

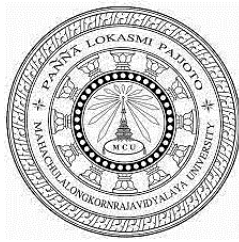
A STUDY OF MEDITATION TEACHING STYLES OF MAHASI SAYADAW
TRADITION

Tejaniya

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
(Linguistics)

Graduate School
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

C.E. 2018



A Study of Meditation Teaching Styles of Mahasi Sayadaw
Tradition

Tejaniya

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
(Linguistics)

Graduate School
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
C.E. 2018

(Copyright by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University)



The Graduate School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has approved this thesis of “A Study of Meditation Teaching Styles of Mahasi Sayadaw Tradition” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics.

.....
(Phramaha Somboon Vuddhikaro, Dr.)

Dean of Graduate School

Thesis Examination Committee:

.....
(Asst. Prof. Dr. Nares Surasit)

Chairperson

.....
(Asst. Prof. Dr. Veerakam Kanokkamalade)

Member

.....
(Dr. Narongchai Pintrymool)

Member

.....
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruandej Pankhuenkhat)

Member

.....
(Phramaha Suriya Vamedhi, Asst. Prof. Dr)

Member

Thesis Supervisory Committee:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veerakam Kanokkamalade

Chairperson

Dr. Narongchai Pintrymool

Member

Researcher:

.....
Tejaniya

(Tejaniya)

Thesis Title : A Study of Meditation Teaching Styles of Mahasi Sayadaw Tradition

Researcher : Tejaniya

Thesis Supervisory Committee

: Asst. Prof. Dr. Veerakarn Kanokkamalade,
B.A. (English), M.A. (Linguistics), Ph.D. (Linguistics)

: Dr. Narongchai Pintrymool, B.A. (English),
M.A (Linguistics), Ph.D. (Linguistics)

Date of Graduation : March 21, 2019

Abstract

This study consists of two objectives, namely; 1) to study the meditation teaching styles of Mahasi Sayadaw tradition and 2) to study the effectiveness of these styles of this tradition. This study is a documentary and qualitative research with two parts of data collection; the first is an interview with professional meditation teachers, the second is the study from textbook, thesis, academic journals.

The result of this research was aimed to study meditation teaching styles which are instrumental in Mahasi Sayadaw tradition. The study has been done based on, especially, the review and books. Researcher attempted to elaborate and elucidate how the techniques are effective to gain expected benefits.

The Vipassana meditation technique taught by Mahasi Sayadaw is characterized by the meditator anchoring his attention on the rising and falling sensations of the abdomen, making that the primary point of observation.

The reason for this is that the rising and falling of the abdomen are always present making that a suitable place for observing the transient and impermanent nature of phenomena. The breath rises and falls all the time. In the same way all phenomena both physically and mentally rise and fall incessantly. Having an anchor serves as a way for the mind to not get lost.

In beginning of meditation practice the mind is like a little child always running out to the objects and getting lost. Having an anchor means that the meditator can always come back to the abdomen if things get too intense meaning if e.g. feelings or thoughts get too intense when observing them.

The meditator then carefully observed the five aggregates, i.e. form, feeling, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. One did not interact with the objects of meditation. One simply observed them. One did not have to do anything. One only has to be a witness.

The second part of the technique which is specific to the Mahasi Sayadaw method is "noting". Noting can also be understood as "naming or labelling" of the object that are currently being observed. It can also mean to "remind" oneself of the current object being observed so that the mind will not stray or follow after the object, identifying with it and getting lost.

Acknowledgement

“A Study of Meditation Teaching Styles of Mahasi Sayadaw Tradition”, which is my thesis title that has been already finished, and it cannot be in a form of completed thesis without the help of everybody.

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Veerakarn Kanokkamalade and Dr. Narongchai Pintrymool of the Faculty of Humanities at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. The door to Asst. Prof. Dr. Veerakarn Kanokkamalade’s office was always open whenever I ran into a trouble spot or had a question about my research or writing. He consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, but steered me in the right direction whenever he thought I needed it.

I would also like to extend my gratitude and respect for all lecturers of M.A. in Linguistics Program, Faculty of Humanities at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Without their passionate participation and input, the validation survey could not have been successfully conducted.

I would also like to acknowledge staff of the Faculty of Humanities at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University as a friendly help for me and I am gratefully indebted to them for very valuable comments on this thesis.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you.

Tejaniya

March 21, 2019

Table of Contents

| | Title | Page |
|---------------------|--|------------|
| | Abstract | i |
| | Acknowledgement | iii |
| | List of Abbreviations | vii |
| Chapter I: | Introduction | |
| | 1.1 Background and Significance of the Problems | 1 |
| | 1.2 Objectives of the Research | 4 |
| | 1.3 Statement of the Research Questions | 5 |
| | 1.4 Scope of the Research | 5 |
| | 1.5 Definition of the Terms Used in the Research | 5 |
| | 1.6 Expected Benefits | 6 |
| Chapter II: | Review of Related Literature and Concerned Research Works | |
| | 2.1 Introduction | 7 |
| | 2.2 Definition of Meditation | 7 |
| | 2.3 Mahasi Concept of Inside Meditation | 10 |
| | 2.4. Mahasi Method the Art of Noting | 11 |
| | 2.5 Translated English Books on Vipassana | 16 |
| | 2.6 Burmese Books Related to Mahasi Method | 20 |
| | 2.7 Books by Mahasi on Vipassana | 26 |
| Chapter III: | Research Methodology | |
| | 3.1 Research Approach | 33 |
| | 3.2 Research Design | 33 |
| | 3.3 Population | 33 |
| | 3.4 Data Collection | 34 |
| | 3.5 Data Analysis | 34 |

