

# Practical Vipassanā Meditational Exercises

with a biographical sketch of  
Mahāsi Sayādaw's life and work

**MAHĀSĪ SAYĀDAW**

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AN INWARD JOURNEY BOOK  
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Translated from Burmese by

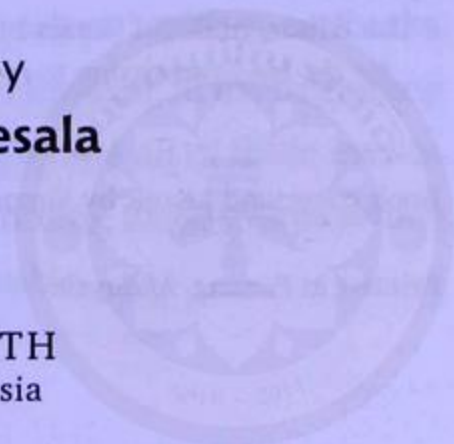
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# Practical Vipassanā

## Meditational Exercises

**THE PRACTICE OF *Vipassanā*** or Insight Meditation is the effort to understand correctly the nature of the mental and physical phenomena within one's own body. Physical phenomena are the things or objects that one clearly perceives around and within one. The whole of one's body constitutes a group of material qualities (*rūpa*). Mental phenomena are acts of consciousness or awareness (*nāma*). These (*nāma-rūpas*) are clearly perceived whenever things are seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched, or thought of. We must make ourselves aware of these mental phenomena by observing them and noting thus: 'Seeing, seeing', 'hearing, hearing', 'smelling, smelling', 'tasting, tasting', 'touching, touching', or 'thinking, thinking'. Every time one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches, or thinks, one should make a note of the fact. However, in the beginning of one's practice, one cannot make a note all of these events. One should, therefore, begin with noting those events which are conspicuous and easily perceivable.

With every act of breathing, the abdomen rises and falls — this movement is always evident. This is the material quality known as the element of motion (*vāyodhātu*). One should begin by noting this movement, which may be done by mentally observing the abdomen. You will find the abdomen rising when you breathe in, and falling when you breathe out. The rising should be noted mentally as ‘rising’, and the falling as ‘falling’. If the movement is not evident by just noting it mentally, keep touching the abdomen with the palm of your hand. Do not alter the manner of your breathing. Neither slow it down, nor make it faster. Do not breathe too vigorously, either. You will tire if you change the manner of your breathing. Breathe steadily as usual and note the rising and falling of the abdomen as they occur. Note it mentally, not verbally.

In *vipassanā* meditation, what you name or say doesn’t matter. What really matters is to know or perceive. While noting the rising of the abdomen, do so from the beginning to the end of the movement just as if you are seeing it with your eyes. Do the same with the falling movement. Note the rising movement in such a way that your awareness of it is concurrent with the movement itself. The movement and the mental awareness of it should coincide in the same way as a stone thrown hits the target. Similarly with the falling movement.

Your mind may wander elsewhere while you are noting the abdominal movement. This must also be noted by mentally saying, ‘wandering, wandering.’ When this has been noted once or twice, the mind stops wandering, in which case you return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If the

mind reaches somewhere, note as 'reaching, reaching'. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. If you imagine meeting somebody, note as 'meeting, meeting'. Then return to the rising and falling. If you imagine meeting and talking to somebody, note as 'talking, talking'.

In short, whatever thought or reflection occurs should be noted. If you imagine, note as 'imagining'. If you think, 'thinking'. If you plan, 'planning'. If you perceive, 'perceiving'. If you reflect, 'reflecting'. If you feel happy, 'happy'. If you feel bored, 'bored'. If you feel glad, 'glad'. If you feel disheartened, 'disheartened'. Noting all these acts of consciousness is called *cittānupassanā*.

Because we fail to note these acts of consciousness, we tend to identify them with a person or individual. We tend to think that it is 'I' who is imagining, thinking, planning, knowing or perceiving. We think that there is a person who, from childhood onwards, has been living and thinking. Actually, no such person exists. There are instead only these continuing and successive acts of consciousness. That is why we have to note these acts of consciousness and know them for what they are. So we have to note each and every act of consciousness as it arises. When so noted, it tends to disappear. We then return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

When you have sat meditating for a long time, sensations of stiffness and heat will arise in your body. These are to be noted carefully too. Similarly with sensations of pain and fatigue. All of these sensations are *dukkhavedanā* (feeling of unsatisfactoriness) and noting them is *vedanānupassanā*. Failure

or omission to note these sensations makes you think, “I am stiff, I am feeling hot, I am in pain. I was alright a moment ago. Now I am uneasy with these unpleasant sensations.” The identification of these sensations with the ego is mistaken. There is really no ‘I’ involved, only a succession of one new unpleasant sensation after another.

It is just like a continuous succession of new electrical impulses that light up an electric lamp. Every time unpleasant contacts are encountered in the body, unpleasant sensations arise one after another. These sensations should be carefully and intently noted, whether they are sensations of stiffness, of heat, or of pain. In the beginning of one’s meditation practice, these sensations may tend to increase and lead to a desire to change one’s posture. This desire should be noted, after which the meditator should return to noting the sensations of stiffness, heat, etc.

There is a saying, “**Patience leads to Nibbāna.**” This saying is particularly relevant in meditation practice. One must be patient to meditate. If one shifts or changes one’s posture too often because one cannot bear the sensation of stiffness or heat that arises, good concentration (*samādhi*) cannot develop. If concentration (*samādhi*) cannot develop, insight cannot result and there can be no attainment of the path (*magga*), the fruit of that path (*phala*) or Nibbāna. That is why patience is needed in meditation. It is mostly patience with unpleasant sensations in the body like stiffness, heat, pain and other unpleasant sensations. On the appearance of such sensations one should not immediately change one’s posture.



One should continue patiently, just noting as 'stiff, stiff' or 'hot, hot'. Moderate unpleasant sensations will disappear if one notes them patiently. When concentration is strong, even intense sensations tend to disappear. One then reverts to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

One will, of course, have to change one's posture if the sensations do not disappear even after noting them for a long time, or if they become unbearable. One should then begin by noting 'wanting to change, wanting to change.' If one raises the arm, note as 'raising, raising'. If one moves, note as 'moving, moving'. This change should be made gently and noted as 'raising, raising', 'moving, moving' and 'touching, touching'.

If the body sways, note 'swaying, swaying'. If you raise the foot, note 'raising, raising'. If you move it, note 'moving, moving'. If you drop it, note 'dropping, dropping'. When there is no more movement, return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. There must be no gaps, but continuity between a preceding act of noting and a succeeding one, between a preceding state of concentration (*samādhi*) and a succeeding one, between a preceding act of intelligence and a succeeding one. Only then will there be successive and ascending stages of maturity in the meditator's understanding. Knowledge of the path and its fruition (*magga-ñāṇa* and *phala-ñāṇa*) are attained only when there is this kind of accumulated momentum. The meditative process is like that of producing fire by energetically and unremittingly rubbing two sticks of wood together to generate enough heat to make fire.

In the same way, the noting in *vipassanā* meditation should be continuous and unremitting, without any interval between acts of noting, whatever phenomena may arise. For instance, if a sensation of itchiness intervenes and the meditator desires to scratch because it is hard to bear, both the sensation and the desire to get rid of it should be noted, without immediately getting rid of the sensation by scratching.

