set of recollections, for instance about the importance of meditation, the need to root out greed, hatred and delusion, and refuge itself, which, in my terms, support the

When *sati* regulates behavior

Parents often tell their roguishly ill-behaved children, “Remember your manners,” in the vain hope that they will constrain their impulses to throw food at the elderly, to offend the young and to make hideous slurping sounds. The hope is for situated recollection as a way of informing their behavioral choices.

Prominent in our Buddhist practice are our ethical choices, to which we apply the guidance of *Dhamma* as we remember it. We find this aspect of practice described in the following simile:

Just as the gatekeeper in the king's frontier fortress is wise, competent, and intelligent, one who keeps out strangers and admits acquaintances, for protecting its inhabitants and for warding off outsiders, so too a noble disciple is recollective,¹⁷ possessing supreme recollection and discrimination,¹⁸ one who remembers and recollects what was done and said long ago. With *sati* as his gate-keeper, the noble disciple abandons the unwholesome and develops the wholesome, abandons what is blameworthy and develops what is blameless, and maintains himself in purity. (AN 7.67, iv 110-111)

Notice that this passage once again describes *sati* as above in terms of remembering “what was done and said long ago,” but it also pairs the relevant recollection with the current situation. The pairing is reflected in the phrase 'recollection and discrimination' [*sati-nepakkena*], for the present situation is discriminated on the basis of recollection of what is wholesome, blameless, etc. or

situated practice.

17 *satimā*.

18 *sati-nepakkena*.

their opposites.

For example, *sati* might act as the gatekeeper when the impulse arises – “Yikes! A cockroach!” [WHAP] – to assault a living being, such that the first of the five precepts is called to mind to provide guidance in the current situation. Just as recollection of *Dhamma* plays a role in discriminating our skillful (*kusala*) from our unskillful (*akusala*) thoughts, it also points out the need to guard our sense faculties lest lust arise. In each case the parameters set by *Dhamma* are recalled then adhered to, often in opposition to contrary impulses and distractions. In fully functional practice, the appropriate recollection is evoked to distinguish what is proper (*sammā*) from what is improper (*micchā*), for example, for each of the steps of the noble eightfold path.

Sati will also apply to instructions for various practices, such as proper wearing of one's robes or details of *satipaṭṭhāna* or *ānāpānasati* meditation. Such practice instructions belong to *Dhamma* and are recalled and borne in mind as we practice. *Sati* is responsible, for instance, for ensuring that our *satipaṭṭhāna* practice remains within the parameters of *satipaṭṭhāna* instruction.

In brief, we see that *sati* serves as the regulator of our practice choices. While *sati* makes the necessary discriminations, right effort secures adherence to the parameters noticed through memory of *Dhamma*. If practice is optimal, *sati* will bring to mind right action, for instance, and will always notice that when our choices are in danger of falling outside of the parameters of right action. This point is made with respect to each of the early steps of the noble eightfold path in the following pericope, illustrated with respect to right thought:

When one understand wrong [thought] [...] as wrong [thought] [...] and right [thought] [...] as right [thought] [...], that's your *right view*. ... One makes an effort to abandon wrong [thought] [...] and to enter upon right [thought] [...]. This is one's *right effort*. Recollecting,¹⁹ one abandons wrong [thought], recollecting one enters upon and abides in right [thought]: this is one's *right recollection*.²⁰ Thus these three things run and circle around right [thought] [...], that is, right view, right effort and right recollection. (MN 117)

Sati, as the regulator of practice choice, typically demands continual attention, and deliberation, a consistent johnny-on-the-spot discriminating awareness of the present situation, alongside immediate recall of the relevant *Dhamma* to guide our choices. Presence of mind and deliberation, in turn, demand non-distraction. In fact, *sati* can and must be trained in these qualities, as we will see below. This gives *sati*, at least as situated recollection, a noteworthy quality that is often described in modern literature as “being in the present moment.”