Table of Contents (Continued)

| | Title | Page |
|--------------------|--|------|
| Chapter IV: | Results of Research | |
| | 4.1 Meditation and Its Kinds | 35 |
| | 4.1.1 Tranquility Meditation | 35 |
| | 4.1.2 Insight Meditation | 36 |
| | 4.2 Characteristics of Mahasi Method | 38 |
| | 4.2.1 Escaping Samatha | 38 |
| | 4.2.2 Direct Vipassana | 39 |
| | 4.2.3 Simplicity | 40 |
| | 4.3 Guideline of Mahasi Method | 41 |
| | 4.3.1 Preparatory Stage | 41 |
| | 4.3.2 Sitting Meditation | 44 |
| | 4.3.3 Standing Meditation | 46 |
| | 4.3.4 Walking Meditation | 47 |
| | 4.3.5 Eating Meditation | 48 |
| | 4.3.6 Sleeping Meditation | 49 |
| | 4.3.7 Meditation on General Activities | 51 |
| | 4.3.8 Time and Schedule | 52 |
| | 4.4 Effectiveness of Mahasi Method | 54 |
| | 4.4.1 General Effects | 54 |
| | 4.4.2 Spiritual Effects | 55 |
| | 4.5 Interview with Translation | 58 |
| | 4.6 Summary of Interviews | 63 |
| Chapter V: | Conclusion and Suggestion | |
| | 5.1 Conclusion | 65 |
| | 5.1.1 The Mahasi Method of Vipassana | 65 |
| | 5.1.2 The Effectiveness of Mahasi Method | 66 |
| | 5.1.3 The Influence on the Society | 68 |

Table of Contents (Continued)

| Title | Page |
|-----------------|------|
| 5.2. Discursion | 70 |
| 5.3 Suggestion | 71 |
| Bibliography | 76 |
| Appendix | 79 |
| Biography | 86 |

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

The abbreviations use in the research as following data:

| | |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| S' | = Singular |
| 'S | = Plural |
| . | = Full Stop |
| , | = Comma |
| “ ” | = Quotation |
| - | = Hyphen |
| — | = Dash |
| ? | = Question Mark |
| : | = Colon |
| ; | = semi-colon |
| () | = parentheses |
| ā | = Latin Small Letter A with Macron |

A STUDY OF MEDITATION TEACHING STYLES OF MAHASI SAYADAW TRADITION

Tejaniya¹

Asst. Prof. Dr. Veerakarn Kanokkamalade²

Dr. Narongchai Pintrymool³

ABSTRACT

This study consists of two objectives, namely; 1) To study the meditation teaching styles of Mahasi Sayadaw tradition. 2) To study the effectiveness of these styles of this tradition. This study is a documentary and qualitative research, it is used two parts of data collection; the first is an interview with professional meditation teachers, the second is the study from textbook, thesis, academic journals.

The result of this research is aimed to study meditation teaching styles which are instrumental in Mahasi tradition. The study has been done based on, especially, the reviewed books. Researcher attempted to elaborate and elucidate how the techniques are effective to gain expected benefits.

The Vipassana meditation technique taught by Mahasi Sayadaw is characterized by the meditator anchoring his attention on the rising and falling sensations of the abdomen, making that the primary point of observation.

The reason for this is that the rising and falling of the abdomen is always present making that a suitable place for observing the transient and impermanent nature of phenomena. The breath rises and falls all the time. In the same way all

¹ Student of Master of Arts In English (International Program), Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

² Asst. Prof. Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

³ Lecturer, Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

phenomena both physical and mental rise and fall incessantly. Having an anchor serves as a way for the mind to not get lost.

In beginning of meditation practice the mind is like a little child always running out to the objects and getting lost. Having an anchor means that the meditator can always come back to the abdomen if things get too intense meaning if e.g. feelings or thoughts get too intense when observing them.

The meditator then carefully observes the five aggregates, i.e. form, feeling, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. One does not interact with the objects of meditation. One simply observes them. One does not have to do anything. One only has to be a witness.

The second part of the technique which is specific to the Mahasi Sayadaw method is "noting". Noting can also be understood as "naming or labelling" of the object that are currently being observed. It can also mean to "remind" oneself of the current object being observed so that the mind will not stray or follow after the object, identifying with it and getting lost.

Keywords: Meditation teaching style, Mahasi Sayadaw tradition.

1. Introduction

Meditation, nowadays, is very popular in the present world. It has become a fashion-like in western societies. Meditation is now known to all the level of human society from kindergarten to research centers. Vipassana-derived mindfulness practices are taught in hospitals, clinics, prisons, and schools without any hint of their Buddhist source. In the west, the practice is primarily offered as an effective method of stress reduction, pain management, and self-understanding.⁴

Vipassana is rooted in ancient India. The Buddha rediscovered it 2500 years ago. Vipassana is the essence of what He practiced and taught during his forty-five years of dispensation. During the Buddha's time, large numbers of people in northern

⁴ Gil Fronsdal, **Insight Meditation in the United States: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**, (USA, California States: University of California Press, 1998), p. 28.

India were freed from the bonds of suffering by practicing it. Over time, the technique spread to the neighboring countries of Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka, Thailand, and others, where it had the same ennobling effect.⁵

According to Gil Fronsdal providing with the traditional preliminary practice of fixed concentration or tranquilization (appana samadhi, samatha) is an important feature of the “Mahasi approach”. Instead, the meditator practices vipassana exclusively during intensive periods of silent retreat that can last several months with a daily schedule of meditation from 3:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Two key elements in Mahasi’s method for developing mindfulness are: the careful labeling of one’s immediate experience and the cultivation of a high level of sustained concentration known as “momentary concentration” (khanika samadhi).

