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# The Direct Path - an Exploration of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*

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## 2) Thesis Abstract

"The direct path - an exploration of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*"  
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The present paper proposes an exploration of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* within its early Buddhist canonical and philosophical context. Foremost in this exploration is the understanding to be gained by evaluating each passage from the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in the light of relevant discourses recorded elsewhere in the *Suttapiṭaka* of the *Pāli* canon. At the same time, whenever opportune, certain key terms are further explored within their historical context and in the light of early Buddhist philosophy as described by a variety of academic articles and monographies. In addition to this, selected material from the *Abhidhamma* and the commentarial traditions has been considered, together with the practical approaches to *satipaṭṭhāna* described by a variety of modern-day meditation teachers.

The first half of this thesis examines general aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation. This is followed by an exploration of the individual *satipaṭṭhāna* meditations. In addition to investigating key terms and the various meditations of the discourse itself, the following issues are discussed in this thesis: comparison of the *Pāli* discourse with Sanskrit and Chinese versions; significance of the term '*Nibbāna*'; role of effort; early Buddhist approach to knowledge; role of *samādhi* in relation to the development of insight; *paṭicca samuppāda*; early Buddhist analysis of *diṭṭhi*; importance of joy for meditation; theory of karma; *anattā*; early Buddhist analysis of the perceptual process; gradual and sudden as-

pects of realisation. In the conclusion central aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna* are set into the general context of the *Pāli* canon. The research outlook examines some features of the commentarial exegesis and of the Zen traditions, in the hope of stimulating further research.