

SATIPATTHANA

သတိပဋ္ဌာန်ဝိပဿနာတရားတော်

Vipassana Insight Meditation Practice

Thant Kyi Taung Yan Aung Chan Thar

Sayadaw



Bhaddanta Thawma Bodhi

Thant Kyi Taung

Myanmar



Thant Kyi Taung Yan Aung Chan Thar Sayadaw
Bhaddanta Thawma Bodhi

PREFACE

In 1987, the head of **Nyinma Centers**, Head **Lama Tarthang Tulku**, was visiting Myanmar on a pilgrimage tour in upper Myanmar. The Lama by accident met **Sayadaw Bhaddanta Thawma Bodhi** at Mandalay Airport. Spontaneously it occurred to the Lama that he had met Sayadaw in one past life and was overwhelmed with great respect and pay obeisance then and there. In grateful respect to one spiritually developed Bhikkhu, Sayadaw he invited Sayadaw to visit the Nyingma Center, at Berkeley, California. In April of 1988, at the invitation of Lama Sayadaw was in Berkeley.

While at **Nyinma Centers**. Berkeley, he was invited to community centers to deliver Buddha sermons and the Vipassana Meditation. Soon, he had visited several community centers in San Francisco, Los Angeles areas, spreading the Buddha teaching. He teaches the Satipathanna Mindfulness Meditation in an extraordinary way to Yogi's that many Yogis' could perceive his method in a very short period of practice...

His teaching is based on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path – categorized into three main factors as – **Sila**, **Samadhi** and **Panna** - that lead an individual to the liberation from the Samsara – the cycle of rebirths.

Sayadaw practices a very strict rule, imposing on himself, taking a special vow that is extraordinary for one practicing austerity with the goal to attain the fruit of holiness. His fame of the special austerity practice spread across the country. To name just a few are:

- a. He will use only the three sets of robes – one a daily use
- b. He will only take vegetarian food
- c. He will take food only from his own alm bowl
- d. He will take no more than 45 takes out of his bowl
- e. He will take one meal a day

The primary goal of his teaching on Satipathanna Mindfulness Meditation described in this booklet is based on the Buddha's teaching on the Buddha's original Satipathanna Sutta - the path leading to one's liberation from the cycle of rebirth (*Samsara). The practice is given in step by step, simple and easy to attain mindfulness.

Acknowledgement:

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- a. **Lama Tarthang Tulku – invitation to visit Nyinma Centers. At Berkeley, California, USA.**

- b. Contributing efforts on the part of U Mya Taung (Mahasi Yogi) and U Kyaw Shein (Retd.). Bank Manager)**

May all sentient beings attain the awakening in this very life.

**Organizing Committee
Thant-Kyi-Taung Yan Aung Chan Tha
Kuppiya Kayana Committee
Myanmar**

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By
Robert H. Thein, Elmer Thein and Family**

Biography

Thant Kyi Taung Yan Aung Chan Thar Sayadaw Bhaddanta Thawma Bodhi

Sayadaw was born in the Myanmar Lunar Calendar year 1297 (1939 AD) on the first waxing moon day of Thadingyut, to parents – U Aung Chain and Daw Saw Khin of Hlakyangpauk Village of Maezale ywaDan Paungsu, Pukkoku township – Magwe Division, Myanmar.

At the age of 10 he was initiated as Samanera under mentor preceptor sayadaw U Ngarya. Then at age 20, he was fully ordained as Bhikkhu under mentor Taunggyigone Sayadaw.

For a good period of ten years he went through training on Monastic Teaching centers in Pukkoku and Mandalay areas Sar Tin Thaik for Vinaya and Pitaka Dhamma and Pali literatures. Some of the Sar Thin Thaik include Ahhle Thaik, Sekkhu Thaik, Khinmagan Thaik, Mekaung Thaik, and ChanThargyi Thaik. He then took to the forest ascetic Bhikkhu life style.

He then took the assignment for a good period of five years as Instructor teaching Anapana Meditation method to novices and Samaneras at Ze pintawya Kyaung at Amarapura Mandalay Township.

At age 35, in 1970 he went through the Webu Meditation method and later went to Mahasi Yeiktha in Yangon to learn Mahasi method of meditation practices four months .

In 1970 onward, for a good period of two years, he went through intensive austerity practice of taken vow to practice tranquility. During these two years he was never preaching and never spoke a word to anyone while practicing tranquility meditation practice.

In 1971 to 1972 for two years, he was teaching Satipathanna Mindfulness meditation practices to Yogi's . Then in 1973 and 1974 he established his own Satipathanna Mediation center teaching Yogi's at Zepintawya, Pukkoku.