In Vipassana movement, Mahasi tradition is one of the unique ones. It is named under Mahasi Sayadaw, in Myanmar. Mahasi Sayadaw (U Sobhana Mahathera; 29 July 1904 – 14 August 1982), is a Buddhist monk of contemporary Burma and an eminent meditation master. He was a Burmese Theravada Buddhist monk and meditation master who had a significant impact on the teaching of Vipassana meditation in the West and throughout Asia. In his style of practice the trainer pay their attention on the sensations of the rising and falling of the abdomen during breathing, observing carefully any other sensations or thoughts. This is a revolutionary technique in the history of vipassana teaching.

The “Mahasi method” is one the most-practiced vipassana nowadays. It is considered faster and easier than the other method. It was promoted by Mahasi Sayadaw, but does have antecedents. Mahasi’s teacher was Mingun Sayadaw, also known as U Narada. Many sources count Mingun as the originator of the lineage.

Mingun’s teacher was Ale-Tawya Sayadaw, whose teacher was The-lon Sayadaw. According to Strong Roots, cited below, “The-Lon Sayadaw put this textual

⁵Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, **A Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma**, Tr. By U Ko Lay, (The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sāsānānuggaha Organization Mahāsi Translation Committee, December 2013), p. 22.

guidance (Visuddhimagga) into practice without a personal teacher to guide him in mindfulness practice". This is based oral history from a traditional Burmese monk in The-lon Sayadaw's lineage. It appears that The-lon Sayadaw developed some method based on the Visuddhimagga, which was learned and then substantially modified by Mingun, which was learned and then substantially modified by Mahasi.

Mahasi aimed his teaching particularly at lay people, rather than monks. He imported from the West the "meditation center" idea (not a traditional Asian institution). He eliminated ritual and minimized textual study.

The approach followed in Mahasi method is that of "bare insight" (sukkhavipassana) where, by direct observation, one's own bodily and mental processes are seen with increasing clarity as being impermanent, liable to suffering, and without a self or soul. The practice begins with a few selected subjects of body-contemplation, which are engaged up to the very end of the road.⁶ With the gradually increasing strength of mindfulness and concentration the range widens and the vision deepens until the insight knowledge unfold themselves in due order, as a natural outcome of the practice. This technique to the ultimate goal of Buddhist meditation is called bare insight because insight into the three characteristics of existence is made use of exclusively, dispensing with the prior development of full concentrative absorption (jhāna). Nevertheless, and it hardly needs to mention, a high degree of mental concentration is required for perseverance in the practice, for attaining to insight knowledge, and for reaping its fruits.⁷

However, this research is aimed to study meditation teaching techniques which are instrumental in Mahasi tradition. The study will be done based on, especially, the reviewed books. Researcher will attempt to elaborate and elucidate

⁶ Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, **Fundamentals of Insight Meditation**, Tr. By Maung Tha Noe (The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanañuggaha Organisation Mahāsi Translation Committee, August, 2013), p. 33.

⁷ Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, **Satipathana Vipassana**, Tr. By U Pe Thin, (The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sasananuggaha Organisation Mahasi Translation Committee, 1990), p. 2.

how the techniques are effective to gain expected benefits. The contemporary contributions of Vipassana, particularly Mahasi tradition, will be analyzed in the regards of social harmony and development. Hence, the study will suggest a simple and concise conclusion.

2 Objectives of the Research

1.2.1 To study the meditation teaching styles of Mahasi tradition.

1.2.2 To study the effectiveness of these styles of this tradition.

3. Research Methodology

1 Research Approach

This research is Qualitative approach concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the forms which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis

2 Research Design

1) In-depth Interview

2) The data of this study are collected from books by Mahasi or technique documentations. This research collects and analyzes the result of information about meditation styles in English of Mahasi Tradition, general academic textbooks, thesis, and academic journals.

3. Population

This research is qualitative research which aims to identify, categories, and analyze the data. This research uses the techniques of in-depth interview with 10 mediators who are meditating at Mahasi Sayadaw Meditation center in Myanmar, and 5 teachers who have good technique and experience about Mahasi Sayadaw teaching styles.

4 Data Collection

Collecting Materials: Collecting the related materials from the primary and secondary sources. Try to understand the related terms with contexts and to categorize them.

The researcher will interview some local scholars about teaching styles of vipassana meditation masters and practitioners and consider their opinions as well.

4 Results of the Research

This research focuses on Mahasi Sayadaw's original meditation styles and inside meditation development. Mahasi Sayadaw vipassana meditation is very famous in Myanmar and the whole world. Here, there are some important points discussed such as; 1 Meditation and its Kinds, 2 Characteristics of Mahasi Method, 3 Guideline of Mahasi Method, 4. Effectiveness of Mahasi Method.

In terms of scriptural explanation, we are made up of psycho-physical phenomena, which are arising and passing away all the time. A yogi is expected to experience them at the six sense doors through the mindfulness. When a sight is seen, for instance, the eye and the sight are physical phenomena, while the resultant consciousness of seeing is a mental phenomenon. Similarly, with the experiencing with sound, smell, taste, touch and mental objects, and several movements of the body such as folding and stretching of the arms, turning or leaning(inclining) of the body and the taking of steps in walking, Mahasi Sayadaw has instructed that all kinds of happenings should be closely noticed the moment they become obvious to us, with no exception of even trifling incidents

The primary object of attention, to which the mind should be tethered as it was, is the rising and falling of the abdomen as the yogis breathes during sitting practice. In the absence of any other noticeable object of attention, the yogi should keep on watching or observing it. The mind should also revert to it when a secondary object of attention has been noticed and fallen away. The yogi is expected to report whether he is able to observe the movement of the rising abdomen from the beginning to the end. As he inhales, the abdomen begins to rise somewhat rapidly and goes on rising as he continues to inhale. When the yogi ceases to inhale, the rising movement comes to an end.