If one perseveres, the itchiness will generally disappear, in which case one reverts to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. If the itchiness does not disappear, one may eliminate it by scratching, but first the desire to do so should be noted. All the movements involved in the process of eliminating the itch should be noted, especially the touching, pulling and pushing, and scratching movements, eventually returning to the rising and falling of the abdomen.

Whenever you change your posture, begin by noting your intention or desire to change, and note every movement closely, such as rising from the sitting posture, raising the arm, moving and stretching it. You should note the movements at the same time as making them. As your body sways forward, note it. As you rise, the body becomes light and rises. Focus your mind on this, you should gently note as 'rising, rising'.

A meditator should behave like a weak invalid. People in normal health rise easily and quickly, or abruptly. Not so with feeble invalids, who do so slowly and gently. The same is the case with people suffering from backache who rise gently lest the back hurts and causes pain. So also with meditators. They should make changes of posture gradually and gently; only

then will mindfulness, concentration and insight be clear. Begin, therefore, with gentle and gradual movements. When rising, the meditator must do so gently like an invalid, at the same time noting as 'rising, rising'. Not only this: though the eye sees, the meditator must act as if blind. Similarly when the ear hears. While meditating, the meditator's concern is only to note. What one sees and hears are not one's concern. So whatever strange or striking things one may see or hear, one must behave as if one does not see or hear them, merely noting carefully.

When making bodily movements, the meditator should do so slowly, gently moving the arms and legs, bending or stretching them, lowering the head and raising it up. When rising from the sitting posture, one should do so gradually, noting as 'rising, rising'. When straightening up and standing, note as 'standing, standing'. When looking here and there, note as 'looking, seeing'. When walking, note the steps, whether they are taken with the right or the left foot. You must be aware of all the successive movements involved, from the raising of the foot to the dropping of it. Note each step taken, whether with the right foot or the left foot. This is the manner of noting when one walks fast.

It will be enough if you note thus when walking fast and walking some distance. When walking slowly or pacing up and down (*cankama* walk), three stages should be noted for each step: when the foot is raised, when it is pushed forward, and when it is dropped. Begin with noting the raising and dropping movements. One must be fully aware of the raising

of the foot. Similarly, when the foot is dropped, one should be fully aware of the 'heavy' falling of the foot.

One must walk noting as 'raising, dropping' with each step. This noting will become easier after about two days. Then go on to noting the three movements as described above, as 'raising, pushing forward, dropping'. In the beginning, it will suffice to note one or two movements only, thus 'right step, left step' when walking fast and 'raising, dropping' when walking slowly. If when walking thus, you want to sit down, note as 'wanting to sit down, wanting to sit down'. When actually sitting down, note attentively the 'heavy' falling of your body.

When you are seated, note the movements involved in arranging your legs and arms. When there are no such movements of the body, note the rising and falling of the abdomen. If, while noting thus, stiffness or sensation of heat arise in any part of your body, note them. Then return to 'rising, falling'. If a desire to lie down arises, note it and the movements of your legs and arms as you lie down. The raising of the arm, the moving of it, the resting of the elbow on the floor, the swaying of the body, the stretching of the legs, the listing of the body as one slowly prepares to lie down — all these movements should be noted.

To note thus as you lie down is important. In the course of this movement (that is, lying down), you can gain distinctive knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the path and its fruition — *magga-nāṇa* and *phala-nāṇa*). When concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*nāṇa*) are strong, distinctive knowledge can come at any moment. It can arise in a single 'bend' of the arm or in

a single 'stretch' of the arm. That was how Venerable Ānanda became an *arahant*.

Venerable Ānanda was trying strenuously to attain Arahantship overnight on the eve of the First Buddhist Council. He was practising the whole night the form of *vipassanā* meditation known as *kāyagatāsati*, noting his steps, right and left, raising, pushing forward and dropping of the feet; noting, event by event, the mental desire to walk and the physical movements involved in walking. Although this went on until it was nearly dawn, he had not yet attained Arahantship. Realising that he had practised walking meditation to excess and that, in order to balance concentration (*samādhi*) and effort (*virīya*), he should practise meditation in the lying posture for a while, he entered his room. He sat on the bed and then lay down. While doing so and noting, 'lying, lying', he attained Arahantship in an instant.

Venerable Ānanda was only a stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) before he lay down. From the stage of a stream-winner he reached the stages of a once-returner (*sakadagāmi*) a non-returner (*anāgāmi*) and an *arahant* (the final stage of the path). Reaching these three successive stages of the higher path took only a moment. Remember this example of Venerable Ānanda's attainment of Arahantship. Such attainment can come at any moment and need not take long.

That is why meditators should always note diligently. One should not relax one's effort, thinking, "this little lapse should not matter much." All movements involved in lying down and arranging the arms and legs should be carefully and

unremittingly noted. If there is no movement, return to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. Even when it is getting late and time for sleep, the meditator should not stop the noting. A really serious and energetic meditator should practise mindfulness as if forgoing sleep altogether. One should go on meditating until one falls asleep. If mindfulness has the upper hand, one will not fall asleep. If, however, drowsiness is stronger, one will fall asleep. When one feels sleepy, one should note as 'sleepy, sleepy', if one's eyelids droop, as 'drooping'; if they become heavy or leaden, as 'heavy'; if the eyes smart, as 'smarting'. Noting thus, the drowsiness may pass and the eyes may become clear again. One should then note as 'clear, clear' and continue noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. However determined one may be, if real drowsiness intervenes, one does fall asleep. It is not difficult to fall asleep; in fact, it is easy. If you meditate in the lying posture, you soon become drowsy and easily fall asleep. That is why beginners should not meditate too much in the lying posture; they should meditate much more in the sitting and walking postures. However, as it grows late and becomes time for sleep, one should meditate in the lying position, noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. One will then naturally fall asleep.

The time one is asleep is the resting time for the meditator, but the really serious meditator should limit sleep to about four hours. This is the 'midnight time' permitted by the Buddha. Four hours sleep is quite enough. If the beginner thinks that four hours' sleep is not enough for health, one may

extend it to five or six hours. Six hours' sleep is clearly enough.

When one wakes up, one should immediately resume noting. The meditator who is really intent on attaining the path and its fruition (*magga-ñāṇa* and *phala-ñāṇa*) should rest from meditation only when asleep. At other times, in all waking moments, one should be noting continually and without let up. That is why, as soon as one awakens, one should note the awakening state of mind as 'awakening, awakening'. If one cannot yet be aware of this, one should begin with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen.

If one intends to get up from the bed, one should note as 'intending to get up, intending to get up'. One should then note the movements one makes as one moves one's arms and legs. When one raises one's head and rises, one notes as 'rising, rising'. When one is seated, one notes as 'sitting, sitting'. If one makes any movements as one arranges one's arms and legs, all of these movements should also be noted. If there are no such changes, one should revert to noting the rising and falling movements of the abdomen.

One should note when one washes one's face and when one takes a bath. As the movements involved in these acts are rather quick, as many of them should be noted as possible. There are then the acts of dressing, of tidying up the bed, of opening and closing the door; all these should also be noted as precisely as possible.

