

# ***SOME SOURCES ON BREATH IN BUDDHIST MEDITATION***

## **PALI CANON**

*Anapanasati Sutta*: Mindfulness of Breathing – Majjhima Nikaya 118

*Mahsatipatthana Sutta*: The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness – Digha Nikaya 22

*Anapanasamyutta*: Connected Discourses on Breathing – Samyutta Nikaya 54

## **ANAPANASATI SUTTA COMMENTARIES: THERAVADA / VIPASSANA**

Breath By Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation

Larry Rosenberg (with David Guy)

Shambhala (1998)

*An excellent presentation of Anapanasati as a practice of meditation and daily life, taught as both a full & linear system and as a simpler and less “progressive” practice. By a Vipassana teacher with experience in Japanese and Korean Zen.*

*Includes translation of part of the Sutra.*

Mindfulness With Breathing: A Manual for Serious Beginners

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Trans. Santikaro Bikkhu

Wisdom Publications (1997)

*Practical commentary on the sutra by a traditional contemporary Theravadan teacher.*

*Includes translation of the Sutra.*

Breathe! You Are Alive: Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing

Thich Nhat Hanh

Parallax (1996)

*Thich Nhat Hanh. Includes translation of the Sutra.*

The Wings to Awakening

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Metta Forest Monastery (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2004)

(esp. pgs. 72-105 “Frames of Reference”)

whole book available at:

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/wings/index.html#preface>

*A very good guide to the Theravadan meditative system.*

## **ZEN**

*Suzuki Roshi – all writings. See “some Suzuki Roshi excerpts on breath” handout.*

*Keizan Zenji – Zazen Yojinki (in “The Art of Just Sitting” and “Soto Zen”)*

*Dogen – Fukanzazengi, Zazengi*

Dogen’s Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Koroku

Taigen Dan Leighton & Shohaku Okumura, Translators

Wisdom (2004)

*Pgs. 348-350: Dogen’s most explicit reference to breath practice. His take on Buddha’s “know a long breath as a long breath,” etc., and reflections on Hinayana/Mahayana breath practice. Also translated in part in “Soto Zen”.*

Book of Serenity: Case 3 “The Invitation of the Patriarch to Eastern India.”  
(any translation, including:)  
Thomas Cleary, Translator  
Shambhala (2005)  
*pgs. 11-16. Prajnatarā/Hannyatara Daishō’s koan on breath.*

Soto Zen: An Introduction to Zazen  
Sotoshu Shumicho (2002)  
*Includes Dogen’s Eihei Koroku breathing section, part of Keizan’s Yojinki, and some action photos of monks breathing. Shows mainstream Soto Zen understanding of zazen, shikantaza, and how breath fits in.*

The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)  
John Daido Looi, Editor  
Wisdom (2004)  
*Compilation of root and contemporary sources. Includes Keizan Zazen Yojinki and Dogen’s Fukanzazengi and Zazengi. Not so much on breathing, but a well-rounded pointing at the context of shikantaza against which the question of breathing becomes very interesting.*

Minding Mind: A Course in Basic Meditation  
Thomas Cleary  
Shambhala (1995)  
*Esp. Man-an “An Elementary Talk on Zen” pgs. 83-106.*

Hara: The Vital Center of Man  
Karlfried Graf Dürckheim  
Inner Traditions (2004)  
*Orientalist and out-dated but how cool is it that there is a whole book about hara?! It makes explicit some of the cultural attitudes underlying how Japanese Zen understands breath.*

Zen Training: Methods and Philosophy  
Katsuki Sekida  
Shambhala Classics (2005)  
*A hands-on Rinzai Zen book that includes extensive comments on the physiology of breathing and offers intense breathing methods like “bamboo exhalation”.*

The Path to Bodhidharma: The Teachings of Shodo Harada Roshi  
Priscilla Daichi Storandt, Translator  
Tuttle (2000)  
*Contemporary teachings from an eminent Japanese Rinzai teacher. Esp. note “Zazen” chapter, pgs. 49-68. Includes summary of Chih-I’s six aspects or methods of breathing.*

**RELATED STUDIES:** Buddhist approaches to breath rest on the foundations of Yoga (Pranayama) and Daoist meditation. General books or basic internet searches on those traditions provide interesting context for understanding breath in Buddhism.