When observing the rising movement of the abdomen, the entire movement should be experienced and known. The observing or noticing mind should be focused on the physical process of the rising abdomen through all the successive stages from the beginning to the end. The beginner would not, of course,

be able to notice all the stages of the movement but he should strive to be able to do so. He is urged to strive, thus, to ensure serious and sufficient concentration of the mind on the object.

5. Conclusion

This chapter explains all the topics and sub-topic of Mahasi Sayadaw Vipassana Meditation and Insight Meditation system and technique. The aim of this research is to study the concept of Meditation system of Mahasi Method. In this research a definition of the terms for Vipassana Meditation is examined. Next, an attempt has been made as to assess the significance of terms of *Sammāsati* (mindfulness) in relation to the realization of the Mahasi's teaching, as followed by two meditation traditions of *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* meditation. The teaching of Sayadaw can be found within the extensive range of written publication in Burmese, as well as publication in English, include 'Practical Meditation Insight' and 'the Process of Insight'. The legacy of Sayadaw's contribution to Buddhism, and in particular to the teaching of practical meditation technique, continues to have an impact around the world. Insight meditation, a technique in which the participant concentrates on the rising and falling of the abdomen during the breathing cycle while acknowledge the changes taking place within the mind and body, allows the participant to journey through the steps towards enlightenment. That such a path could be taken not only by monks but everyday persons had a dramatic influence within the realm of Theravada Buddhism, generating waves of interest in the practice of insight meditation.

6. Suggestion

1. Practice "Teflon" consciousness, observing consciousness, being the fair witness, awareness without an object, the neutral compassionate watcher of thoughts.

2. Learn to be your own meditation guide. Practice leading yourself in a guided meditation. This helps focus the purpose of your meditation and invests you in its creation and fulfillment.

3. If possible create a sacred place, even it is very small in your home which is used just for meditation.

4. Be aware of the benefits of your meditation at the end of the session, noticing how you feel, physically, mentally and emotionally

5. Remember meditation is as much about refinement of consciousness as it is expansion of consciousness.

Bibliography

Gil Fronsdal. **Insight Meditation in the United States: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**. USA, California States: University of California Press, 1998.

Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **A Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma**. Tr. By U Ko Lay. The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization Mahāsi Translation Committee, 2013.

Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **Fundamentals of Insight Meditation**. Tr. By Maung Tha Noe. The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organisation Mahāsi Translation Committee, 2013.

Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **Satipathana Vipassana**. Tr. By U Pe Thin. The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sasananuggaha Organisation Mahasi Translation Committee, 1990).

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problems

Meditation, nowadays, is very popular in the present world. It has become a fashion-like in western societies. Meditation is now known to all the level of human society from kindergarten to research centers. Vipassana-derived mindfulness practices are taught in hospitals, clinics, prisons, and schools without any hint of their Buddhist source. In the west, the practice is primarily offered as an effective method of stress reduction, pain management, and self-understanding.¹

Vipassana is rooted in ancient India. The Buddha rediscovered it 2500 years ago. Vipassana is the essence of what He practiced and taught during his forty-five years of dispensation. During the Buddha's time, large numbers of people in northern India were freed from the bonds of suffering by practicing it. Over time, the technique spread to the neighboring countries of Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka, Thailand and others, where it had the same ennobling effect.²

Five centuries after the Buddha, the noble heritage of Vipassana had disappeared from India. The purity of the teaching was lost elsewhere as well. In the country of Myanmar, however, it was preserved by a chain of devoted teachers. From generation to generation, over two thousand years, this dedicated lineage transmitted the technique in its original purity and popularity.³

¹ Gil Fronsdal, **Insight Meditation in the United States: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**, (USA, California States: University of California Press, 1998), p. 28.

² Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, **A Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma**, Tr. By U Ko Lay, (The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sāsānānuggaha Organization Mahāsi Translation Committee, December 2013), p. 22.

³ Goenka, S. N. **Vipassana Research Institute Founded in the Tradition of Sayagi U Ba Khin**, (India, Mumbai: The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Press, 2010), p. 1.

Contemporary Burmese Theravada Buddhism is one of the main creators of modern vipassana practice, which has gained popularity from the 1950s onward. The "New Burmese Method" was developed by U Narada (1868-1955) and popularized by his students Mahasi Sayadaw (1904-1982) and Nyanaponika Thera (1901–1994). Many senior western vipassana teachers studied with Mahasi Sayadaw and his student Sayadaw U Pandita.⁴ Another prominent teacher is Bhikkhu Bodhi, a student of Nyanaponika. More likely, the lineage is known to many as Mahasi teaching system as he influenced beyond Myanmar with its unique techniques; of course, there are other traditions.

According to Gil Fronsdal providing with the traditional preliminary practice of fixed concentration or tranquilization (appana samadhi, samatha) is an important feature of the "Mahasi approach". Instead, the meditator practices vipassana exclusively during intensive periods of silent retreat that can last several months with a daily schedule of meditation from 3:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Two key elements in Mahasi's method for developing mindfulness are: the careful labeling of one's immediate experience and the cultivation of a high level of sustained concentration known as "momentary concentration" (khanika samadhi).

Robert H. Sharf notes that Buddhist practice is aimed at the attainment of "correct view", not just "bare attention": Mahasi's technique did not require familiarity with Buddhist doctrine (notably Abhidhamma), did not require adherence to strict ethical norms (notably monasticism), and promised astonishingly quick results. This was made possible through interpreting sati as a state of "bare awareness" — the unmediated, non-judgmental perception of things "as they are," uninflected by prior psychological, social, or cultural conditioning.⁵

⁴ Fronsdal, Gil., **Insight Meditation in the United States: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**, (USA, California States: University of California Press, 2017), p. 9.

⁵ Robert H. Sharf, **Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry**, (Canada: Faculty of Medicine, McGill University press, 2018), p. 1.

