

effort,
heedfulness
& the yogi



SAYADAW U PANDITA





AN INWARD JOURNEY BOOK
IJ066/02

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Published by
INWARD PATH
Penang • Malaysia



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Published by

INWARD PATH

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www.buddhanet.net/ipp.htm

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Special Thanks to Sister Gavesini & Helen (KL)

ISBN 983-9439-65-0

2,000 copies, Kathina 2002

New Layout & Design: 2,000 copies, Kathina 2004

Book cover design and layout by Sunanda Lim

Printed in Penang, Malaysia





THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPILATION of Sayādaw U Paṇḍita's answers and advice given to foreign yogis (meditators) during the weekly Dhamma Discussion sessions at the Paṇḍitārama Meditation Centre in Yangon. It is a sequel to the initial work entitled 'Dhamma Discussion Series, Vol. 1' (1996) but presented in a slightly different format.

In the first part of this issue, Sayādaw discusses the essential qualities of a good yogi and the importance of exertion in Insight Meditation practice. In the second part, he elaborates on the meaning of 'heedfulness' and its opposite.

Acknowledgment

This booklet could not have materialised without the continuous help, support and enthusiasm of fellow yogis. I would like to specially acknowledge the kind assistance of the following Dhamma friends;

- Ven. (Ashin) U Pannadipa of Tathagatha Meditation Centre, San Jose, California, for helping with the translation of Myanmar Language to English;

- Ven. U Vivekananda of Panditarama Meditation Centre, Lumbini, Nepal for the transcription and compilation of the original manuscript;
- Kathy Kwok and Doris Yeoh, for the painstaking task of proof-reading;
- Kuan Thye, for meticulously checking all the Pali terms and spelling;
- Sunanda Lim for the layout and cover design.
- Finally, “Mahā-Sādhu” to all the generous donors who have made this free publication possible.

May this Dhammadāna be to all of them, a source of happiness and a supportive factor in their spiritual quest.

Gavesini

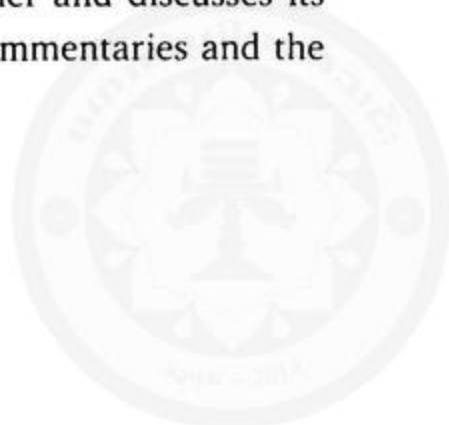
Selangor, Malaysia

September 15, 2002





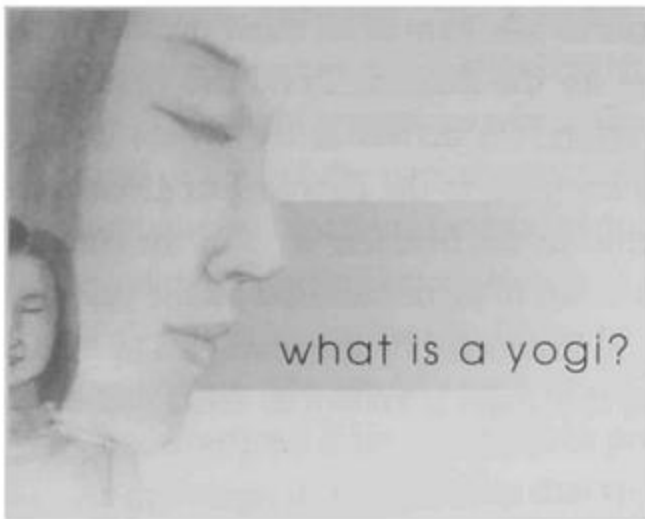
ACCORDING TO SAYĀDAW U PAṄḌITA, there are two types of monks (*bhikkhus*) — one who is a *bhikkhu* by virtue of his appearance and the other, by virtue of his practice. The first one just puts on the robes without fulfilling the practice required of a monk. The other puts on the robes, practises and fulfils his duties as a monk. In the same way, yogis can be said to be of two types. Similarly, one may be a yogi only by physical appearance while the other is a yogi by practice. It does not matter if the yogi wears a uniform or not. A yogi is one who practises meditation. This definition alone is however not good enough to illustrate the full meaning of the term yogi as used in the texts so Sayādaw goes a step further and discusses its full implication in accordance with the commentaries and the sub-commentaries.





...yogi refers to one who
strives or puts forth effort
for the Dhamma.





IN THE BURMESE LANGUAGE, the term meditator or yogi refers to one who strives or puts forth effort for the Dhamma.

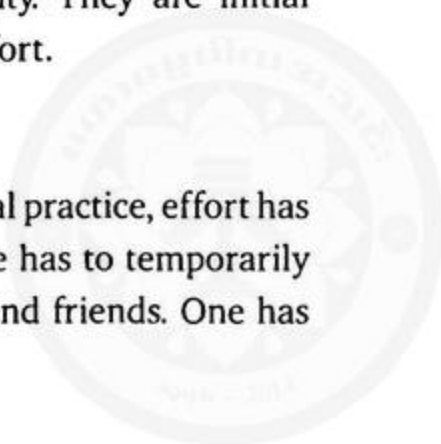
A yogi is one who makes effort in his practice for mental development and insight knowledge. This is the duty of a yogi. The key word used in this definition which needs to be qualified is "effort".

What kind of effort is meant here?

Effort (*Viriya*) or energy can be classified into three kinds according to the degree or level of intensity. They are initial effort, stepped-up effort and persevering effort.

1. Initial Effort (*Ārambha Dhātu*)

Even before one gets down to do the actual practice, effort has to be applied. To be a full time yogi, one has to temporarily give up one's job, hobby, home, family and friends. One has



to make arrangements to take care of all these details at the outset before leaving for the Retreat. To do this requires a lot of courage and effort. On arrival at the retreat centre, one has to pay close attention to the instructions given with regards to the practice. In the first few days of the retreat, the yogi has to exert effort to focus his mind on the primary object of meditation as instructed by the teacher. The effort he has applied up to this stage is known as initial effort or preliminary effort.

2. Stepped-up Effort (*Nikkama Dhātu*)

After a few days into the retreat, the yogi is bound to encounter some difficulties in his practice like sluggishness, sleepiness, sloth, restlessness and boredom. To overcome these obstacles, the yogi has to put forth even more effort than before. Making increased effort at this point is known as stepped-up effort. Normally, most people react in a negative manner whenever they encounter some problems. The undeveloped mind's nature is to resign itself to inactivity or sluggishness. This is not uncommon in the practice of sitting meditation.

When a lot of unpleasant sensations (*dukkha vedanā*) like pain and aches arise, yogis normally try to get rid of the discomfort by changing the sitting posture or even by adopting another posture like the reclining posture or simply lying down. If they are doing the walking meditation practice, they may not like walking for a full hour and halfway through the session they will succumb to the desire to sit down. These sort of yogis will rationalise by thinking, "These pain and aches may cause harm to my body so it would be better to change my posture". By giving in to such thoughts

every now and then, one will not be able to progress. By changing posture, one avoids contemplating on the nature of the unpleasant sensations whenever they arise. One does not avail oneself of the opportunity presented in the form of the unpleasant sensations (*vedanā*) which is in fact an object for *vipassanā* contemplation. Hence, it would be impossible for such a yogi to realise the Dhamma through direct personal experience. He would never get to see the three Universal Characteristics if he continues to practise in such a manner. At this stage, it is imperative that the yogi steps up his effort to counter whatever hindrances that arise in his practice.

3. Persevering Effort (*Parakkama Dhātu*)

This is the effort required to persist and maintain a steady progression in the practice until one reaches the final goal. It is the kind of unrelenting effort that one has to put forth to progress through the different stages of insight knowledges (*ñāṇa*) one after another until the attainment of Nibbāna.

Just as a runner who is approaching the finish line should increase his effort, the yogi who is close to the goal should continue to work enthusiastically and continuously until he reaches his goal.

One who comes to the meditation center and wears the yogi's uniform but does not apply these three types of effort cannot be called a 'real' yogi. Only one who makes these three types of effort can be called a 'real' yogi. It is only when these three types of effort are present, that concentration and wisdom will develop.

Some yogis are afraid of painful sensations and tend to worry unnecessarily about their physical health while doing the practice. This fear and worry will undermine their effort in the

practice as they will naturally relax or even stop the practice. Such yogis have to be given the reassurance that they will not die or become paralysed as a result of the practice of meditation. On the other hand, some yogis do not experience much pain but instead experience more pleasant sensations so they delight in such experiences. They begin to relax or even stop noting altogether.