A simile might help to understand the regulatory role of *sati* in making choices according to *Dhamma*. *Sati* in this role is like a thermostat. The heater or air conditioner is like right effort. The setting of the thermostat is like right view, carrying the age-old wisdom of climatic comfort, say, 70° F (21° C). The room temperature is the relevant feature of current situation. The thermostat pairs the recollection of setting with the discernment of room temperature, and does this perfectly without distraction. Would that we were all so reliable. If the room temperature goes

19 *sato*.

20 *sammā-sati*.

beyond, say, a 1° tolerance, the thermostat (*sati*) notifies the heater or air conditioner to turn on or off as appropriate.

Regulatory recollection plays an important role in *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation, in which, as we will see, framing recollection also plays an important role. The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* presents four contemplations, and many subsidiary contemplations, based on different fields of experience. The following pericope states the regulatory role for all of the contemplations:

He dwells observing the 'body' [feeling/mind/phenomena] in the 'body' [...], ardent, clearly comprehending and *recollecting*, having put away covetousness and grief concerning the world. (DN 22, MN 10)

The central task for each contemplation is observation (*anupassanā*) of the particular field, while recollecting any *Dhamma* relevant to that field; this thus involves framing recollection as well, which we will return to below. We are also asked to maintain a sense of ardency or alertness and actively investigate what we observe. We are also asked to put away worldly distractions. Most challenging is keeping distractions at bay. Elsewhere²¹ the distractions are expanded to the five hindrances that tend to impinge on contemplative practice: lust, ill-will, sloth-torpor, restlessness-remorse and doubt.

It is *sati* in its regulatory role, recollecting these instructions (right view) while attending to the current situations, that notes when we deviate from the parameters set forth. Right effort makes corrections. We find right view, right effort and right recollection here circling around the *satipaṭṭhāna*, as these do around any

21 For instance, SN 47.5.

similarly defined practice.

When *sati* informs observation

A birdwatcher brings her cumulative memory of all things bird to her understanding and appreciation of the activities on feeder and in bush. Moreover, the more she engages in her hobby, the more her knowledge, which is to say her memory, is refined, eventually to develop into the very way she perceives the feathery realm, far beyond even the invaluable sketches her *Peterson Field Guide* provides.

As we engage in *satipaṭṭhāna* waits on the arising and falling of experience, and as a result our knowledge is honed, polished, fine-tuned and distilled, until we begin to behold the phenomenal world through the very eyes of the Buddha. Although *sati* in its regulatory role is very active in *satipaṭṭhāna*, it is *sati* in its framing role that puts the *sati*- in *satipaṭṭhāna*, since the regulatory role is common to all practice.

The fourth contemplation of the *satipaṭṭhāna*, observation of phenomena (*dhammānupassanā*), provides a particularly relevant illustration because its explicit task is to observe *dhammā* (phenomenal experiences) through the lens of *Dhamma*.

He dwells observing phenomena²² in phenomena, ardent, clearly comprehending and *recollecting*,²³ having put away covetousness and grief concerning the world. (DN 22, MN 10)

In *dhammānupassanā*, we begin by selecting a topic of *Dhamma*

22 *dhammānupassī*.

23 *satimā*.

and *Dhamma* drives our interpretation of phenomena arising in experience. Listed²⁴ as *dhammic* themes to guide observation are: the five hindrances, the seven factors of awakening, the five aggregates, the sixfold sphere (aka the six sense bases) and the four noble truths. The Pali *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (MN 118) also lists four qualities to be examined with respect to the breath, said to satisfy the fourth establishment of mindfulness: impermanence, dispassion, cessation and relinquishment. It is clear that the scope of the fourth establishment of mindfulness is quite extensive, including any teachings that can be related to phenomenal experience in this way.²⁵

In *dhammānupassanā* we pair memory (*sati*) with observation of phenomena, bringing in clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) to effectively test and amend our understanding empirically by matching it against experience as we deepen our ability to fully comprehend that experience. The first two factors of the seven factors of awakening similarly pair *sati* and analysis of phenomena (*dhamma-vicaya*) to frame the same process, in which analysis of phenomena can be equated with observation of phenomena with clear comprehension.