In Vipassana movement, Mahasi tradition is one of the unique ones. It is named under Mahasi Sayadaw, in Myanmar. Mahasi Sayadaw (U Sobhana Mahathera; 29 July 1904 – 14 August 1982), is a Buddhist monk of contemporary Burma and an eminent meditation master. He was a Burmese Theravada Buddhist monk and meditation master who had a significant impact on the teaching of Vipassana meditation in the West and throughout Asia. In his style of practice, the meditators pay their attention on the sensations of the rising and falling of the abdomen during breathing, observing carefully any other sensations or thoughts. This is a revolutionary technique in the history of vipassana teaching.

The “Mahasi method” is one the most-practiced vipassana nowadays. It is considered faster and easier than the other method. It was promoted by Mahasi Sayadaw, but does have antecedents. Mahasi’s teacher was Mingun Sayadaw, also known as U Narada. Many sources count Mingun as the originator of the lineage.

Mingun’s teacher was Ale-Tawya Sayadaw, whose teacher was The-lon Sayadaw. According to Strong Roots, cited below, “The-Lon Sayadaw put this textual guidance (Visuddhimagga) into practice without a personal teacher to guide him in mindfulness practice”. This is based oral history from a traditional Burmese monk in The-lon Sayadaw’s lineage. It appears that The-lon Sayadaw developed some method based on the Visuddhimagga, which was learned and then substantially modified by Mingun, which was learned and then substantially modified by Mahasi.

Mahasi made several innovations in teaching vipassana. The most important was skipping samatha and the development of the jhanas (concentration states) and going directly to vipassana. In his understanding, samatha would take care of itself, if vipassana is practiced correctly. The jhanas are not ends in themselves, so bypassing samatha is a practical shortcut. Mahasi taught that one should aim directly for sotapatti, a first taste of nirvana. Experiencing sotapatti guarantees that one cannot be reborn other than as a human or in heaven and no more than seven times. He said that sotapatti could be reached by newcomers in a month.

Mahasi aimed his teaching particularly at lay people, rather than monks. He imported from the West the “meditation center” idea (not a traditional Asian institution). He eliminated ritual and minimized textual study.

The approach followed in Mahasi method is that of "bare insight" (sukkhavipassana) where, by direct observation, one's own bodily and mental processes are seen with increasing clarity as being impermanent, liable to suffering, and without a self or soul. The practice begins with a few selected subjects of body-contemplation, which are engaged up to the very end of the road.⁶ With the gradually increasing strength of mindfulness and concentration the range widens and the vision deepens until the insight knowledge unfold themselves in due order, as a natural outcome of the practice. This technique to the ultimate goal of Buddhist meditation is called bare insight because insight into the three characteristics of existence is made use of exclusively, dispensing with the prior development of full concentrative absorption (jhāna). Nevertheless, and it hardly needs to mention, a high degree of mental concentration is required for perseverance in the practice, for attaining to insight knowledge, and for reaping its fruits.⁷

However, this research is aimed to study meditation teaching techniques which are instrumental in Mahasi tradition. The study will be done based on, especially, the reviewed books. Researcher will attempt to elaborate and elucidate how the techniques are effective to gain expected benefits. The contemporary contributions of Vipassana, particularly Mahasi tradition, will be analyzed in the regards of social harmony and development. Hence, the study will suggest a simple and concise conclusion.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

1.2.1 To study the meditation teaching styles of Mahasi Sayadaw tradition.

1.2.2 To study the effectiveness of these styles of this tradition.

⁶ Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **Fundamentals of Insight Meditation**, Tr. By Maung Tha Noe (The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanañuggaha Organisation Mahāsi Translation Committee, August, 2013), p. 33.

⁷ Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **Satipathana Vipassana**, Tr. By U Pe Thin, (The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sasananuggaha Organisation Mahasi Translation Committee, 1990), p. 2.

1.3 Statement of the Research Questions

1.3.1 What are the meditation teaching styles of Mahasi Sayadaw tradition?

1.3.2 What is the effectiveness of these styles of this tradition?

1.4 Scope of the Research

1.4.1 Scope of Content: This study will focus on the styles and effectiveness of Mahasi tradition.

1.4.2 Scope of Population: The study will be involved with five professional meditation teachers. They might be scholars on Vipassana, meditation masters and practitioners.

1.4.3 Scope of Place: The research will be conducted at Kyunpin Meditation Center in Sagain Division of Myanmar.

1.4.4 Scope of time: this research took time on September to December 20, 2018.

1.5 Definition of the Terms Used in the Research

To do an academic research, researcher uses some technical terms, which actually elaborate a whole concept into concise. Some of terminological terms are used here as the following:

1.5.1 Vipassana: It is a technical term used as one of the Mediation methods, especially in Theravāda tradition. Literally it refers to ‘See things deeply insight’.

1.5.2 New Burmese method: It means the method which was developed by the Mahasi Sayadaw himself. Presently it may be known as Mahasi Method.

1.5.3 Samatha: Samatha is one of the main two methods of meditation in Pali tradition. It is mostly known as concentration meditation or one pointedness meditation.

1.5.4 AppanaSamādhī: It denotes absorption concentration or full concentration from apeti to fix is the concentration existing during absorption jhāna, whilst the

neighborhood or access-concentration upacārasamādhi only approaches the first absorption without attaining it.

1.5.5 KhanikaSamādhi: It refers to momentary mindfulness. Here we frequently change the focus from one object to another based on the need.

1.5.6 Visuddhimāgga: It is the 'great treatise' on Theravada Buddhist doctrine written by Buddhaghosa approximately in the 5th Century in Sri Lanka. It is a comprehensive manual condensing and systematizing the theoretical and practical teachings of Gautama Buddha.