Is noting the object so important in the practice?

Of course, it is. Without the canvass as a medium an artist cannot possibly produce a painting. He cannot draw or paint in the air. Without a target a marksman cannot develop his shooting skill. Similarly, when a yogi notes a mental or physical object, it becomes the medium, which enables him to know the distinction between mind and matter, the cause and effect relationship and the arising and passing away nature of all phenomena. Therefore any lapse in making a mental note of the presently occurring object would be detrimental to the yogi's progress of insight knowledge.

How does a yogi make continuous effort?

The duty of a yogi is to note whatever object arises without a break. To note the object precisely as it occurs, he has also to exercise proper aiming. Here are a few examples to illustrate the meaning and importance of aiming accurately and noting continuously.

Just as one knows the actual taste of a certain food only by chewing it properly, a yogi knows the true nature of the object only if he notes the object with precise aiming.

A marksman has to aim properly at the target before pulling the trigger. Similarly a yogi has to aim accurately at the object of noting such as rising and falling etc., to note it precisely.

All vehicles can move and reach their destination without any problems when their engines are working well. Similarly when a yogi's "noting engine" is in motion, the yogi is sure to reach his destination of Nibbāna without any delay or hitches.

Yogis must activate mindfulness without a break just as a swimmer has to activate his hands and legs continuously in the water otherwise he would surely drown.

Why must noting be done meticulously and thoroughly?

To realise and appreciate the true nature of the object as it really is. If one reads quickly in a superficial manner, one will not really be conscious of each and every word as when one reads carefully and thoroughly. Similarly the yogi who notes superficially cannot know the object thoroughly. Only by noting in a focussed and continuous manner will the yogi know the object comprehensively and clearly. So it is every yogi's duty to note and know thoroughly every aspect of the object as experienced at the very moment of its occurrence without missing anything.



Why is it so important to make continuous effort at noting?

A good yogi has to make effort continuously so that he reaches his final destination smoothly without being hindered by the defilements.

The edge of a knife becomes sharp when it is sharpened and a silver cup becomes shiny after it is polished. After some time the knife can become blunt if it is not sharpened again and again. The silver cup will be tarnished and will lose its lustre if it is not polished continuously. Similarly, when a yogi notes continuously, his insight becomes very sharp and bright. Only with insights that are sharp and strong can one penetrate and realise the true nature and characteristics of the reality that is being experienced.

With continuous effort, both mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) will be strengthened.

When one can note properly with effort, the physical and mental objects consistently and continuously, mindfulness will develop and with this strong mindfulness one can prevent the defilements from arising.

Here is a good example to clarify this point. In Burma, during the monsoon season, the prevailing wind blow from the southwest direction, bringing a lot of rain. If the doors and windows of our monastery building are not kept closed properly, the wind and rain will come in and cause a lot of damage. Similarly with the defilements; if you leave the six sense-doors 'open' i.e., unrestrained without exercising mindfulness, the defilements will easily enter your stream of consciousness and cause unwholesomeness to arise in your mind. By exercising mindfulness, you keep the sense-doors closed. Thus greed

(*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and ignorance (*moha*) will be kept out.

Sustained mindfulness leads to the development of stronger concentration. With stronger concentration, the mind does not wander from the primary object. Instead the mind fixes itself on the primary object of attention so there is no opportunity for the defilements to arise. This is tantamount to “killing the defilements”. The defilements are kept even farther at bay so they no longer become a threat to one’s progress. The following analogy will illustrate this point.

Imagine that you are surrounded by enemies who are ready to strike. If your mind is not alert at all times, the enemies could easily attack you at the moment when you are unaware but if you are alert and fully mindful of the situation, there is less chance of you being overwhelmed by your enemies. To be mindful continuously would require strenuous and unrelenting effort but you will be safe and free from any kind of danger. You will not fall victim to the defilements. This leads to temporary peace and security of mind.

Concentration also has an overpowering effect on the mind. For example, a child who is not under the control of his guardian or parents tends to become very playful, mischievous and at times, reckless. However, once he realises he is under the watchful eyes of his parents, he will eventually become well-disciplined and obedient. Likewise, because of concentration the mind will not wander, it will not be restless, playful and reckless. Because of concentration the mind is focussed on the object. When the mind is under control even for a short moment, it is pure and free from *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* for the duration of that moment. This is known as purity of mind (*citta visuddhi*) in the texts.

The mind could be easily directed to any object and it would remain there for some time. This is a characteristic of the mind,

which is concentrated, pure and free from *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*. Just as powerful binoculars will enable one to see even small objects far away, a skilful yogi can observe even very small objects when his concentration is very strong. This is yet another beautiful quality of concentration.

The purification of mind is a gradual process and is comparable to an empty bottle being filled slowly with water. By allowing the water to drip slowly into the bottle drop by drop, the air is gradually displaced at the same rate. The displacement of air is likened to the defilements being kept out while the dripping of the water droplets is likened to the gradual purification of the mind.

What are the benefits of practising as a real yogi?

A real or genuine yogi makes effort all the time because he knows that effort acts effectively as his personal defensive system against all defiling elements. This is the immediate benefit of making continuous effort as a real yogi.

Peace, security and happiness automatically arise in the absence of defilements. This is the second benefit of making continuous effort.

The third benefit is the purification and refinement of the mind. This requires a lot of effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*).

A boxer needs to avoid his opponent's fists and at the same time look for a chance to hit his opponent with all his might when the opportunity arises. The opponent gets weaker each time he is hit. Similarly, the yogi needs to avoid any attack by the defilements (*kilesa*) which are his opponents. When the yogi gets the chance i.e., when the object arises, he must quickly and

promptly make his move and “attack” with his noting mind. Once is not enough. He must repeatedly note the object in order to further weaken the defilements until they are finally uprooted and destroyed. In this manner the yogi will be able to overcome some defilements until the point of no return through attainment of the first Path of Stream-Entry (*Sotāpatti Magga*).

What happens if a yogi does not make effort continuously?

On the other hand, if one does not practise properly and respectfully by making continuous effort, mindfulness will not develop and without strong mindfulness, strong concentration will not arise.

For instance, if there are gaps on a wooden parquet floor, dust will collect in these gaps. Similarly, if a yogi’s noting is not continuous, that is, there are frequent lapses in his notings, *kilesa* will arise. When concentration is broken, *kilesa* will enter the mind.

Of the three factors, effort, mindfulness and concentration, effort is the most critical. Why? Without effort, mindfulness and concentration will be very weak and thus the mind will not be clear and bright. Instead it will be weak, dull and slow. This is the state of a deluded mind which is full of ignorance (*moha*).



What becomes of a yogi who does not put in any effort in the practice?

As one grows older one's physical body will mature. Not so, the untrained mind. It will not mature automatically with age. It will remain immature and undeveloped without effort. One's life as a human being will be of a substandard quality.

Restlessness (*uddhacca*) and boredom will weaken and pollute one's mind. The undeveloped mind is very vulnerable for it is assailed constantly by defilements of all sorts and there will be no peace and happiness. It is easily drawn to sense-pleasures and is easily overwhelmed by aversion and delusion. Moreover, the mental factors of shamelessness (*ahirika*) and fearlessness (*anottappa*) of doing unwholesome deeds will have a strong negative influence on the mind. This is a very dangerous condition. *Anottappa* is likened to a drunkard who is not afraid of the consequences of driving under the influence of liquor while *uddhacca* is likened to a heap of ashes into which a stone is thrown causing the ashes to scatter all over the place. The ashes will keep afloat and not settle down easily again. This is bound to happen to the yogi whose mind is under attack by the defilements, which is due to his negligence in not making a conscious effort to note properly.

If that yogi realises his folly and if for one moment he can note properly with sufficient effort, then for that moment the defilements will not arise and his mind will for that moment's duration, be peaceful and purified. If he can note for the next few successive moments properly, his mindfulness and concentration will develop even further and his mind will become more refined. A mind that is continuously refined by *vipassanā* (*satipaṭṭhāna*) meditation will mature gradually and when wisdom has developed, the mature mind will be unaffected by

kilesa. The mind that is developed through meditation is said to have spiritual stamina and wisdom. It is for this reason that meditation is known in Pāli as *bhāvanā*, meaning mental development or mental cultivation.

How does the yogi progress?

The beginner yogi when noting and observing the rising and falling of the abdomen has to put in initial effort. When encountering sleepiness, laziness etc. the yogi has to step up his or her effort (stepped-up effort) to overcome the sleepiness, laziness etc. Finally, the yogi has to increase his effort even further (persevering effort) so as to reach the goal. When the mind is totally mindful, it is free from *kilesa*, i.e. the mind is refined and developed. This is the result of *bhāvanā* (mental development).