When one has one's meal and looks at the table, one should note as 'looking, seeing, looking, seeing'. When one extends one's hand towards the food, touches it, collects it

and arranges it, handles it and brings it to the mouth, bends one head and puts the morsel into one's mouth, drops one's arm and raises one's head again, all these movements should be duly noted. (This way of noting is in accordance with the Burmese way of taking a meal. Those who use fork and spoon or chopsticks should note the movements in an appropriate manner.)

When one chews the food, one should note as 'chewing, chewing'. When one comes to know the taste of the food, one should note as 'knowing, knowing'. As one relishes the food and swallows it, as the food goes down one's throat, one should note all these events. This is how the meditator should note when taking each morsel of food. As one takes soup, all the movements involved such as extending the arm, handling the spoon, scooping with it and so on, should all be noted. To note thus at meal-times is rather difficult as there are so many things to observe and note. The beginner is likely to miss several things that should be noted, but one should resolve to note them all. One cannot, of course, help overlooking some, but as one's concentration (*samādhi*) deepens, one will be able to note all of these events precisely.

I have mentioned so many things for the meditator to note, but in brief, there are only a few things to remember. When walking fast, note as 'right step', 'left step', and as 'raising, dropping' when walking slowly. When sitting quietly, just note the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note the same when you are lying down, if there is nothing particular to note. While noting thus and if the mind wanders, note the



acts of consciousness that arise. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note also the sensations of stiffness, pain, aching and itchiness as they arise. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Note also, as they arise, the bending, stretching and moving of the limbs, the bending and raising of the head, the swaying and straightening of the body. Then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen.

As one goes on noting thus, one will be able to note more and more of these events. In the beginning, as the mind wanders here and there, one may miss many things, but one should not be disheartened. Every beginner encounters the same difficulty, but as one becomes more skilled, one becomes aware of every act of mind-wandering until, eventually, the mind does not wander any more. The mind is then riveted onto the object of its attention, the act of mindfulness becoming almost simultaneous with the object of its attention. In other words, the rising of the abdomen becomes concurrent with the act of noting it, and similarly with the falling of the abdomen.

The physical object of attention and the mental act of noting occur as a pair. There is in this occurrence no person or individual involved, only the physical object and the mental act of noting it, occurring in tandem. The meditator will, in time, actually and personally experience these occurrences. While noting the rising and falling of the abdomen one will come to distinguish the rising of the abdomen as physical phenomenon and the mental act of noting it as mental phenomenon; similarly with the falling of the abdomen. Thus the meditator will distinctly realise the simultaneous occurrence

in pairs of these psycho-physical phenomena.

With every act of noting, the meditator will come to know clearly that there are only this material quality which is the object of awareness or attention and the mental quality that makes a note of it. This discriminating knowledge is called analytical knowledge of mind and matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*), which is the beginning of insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*). It is important to gain this knowledge correctly. This will be succeeded, as the meditator continues, by knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*).

As one goes on noting, one will see for oneself that what arises passes away after a short while. Ordinary people assume that both the material and mental phenomena persist throughout life, that is, from youth to adulthood. In fact, that is not so. There is no phenomenon that lasts for ever. All phenomena arise and pass away so rapidly that they do not last even for the twinkling of an eye. One will come to know this personally as one goes on noting. One will then become convinced of the impermanency of all such phenomena. Such conviction is called *aniccānupassana-ñāṇa*.

This knowledge will be succeeded by *dukkhānupassana-ñāṇa*, which realises that all this impermanency is suffering. The meditator is also likely to encounter all kinds of hardship in the body, which is just an aggregate of suffering. This is also *dukkhānupassana-ñāṇa*. Next, the meditator will become convinced that all these psycho-physical phenomena are occurring of their own accord, following nobody's will and subject to nobody's control. They constitute no individual or

ego-entity. This realisation is *anattānupassana-ñāṇa*.

When, as one continues meditating, one comes to realise firmly that all these phenomena are *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, one will attain Nibbāna. All the former Buddhas, *Arahants* and *Ariyas* realised Nibbāna by following this very path. All meditating meditators should recognize that they themselves are now on this *satipaṭṭhāna* path, in fulfilment of their wish for attainment of knowledge of the path (*magga-ñāṇa*), its fruition (*phala-ñāṇa*) and Nibbāna, following the ripening of their perfections (*pāramī*). They should feel glad at the prospect of experiencing the noble kind of tranquillity brought about by concentration (*samādhi*) and the supramundane knowledge or wisdom (*ñāṇa*) experienced by the Buddhas, *Arahants* and *Ariyas*, which they themselves have never experienced before. It will not be very long before they experience this knowledge for themselves. In fact, it may be within a month or twenty days of meditation practice. Those whose perfections are exceptional may have these experiences within seven days.

One should therefore be content in the faith that one will attain these insights in the time specified above, and that one will be freed of personality-belief (*sakkaya-ditṭhi*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*), and thus saved from the danger of rebirth in the lower worlds. One should continue one's meditation practice optimistically with this faith.

May you all be able to practise meditation well and quickly attain that Nibbāna which the Buddhas, *Arahants*, and Noble Ones (*Āriyas*) have experienced!

*Sādhu* (well done)! *Sādhu!* *Sādhu!*

THE METHOD OF VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION  
Mahāsī Sayādaw

“While mindfulness and the mental process of noting become strong and accelerated, the meditator will feel a subtle and slight thrill with a little tremor. A depressing periodic wave of sensations with a mild touch of chill might occur in the back or hinder surface of the body, or in the pervading joy according to nature.

**Don't fear.**

It is the occurrence of a pervading joy according to nature.

There may be a sudden fright or a thrilling sensation on hearing soft voices or feeble sounds.

**Don't get frightened.**

It simply indicates consciousness or awareness of the state of severity of the feeling of touch as concentration gains momentum.”



## *A Biographical Sketch of*

## *Mahāsī Sayādaw's life and work*

enerable Mahāsī Sayādaw was born in the year 1904 at Seikkhun, a large prosperous village of pleasing appearance lying about seven miles to the west of historic Shwebo town in Upper Burma (Myanmar). His parents, peasant proprietors by occupation, were U Kan Taw and Daw Oke. At the age of six the Sayādaw was sent to receive his early monastic education under U Adicca, presiding monk of Pyinmana monastery at Seikkhun. Six years later, he was initiated into the monastic Order as a samanera under the same teacher and given the novice's name of Shin Sobhana, (which means Auspicious), a name that befitted his stalwart, impressive features and his dignified, serene behavior. He proved to be an apt and bright pupil, making quick, remarkable progress in his scriptural studies. When U Adicca left the Order, Shin Sobhana continued his studies under Sayādaw U Parama of Thugyi-kyaung monastery, Ingyintaw-taik, till the age of nineteen when he had to make a fateful decision in his



young life whether to continue in the Order and devote the rest of his life to the service of the *Buddha Sāsana* or to return to lay life. Shin Sobhana knew where his heart lay and unhesitatingly chose the first course. With due and solemn ceremony, he was ordained a full-fledged *bhikkhu* on the 26th day of November 1923, Sumedha Sayādaw Ashin Nimmala acting

as his spiritual preceptor. Within four years of his ordination, the future Mahāsī Sayādaw, now Ashin Sobhana, took in his stride all the three grades (lower, middle and higher) of the Pāli scriptural examinations conducted by the Government.