1.5.7 Jhāna: Jhāna is a meditative state of profound stillness and concentration in which the mind becomes fully immersed and absorbed in the chosen object of attention. It is the cornerstone in the development of Right Concentration.

1.5.8 Sotapatti: A Pāli Buddhist term referring to the stage of “entering the stream”. One who has accomplished it is termed a Sotapanna. This stage is the first of four steps in the Buddhist path to enlightenment.

1.6 Expected Benefits

1.8.1 Knowing the meditation teaching styles of Mahasi Sayadaw traditions.

1.8.2 Understanding the effectiveness of these styles of this tradition.

1.8.3 knowing clearly about meditation teaching styles of Mahasi tradition.

Chapter II

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the literature that is relevant to the research study on meditation teaching techniques of Mahasi tradition having an effect on learning skills of the meditation training for the trainer of international followers. The main purpose of information consists of books, theses, and many sources of information on English teaching techniques. The major areas that will be discussed are (1) Translated English Books on Vipassana (2) Burmese Books related to Mahasi Method (3) Books written by Mahasi on Vipassana (4) Conclusion.

2.2. Definition of Meditation

Meditation is a means of transforming the mind. Buddhist meditation practices are techniques that encourage and develop concentration, clarity, emotional positivity, and a calm seeing of the true nature of things. By engaging with a particular meditation practice you learn the patterns and habits of your mind, and the practice offers a means to cultivate new, more positive ways of being. With regular work and patience these nourishing, focused states of mind can deepen into profoundly peaceful and energized states of mind. Such experiences can have a transformative effect and can lead to a new understanding of life.

Meditating on the Buddha or on the Buddha-like qualities of one's liberated or enlightened Buddhist teacher, accomplishes both of these. The outer form attracts and holds our attention. And with the insight that our own nature is enlightened like the Buddha's, we can make fast progress. Meditation is a profound method that reaches deep enough to fully enlighten us. But while we're still on the way to the ultimate goal, we might notice various other benefits.

When we get distracted during meditation, we bring ourselves back to the object that we're meditating on. In this way, we practise not being carried away by our emotions or thoughts. We're simply aware of them. And when this habit leaks out into daily life, we'll probably find that our relationships with people improve. We're not so quick to react with anger or jealousy. And if we do, we recover faster. Meditation can give us a bigger perspective, which in turn can lead to less stress. Experiencing less stress gives a cascade of physical and mental benefits. Physically, we can experience better sleep and more energy. And psychologically, we are simply happier.

It's natural for us to then use this surplus from meditation to help others. We try to use our increasing clarity to see what will give people the most benefit for the longest time. Then we put our power into that. Acting in this way creates more positive impressions in our mind, which in turn makes our meditation easier and more effective.⁸

Different types of meditation can be classified based on how the practitioner's attentional processes are regulated and directed.⁹ It is therefore important to be explicit about the type of meditation practice under investigation. This article focuses on the 3 most common styles of meditation derived from Buddhist traditions:

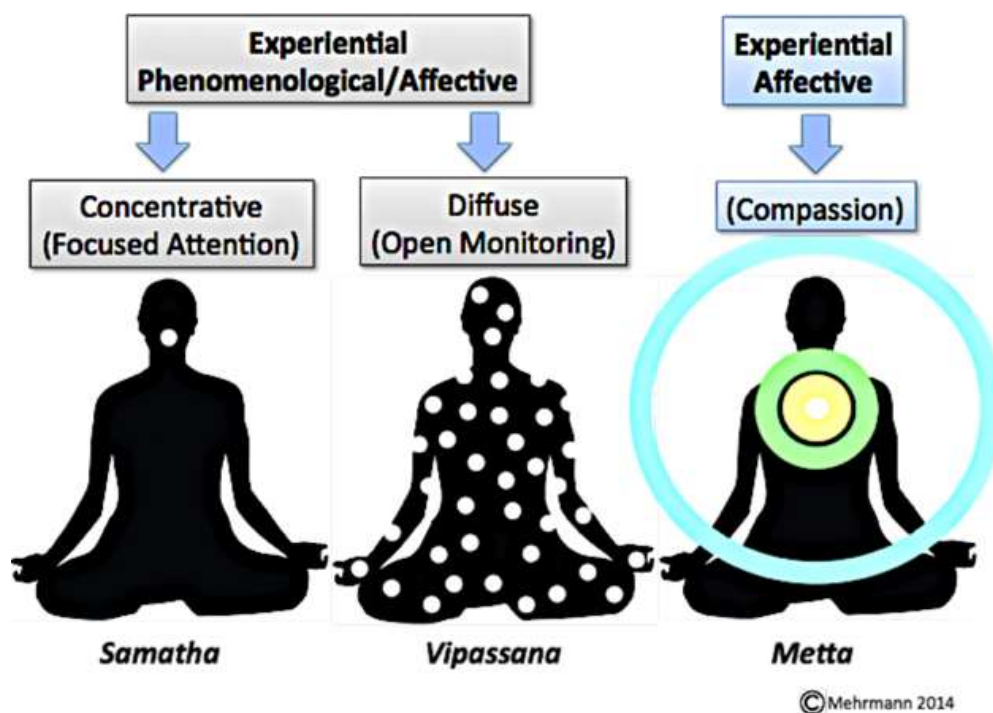
1. Concentrative, or focused-attention, meditation
2. Diffuse, or open-monitoring, meditation
3. Compassion meditation, a form of concentration meditation widely practiced in Buddhist traditions

Concentrative and diffuse meditation practices are often combined, whether in a single session or over the course of the practitioner's training, and are

⁸ Lama Ole Nydahl, **Meditation is Mind's Gift to Itself** (Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Bhutan, 1991), p. 23.