In 1975 at the instruction of his Tipitakadaya teachers he established his Monastic residence at Thantkyitaung teaching the Satipathanna meditation practices.

Then, in 1988, at the invitation of Lama Tarthang Tulku, he visited the Nyinma Centers at Berkeley, California and later traveled to San Francisco, and Los Angeles to teach Satipathanna Mindfulness meditation practices to Yogi's.

In the course of his Ministry at Los Angeles, the Myanmar community in Los Angeles donated the Monastery at Azusa, to him and under his care to provide resident Bhikkhu's to teach Satipathanna meditation to the local community. It was then his responsibility to pay annual visit to this monastery in Los Angeles, California.

In January 6, 1989, the Mahabonkyaw Pagan Thaik Monastery including 7.5 acres of land at Takhundaing Town, Mandalay District was given to his care by Sayadaw Nayadabiwontha and U Pyinnyathami. He now holds to perform his foreign and domestic ministry to teach and lead Yogi's who aspired to attain the cessation of suffering in this Samsara feeding on his Satipathanna Mindfulness Meditation practices.

**Thant Kyi Taung Yan Aung Chan Thar Sayadaw
Bhaddanta Thawma Bodhi**

Satipathanna Vipassana Meditation Practice

1. To learn Satipathanna Meditation practice takes total dedication and hard work on the part of Yogi to reap the maximum benefit. It takes many past lives' good kamma and one's perfection (parami) in order to be beneficial and thus requires a strong effort to learn this practice.

Buddha said that it is an inherent nature of human to be good at a few specialties but not at all specialties and skill. For that reason, to Buddha preached about given Dana (Charities; to some he preached Sila (virtue); and some he teaches Samadha (concentration practices. However, he preached Satipathanna Mindfulness meditation practices only to some special people who are endowed with talents and high perfection)parami).

Due to inherent nature of people with different background and taste, Buddha said that people who are highly intelligent , wise and wealthy prone to be concerned about their future welfare from here and after; however, people who are not intelligent, wise and wealthy are not so concerned of their present and their future welfare. To the first group of people, Buddha selected them and teaches them the Satipathanna meditation that will benefit them, most.. It is to this group of people, Buddha delivered the Satipathanna Meditation discourse.

2. There are many benefits that an individual of the first group can accrue by the Satipathanna practices are many:

- a. Cleansing off bad thoughts to do akusal**
- b. Eradicates worry and concerns of the present and future welfare**
- c. Eradicates lamentation when faced with sad event**
- d. Free from worldly ills**
- e. Enable to attain the four stages of holiness – Sotapanna, Sedakagama, Anagami, Arahatsip**
- f. Enable to perceive the clear understanding of the path leading to the cessation of sufferings – Nibbana.**

3. Buddha said that those who aspire to attain their own liberation from the Samsara, an individual must practice this Satipathanna Meditation practice.

- a. Go to the forest – seek out quiet and tranquil places**
- b. Seek out a quiet place under a tree, or**
- c. A peaceful and tranquil place**

With any of the above three suitable place found, a Yogi should sit in Lotus position with his body erect and start the practice.

3.1 Three positions of Sitting

1. Lotus position - legs separated
2. Lotus position with one leg on top of the other
3. Perfect lotus position like Buddha

To practice the meditation, one has a choice to select any of the three position and with body erect. It is not necessary for one to sit in a perfect lotus position, like in position 3. Any position of your choice is proper and comfortable to you. Position 3 is only when one has been conditioned for quite sometime in the practice

3.2 Hand Positions

1. Palm on top of the other with thumb touching lightly, or
2. With pal down, place right palm on the right knee and left palm on the left knee

Among practitioners, many preferred the first hand position. Any hand position is proper and acceptable.

3.3 Body Position

All Yogi should place their body position erect and straight. There is no other choice.

4. Breathing

Yogi is now ready to start the meditation. A Yogi must start with “ **breathing – in and Breathing - out** “. One must be mindful of where the air is being **breathed –in** and where the air is being **breathed-out**. This cycle of in and out process must be as regular and steady as possible. As one is mindful of the breath=in and breath-out, one should not think of all external affairs in your thought.

4.1 Noting the Breathing Process

- a. Start - To begin the meditation, one must **note where the air touches while breathe in; and note where the air touches while breathe out.**
- b. Next - one must note where the air touches while breathe in; and note where the air touches while breathe out
- c. Next - one must note where the air touches while breathe in; and note where the air touches while breathe out
- d. Next -.....
- e. Next

- f. This noting will then repeat as regular and as steady as possible. It takes some effort for one to get use to repeat the cycle on and on continuously for at least half an hour.