### Practice of Vipassanā

Ashin Sobhana next went to the city of Mandalay, noted for its pre-eminence in Buddhist learning, to pursue advanced study of the scriptures under Sayādaws well-known for their learning. His stay at Khinmakan West monastery for this purpose was, however, cut short after little more than a year when he was called to Moulmein by the head of the Taikyaung monastery, Taungwainggale (who came from the same village as Ashin Sobhana) to assist him with the teaching of his pupils. While teaching at Taungwainggale, Ashin Sobhana went on with his own studied of the scriptures, being specially interested in and making a thorough study of the



**Mingun Jetavan Sayādaw**  
(Sayādaw U Nārada Mahāthera, 1868-1955)



MAHĀSATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA. His deepening interest in the *satipaṭṭhāna* method of *vipassanā* meditation took him then to neighboring Thaton where the well-known Mingun Jetavan Sayādaw's (Sayādaw U Nārada Mahāthera, 1868-1955) instructions, Venerable Sobhana took up intensive practice of *vipassanā* meditation for four months with such good results that he was in turn able to teach it properly to his first three disciples at Seikkhun while he was on a visit there in 1938. After his return from Thaton to Taungwainggale (owing to the grave illness and subsequent death of the aged Taik-kyaung Sayādaw) to resume his teaching work and to take charge of the monastery, Venerable Sobhana sat for and passed with flying colors the Government-held *Dhammacariya* (Teacher of the *Dhamma*) examination in June 1941.

On the eve of the Japanese invasion of Burma, Mahāsī Sayādaw had to leave Taungwainggale and return to his native Seikkhun. This was a welcome opportunity for the Sayādaw to devote himself whole-heartedly to his own practice of *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation and in turn to teach it to a growing number of disciples at Mahāsī monastery, Ingyintaw-taik (whence the Sayādaw came to be known as Mahāsī Sayādaw) at Seikkhun which fortunately remained free from the horror and disruption of war. It was during this wartime period that the Sayādaw was prevailed upon by his disciples to write his monumental *MANUAL OF VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION*, an authoritative and comprehensive work expounding both the doctrinal and practical aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna* method of meditation.



## Meditation Centers

It was not long before Mahāsī Sayādaw's reputation as an able teacher of *vipassanā* meditation spread far and wide in the Shwebo-Sagaing region and came to attract the attention of a devout and well-to-do Buddhist in person of Sir U Thwin who wanted to promote the *Buddha Sāsana* by setting up a meditation center to be directed by a meditation teacher of proven virtue and ability. After listening to a discourse on *vipassanā* meditation given by the Sayādaw and observing the Sayādaw's serene and noble demeanor, Sir U Thwin had no difficulty in making up his mind that Mahāsī Sayādaw was the ideal meditation master he had been looking for.

Eventually, on the 13th of November 1947, the Bud-dhasāsanānuggaha Association was founded at Rangoon (Yangon) with Sir U Thwin as its first President and scriptural learning and practice of the *Dhamma* as its object. Sir U Thwin donated to the Association a plot of land in Hermitage Road, Kokine, and Rangoon, measuring over five acres for erection of the proposed meditation center. In 1978, the Center occupies an area of 19.6 acres, on which a vast complex of buildings and other structures has sprung up. Sir U Thwin told the Association that he had found a reliable meditation teacher and proposed that the Prime Minister of Burma invited Mahāsī Sayādaw to the Center.

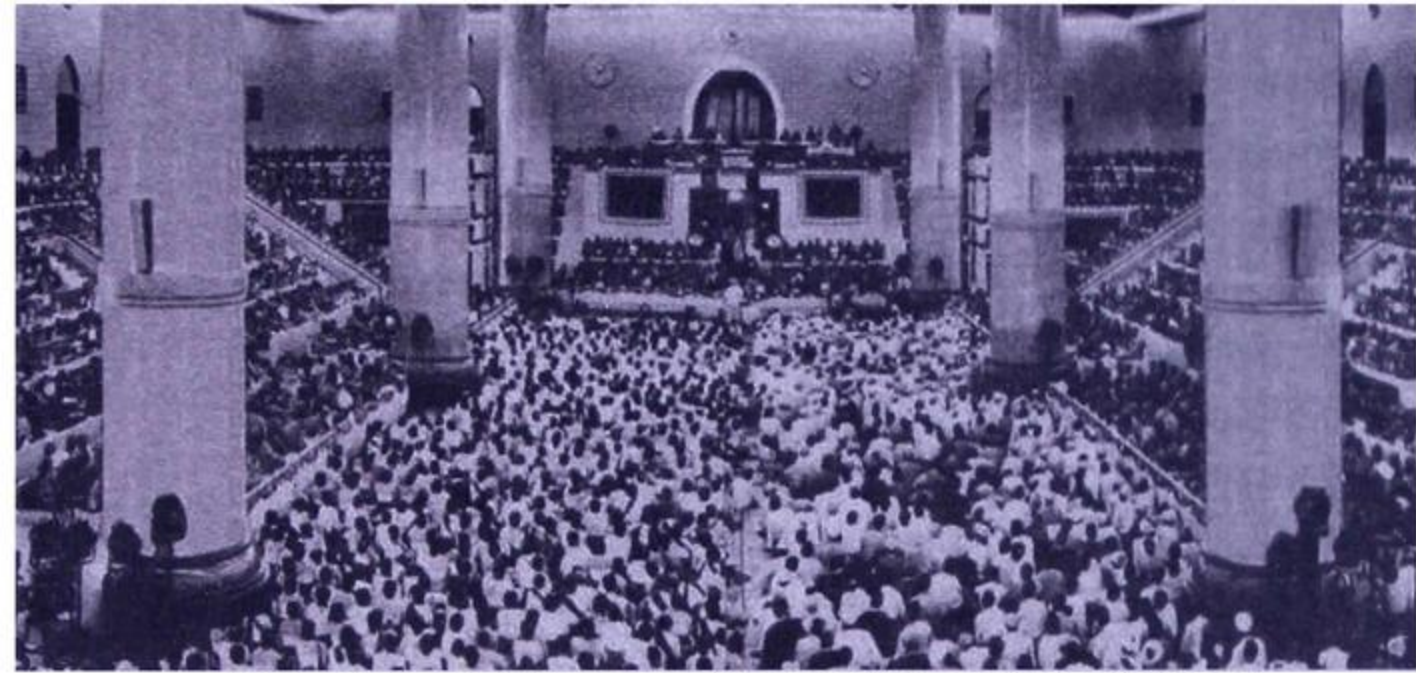


a speech during the  
Sixth Buddhist Council  
Yangon, Burma (1954)

After the end of the Second World War the Sayādaw alternated his residence between his native

Seikkhun and Taungwainggale in Moulmein. In the meantime Burma has regained her independence on 4th January 1948. In May 1949, during one of his sojourns at Seikkhun, the Sayādaw completed a new *nissaya* translation of MAHĀSĀTI-PAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA. This work excels the average *nissaya* translation of this *Sutta* which is of great importance for those who wish to practice *vipassanā* meditation but need guidance.