⁹ Davidson RJ., **Meditation and the Neuroscience of Consciousness: The Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness**, (USA New York, NY: Cambridge University Press; 2007: 81-109), p. 28.

intentionally designed to train specific cognitive processes.¹⁰ These styles of meditation can be further classified based on whether or not their experiential mode of observation is conditional (experiential affective) or unconditional (experiential phenomenological)



Examples of the 3 most common styles of meditation derived from Buddhist traditions: 1) concentrative, or focused-attention, meditation; 2) diffuse, or open-monitoring, meditation; and 3) compassion meditation. LEFT: EP-focused attention meditation – maintaining concentration on sensations in the area of the philtrum (Pali: Samatha). CENTER: EP/EA diffuse meditation – cultivating awareness of sensations throughout the body while understanding the Three Characteristics (Pali: Vipassana). RIGHT: EP/EA concentration meditation known as “compassion meditation” – cultivating objective awareness of sensation in the area of the non-

¹⁰ Dakwar E., *The Emerging Role of Meditation in Addressing Psychiatric Illness, with a Focus on Substance Use Disorders*, (USA New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 12.

anatomical heart center, activating an unconditionally positive emotion, and allowing the heart center to act as a receiver-amplifier for that emotion, thereby filling the psychosomatic experience with the vibrations of loving-kindness (Pali: *Mettā*).

2.3 Mahasi Concept of Inside Meditation

Mahasi was a leading figure the revival of Buddhism in Burmas post-independence period, a movement that established many centers for teaching insight meditation. The Mahasi method is designed to allow lay people in the modern world to attain the experience of enlightenment, or nibbana. Vipassana meditation in this tradition is also known as “mindfulness meditation” for its practice of continuous and unremitting attention to mental and physical phenomena as they appear to the meditator. If you sincerely desire to develop contemplation and attain insight in this your present life, you must give up worldly thoughts and actions during the training. This course of action is for the purification of conduct, the essential preliminary step towards the proper development of contemplation. You must also observe the rules of discipline prescribed for laymen, (or for monks as the case may be) for they are important in gaining insight. For lay people, these rules comprise the Eight Precepts which Buddhist devotees observe on the Observance Days (*uposatha*) and during periods of meditation. An additional rule is not to speak with contempt, in jest, or with malice to or about any of the noble ones who have attained states of sanctity. If you have done so, then personally apologize to him or her or make an apology through your meditation instructor. If in the past you have spoken contemptuously to a noble one who is at present unavailable or deceased, confess this offense to your meditation instructor or introspectively to yourself.

The old masters of Buddhist tradition suggest that you entrust yourself to the Enlightened One, the Buddha, during the training period, for you may be alarmed if it happens that your own state of mind produces unwholesome or frightening visions during contemplation. Also place yourself under the guidance of your meditation instructor, for then, he can talk to you frankly about your work in contemplation and give you the guidance he thinks necessary. These are the

advantages of placing trust in the Enlightened One, the Buddha, and practising under the guidance of your instructor. The aim of this practice and its greatest benefit is release from greed, hatred and delusion, which are the roots of all evil and suffering. This intensive course in insight training can lead you to such release. So work ardently with this end in view so that your training will be successfully completed. This kind of training in contemplation, based on the foundations of mindfulness (satipattana), had been taken by successive Buddhas and noble ones who attained release. You are to be congratulated on having the opportunity to take the same kind of training they had undergone.¹¹

2.4. Mahasi Method the Art of Noting

In the Mahasi method (like in the 8 weeks Mindfulness training MBSR) ‘formal’ sitting and walking meditation and ‘informal’ daily activities are equally important as an area of practice. Respecting the instructions is important for progress. Basic object in the practice is the body, notably the element of tightness and movement, one of the four elements of matter. From there also feeling, thinking and natural phenomena can become an object of mindfulness. Mindfulness has a central position in the five Controlling Faculties (faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and intuitive wisdom). Noting or labelling aims (vitakka) the mind, so that it can rub against the object (vicara). Momentary concentration (on successive physical and mental phenomena) has the same power as continuous concentration on a concept. Besides the above mentioned the Mahasi method can be characterised by the role of morality as a fully integrated part of the teachings (not an ‘Ethical Code’ just hanging in a frame on the wall) and an all-over depth (in Western terms: rather emotion, surrender and passion than intellectualism). While the Buddha’s teachings in the West initially, in the 19th century, were considered nihilistic and pessimistic, and this successively changed into realistic, the Mahasi method conveys an optimistic, happy message, a glad tidings.¹²

¹¹ Nyanaponika, **The Heart of Buddhist Meditation**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1998), p. 39.

¹² Nyānaponika Thera, **The Heart of Buddhist Meditation**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2005), p. 95.

Although, traditionally, the prescribed object of meditation for calming the mind has primarily remained the breath or rather observation of the sensation of breath. Observation of the breath naturally brings calmness in mind and the breath as an object of meditation is very natural and easily available. There are number of places in which the people feel the sensation of breath more acutely such as at the nostril or upper lip or at the rising and falling of the chest, an in the abdomen, any of these placed mentioned are valid object of meditation. However, Mahasi Sayadaw prefers the observation of abdomen.

Furthermore, the observation of the abdomen is similar to that of slow walking, as we can observe the foot rising and falling, it is possible to also experience abdomen rising and falling. Mahasi Sayadaw does not recommend the placing of attention on the breath or at the nostrils as it leads to the tendency of losing contact with body. Therefore, observation of the breath at the nostrils is popular and effective way of achieving higher state of absorptions or *jhāna*. If the concentration is focused on the single object, it effectively suppresses everything else, including the purification of emotions. But when you emerge from the concentration you know that during the absorption the mind was very clear and it was all the time one with the object of concentration, the circle of light.¹³ However, it is also true that without certain level of concentration one will not be able to engage in the sustained contemplation of the insight meditation. Therefore, such as concentration is useful. Although, Mahasi does give preferences to observation of abdomen, he does not discourage anyone from taking up breath and sensation of breath at nostril as means of achieving concentration.