Once the mind is well-developed and one can note properly, there are mainly four factors of the Eightfold Path involved, i.e. right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), right aiming (*sammā-saṅkappa*), right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*) and right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*). The gradual progress of the yogi is likened to going up the stairs or climbing up a mountain. Going up step by step one will reach higher and higher levels. As the mind becomes more and more developed, it is less and less affected by *kilesa*. The hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*), i.e. sensuous desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness and worries (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) and skeptical doubts (*vicikicchā*) are not likely to arise and they no longer disturb the mind.

This is likened to a rocket travelling into space. It becomes less and less affected by gravity, and once in space it will be free from the earth's gravitational force. The purpose of meditation

is to be free from *nīvaraṇas* or *kilesas*. In the beginning, a rocket needs a lot of energy. Similarly, the yogi needs to make the initial effort. If the initial energy of the rocket is not enough it will not be able to take off. Ordinary effort will not be enough to get to the next stage. Every single second, effort has to be made. Once the rocket is in orbit and free from the gravitational force it can manoeuvre freely. So also the “liberated” mind is free from the “gravitational” forces of the *kilesa*. However, if the yogi’s mind strays without noting, the mind will gravitate towards the *kilesa* again and hence it will not be free from them.

What are the characteristics of Viriya?

The Pāli term *virīya* can be rendered as effort, vigor, courage, bravery or strength. When encountering a problem, most human beings give up. They do not fight against the difficulty. They have no courage. After meditating for some time the yogi will have to face both physical suffering (*kāyika dukkha*) and mental suffering (*manasika dukkha*). Most yogis try to avoid *dukkha* (discomfort or pain). They want to be comfortable all the time so they keep changing their sitting postures. Changing posture frequently shows that the yogis are not being courageous and are not making enough effort. When facing physical and mental discomfort, the yogi should make effort to be courageous and try to overcome the discomfort. *Virīya* has the characteristic of ‘sustaining’ (*ussāhana lakkaṇa*). This means, one is willing to overcome suffering with patience even at the ‘risk of one’s life’. The yogi should make effort even to the extent of sacrificing his or her own life.

Another characteristic of *virīya* is ‘supporting’ (*upatthambhana lakkaṇa*). A house that is on the verge of collapse can

serve to illustrate this aspect of *virīya*. In order to save the house one must use support-beams. As an old house is supported by support-beams, so also the yogi when faced with difficulties, should support his practice by increasing his effort or level of exertion. He should not relax or stop exerting himself. The unsupported house will shake and eventually collapse. Similarly, the unsupported mind will not be steady. In the face of physical and mental suffering one will easily give up. However, if one makes more effort and perseveres unrelentingly the mind will become strong, calm, stable and peaceful again.

How can one induce more effort?

The reflection on *saṁvega-vatthu*, (i.e. the eight objects inducing a sense of urgency) can serve as a way to increase effort (*virīya*). They are birth, old age, illness, death, misery in the four woeful planes (*apāya*) and misery caused by *saṁsāra* in the past, present and future. A number of examples will illustrate how *saṁvega* can be a source for increasing one's *virīya*. An ordinary person upon seeing an old man will not ponder about it. A yogi, however, when seeing an old man will reflect on the inevitability of old age, thus, arousing a sense of urgency (*saṁvega*) in him and he will put in more effort in his practice. He can be compared to a person who has almost recovered from a disease. He is well aware of the dangers of disease so out of a strong sense of urgency, he will strive on until full recovery. This exertion is due to the arising of *saṁvega*.

A traveller, who is exhausted after a long journey will nevertheless continue to plod on so long as he has yet to reach his destination. Similarly a yogi who is filled with a sense of urgency

makes strong effort to meditate. This effort is *virīya*. Now, an example with regards to food. A yogi, knowing that in the next few days there might be a food shortage will be filled with a sense of urgency so he will naturally increase his effort in meditation. On the other hand, if a yogi keeps worrying about getting the proper kind of food and medicine, then he will be wasting a lot of time and energy and will not be able to progress well in his practice. Some yogis worry excessively about their health. They even think they might die because of meditation. Thinking in this way results in reduced effort. Such yogis are no longer real yogis. They will put in less effort, therefore mindfulness will be weakened and in turn concentration will decrease. In this manner only very little progress can be made. A real yogi is not afraid of obstacles, be it pain and aches, poor food or severe climate.

How does this technique of noting and being continuously mindful lead one to the attainment of Nibbāna?

Firstly, one has to have faith in this technique of noting just like a person who walks towards the Shwedagon Pagoda knows that he is getting closer to the pagoda with every step taken. He continues on his journey without hesitating for a moment and he is sure to reach his destination. Similarly a yogi walking on this *Satipaṭṭhāna* Path is sure to get closer to Nibbāna with each noting.

For one who has defeated his enemies in a war before, he becomes confident in fighting his enemies again. A yogi who has overcome obstacles such as discouragement or fear caused by either physical or mental pain will be more confident and courageous in facing them again. The more hindrances he is able to overcome, the more confident and skilful he becomes in handling them.

Is it essential for a yogi to have a teacher?

For someone who travels to a new place, he should follow the instructions of a competent guide. The guide should point out to him the right and the wrong path and encourage the traveler to plod on even when he is tired. He should not confuse the traveller with unimportant things such as names of villages and cities, etc. This way the traveler will certainly reach his destination. In the same way, yogis who practise for progressive insight must follow a skilful teacher's instructions on the journey of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. The teacher should not burden the yogi with unnecessary details such as the names of insight knowledges. The teacher should encourage him and when necessary point out the right and wrong paths. When appropriate the teacher should also encourage the yogi by explaining to him the insights that has been attained. In this way the yogi will reach his destination smoothly.

When an infant grows from stage to stage — lying, standing, crawling, walking, he goes through new experiences that may seem strange to him. These are signs of his physical development. Similarly, a yogi may feel a little bewildered when his knowledge moves from one level or stage of insight to another. He may not even realise that he is progressing in his development of insight knowledge so he has to rely on his teacher for reassurance and guidance. In war, a soldier must follow the orders of his general. In the war with defilements, a yogi should follow his teacher's instructions to overcome them.

As one's reading skill improves, one is able to read many words at an instant. Likewise, when a yogi's noting skill improves, he progresses from noting one object at a time to becoming automatically aware of many objects at a time without pinpointing

or labelling. Like a person who can throw the dart and hit the bull's eye without special aiming, a veteran yogi who is very skilful can note the objects without making any special effort.

Can one whose mind is still impure, purify the mind?

It is possible otherwise the Buddha would not have encouraged us to do so. By making much effort in one's meditation the mind can be purified. As long as the mind is not purified it will always be indulging in ignorance (*avijjā*).

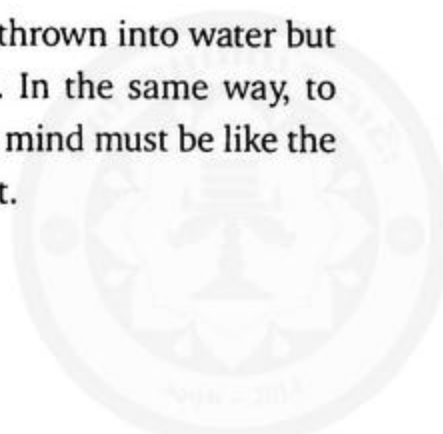
What object should the yogi keep his mind on?

A soccer player must keep his eyes on the ball. A badminton player must keep his eyes on the shuttlecock and a boxer must keep his eyes on his opponent. What about the yogi?

A yogi should keep his mind on the object that comes into his field of awareness at the present moment.

A person carrying a cup full of oil needs to carry it carefully or it will spill. A person walking along a narrow mountain cliff needs to be very careful as he takes his steps or he will slip and fall. Yogis, in the same way, need to note while moving around slowly and mindfully.

Light-weight materials will float when thrown into water but if a stone is thrown, it will certainly sink. In the same way, to realise insight knowledge, the yogi's noting mind must be like the stone sinking or penetrating into the object.



How is a yogi equal to a bhikkhu?

A lay person who comes to this centre for intensive meditation practice can, at first be considered a *bhikkhu* by name only. Whether he or she is a lay person, nun or monk, the Buddha defined a real *bhikkhu* as a person who notes and knows the arising mental and physical phenomena all the time. It is like a child going to school. In the beginning the child learns little, but because of his attendance the child is called a student. Later on, as the child observes the school discipline, the various rules and regulations at school, performs his duties and acquires knowledge, that child becomes a real student. In the same way, a *bhikkhu* who observes the Vinaya (monastic discipline) as laid down by the Buddha and who respects the rules can be called a *sīla-bhikkhu*.