In November of that year, on the personal invitation of the former Prime Minister, Mahāsī Sayādaw came down from Shwebo and Sagaing to the Sāsana Yeiktha (Meditation Center) at Rangoon, accompanied by two senior Sayādaws. Thus began twenty-nine years ago, Mahāsī Sayādaw's spiritual headship and direction of the Sāsana Yeiktha at Rangoon (then in its initial stages of development without many appurtenances that grace it today). On 4th December 1949, Mahāsī Sayādaw personally inducted the very first batch of 25 yogis into the practice of *vipassanā* meditation. As the yogis grew in numbers later on, it became too strenuous for the Sayādaw himself to give the whole of the initiation talk. From July 1951 the talk was tape-recorded and played back to each new batch of yogis with a few introductory words by the Sayādaw. Within a few years of the establishment of the principal Sāsana Yeiktha at Rangoon, similar meditation centers sprang up in many parts of the country with Mahāsī-trained members of the *Saṅgha* as meditation teachers. These centers were not confined to Burma alone, but extended to neighboring Theravāda countries like Thailand and Sri Lanka. A few such centers also grew up in Cambodia and India. According to a 1972 census, the

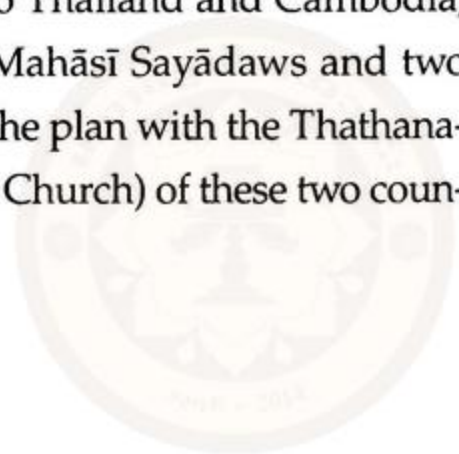


This huge hall was built to house the Sixth Buddhist Council (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā), convened in 1955 to recite the Pāli Tipiṭaka and authenticate the texts. On the 2,500th Anniversary of the Buddha's final passing away (Parinibbāna), 2,500 monks assembled from the Theravāda Buddhist countries.

total number of yogis trained at all these centers (both in Burma and abroad) had passed the figure of seven hundred thousand. In recognition of his distinguished scholarship and spiritual attainments, Mahāsī Sayādaw was honored in 1952 by the then President of the Union of Burma with the prestigious title of *Agga Mahā-Paṇḍita* (the Exaltedly Wise One).

### **The Sixth Buddhist Council**

Soon after attainment of Independence, the Government of Burma began planning to hold a Sixth Buddhist Council (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā) in Burma, with four other Theravāda Buddhist countries (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos) participating. For prior consultations for this purpose, Government dispatched a mission to Thailand and Cambodia, composed of Nyaungyan and Mahāsī Sayādaws and two laymen. The mission discussed the plan with the Thathana-baings (Primates of the Buddhist Church) of these two countries.



At the historic Sixth Buddhist Council, which was inaugurated with every pomp and ceremony on 17th May 1954, Mahāsī Sayādaw played an eminent role, performing the exacting and onerous tasks of *Osana* (Final Editor) and *Pucchaka* (Questioner) Sayādaw. A unique feature of this Council was the redaction not only of the Pāli Canon (canonical texts) but also of the *aṭṭhakathās* (commentaries) and *ṭīkās* (sub-commentaries). In the redaction of this commentarial literature, Mahāsī Sayādaw was responsible for his part for making a critical analysis, sound interpretation and skillful reconciliation of several crucial and divergent passages in these commentarial works.

A significant result of the Sixth Buddhist Council was the revival of interest in Theravāda Buddhism among Mahāyāna Buddhists. In the year 1955 while the Council was in progress, twelve Japanese monks and a Japanese laywoman arrived in Burma to study Theravāda Buddhism. The monks were initiated into the Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha as *sāmaneras* (novitiates) while the laywoman was made a Buddhist nun. Next, in July 1957, at the instance of the Buddhist Association of Moji on the island of Kyushu in Japan, the Buddha Sāsana Council of Burma sent a Theravāda Buddhist mission in which Mahāsī Sayādaw was one of the leading representatives of the Burmese Saṅgha.

In the same year (1957) Mahāsī Sayādaw was assigned the task of writing in Pāli an introduction to the VISUDDHIMAGGA AṬṬHAKATHĀ, one that would in particular refute certain misrepresentations and misstatements concerning the

gifted and noble author of this *aṭṭakathā*, Venerable Buddhaghosa. The Sayādaw completed this difficult task in 1960, his work bearing every mark of distinctive learning and depth of understanding. By then the Sayādaw had also completed two volumes (out of four) of his Burmese translation of this famous commentary and classic work on Buddhist meditation.

### Foreign Missions

At the request of the Government of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), a special mission headed by Sayādaw U Sujata, a senior lieutenant of Mahāsi Sayādaw, was sent to Ceylon in July 1955 for the express purpose of promoting *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation. The mission stayed in Ceylon for over a year doing good work, setting up 12 permanent and 17 temporary meditation centers. Following completion of a specially constructed central meditation center on a site granted by the Ceylonese Government, a larger mission led by Mahāsi Sayādaw himself left on 6th January 1959 for Ceylon via India. The mission was in India for about three weeks, in the course of which its members visited several holy places associated with the life



Mahāsi Sayādaw  
with Prime Minister  
of India, Shri  
Jawaharlal Nehru

and work of Lord Buddha, gave religious talk on suitable occasions and had interviews with Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Vice President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. An especially interesting feature of the visit was the warm welcome accorded to the mission by members of the depressed classed who had embraced the Buddhist faith under the guidance of their late leader Dr. Ambedkar.

The mission enplaned at Madras for Ceylon on 29th January 1959 and arrived at Colombo the same day. On Sunday the 1st February, at the opening ceremony of the permanent central meditation center named Bhāvanā Majjhathana, Mahāsī Sayādaw delivered an address in Pāḷi after Prime Minister Bandaranayake and some others had spoken. Led by Mahāsī Sayādaw, the members of the mission next went on an extended tour of the island, visiting several meditation centers where Mahāsī Sayādaw gave suitable discourses on *vipassanā* meditation and worshipping at various places of Buddhist pilgrimage like Polonnaruwa, Anurādhapura and Kandy. This historic visit of the Burmese mission under the wise and inspiring leadership of Mahāsī Sayādaw was symbolic of the close and mutually beneficial ties (dating from ancient times) spiritual kinship between these two Theravāda Buddhist countries. Its positive contribution to the welfare of the Buddhist movement in Sri Lanka was a steady revival of interest and activity in Buddhist meditation discipline, which seemed to have declined in this fraternal land of ours.