With regular practice of noting, it will be easier and easier with more sittings and more practices.

4.2 Parami – Perfection

Depending on one's past consciousness, or kamma, some may take longer than the other. However, to a few Yogi, it may take a matter of seven days sittings to realize this noting process. No two Yogi's can attain this noting knowledge in the same length of time. To some it could take as long as seven year.

Buddha said that at a minimum, one could attain the perception as short as a day to seven days to attain **Sotapanna** or **Anagami** stage of holiness.

Preliminary Experience

At the start in the first few days, a Yogi will find it very hard to note the process of breath-in and Breath out; however, in the later part of their sittings, they will find it much easier to note. Perseverance is what a Yogi needs to continue on to take this practice. Knowing that it is the way leading to perceive the Universal Law of Anicca, Dukha and Anatta, to free us from the round of rebirths, we should put all our effort to achieve the ultimate result.

This method of mindfulness of noting the breath-in and breath-out process applies only to the **sitting meditation**.

5. Other Mindfulness Noting Methods

The sitting mindfulness of noting is only the basis fundamental method of Vipassana meditation. “ **Know the Breath-in and Breath-out**” *The breath-in and Breath-out process should be gentle and steady so noting could then be synchronize easily with the process.*

In the first 20 minutes of sitting. You will feel the painful sensation or the heat sensation of your body. When this is experience, one should not stop the process nor change the method to a different frequency or mode of breathing and noting. **The same process should be maintained.** .

When Yogi starts to feel the pain, which is inherent in all of us when doing a repeated process, to avoid stopping or changing the mode of repetition of noting, one should note – the pain, the pain, the pain, the pain, the pain as such. The feeling of pain or heat will soon vanish.

Try to ignore the newly sensation of Pain or Heat. Thus, the Yogi will focus more and more on the noting and breath-in and breath-out as steady and as gentle as you can.

In the same manner, if you feel any numbness, stiffness on any part of the body, the same effort should be applied to ignore such sensation. When such effort is applied to ignore, the Yogi has now overcome the hard part of meditation practice.

There are other two methods that can also be used. They other two methods are :

- a. Standing Meditation method
- b. Walking Meditation method

6. Standing Meditation

Foot Position - When practicing the standing meditation, a Yogi should stand comfortably with the two feet – not too close, not too far apart, but just comfortably apart by about 5 to 7 inches apart between the two.

Hand Position – Both hand can be comfortably place with finger extended or finger slightly curved.

Head and Neck Position – Head and neck should be as straight as possible and be comfortable as possible. Many will prefer the loosely drop hand position.

While you are comfortably placed, focus on noting that you are standing by the strength of air space (**Note in your mind that the air keeps your body standing**). Keep in mind that your ability to stand is due to atmospheric pressure surrounding the body. Having this in mind –

With this thought – **your entire body from top to bottom – note**

- a. Standing note
- b. Standing note
- c. Standing note
- d. Standing note
- e. Standing note , having that in focus,

Start on the breath-in and breath out – noting . noting – as prescribed in above sitting position method. Breathing in and breathing out should be discernable but not vigorous.

While you are synchronizing the breath-in and breath-out noting the where the air touches the nose, stop thinking of all external worldly affairs – worry, concerns, house chores, etc. **Do not let any sense interfere with the noting process**. Keep your concentration on the sense of the air going in and air going out at one place.

7. Synchronizing the Breath-in and Breath-out Air

When your mindfulness in noting the air and out air touching the nose, you then attain the benefit of meditation –

- a. Worry - Free from worry
- b. Anger – free from anger
- c. Conceit – free of conceit

This stage is when your concentration is focus on a single point – free from all external thoughts. Once this single point of concentration is established, you have attained the ultimate piece of bliss and happiness. That was why Buddha said to his disciples thus –

The teaching that I am given you, is of the highest knowledge for the high intellects –

- a. Very deep in thought
- b. It is very rare to encounter
- c. It is hard to conceived through thought process

Should an individual attain what is deep in philosophy, rare to encounter in life, and hard to conceive through thought process, then, that individual has gain an invaluable knowledge. One can experience it through doing it through experience. That is why Buddha said this knowledge is only for the wise.

To be clear of the meaning of the wise means – not an individual who gain the knowledge taught by other; but one who conceived and gain that knowledge through experiencing it on his own.

A wise man is one who put himself to experience it on his own through experimenting it.