The basic requirement for a *bhikkhu* is to have mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*). The word *bhikkhu* can be rendered in many ways. In a wide sense it comprises monks, nuns and yogis. There are two important meanings of the term '*bhikkhu*'.

1. One who has got rid of the evil qualities which lead to rebirth, and
2. One who sees fear in the cycle of rebirth (*samsāra*).

The term *samsāra* can be interpreted in two ways:

- i) The continuous arising and passing away of psycho-physical phenomena. For instance, the intention (mind) to bend the arm and the action of bending (matter) the arm. The intention (mind) to see and the action of seeing (matter) and so on, from moment to moment.
- ii) The cycle of rebirth, the process of again and again being born, growing old, suffering and dying. Now you are a

human being but in the next existence you might be reborn as an animal, heavenly being (*deva*), ghost spirit (*peta*) or again as a human being. Depending on the performance of good or bad deeds in the previous existence, good or bad experiences will be encountered in this existence. Good begets good, bad begets bad. Having performed bad deeds (*duccarita*) such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants in a previous existence and not believing in rebirth causes negative results in the next existence. On the other hand, performing good deeds (*sucarita*) or in other words avoiding all bad deeds (*duccarita*) results in a good rebirth. Having done *duccarita* one can become an animal in the next existence. Life as an animal is fraught with dangers. When dying as an animal, the death-consciousness is filled with fear and worry. Therefore rebirth will not take place in a good plane of existence. Once reborn as an animal, it is very difficult to be reborn into the human realm again. Though deities (*devas*) are beings who live in happy realms, they too, are subject to repeated birth and death. Human beings in the human realm encounter both happiness as well as suffering (pain, disease, old age, death etc.).

In the woeful planes, suffering exceeds happiness. A *bhikkhu* ought to be aware of this fact. Without the purification of one's physical actions, speech and mind, the combination of body and mind will reappear again and again and the defilements (*kilesa*), such as craving (*taṇhā*), hatred (*dosa*) and ignorance (*avijja*), will keep creeping into the mind and there will be no end to rebirth. A *bhikkhu* is one who sees fear in this cycle of rebirth.

There are three grades of *kilesa*.

1. *Vītikkama kilesa* are defilements, which result in the transgression of one's precepts, and violation of the rights of others. Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants belong to this group of coarse defilements.
2. *Pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa* or obsessive defilements occur only on the mental level and do not manifest physically or verbally. The intention to do some unwholesome deed is an example of this mediocre form of defilement.
3. *Anusaya kilesa* are those dormant defilements that have not yet arisen in the mind but if there is a chance and when conditions are right, they cause *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa* and *vītikkama kilesa* to arise. *Anusaya kilesa* are very potent and can cause a lot of damage. They are also known as proclivities, inclinations, or tendencies. The three forms of *kilesa* are likened to an active, waking and sleeping person respectively. The *kilesa* will not disappear by themselves.

How does one do away with the kilesa?

There are three ways of destroying the three levels of *kilesa*:

1. With *sīla-sikkhā* (training in morality or virtue) the *vītikkama kilesa* (gross or coarse form of defilements) are destroyed.
2. With *samādhi-sikkhā* (training in concentration) the *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa* (medium form of defilements) are destroyed.
3. With *paññā-sikkhā* (training in wisdom) the *anusaya kilesa* (latent or dormant defilements) are destroyed.

In order to get out of *saṃsāra* the yogi has to actively destroy the three types of *kilesa*. While meditating one undergoes training in morality, concentration and wisdom. In every act of noting, morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) are involved. The practice of morality can eradicate the first and coarse form of defilement, the practice of concentration, the second form while the development of wisdom through meditation will destroy the third form of defilement. Hence, the three levels of defilement will be eradicated step by step and the meditator can be regarded as a *bhikkhu* even if he or she is not ordained but only a lay person.

When the yogi notes an object promptly with accurate aiming and concentration, for that moment, the *kilesa* are killed temporarily. As one notes the objects properly, wisdom will arise and one will know the difference between *nāma* (mentality) and *rūpa* (materiality). One will understand the Law of Cause and Effect. Whoever practises like this can be called a *bhikkhu*. Why? Because such a person is killing the *kilesa* and trying to gain insight. Such a person is a *bhikkhu* by virtue of his practice, not a *bhikkhu* in name. In this way, a yogi who is striving hard is equal to a *bhikkhu*. Wearing the robes, offering food or robes, reciting the scriptures, paying homage, etc. alone does not lead to insight about *nāma* and *rūpa*.

In the Dhammapada, verse 276, the Buddha explicitly stated that to be free from the bondage of *kilesa* and to cause the *kilesa* to dry up, one has to note accurately and precisely.

*Tumhehi kiccaṃ atappaṃ
akkhātāro tathāgatā,
Paṭipannā pamokkhanti
jhayino mārabandhanā.*



You yourselves should make the effort;
 the *Tathāgatas* (Buddhas)
 can only show the way.
 Those who practise Tranquility and
 Insight meditation are freed from
 the bondage of Māra.”

Māra as it appears in the above context, is a personification of the evil tendencies in ordinary unenlightened beings (*anariya*), such as greed, hatred and delusion. Due to these inherent tendencies, they do not want to improve their conduct or uplift the quality of their lives. Yogis who are practising sincerely wish to improve the quality of their minds and lives so they are engaged actively in eradicating the defilements. This is indeed praiseworthy.

How does the Path of Morality (Sīla Magganga) help to eradicate the kilesas?

Yogis are always reminded to speak only when necessary. They are to refrain from gossiping, lying, slandering, and harsh speech as this practice of verbal restraint constitutes right speech (*sammā-vācā*). It can also be called verbal culture or purity of speech. When practising right speech one has *mettā* (loving-kindness) for the other person as there is no intention to hurt anyone. It is not always appropriate to tell the truth in a direct manner, if it hurts others. In such cases one should express the truth in an indirect manner.

A person fulfilled with Right Bodily Action (*sammā-kammanta*), refrains from performing acts of killing, stealing

and sexual misconduct.

Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), means abstaining from a livelihood that brings harm to others. Generally, monks have right livelihood because the food, medicine, dwelling and robes they receive are offered by devotees and are not acquired through any form of cheating or exploitation.

Those who are meditating at this meditation centre are pure in speech, physical actions and livelihood. Observing these three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path is cultivating the path of morality (*sīla magganga*) and it is praiseworthy because it is beneficial for both oneself and others. By keeping *sīla* (morality) one gives the gift of fearlessness (*abhaya-dāna*) to others.

There are two kinds of restraint:

1. Restraint of one's actions for one's own good and
2. Restraint of one's actions for the sake of others i.e. wanting to spare others from harm and danger.

For example: Imagine yourself standing next to a mud pool and another person is teasing you. You are tempted to throw a fistful of mud at that person who is annoying you but you restrain yourself. If you restrain yourself because you do not want to get your hands soiled you are practising the first type of restraint. If however, you decide to spare the other person simply because you do not want to hurt him, you are practising the second type of restraint.

Some people say keeping *sīla* is selfish. In reality, it is not so, because by observing precepts and restraining oneself, one protects oneself and others simultaneously. As the saying goes, one is 'killing two birds with one stone'. Hence one who is fulfilled in *sīla-magganga* is a "practical and genuine *bhikkhu*".

How does the Path of Concentration (Samādhi Magganga) help to eradicate the kilesas?

Sīla-magganga only helps to dispel the coarse *kilesas* like killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc. With only the development of *sīla-magganga*, one cannot restrain the mind from evil tendencies. Although one refrains oneself from transgressing through body and speech, the thought or desire to kill, steal, lie etc. might still arise in the mind. These are unwholesome mental factors. Only by *samādhi-magganga* can these unwholesome mental factors be dispelled.

Samādhi-magganga comprises effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*). To note an object continuously requires Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*). Yogis are instructed to note all general activities as well, such as bathing, changing clothes, opening and closing doors, taking off shoes, etc. If noting is done properly and continuously with effort, *kilesas* cannot arise while one is performing these actions. Right effort means not accommodating the *kilesas*.

The ability to note and know precisely whatever object arises from moment to moment is Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). With right mindfulness, unwholesomeness (*akusala*) cannot arise. Mindfulness (*sati*) is like the door of a house, which keeps out dust, dirt, rain and wind. Mindfulness keeps the *kilesas* out. There is a cause and effect relationship between effort and mindfulness. Without effort, mindfulness cannot develop and in the absence of mindfulness *kilesas* will arise. The ability to concentrate the noting mind from moment-to-moment on whatever object that arises is known as momentary concentration (*khaṇika samādhi*).