Venerable  
Ashin  
Jinarakkhita  
(1923-2002)

In February 1954, a visitor to the Sāsana Yeiktha would be struck by the spectacle of a young Chinese practicing *vipassanā* meditation. The yogi in question was a young Chinese Buddhist teacher from Indonesia by the name of Bung An who had become interested in this kind of Buddhist meditation. Under the guidance and instructions of Mahāsī Sayādaw and of the late Sayādaw U Nanuttara, Mr. Bung An made such excellent progress in about a month's time that Mahāsī Sayādaw himself gave him a detailed talk on the progress of insight. Later he was ordained a *bhikkhu* and named Ashin Jinarakkhita. Mahāsī Sayādaw himself acted as his spiritual preceptor. After his return as a Buddhist monk to his native Indonesia to launch a Theravāda Buddhist movement in that country a request was received by the Buddha Sāsana Council to send a Burmese Buddhist monk to promote further missionary work in Indonesia. It was decided that Mahāsī Sayādaw himself, as the preceptor and mentor of Ashin Jinarakkhita, should go. Along with 13 other monks from other Theravāda countries, Mahāsī Sayādaw undertook such essential missionary activities as consecrating *sima*'s (ordinating boundary), ordaining *bhikkhus*, initiating *sāmaneras* (novices in the Buddhist *Saṅgha*) and giving discourses on *Buddha Dhamma*, particularly talks on *vipassanā* meditation.

Considering these auspicious and fruitful activities in the interests of initiating, promoting and strengthening the Buddhist

movements in Indonesia and Sri Lanka respectively, Mahāsi Sayādaw's missions to these countries may well be described as "*Dhamma-vijaya*" (victory of the *Dhamma*) journeys.

As early as the year 1952, Mahāsi Sayādaw at the request of the Minister in charge of Saṅgha Affairs of Thailand, had sent Sayādaws U Asabha and U Indavaṃsa to promote the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation in that country. Thanks to the efforts of these two Sayādaws, Mahāsi Sayādaw's method of *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation gained wide currency in Thailand where many meditation centers had come into existence by about the year 1960 and the number of trained yogis had exceeded the hundred thousandth mark.

On the exhortation of Abhidhaja-mahārattha-guru Maso-eyein Sayādaw who headed the Saṅghanāyaka Executive Board at the Sixth Buddhist Council, Mahāsi Sayādaw had undertaken to teach regularly Venerable Buddhaghosa's VISUDDHI-MAGGA ATṬHAKATHĀ and Venenerable Dhammapala's VISUDDHI-MAGGA MAHĀṬĪKĀ to his *Saṅgha* associates at the Sāsana Yeiktha. These two commentarial works of the Theravāda School deal in the main with Buddhist meditational theory and practice, though they also offer useful explanation of important doctrinal points in *Buddhavāda*. They are thus of the utmost importance for those who are going to be meditation teachers. In pursuance of his undertaking, Mahāsi Sayādaw began





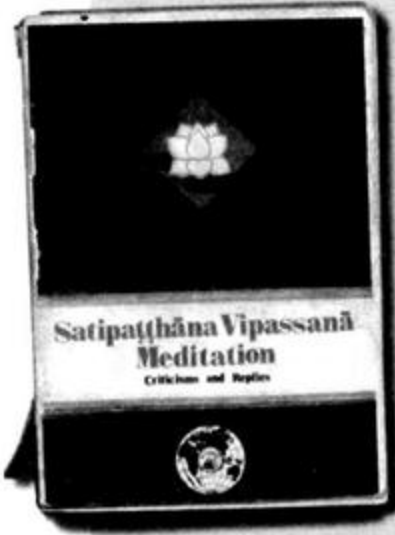
teaching these two works on 2nd February 1961 and for one and one-half to two hours a day. On the basis of notes of his lectures taken by his pupils, Mahāsī Sayādaw started writing his *nissaya* translation of VISUDDHI-MAGGA ATṬHAKATHĀ and completed it on 4th February 1966. The production of this *nissaya* translation was an exceptional performance on the part of Mahāsī Sayādaw. The section on *samayantara* (different views held by other religions or faiths) formed the most exacting part of the Sayādaw's task in producing this work. For tackling this part, the Sayādaw had to, among other things, familiarize himself with ancient Hindu philosophical doctrines and terminology by studying all available references, including works in Sanskrit and English.

Up until 1978 Mahāsī Sayādaw had to his credit 67 volumes of Burmese Buddhist literature. Space does not permit us to list them all here, but a complete up-to-date list of them is appended to the Sayādaw's publication: A DISCOURSE ON SAKKAPAṬHA SUTTA (published in October 1978).

At one time, Mahāsī Sayādaw was subjected to severe criticism in certain quarters for his advocacy of the allegedly unorthodox method of noting the rising and falling of the abdomen in *vipassanā* meditation. It was mistakenly assumed that this method was an innovation of the Sayādaw on his own, whereas the truth is that it had been approved several years before Mahāsī Sayādaw adopted it, by no less an authority than the *mūla* (original) Mingun Jetavan Sayādaw, and that it is in no way contrary to the Buddha's teaching on the subject. The reason for Mahāsī Sayādaw's preference for this method

is that the average yogi finds it easier to note this manifestation of *vāyo-dhātu* (element of motion). It is not, however, imposed as an obligatory technique upon any yogi who comes and practices meditation at any of the Mahāsī Yeikthas (meditation centers). Such a yogi may, if he likes and if he finds that he is better accustomed to the *ānāpāna* way (observing the inbreath and outbreath), meditate in this latter mode. Mahāsī Sayādaw himself refrained from joining issue with his critics on this point, but two learned Sayādaws brought out a book each in defense of Mahāsī Sayādaw's method, thus enabling those who are interested in the controversy to weigh and judge for

themselves. This controversy was not confined to Burma alone, but arose in Ceylon also where some members of the indigenous *saṅgha*, inexperienced and unknowledgeable in practical meditational work, publicly assailed Mahāsī Sayādaw's method in news-papers and journalistic articles. Since this criticism was voiced in the English language with its worldwide



**“I would like to say, in conclusion that I had seen all these Rejoinders, Rebuttals and Replies before they were sent out and I have hardly anything to add to or detract from them. My blessings go to all concerned. I must avail myself of this opportunity to place on record my great appreciation, with a deep sense of gratitude, of the services of the Venerable Nyanaponika Thera, who had spared no pains in spreading this Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation Method to the whole world.”**

An Extract from the Foreword —  
**Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation: Criticisms and Replies**  
by Mahāsī Sayādaw

coverage, silence could no longer be maintained and the late Sayādaw U Nanuttara of Kaba-aye (world Peace Pagoda campus) forcefully responded to the criticisms in the pages of the Ceylonese Buddhist periodical "World Buddhism".

Mahāsī Sayādaw's international reputation and standing in the field of Buddhist meditation has attracted numerous visitors and yogis from abroad, some seeking enlightenment for their religious problems and perplexities and others intent on practicing *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* meditation under the Sayādaw's personal guidance and instructions. Among the earliest of such yogis was former British Rear Admiral E. H. Shattock who came on leave from Singapore and practiced meditation at the Sāsana Yeiktha in 1952. On his return home to England he published a book entitled AN EXPERIMENT IN MINDFULNESS in which he related his experiences in generally appreciative terms. Another such practitioner was Mr. Robert Duvo, a French-born American from California. He came and practised meditation at the Center, first as a lay yogi and later as an ordained *bhikkhu*. He has subsequently published a book in France about his experiences and the *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* method of meditation. Particular mention should be made of Anagarika Shri Munindra of Buddha Gayā in India, who became an *anterasika* (close) disciple of Mahāsī Sayādaw, spending several years with the Sayādaw learning the Buddhist scriptures and practising



Anagarika Shri Munindra of Buddha Gayā, India



Joseph Goldstein, along with Sharon Salzberg and Jack Kornfield, co-founded the Insight Meditation Society (IMS), in Barre, Massachusetts, USA

*satipaṭṭhana vipassanā* (insight) meditation. He now directs an international meditation center at Buddha Gayā where many people from the West have come and practised meditation. Among these yogis was a young American, Joseph Goldstein, who has recently written a perceptive book on insight meditation under the name *THE EXPERIENCE OF INSIGHT: A NATURAL UNFOLDING*.