As we have seen, the term *satipaṭṭhāna* suggests recollection as

24 MN 10.

25 Kuan (2008, 128) states, “Therefore dhammas in the fourth *satipaṭṭhāna* can cover virtually whatever phenomena become the objects of consciousness, which are contemplated from the Buddhist point of view.” This is indeed a wide swath of Dhamma, but Shulman (2014, 31) also argues that it is wider than we often acknowledge, for much of what we understand in *Dhamma* as abstract, philosophical or otherwise difficult to relate to the current situation, in fact first arose in “particular, concrete meditative moments.” He points to, as an extended example, the four noble truths, which historically has become an abstraction, but which he points out in most texts is worded with reference to phenomenal experience.

serving the analysis of phenomena, but in fact while recollection of *Dhamma* gives insight into phenomena, the observation of phenomena gives insight into *Dhamma*, as our understanding and thereby memory is corrected and elaborated. Shulman suggests that the two processes will eventually merge so that there is no difference between our understanding and the way we see things as recollection and observation become increasingly refined.²⁶ He calls *sati* “a method by which philosophy [i.e., *Dhamma*] is turned into an active way of seeing.”²⁷ Kuan sees *sati* as directing perception (*saññā*) to conform to *Dhamma* such that wisdom (*paññā*) results.²⁸ In fact, it would seem that perception is the farthest extent of situated recollection, since it involves bringing past experience to bear on the interpretation of present phenomena in an almost instinctive way. As recollection and interpretation merge, we begin, as Gombrich puts it, to think *with* the teachings rather than *about* them, or “to see with the Buddha's spectacles.”²⁹

When sati does not seem to mean 'memory'

The Buddha gives us a telling simile, of an occasion in which the most beautiful girl of the land will dance and sing and accordingly draws a large assembly of people. In the midst of the hubbub, a man is given an unusual task:

“Good man, you must carry around this bowl of oil filled to the brim between the crowd and the most beautiful girl of the land. A man with a drawn sword will be following

26 Shulman (2014, 12).

27 Shulman (2014, 111).

28 Kuan (2008, 58-59).

29 Gombrich (1997, 36).

right behind you, and wherever you spill even a little of it, right there he will fell your head.” (SN 47.20)

The Buddha then explains,

The bowl of oil filled to the brim: this is a designation for recollection directed to the body.³⁰ (SN 47.20)

If *sati* is situated recollection of the *Dhamma* (in either a framing or regulatory role), spilling a drop of oil must represent forgetting the *Dhamma* when it is needed, even for an instant. Well and good. Overcoming distraction is the challenge in this passage, and the sword, of course, represents the urgency of practice. For a long time I was confused when I read that the bowl of oil represented “mindfulness”; I thought the task of overcoming distraction would represent “mindfulness,” or the overall task of staying on task. But the task itself involves factors that are incidental to recollection, strictly speaking. In this simile *sati* indeed means 'recollection'.

Nonetheless, a similar reaching beyond the strict role of *sati* in such examples is endorsed in the EBT: The seventh step of the noble eightfold path *sammā-sati* (right recollection, “right mindfulness”) is identified not with *sati* itself but with the whole of the *satipaṭṭhāna*, in which *sati* is properly just one of a configuration of elements:

And what, bhikkhus, is right recollection? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwells observing the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending, *recollecting*, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. He dwells observing feelings in feelings, ... mind in mind ...

30 *kāyagatā sati*.

phenomena in phenomena ... This is right recollection.
(SN 45.8)

The *satipaṭṭhāna* is a process of observation (*anupassanā*) and *sati* is one element of that process, one that brings the guidance of *Dhamma* optimally into our investigation. Linguistically, using the term for one element of a complex or whole to signify the whole is *synecdoche*, which is a common figure of speech, as when we say 'hired hand' but assume we are hiring the body parts attached to the hand as well, or '9/11' to refer to a particular event that happened on that date in a particular year. Clearly *sati* is, indeed, accorded a prominent role in this process of observation, for we can regard the overall function of the process of *satipaṭṭhāna*, as one of extending memory through learning and deep internalization of *Dhamma*., but *sati* is not, strictly speaking, the entirety of the *satipaṭṭhāna*.