If effort, mindfulness and concentration are present for a moment, then for that moment the gross (*pariyuṭṭhāna*) *kilesas* of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* will not arise. This kind of concentrated

mental state can also be achieved when practising *samatha-bhāvanā* (*Mettā Bhāvanā, Buddhānussati...* etc.).

Sense objects should be noted straight away as and when they arise. The noting mind must be close to each other, without a gap, only then can concentration gain in strength. Those yogis who can note continuously on a stretch are known as 'samādhi-bhikkhus'. If *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi* are not present, the seed for the arising of gross or coarse defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa*) is still present.

How does one eradicate kilesas for good?

Not being totally and permanently eradicated, *kilesas* can re-appear like a disease that recurs because the medicine prescribed was not taken regularly. *Sīla* and *samādhi-magganga* can eradicate *kilesas* only to a certain extent. However, with *paññā-magganga* the *kilesas* can be fully extinguished. *Paññā-magganga* is of two kinds:

1. *Vipassanā-paññā*, which knows the distinction between *nāma-rūpa*, cause and effect relationship and the three Universal Characteristics of *anicca-dukkha-anattā*. With the development of *Vipassana-paññā* the *kilesas* are temporarily eradicated.
2. *Magga-paññā* is wisdom as realized on attainment of *sotāpatti-magga*, *sakadāgāmi-magga*, *anāgāmi-magga* and *arahatta-magga*. Upon attaining the first three *maggas*, some of the *kilesas* are eradicated for good, and only at *arahatta-magga* are all *kilesas* permanently eradicated.

A person who possesses *paññā* (wisdom) through development of both types of wisdom is known as a *paññā-bhikkhu*.

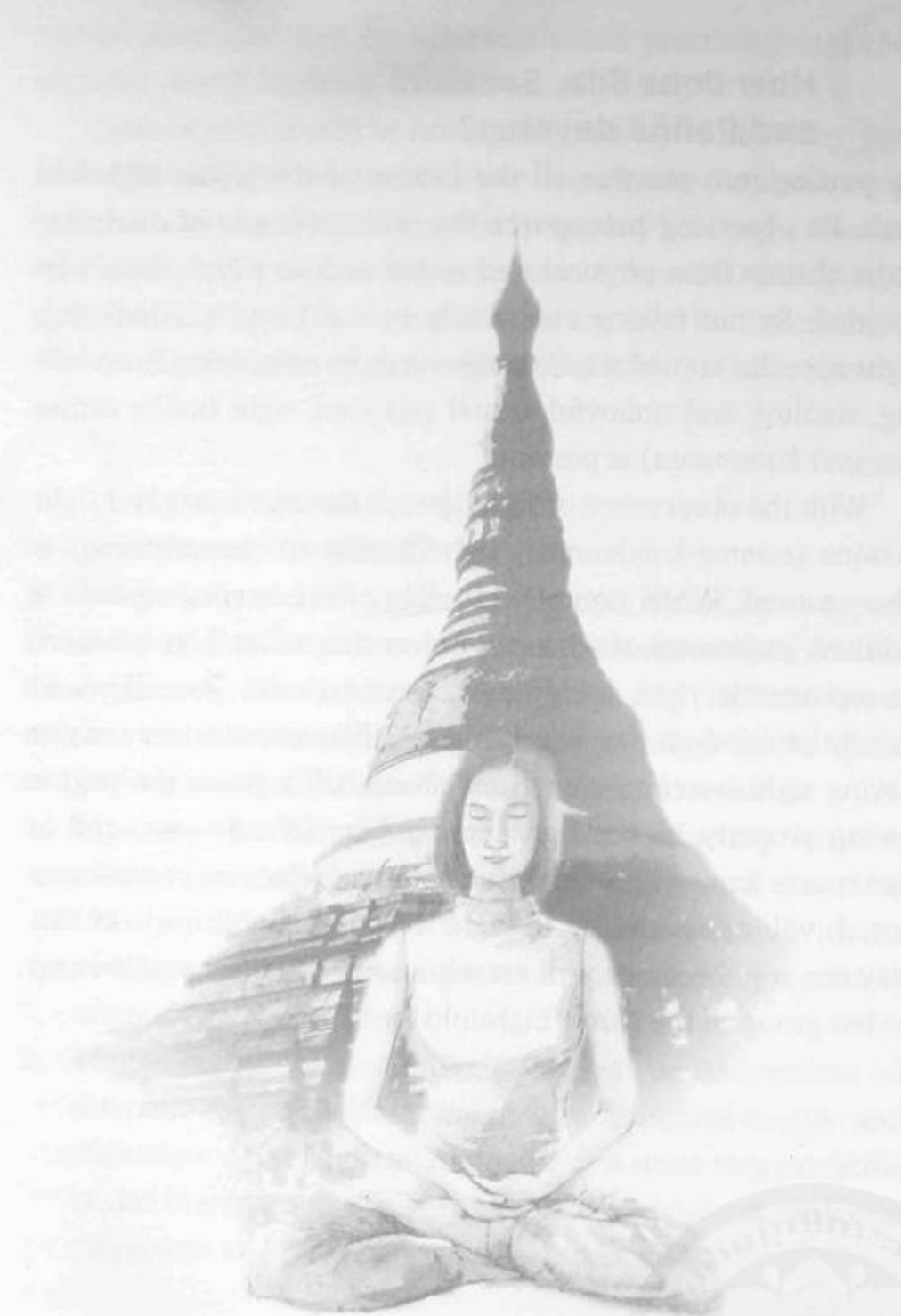
With proper noting *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* will unfold.

How does Sila, Samādhi and Paññā develop?

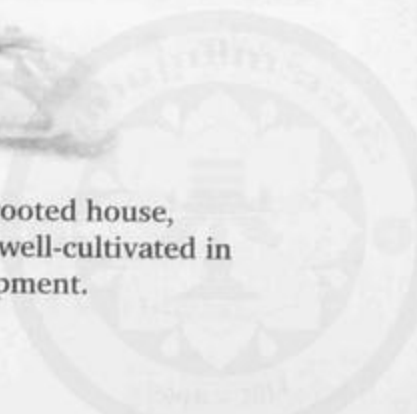
By putting into practice all the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. By observing precepts or the monastic code of discipline yogis abstain from physical and verbal actions which should be avoided. By not talking excessively, by not lying or slandering, right speech (*sammā-vācā*) is observed. By abstaining from killing, stealing and unlawful sexual relations, right bodily action (*sammā-kammanta*) is present.

With the observance of right speech (*sammā-vācā*) and right actions (*sammā-kammanta*), right livelihood (*samma-ājīva*) is also ensured. When noting with right effort, *sammā-vāyāma* is fulfilled. Awareness of whatever object that arises from moment to moment is right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). Focusing and fixing the mind on the object in a steadfast manner amounts to having right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*). Since the yogi is noting properly, he has right aiming (*sammā-saṅkappa*) and in due course knowledge of the true nature of whatever phenomena noted, will arise leading to right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). In this way the yogi becomes well established in the *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* group of the Noble Eightfold Path.





**Just as rain cannot penetrate a well-rooted house,
So also passion cannot penetrate a mind well-cultivated in
Tranquility and Insight Development.**





PEOPLE WHO CAN KEEP MORALITY (*sīla*), i.e. avoid actions which harm other beings, are 'real' human beings. In the absence of an imposed system of discipline people tend to do whatever they like. The Buddha laid down a moral discipline for the welfare of humanity. A moral discipline sets a certain standard with the aim to improve the quality of life. People with a low quality of life must obey, follow and respect that discipline and by doing so the quality of their life will be raised. One must practise wholesome behaviour by body, speech and mind (*puñña-kiriya*) in order to uplift one's status to the highest degree in both mundane and dhamma spheres. Such practice should be made a habit, which requires one to be non-negligent and unforgetful in one's behaviour. One must be heedful, diligent, alert, earnest and watchful. In short, it means living with "*Appamāda*". The meaning of "*Appamāda*" can be known by analyzing its opposite, "*pamāda*". *Pamāda* has the meaning of carelessness, forgetfulness, and heedlessness with regards to wholesome practice.

A sober person is a normal person, whereas a drunkard under the influence of liquor is slightly mad. A person can also be intoxicated with wealth, lust, career, etc. When a person is drunk, his or her sense of moral dread and moral shame (*hiri* and *ottappa*) disappear and such a person may kill, steal, tell lies, speak harsh words or use abusive language thereby causing harm to others. Intoxication causes:

- i. Failure to abstain from what should be abstained and
- ii. Failure to observe what should be observed.

If, however, one is alert and unflinching in abstaining from that which will lower one's status and in observing that which will uplift one's status, one is said to be fulfilled with heedfulness (*Appamāda*). Just as when eating one must unflinchingly take good and clean food in order to be free from discomfort and disease.