Some of Sayādaw's work have been published abroad, such *THE SATIPAṬṬHĀNA MEDITATION* by the Unity Press, San Francisco, California, U.S.A., and the *PROGRESS OF INSIGHT* by the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Selfless and able assistance was rendered by U Pe Thin (now deceased) and Myanaung U Tin in Sayādaw's dealings with his visitors and yogis from abroad and in the translation into English of some of Sayādaw's discourses on *vipassanā meditation*. Both of them were accomplished yogis.



Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw leading the procession at Oakenholt, England.



**GROUP PHOTO — OAKENHOLT, UK 1979**

When Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw came to the UK in 1979 he spent about one month teaching *Vipassanā* at Oakenholt Buddhist Centre, at Farmoor, near Oxford. Many devout Buddhists ordained temporarily to practise meditation under the Sayādaw's expert guidance. Sitting to the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw's left, is Chanmyay Sayadaw U Janaka, who served as his interpreter during his foreign mission. Seated just in front of U Janaka is Mrs Ruth Dennison, a well-known teacher of *Vipassana* meditation in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Bhikkhu Pesala is seated at the extreme right of the photograph. The tall slim young man in the blue-check shirt standing at the back behind U Janaka is now known as Ajahn Karuniko, a senior monk in the English Forest Sangha.



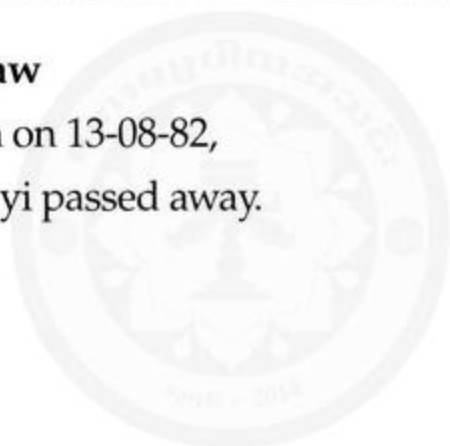
#### NOVICE ORDINATION 1979

The ordinations at Oakenholt in 1979 were held in a temporary *simā*, created for that purpose inside one of the many wooden buildings at Oakenholt. In the morning of June 24th 1979, many famous monks were gathered. To the Mahāsi Sayādaw's left is Venerable Ajahn Chah, behind his left shoulder is Ajahn Sucitto (current abbot of Chithurst Forest Monastery). Also in the front row of senior monks is Venerable Manadharo (from Laos), and Venerable Hammalawa Saddhatissa (Sri Lanka). The candidates are already in robes, awaiting the going-forth (*pabbajja*). The Higher Ordination ceremony took place in the afternoon, by which time Venerable Ajahn Chah and his disciples had left for Chithurst monastery.

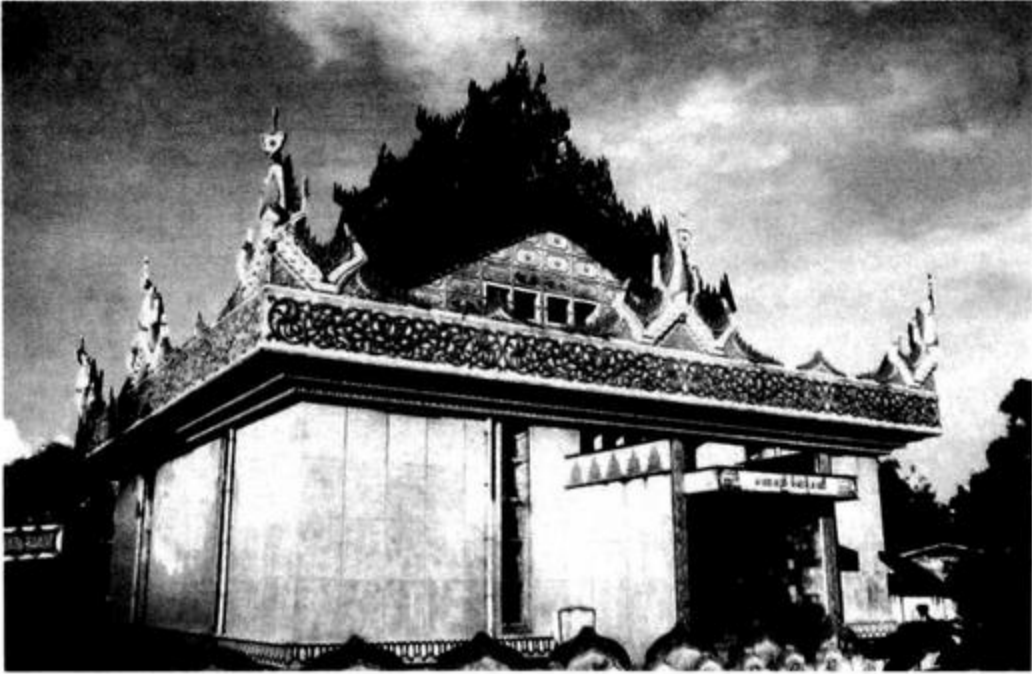


**Mahāsi Sayādaw**

This Photograph was taken on 13-08-82,  
just one day before Sayadawgyi passed away.



The inexorable law of *Anicca* (Impermanence) terminated, with tragic suddenness, Mahāsī Sayādaw's selfless and dedicated life on the 14th day of August 1982. Like a true son of the Buddha, he lived valiantly, spreading the word of the Master throughout the world and helped many thousands onto the Path of Enlightenment and Deliverance.



#### MAHĀSĪ MAUSOLEUM

This building was constructed in one corner of Mahāsī Yeiktha in Yangon to serve as a lasting memorial to the tireless work of the Most Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw in propagating the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna meditation. Inside this marble mausoleum is a lifelike statue of the late Mahāsī Sayādaw, some photographs of his foreign missions, and on the walls, inscribed in marble slabs, one can read (in Burmese) his great work on Vipassanā meditation — Vipassanā Shunee Kyan. In the centre of the building is a raised wooden platform on which one may practice meditation in the calm and cool interior of the mausoleum.



## APPENDIX

Below is a concise excerpted translation from the Pāli text of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta accompanied by a commentary from the author, Mahāsī Sayādaw. This is offered as an expanded aid in this meditation technique, a reference to the source from which all Satipaṭṭhāna meditation arose, the words of the Buddha.

● **THE MAHĀSATIPATṬHĀNA SUTTA** states:

“And moreover, monks, a monk, when he is walking, is aware of it thus: ‘I walk’; or when he is standing, or sitting, or lying down, he is aware thereof.”

“And moreover, monks, a monk, when he departs, or returns, when he looks at or looks away from, when he bends or stretches (his limbs), when he puts on the lower robe, the upper robe, or takes the bowl, when he is eating, drinking, chewing, savouring, or when he is obeying the calls of nature — he is aware of what he is doing. In going, standing, sitting, sleeping, watching, talking, or keeping silence, he knows what he is doing.”