Minor correction –

In the lapse of about 10 to 15 minutes of standing meditation, a Yogi will experience the heat or some numbness at the foot. It is normal for Yogi to make a small correction like – lift either the front toe or the back of the foot to slightly separate from the floor – enough to ease the foot pressure.

There may be instances that Yogi will feel the intense numbness in the leg, shaking of the leg, shaking of the body or even the whole body. When that happened, please do not think that you will fall, you are only experiencing the natural phenomena. You are perfectly alright. This is experienced by all Yogi as a beginner; however, in the next few meditation, you will be more at ease. **S**o keep your noting of the breath-

in and breath-out. It is said in the literature that those who practice standing meditation could be free from all illnesses like stroke, arthritis, etc. It is recommended that to a beginner, one should start with 30 minutes, then, to 40 minutes and later to 50 minutes.

At the end of every sitting or standing meditation, you should end in saying – **Well done , Well done, Well done** – **Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu**. Then slowly lift your foot while moving or taking the first step, looking at the floor and noting. Now you begin the step –

Here too, do not loose your noting – still note that, you are taking the left step, then the right step, and so on. Continue noting on the steps.

10. Walking Meditation

In walking meditation the procedure is pretty much the same – focus your mind on each and every step you take –

- a. Note - taking the left step
- b. Note - taking the right step

Repeat the same –

- a. Note - taking the left step
- b. Note - taking the right step

Repeat the same –

- a. Note - taking the left step
- b. Note - taking the right step

With the noting in your mind is synchronized easily, then you move on to the next step.

Note - at each action taken

Left Step.

- a. Noting - foot lifting from the floor the left foot
- b. Noting - foot taking a step forward – left foot
- c. Noting -. stepping on the floor – left foot

Right Step.

- a. Noting - foot lifting from the floor the right foot
- b. Noting - foot taking a step forward – right foot
- c. Noting -. stepping on the floor – right foot

Process - **Lift** **step** **touch** - **the floor**

This noting is the basis of walking meditation.

Advance Procedure – Walking Meditation

Going on to the advance procedure is to note –

Left foot

Lift **step** **touch** - **the floor**

Right foot –

Lift **step** **touch** - **the floor**

Continue on noting as above.

Yogi will slowly become more experience in noting day by day, until ultimately, the Yogi will only be noting so efficiently. At such time, the procedure of noting becomes automatic and this stage is the attainment of meditation process. The Yogi will feel so light footed.

When a Yogi has reached this stage, the individual is said to be benefit the followings:

- a. Ability to travel long distances
- b. Ability to do meditation with little or no effort
- c. One is free from all illnesses
- d. Able to digest food–
- e. Concentration at single point is reached – Samadhi.

At this stage, some Yogi could recall his or her past lives; and some attain the ability to see one's future. It is to be noted that not all will achieved the divine eyes; however, a few will attain this divine eye – the celestial sixth senses.

12. Recommendations

There are many benefits that can be achieved by a Yogi who practice this mindfulness meditation. It is important that Yogi 's follow the instruction to the letter of the instruction. Miraculous power can be achieved through practicing mindfulness meditation. The benefit can be invaluable both in the present and thereafter in the next live. Vipassana is the way to Nibbana – an escape route from the cycle of rebirth– to **Nibbana**.

13. Required Requisites of a Yogi

There are five factors required of a Yogi to practice this Satipathanna meditation.

- a. Sadha – Faith in the teaching
- b. Viriya - Perseverance
- c. Observance – knowing and observing
- d. Peace of mind - presence of mind – quick to learn
- e. Truth – knowing the truth as is really is

The above requisites are essential for Yogi to attain the ultimate awakening and should be able to enjoy the benefits of concentration and mindfulness meditation. One with these requisite could enjoy the benefit of meditation in a very short time.

14. The Realization of the law of Anecca, Dukha and Anatta

The Universal law of impermanence, suffering and No-self is what Buddha said we all Yogi must perceive when we look at the nature and characteristic of things as they really are. So after you are familiar with the meditation on focusing on a single point of concentration we should then move on to the impermanence nature of all phenomena, which we consider as Vipassan meditation.

This law of impermanence, suffering and no-self can only be perceived only when an individual put himself whole heartedly to look at the natural phenomena with the true eye. To experience is to know the truth.

To conclude the teaching discourse, I thank Mr. Jack and the translator Dr. Tin Wa for his kind effort to translate the lessons to the attending Yogi's. Most of all, I thank all who attend this meditation discourse.

My thanks also go to **Lama Tarthang Tulku head of the Nyinma Centers who arrange this meditation discourse.**