Here it should be mentioned that there are three grades of *pamāda*: coarse, mediocre and refined. Failing to abstain from the ten forms of misconduct (*duccarita*) which cause harm to oneself and others is the coarse type of *pamāda*. This *duccarita* includes:

1. Three forms of bodily misconduct (*kāya-duccarita*) — killing, stealing and sexual misconduct
2. Four forms of verbal misconduct (*vacā-duccarita*) — lying, malicious talk, frivolous speech and harsh speech
3. Three forms of mental misconduct (*mano-duccarita*) — covetousness, ill-will and perverted view (i.e. not having the view of good acts beget good results and bad acts beget bad results).

Failing to control one's mind regarding sensual objects is the mediocre form of *pamāda*. We take delight in sensual pleasures, we want to see beautiful things, hear pleasant sounds, smell fragrant

odours, taste delicious food and think about pleasant events. In this way we do not restrain the mind. There is no intention to harm others here, but the main motivation is the gratification of sense desires. Controlling the mind with regards to sensual pleasures is *Appamāda* and the inability to do so is *pamāda*. Lack of mental restraint with regards to sensual pleasures is dangerous and can even lead to fatal consequences. Just as ants will get stuck in the honey they are enjoying, so too those who are excessive in their pursuit of sensual pleasures will get 'stuck' and 'sink' in them. This is the cause of one's downfall.

Pain, unpleasantness, trouble and suffering (*dukkha*) have its source in *taṇhā* which in turn has its source in desirable objects (*kāma-guṇa*). Association with one's beloved is *sukha* while the inevitable separation from them is *dukkha*. Those who have not meditated tend to suffer a lot in the face of life's vicissitudes and adversities. However, experienced yogis who have developed some amount of spiritual stamina will suffer less.

How do we establish Appamāda?

The Buddha's answer is simple. By continuously contemplating any of the four postures (*kāya-vipassanā*) — sitting, standing, walking and lying.

Refined *pamāda* is found in those meditators who do not practice *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation respectfully and seriously. A good yogi practices conscientiously, meticulously, respectfully and obediently follows the instructions given. He is always noting continuously, accurately and precisely throughout the day. He eats and sleeps in moderation (4 hours at night), moves about as if sick, blind, deaf, dumb and notes all objects at

the six sense-doors continuously, moment-to-moment, without gaps and precisely. He even notes the intention to blink the eye and the actual blinking. Such a yogi is said to have very refined *Appamāda*.

Although people have eyes to see with, the Buddha encouraged yogis to behave as if they are blind. Trying to look at visual objects results in failure to note seeing consciousness that is arising. Although one has ears, one should behave like a deaf person, thereby protecting the mind from liking the pleasant sounds or disliking unpleasant sounds. A meditator who behaves like a blind and deaf person will not see or hear anything and he will then be able to note continuously. Although he may have a good amount of general knowledge about many things, he should act like a dumb person. There is no need to discuss one's general knowledge with others during intensive practice.

Why are yogis advised not to talk?

While talking, yogis will miss noting for a few moments. Let us assume that one mental noting is roughly equal in duration to one second. One minute of talking is equal to missing sixty mental notings, five minutes of talking is equivalent to 300 times of failed noting and one hour of talking means missing 3600 moments of noting.

The Buddha has given the following advice about talking: Try to avoid talking. Even if you have to talk for a good reason you should limit the duration of the conversation and limit the topic to Dhamma only, taking care to exclude worldly subjects. After a conversation it is usually difficult to note continuously because the momentum of noting has been disrupted.

Is it possible for one to be mindful while talking?

Yes, it is possible but it is not easy to maintain this mindfulness. While talking the yogi should note and be aware of the intention to talk, the movements of the lips, changes of tone and the words used. When meditators report their meditation experiences during interviews and when they listen to Dhamma talks they should also try to maintain their mindfulness by making general notings.

In order to understand the real nature (*sabhāva*) of mental and physical phenomena all activities have to be slowed down and physical movements such as getting up, bending, stretching, walking, turning, sitting down, bowing, eating, bathing and dressing, etc. have to be done slowly, mindfully and with utmost care. Not performing one's activities in a slow and mindful manner amounts to refined *pamāda*. Patients in a hospital have to be handled slowly and carefully, otherwise their condition might be adversely affected. Likewise, yogis should take great care to perform daily activities slowly and without failing to make a mental note of them.

When eating food it is important to chew the food properly to avoid indigestion. Likewise in noting. One should not swallow meditation objects without noting, the consequence thereof is “*dhamma*-indigestion” and there is no cure for that.

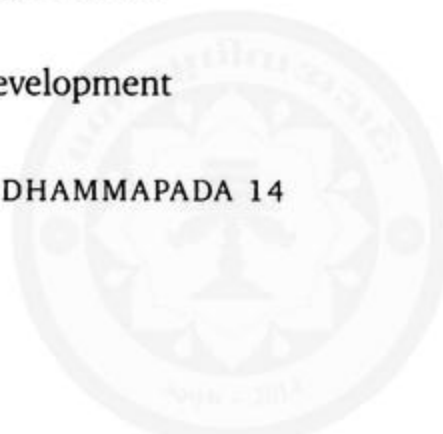
At home one can change one's posture as often as one likes and one can sit down in whatever posture so long as it is convenient and comfortable. This is not so during a meditation retreat. During sitting meditation one should try not to change the sitting posture as it will affect the development of concentration (*samādhi*). One must have lots of patience to restrain oneself from changing one's posture. When experiencing unbearable

physical pain, the yogi should regard the body as a dead body, then the pain will not bother the yogi so much. It will help to remind oneself that to date no yogi has died from pain or injury sustained from intensive meditation practice.

Not noting the arising and passing away of all mental and physical phenomena consistently is a form of refined *pamāda*. On the other hand, continuous, consistent noting without gaps is a form of *Appamāda*. Only when the noting of all activities and all objects arising at the six sense-doors is continuous, precise and consistent, without gaps from the moment one gets up in the morning until one goes to bed at night, will there be progress in the practice. Failure to do so is referred to in Pāli as *asatata kiriya*, i.e. discontinuous performance of an action or deed. Just as rain penetrates a badly roofed house, so also, passion (*rāga*) penetrates a mind not cultivated in Tranquility and Insight Development (*samatha* and *vipassanā*).

*Yathā agāraṃ suchannaṃ
vutthī na samativijjhati,
evaṃ subhāvitaṃ cittaṃ
rāgo na samativijjhati*

Just as rain cannot penetrate
a well-roofed house,
So also passion (*rāga*) cannot penetrate
a mind well-cultivated in
Tranquility and Insight Development
(*samatha* and *vipassanā*).



Noting mental and physical objects in a discontinuous manner with gaps in between (notings) will allow defilements (*kilesa*) to arise in the mind. Wide gaps in noting are comparable to a big hole in a roof. Noting all physical and mental phenomena at the six sense-doors continuously and without gaps will guarantee that one can withstand all *kilesas* (defilement) like a well-roofed house.

During sitting, one has to note the objects as and when they arise. If one misses to note, the true nature of the object cannot be known and hence ignorance (*avijjā*) will arise. When seeing something pleasant, desire (*lobha*) arises. When seeing an unpleasant object, dislike (*dosa*) is likely to arise. Before changing one's posture from sitting to standing one has to note the intention to get up, followed by careful and precise noting of all movements of the hands, legs, trunk and head. As one experiences the weight of the body on the palms, one notes it as 'heavy', 'heavy'. Then sensations of stiffness might appear in various parts of the body. These sensations, too, have to be noted and known. All movements involved in changing one's posture should be carried out slowly and carefully. Yogis should not act like school children — impulsively rushing out of the classroom at the sound of the bell!

Noting with gaps allows *kilesas* to arise, hence *samādhi* (concentration) cannot develop. This in turn gives rise to doubts about the practice. The meditator will start to have doubts about the meditation teacher and find himself in low spirits. If a yogi carries on like this, he or she will not gain anything from the practice and is merely wasting time. This kind of yogi is comparable to a patient who is ill. After having diagnosed the ailment, the doctor will prescribe some medicine. The patient however, fails to take the medicine, so he cannot recover. Then doubts about the qualifications of the doctor or the medication will arise.

Finally, the patient goes and sees another doctor. The new doctor prescribes some other medicine and again the patient does not take the medicine regularly so he does not recover. Again doubts arise about the second doctor and the patient consults a third doctor. This patient ends up having a chronic disease. Similarly in meditation practice, some yogis become 'chronic yogis'. Not following carefully the meditation teacher's instructions, they are unable to practise well and eventually become frustrated. Most 'chronic yogis' will not be able to progress in their practice.