“And moreover, monks, a monk reflects upon this very body, however it be placed or disposed, with respect to the four elements.”

“Herein, monks, when affected by a feeling of pleasure, a monk is aware of it as ‘I feel a pleasurable feeling’. Likewise, he is aware when affected by a painful feeling.”

“Herein, monks, if a monk has a lustful thought, he is aware that it is so, or if the thought is free from lust, is aware that it is so. Herein, monks, when a monk is aware of sensual desire he reflects ‘I have sensual desire’.”

In accordance with these teachings of the Buddha, it has been stated in colloquial language thus: “rising” while the abdomen is rising; “falling” while the abdomen is falling; “bending” while the limbs are bending; “stretching” while

the limbs are stretching; “wandering” while the mind is wandering; “thinking”, “reflecting”, or “knowing” while one is so engaged; “feeling stiff, hot,” or “in pain” while one feels so; “walking, standing, sitting,” or “lying” while one is so doing. Here it should be noted that walking and so on are stated in common words instead of “being aware of the inner wind element manifesting itself in the movement of the limbs,” as is stated in the Pāli texts.

### ● RISING AND FALLING MOVEMENT OF THE ABDOMEN

It is quite in agreement with the Buddha’s teachings to contemplate on the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. Such rising and falling is a physical process (*rūpa*) caused by the pressure of the wind element. The wind element is included in the material group of the five aggregates (*khandhā*); in the tactile object of the twelve sense bases (*āyatana*); in the body impression of the eighteen elements (*dhātu*); in the wind element of the four material elements (*mahābhūta*); in the truth of suffering of the four noble truths (*sacca*). The material aggregate, a tactile object, a body impression and the truth of suffering are certainly objects for insight contemplation. Surely they are not otherwise.

The rising and falling movement of the abdomen is therefore a proper object for contemplation, and while so contemplating, being aware that it is but a movement of the wind element, subject to the laws of impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality, is quite in agreement with the Buddha’s discourses on the aggregates (*khandhās*), the sense bases (*āyatanas*), the elements (*dhātus*), and the Noble Truths (*saccas*). While the abdomen is rising and falling, the pressure and movement experienced thereby is a manifestation of the wind element which is tactile, and perceiving that rightly

as such is quite in accordance with what the Buddha taught as briefly shown below.

**“Apply your mind thoroughly, monks, to body and regard it in its true nature as impermanent.”**

**“Monks, when a monk sees the body which is impermanent, as impermanent, this view of his is right view.”**

**“Herein, monks, a monk reflects: ‘Such is material form, such is its genesis, such its passing away’.”**

**“Apply your minds thoroughly, monks, to the tactile objects and regard their true nature as impermanent.”**

**“Monks, when a monk sees tactile objects which are impermanent, this view of his is right view. However, by fully knowing and comprehending, by detaching himself from and abandoning the tactile objects, one is capable of extinguishing ill.”**

**“In him who knows and sees tactile objects as impermanent, ignorance vanishes and knowledge arises.”**

**“Herein, monks, a monk is aware of the organ of touch and tangibles.”**

**“Whatever is an internal element of motion, and whatever is an external element of motion, just these are the element of motion. By means of perfect intuitive wisdom it should be seen of this as it really is, thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’**

Thus the contemplation of the rising and the falling movement of the abdomen is in accord with the above discourses and also with the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Dhātumanasikārapabba — section on attention to the elements), Again, the wind element that causes the movement and pressure of the abdomen, comprised in the group of materiality, is the truth of suffering.

*Excerpts from One Truth Only:*  
*A Compilation of Passages from Mahāsi Sayādaw*

● **HOW NIBBĀNA IS REALIZED**

*from PRACTICAL INSIGHT MEDITATION*

THE UPS AND DOWNS of insight knowledge occurring in the aforesaid manner are comparable to a bird let loose from a sea-going ship.

In ancient times the captain of a sea-going ship, finding it difficult to know whether the ship was approaching land, released a bird that he had taken with him. The bird flies in all four directions to look for a shore. Whenever it cannot find any land, it comes back to the ship. As long as insight knowledge is not mature enough to grow into *path* and *fruition knowledge* and thereby attain to the realization of Nibbāna, it becomes lax and retarded, just as the bird returns to the ship.

When the bird sees land, it flies on in that direction without returning to the ship. Similarly, when insight knowledge is mature, on having become keen, strong and lucid, it will understand one of the formations, at one of the six sense doors, as being *impermanent* or *painful* or *without self*. That act of noticing any one characteristic out of the three which has a higher degree of lucidity and strength in its perfect understanding, becomes faster and manifests itself three or four times in rapid succession.

Immediately after the last consciousness in this series of accelerated noticing has ceased, *magga* and *phala* (path and fruition) arises, realizing Nibbāna, the cessation of all formations.

The acts of noticing are now more lucid than the previous ones immediately before the realization. After the last act of noticing, the cessation of the formation and realization of Nibbāna become manifest.

*The answer may be just a book away!*

“Imagine someone searching for some understanding, some answer to the confusion of life. This person knows that things aren’t quite right. There must be better ways to live one’s life than this. She or he searches and picks up yet another book and lo and behold finds the answer to his or her quest. ~THAT’S IT!~ and life changes forever.” ~Venerable Nānadassi

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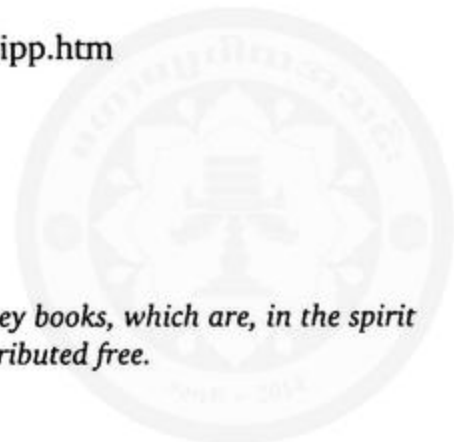
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*"Whosoever, O monks, has developed and frequently practiced Mindfulness of the Body, included for him therein are all beneficial things conducive to wisdom."*

(Majjhima Nikaya 119, Kayagatasati Sutta)

*"If the body is unmastered (by meditation; abhāvito), the mind will be unmastered; if the body is mastered, the mind is mastered"*

(Majjhima Nikaya 36, Maha-Saccaka Sutta)

**THIS LITTLE BOOKLET** provides practical, methodical and easy to follow instruction on the practice of *vipassanā* or insight meditation. It serves as an introduction to the practice of *vipassanā*. It is transcribed from a talk given by the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw of Burma (Myanmar) to new meditators at Sāsana Yeiktha Meditation Center, Rangoon (Yangon), Burma.

The late Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw, U Sobhana Mahāthera is one of the most eminent meditation masters of our time and a leader in the contemporary revival of *vipassanā* meditation.

Under his guidance thousands of people have been trained at his Center and many more have benefited from his clear-cut approach to meditation practice through his writings and teachings of his disciples. More than a hundred branch centers of the Sāsana Yeiktha Center have been established in Burma and his method has spread widely to other countries, East and West.

A brief biography of the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw is also included in this booklet.



Photograph of the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw as *Pucchaka* (Questioner) during the Sixth Great Buddhist Council at Yangon, Myanmar (1954)



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