Moreover, within *satipaṭṭhāna* the role of *sati* is not as constant as the discussion so far would mislead one into thinking. If we consider the first section of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, on observation of body (*kāyānupassanā*), we find passages like the following:

Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is one who acts with clear comprehension³¹ when going forward and returning; who acts with clear comprehension when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts with clear comprehension when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts with clear comprehension when defecating and urinating; who acts with clear comprehension when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent.

31 *sampajānakārī*.

In this way he abides observing the body³² in a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally. Or else he abides observing in the body its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else the recollection³³ 'there is a body' is in attendance in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and recollection. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. (MN 10, i 57)

The practice here is clearly open-ended, extensible to a wide swath of additional physical activities, such as cutting potatoes or feeding the dog, chopping wood or carrying water. In fact, one can practice this almost all day in the midst of one's everyday activities off the cushion.

More importantly, the framing *Dhammic* content with which *sati* attends, is quite thin; it requires no study of Dhamma for us to keep in mind that there is a body. I suggest this is a kind of place holder for the role of *sati* among the configuration of other factors. The passage does, however, also bring in recollection of impermanence, a teaching that is profound, but is also universally applicable to the observation of all phenomena and mentioned throughout the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

With the sidelining of framing recollection in this passage, what remains are the other factors of *satipaṭṭhāna*: observation, clear comprehension, seclusion from distractions, stripping down of extra conceptual content. This practice comes close to being

32 *kāyānupassī*.

33 *sati*.

satipaṭṭhāna without the *sati*, much like a suitcase is still a suitcase even when it has never actually held a suit. This is, in short, not a practice for internalizing *Dhamma*, but for training and mastering a very portable *satipaṭṭhāna* abstracted from *Dhammic* content as a kind of multifaceted mental faculty.

Gethin, in his study of the meanings of *sati* in the EBT describes one of them as follows:

“... if we have mindfulness then we will remember what it is that we should be doing in a given moment.”³⁴

In this sense, “mindfulness” is keeping firmly in mind what our present task is, along with its parameters, then staying on that task and not being distracted from that task. In fact, the English word “mindfulness” captures this, as when we are mindful to have our tires rotated, or mindful not to allow the miso soup to boil. This definition actually highlights the regulatory function of *sati*, but omits the framing. The regulatory function, it will be recalled, has been there all the time, as it is found in all Buddhist practices.

The identification of right recollection with *satipaṭṭhāna*, along with the dispensability of framing recollection of *Dhamma* within the *satipaṭṭhāna* has opening up to a widening of the meaning of *sati*

Conclusions

Sati, in the EBT, seems never to wander far afield of its original meaning, 'memory'.³⁵ The particular application of *sati* that characterizes the *satipaṭṭhāna* is to provide a *Dhammic* basis for

34 Gethin (2011, 272).

35 Thanissaro's (2012, e.g., 9-14) account of mindfulness also sticks close to its early definition as memory.

examination of phenomena. From a different perspective, *satipaṭṭhāna* supports the internalization of *Dhamma*, ultimately integrating *Dhamma* into perception. *Sati*, once identified with the full *satipaṭṭhāna* process of which it is properly an element, may become disassociated from memory in some contexts, insofar as some applications of *satipaṭṭhāna* minimize the role of recollection of the *Dhamma*. This may anticipate aspects of the modern definitions.³⁶

I think the main thing we can take away from this study is an appreciation of the tight integration of *Dhamma* study and *satipaṭṭhāna* or factors-of-awakening practice in the EBT, the latter being an extension of *Dhamma* study concerned with deep internalization of the *Dhamma*, with learning to see with the eyes of the Buddha.

When, *bhikkhus*, a noble disciple listens to the *Dhamma* with eager ears, attending to it as a matter of vital concern, directing his whole mind to it, on that occasion the seven factors of awakening go to fulfillment and development.
(SN 46.38)

It is important that we appreciate this because this integration seems to have frayed in many of the later traditions.³⁷

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36 I will follow up with an account of the modern meaning of the term, “How did mindfulness become 'bare, non-judgmental, present-moment awareness'?” in the immediate future.

37 See Shulman (2014), Cintita (2018) for more on the weakening of this integration.

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