Some yogis do not report honestly to their teachers regarding their own practice. They may exaggerate and fabricate their reports to impress the teacher or resort to reporting the same thing over and over again to cover up for their laziness or disobedience. By not reporting accurately and openly, the meditation teacher will not be able to detect the yogi's weaknesses and correct them so it will be to the yogi's disadvantage. There are also a number of yogis who frequently change meditation teachers due to lack of faith and doubts about the method of practice. They have a tendency to blame the technique or the teacher for not progressing in their practice. Needless to say, such yogis cannot progress well and their faith will be further weakened.

As regards continuous noting with effort (in the meditation practice) a simile is given in the scriptures. Only by continuously rubbing two stones against each other with relentless effort can a fire be kindled. Another, more modern example is used: To produce electricity we need a generator and a dynamo. The dynamo has to make a minimum number of revolutions per minute (rpm). If the generator stops, the dynamo will not run at all and there won't be any electricity whatsoever. If the generator runs slowly, the dynamo also will run slowly producing only little electricity and consequently a very dim light. To produce

sufficient electricity, the generator has to run continuously. Likewise in meditation, the effort to note should be consistent, continuous and without gaps. This aspect is very important and should be borne in mind by every yogi.

Another kind of refined *pamāda* is *anattitakiriya*, i.e., stop-and-go noting or discontinuous. Its opposite is *atthitakiriya*, i.e., continuous noting. Because the yogi wants to rest occasionally, stop-and-go noting occurs. Sometimes the yogi forgets to note. This is not intentional so it is not a form of stop-and-go noting.

During a meditation retreat one has to note continuously without taking a rest from noting throughout the day except during sleep. Just like soldiers fighting at the forefront who have to be on guard all the time, or else they will be defeated by the enemy. Meditators who take a rest purposely will be attacked and defeated by the defilements of greed, hatred and delusion. Because of not noting the meditator may retrogress. After taking a rest it is usually difficult and tiresome to resume noting and to reach the stage previously attained. Due to stop-and-go noting concentration (*samādhi*) cannot mature. Taking a rest repeatedly and resting at improper time is a form of refined *pamāda*, while not taking a break from practice is refined *Appamāda*.

Going upstream

Meditation is similar to a boatman going upstream. To do so one requires a rudder, a pair of oars and plenty of effort. Going downstream in a boat is comparatively easy as not much effort is required. In the same way it is easy and it does not require any effort to get carried away by the *kilesas*. Yogis are in a position similar to the boatman going upstream. They have to row with

effort, using the rudder of mindfulness to avoid (or keep away from) the whirlpools of *kilesas*. At first yogis will find it tiresome to row up-stream, but with practice, it becomes easier. Just like the rowboat heading for a secure place upstream, so also, yogis should strive to reach that place which is free from life's dangers and where there is true peace and tranquility.

Stop-and-go noting can also be compared to an ocean liner in a storm. If in the midst of the storm the ship's engine is frequently shut down and re-started, the ship will not be able to weather the storm. However, if the ship's engine is kept running continuously and the ship's bow is directly facing the waves, then the ship will be able to make it through the storm without sinking.

Yogis can also be compared to a pilot. The pilot cannot turn off the jet engine in mid-air. In the same way, the yogis should not turn off the noting-engine. Sometimes the effort decreases unconsciously. The yogi should then step up his effort. Yogis should continuously note whatever sense object arises at the six sense doors without stopping. Stopping the process of noting is tantamount to falling into the air pocket of *kilesa*. Not stopping mental noting and making physical and mental effort is a form of refined *Appamāda*. Failing to do so is a form of *pamāda*.

Chameleon Yogis

Chameleon lizards have a habit of stopping several times on their way towards a destination. They advance quickly for a few feet, then stop and look around for a while. Then they advance only to stop again. Thus it takes them a long time to reach their destination. Many people behave like the chameleon lizard — e.g. observing *sīla* off and on, listening only to parts of dhamma-discourses and

noting physical and mental objects in a stop-and-go manner.

Another form of refined *pamāda* is known in Pāli as *polīnavuttita*. It means 'not working full-time'. For example, in an office the employees have to work full-time without taking too many breaks. Yet, some employees do not devote their energy and time to the job. If a yogi is not fully devoted to the meditation practice and he takes frequent breaks from the practice it is a clear case of *pamāda*. Fulfilling one's duty, i.e. noting whatever objects arise without a gap, practising full-time is called in Pāli, *anolīnavuttita*. A meditator who possesses this quality is said to have refined *Appamāda*.

There are many parts in a clock. The main part is the pinion, a small cog-wheel with teeth fitting into larger cog-wheels. If the pinion fails to turn, the remaining cogwheels will not turn either. In the meditation practice, effort corresponds to the main pinion of a clock. Only with effort can there be progress. The ability to note whatever object arises is due to effort. At the beginning of the practice, laziness and sluggishness are bound to arise which have to be countered with the three forms of effort, i.e. initial effort, boosted effort and the effort leading to the goal. Based on these three forms of effort, mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*), faith or confidence (*saddhā*) and *anikkhittachandatā*, which is the intention to try one's best despite all the odds, will arise. The determination to advance no matter what happens (*anikkhittachandatā*), is a form of refined *Appamāda* while the absence of *anikkhittachandatā* is equivalent to having *pamāda*.

At work some employees are interested in gaining work experience and financial rewards. Thus they have the desire to get ahead (*anikkhittachandatā*). On the other hand, there are some employees who are not interested in acquiring better skill.

Even higher pay is no incentive for them to work harder. Simply put, they are lazy and naturally they have no *anikkhitta-chandatā*. This sort of attitude is refined *pamāda*.

The Vannapatha Jātaka story tells of a team of traders who were crossing a desert. As the journey took longer than expected they ran out of water. Finally, they thought they had reached an oasis. In their attempt to search for water, a hole was dug, but to their dismay, a huge slab of stone prevented them from digging any further. Therefore, they gave up. The leader of the group, however, was certain that water was just underneath the slab. He ordered a slave to drive a huge wedge into the slab. After a long time of hammering at the slab it broke apart and water came gushing out at full force. The leader of the group of merchants and the slave possessed *anikkittachandatā* and refined *Appamāda*. On the other hand, the attitude of the other members of the caravan was governed by refined *pamāda*.

It is important for yogis to understand the morale of this story. During the course of meditation they are bound to encounter pains, aches, and other unpleasant sensations. Some yogis think they might die because of the seemingly unbearable sensations and they change posture thereby reducing the effort (*virīya*) which in turn causes concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) to decrease. The meditators should not be afraid that these pains and aches would cause them harm. If instead, the meditators make more effort with the intention to go ahead no matter what happens, their *anikkhittachandatā* will be strengthened.

The antonym of *anikkhittadhurata* is known in Pāli as *nikkhittadhurata*, which means reducing one's effort or mental strength in the face of obstacles. *Nikkhittadhurata* is a form of refined *pamāda*. Another example will help to make the meaning of *nikkhittadhurata* clearer. While meditating some

meditators might think like this: “I’ve achieved enough in this practice, therefore I can afford to loosen my effort a little bit”. Another type of meditator has real determination and the guts to go ahead without reducing his effort (*anikkhittadhurata*). Although some yogis have been practising for months, they have poor noting. Then, they reflect about themselves, deploring their apparent lack of perfections (*pāramīs*) or having doubts about the instructions given to them by the meditation teacher, etc. Thinking along these lines will cause effort (*virīya*) to drop even further. Instead of indulging in self-pity the yogi should step up his effort. Yogis should be like soldiers at the front, full of spirit and courage, fighting the *kilesas* face to face. Only then will the yogis be able to overcome them.

In the *Therīgāthā*, we find the story of an old lady by the name of Gitta. When growing up she developed a lot of faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. As her physical health was poor she could not meditate for a long time at a stretch. Although she was weak, she never reduced her effort. It was still extremely difficult for her to develop *samādhi*. One day she made a resolution to fight the *kilesa* even at the risk of her life. She went up a mountain, thinking that only two things can happen: either she dies or the *kilesa* die. She sat down and began to meditate. Due to the power of her effort, she gradually gained mindfulness, concentration and wisdom and even her physical ailments vanished. When she got up from her meditation she no longer needed a walking stick. Gitta was truly possessed with *anikkhittadhurata*.

An ailing patient has to continuously take the correct dose of medicine as prescribed by the doctor. In a like manner those who suffer from the *kilesa*-disease should take the Dhamma-medicine as prescribed by the greatest of all physicians, the Buddha. To

cure the *kilesa*-disease is to uproot the *kilesa* by the Dhamma-medicine of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. This kind of Dhamma-medication will cause people to have only healthy wholesome mind (*kusala*). A yogi has to take the Dhamma-medicine continuously, diligently and in the right dosage i.e., he or she has to note the primary object of meditation without gaps.

With effective noting, *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* and supramundane knowledge (*lokuttara*) will arise. Then, out of personal direct experience, the yogi realizes that some defilements (*kilesa*) have been eradicated and simultaneously, unshakable faith in the Buddha (the physician), the Dhamma and the Sangha takes root. It is the duty of all human beings to work at the refinement of all bodily, verbal and mental actions, thus avoiding all actions harmful to others. In one's mind there should not be thoughts of wanting to kill, steal, lie, performing sexual misconduct and taking intoxicants. Refinement in physical, verbal and mental actions is tantamount to refined *Appamāda*.

Making a resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*) to have progress in Dhamma is considered a form of *Appamāda*, whereas not making determination (*anadhiṭṭhāna*) is *pamāda*.

The Buddha said:

*Pamādamanuyuñjanti
bālā dummedhino janā.
Appamādañca medhāvī
dhanam seṭṭham va rakkhati.*

*Mā pamādamanuyuñjetha
mā kāmaratisanthavam
Appamatto hi jhāyanto
pappoti vipulam sukham*



The foolish and the ignorant give
 themselves over to negligence;
 Whereas the wise,
 treasure heedfulness (mindfulness)
 as a precious jewel.

Therefore, one should not be negligent,
 nor be addicted to sensual pleasures;
 For he who is established
 in heedfulness (mindfulness),
 through cultivation of Tranquility
 and Development of Insight practice,
 experiences supreme happiness
 (i.e., realizes Nibbāna).

~ DHAMMAPADA 26 & 27

Just as one values the inheritance from one's ancestors, so also, yogis should appreciate the real value of heedfulness (*Appamāda*). In the text, heedfulness (*pamāda*) is likened to dust, dirt or filth (*rāga*). As the dust of a street clings to and penetrates clothing and buildings, so also, *pamāda* pollutes the mind. Some people allow *pamāda* to arise in the mind, they even watch it arise and they let the mind get polluted. Such mental pollution with *pamāda* is many times worse than the pollution caused by physical dust.

These days air-pollution is a common phenomenon. It can cause dizziness and respiratory difficulties. In the case of an explosion at a chemical plant in Bhopal, India some years ago, poisonous gas leaked out and a large number of people died while others' health was severely affected. Due to exposure to poisonous gases, both body and mind will suffer. The only protection

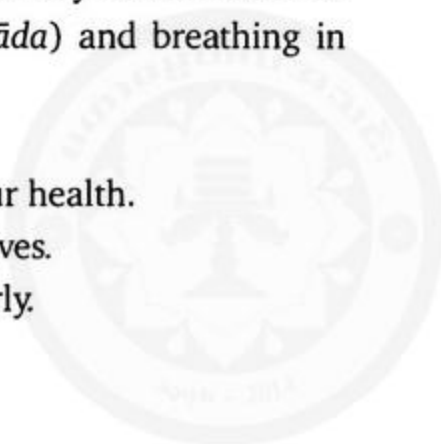
against air-pollution and poisonous gas is to wear a gas mask. When one is in a place polluted with *duccarita* (physical, verbal and mental misconduct) only the gas mask of *Appamāda* will ensure the safety of mind and body.

Due to ignorance (*moha*) one may become reckless and wild. Because of heedlessness (*pamāda*) one might lack the proper response to a situation, one is then capable of performing any misdeed.

Everybody needs to breathe fresh and clean air. By breathing fresh and clean air, the body is supplied with oxygen and we need this to maintain our good health. *Bhāvanā* is like breathing fresh air. It is necessary for everybody regardless of age, race, sex or creed. Breathing in polluted air can cause dizziness, vomiting or even death. In the absence of *Appamāda* we are giving *kilesa* a chance to arise and to pollute the mind. Breathing in fresh air is conducive to good health and must be done continuously. Likewise we need to have *Appamāda* every second. Only then will our minds become alert, peaceful, clean and true knowledge will unfold. Consequently we will be satisfied and we will experience mental peace (*citta sukha*). Due to mental peace, rapture and tranquility our physical health (*kāya sukha*) also becomes better, the condition of our eyes, ears and other faculties will improve. It is also observed that the skin will become clearer and our complexion will be bright and radiant.

Here, I would like to give a short summary to stress on the importance of both heedfulness (*Appamāda*) and breathing in fresh air.

1. Breathing in fresh air is essential to our health.
2. We must breathe in fresh air by ourselves.
3. We have to breathe in fresh air regularly.



Similarly, developing *Appamāda* is important for everybody in three ways:

1. It is essential for mental and spiritual health.
2. We have to develop *appamāda* by ourselves.
3. We have to develop *appamāda* regularly and on a full-time basis.

*Appamādarato bhikkhu
pamāde bhayadassi vā
Abhabbo parihānāya
nibbānasseva santike.*

A *bhikkhu* who takes delight in heedfulness and sees danger in negligence cannot fall away (from the practice of Tranquility and Insight Development and the benefits thereof).

He is, indeed, very close to Nibbāna.

~ DHAMMAPADA 32

In other words, those who develop *Appamāda* and shun *pamāda* are very close to true happiness. What is the meaning of “taking delight in heedfulness (*Appamādarato bhikkhu*)”? It refers to a *bhikkhu* (yogi) who takes delight in heedfulness i.e. in the practice of Tranquility and Insight Development. At the same time he or she avoids *duccarita* and prevents the mind from going after sensual pleasures. If yogis note all their activities in the course of a day, then they are said to be taking delight in heedfulness. Those who note with right aiming and with right effort are not delighting in *pamāda* (negligence), and at the same time will develop mindfulness (*sati*). These yogis will progress stage by stage in wisdom (insight knowledge) and thus they are

indeed very close to Nibbāna. The Buddha has given us the assurance that Nibbāna can be reached with proper practice. To reach Nibbāna, heedfulness (*Appamāda*) is an essential factor whereas negligence (*pamāda*) is an obstacle. This can be understood more clearly by way of an analogy. Good education is a supportive factor for getting jobs and to ensure an income, whereas lack of education can be a real obstacle in securing a job.

The Buddha's teaching is always very sensible. It always points out the benefits of something and shows the disadvantages of certain faults. By now it should be clear that having *Appamāda* will yield many benefits whereas with *pamāda* we will not hesitate to commit *duccasīlā*, which will lead to a low standard of life in future existences. In a practical way, *Appamāda* means avoiding that which should be avoided and observing that which should be observed. To have *Appamāda* means that one can at least reach the First Path (*sotāpatti-magga*) and First Fruition Knowledges (*sotāpatti-phala nāṇa*). '*Abhabbo parihānāya*' refers to this attainment. '*Pamāde bhayadassī*' which mean 'seeing danger in negligence' refers to the kind of negligence, which will lead to continued existence in the round of rebirth (*samsāra*). To summarise, in this present existence, neglecting to develop *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, will cause the mind to be wild and unrestrained.



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WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES a yogi or meditator needs? How should he or she make effort in his meditation? In these Dhamma discourses, Myanmar Meditation Master Sayādaw U Paṇḍita emphasizes the need to make ardent effort in the practice. A yogi cannot afford to slide back. His effort must be constant, must be stepped up, and must be maintained so that he can attain the goal of mental purification, wisdom, enlightenment, and liberation.

Sayādaw gives many similes to drive home his point. Again and again Sayādaw explains why effort is so important and how this effort can be applied. He gives us advice on how to note and stay with our meditation object. He also explains the important Pāli word, *appamāda*, which has the meaning of heedfulness/mindfulness/diligence/conscientious, unslacking, continuous, unbroken, persevering, ardent, steadfast effort/non-negligence.

It is quite certain that meditators will be inspired to strive harder after reading this booklet. Sayādaw has been known to be a very tough, exacting and demanding teacher who expects the best from his pupils. He wants them to be heroic yogis who will never give up and who will do or die for the Dhamma. And often, under Sayādaw's tutelage, meditators have been spurred to give their best effort and make progress in their journey to reach Nibbāna, the end of all suffering.



Sayādaw U Paṇḍita is the Ovādācariya (Chief Preceptor) and Abbot of Paṇḍitārama Meditation Centre in Yangon, Myanmar. He also heads the Paṇḍitārama Hse Main Gon Forest Meditation Centre and other branch monasteries in Myanmar. A world renowned meditation master, Sayādaw is the author of *In This Very Life: The Liberation Teachings of the Buddha*, a book based on talks given by Sayādaw in a three-month retreat at the Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts, USA, in 1984.



IJ066/02

**AN
INWARD JOURNEY BOOK**

published by

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Penang • Malaysia

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ISBN 983-9439-65-0



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