The second technique, which is specific to the Mahasi method, is noting. Paradoxically this is to take a meditator beyond thinking. It is not an end in itself. The Mahasi was a highly respected scholar. As a young man he had passed Dhammacariya (Teacher of the Dhamma) examination with distinction. At the Sixth

¹³ Venerable Sujiva, **Essentials of Insight Meditation Practice**, (Malaysia: Buddhist Wisdom Centre, 2000), p. 165.

Buddhist Council in 1945, when all the texts were reviewed and for the first time all the commentarial literature was edited, the Mahasi Sayadaw was given the task of Pucchaka (Questioner) and Osana (Final Editor) of the texts. Although a scholar, he was not one to confuse intellectual understanding with true experiential insight. Indeed, he put that intellect to the service of the Dhamma. He wrote many books on Dhamma and the best introduction to his system still remains his opening talk to beginners—satipatthana vipassana, *Discourse on the Basic Practice of the Application of Mindfulness*. A more detailed description will be found in his book, *Practical Insight Meditation*.

According to the Buddha's teaching, there are two stages of concentrated thought before full concentration is established. The first is a simple noting or naming of the object. This simple labelling, naming, noting—whereby attention is pointed at the object—is known as vitakka and is likened to a bee flying towards a flower. It is a word which encapsulates the whole experience. In a child this is very obvious and simplistic. When two-year-olds begin to speak they rejoice at being able to name an object: Car! Car! For that mind the word 'car' simply points at the object. There is not much thought around it since language itself, which allows us to think about an object, is not developed enough for this to happen. For us, the word 'car' conjures up a host of memories and desires.

This is thinking about an object. This mentation is known as proliferation (papanca). The purpose of thinking and daydreaming is to keep us off the present object and to distract the mind. The Buddha likened this to a monkey jumping from branch to branch. This is exactly what we have to bring to a stop. Shrinking thought down to a single word is the preliminary effort. But at this stage the meditator has to constantly pull the attention out of wandering and into observing. Indeed, this is what training through a technique is all about—reconditioning consciousness to be present, to be attentive to what is happening now.¹⁴

¹⁴ U Htin Fatt (trs), *On the Nature of Nibbāna by The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma*, (First printed and published in the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, 1981), p. 6.

To be effective, this noting has to be done with precise effort. It has to be an acknowledgement of what the body, heart or mind are doing. For instance, when one wakes from a fantasy, there is the first noting—arguing, planning, lusting—and then the second and consequent noting which is an acknowledgement of what is obsessing the mind. In the same way, if a sensation or feeling arises in the body, the first thing to be noted is the recognition that this is taking place, and the second and all consequent noting is the acknowledgement: ‘This is what is really happening now.’ Although there is careful noting, however, the attention is never placed on the word, only on the experience—the feeling of a sensation, the feeling of an emotion, the knowing of a thought. It is as though the intuitive intelligence sees through the word and experiences the presenting object directly. In this way the intellectual faculty is brought into the service of that intuitive intelligence rather than intuitive intelligence being fogged by conceptual thinking.

Thought itself can be split into two categories—conceptual and image making. As we note the breath, for instance, there will be a concept of rising and falling and also a mental image of the abdomen. We do not try to destroy them or in any way obliterate them. We just keep pointing the attention at the feeling of movement, the sensations. This attention, as it grows in strength, will eventually take all the energy out of thinking to the point where there is just the noting word. The meditator is still noting, but the attention becomes stuck, as it were, onto the object instead of wanting to wander off. This is likened to a bee landing and sucking on a flower. It is the second stage of developing right concentration and is called vicara. If the meditator continues to note, placing the attention more and more on the object—really feeling those sensations, really experiencing them as they arise and pass away—all the energy will be drawn out of the thinking mind. It will stop!

Thinking is always about something. It is an attempt to categorise. What we experience is seen in the light of past experience. What we have experienced in the past is filtered through the way we look at things, our dispositions (sankhara). That is why thought will not allow us to see things anew. If we want to experience things as they really are, then thought about those things must come to an end. When thinking stops, we must be right there with what is happening. It is at that point that

true vipassana consciousness arises, right awareness (*samma sati*), and our intuitive intelligence (*panna*)—free of the distortion of thought and image—can finally begin to understand and see the way things really are (*nanadassana-yatha-bhutam*).

So we don't have to worry about when to stop noting. It will stop once we have arrived at a high enough level of awareness and concentration. Such moments of pure vipassana are usually of very short duration, but they have great potential for insight. These moments are known as *khanika samadhi*, momentary concentration which lengthen into a moment-to-moment concentrated awareness. This sort of concentration does not depend on a single object as does absorption concentration (*arambana samadhi*). It takes anything that arises within the mind—sensation, emotion, or thought—as its object, but for the purpose of seeing the Three Characteristics of Existence (*lakkhana samadhi*). In other words, the concentration in vipassana is only there to support awareness (*sati*) and intuitive intelligence (*panna*). It is that steady gaze and exploration of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self that leads to liberation.

For some meditators noting comes with its difficulties. For instance, the word is very loud and dominates the meditation. This is simply showing the meditator how blocked they are by conceptual thinking. By patiently pointing the attention at feelings, intelligence will extricate itself from the conceptual mind. It is often quite a discovery to find that there is another way of experiencing the world. Another difficulty is the attempt to find the right word. One starts to look for a word as a poet might. But the simplest word is enough. A general term, such as 'feeling' will do.

This kind of noting is not limited to the sitting posture. Indeed, it has to become continuous from the moment we wake to the moment we fall asleep. The Mahasi was fond of saying, 'The continuity of awareness is the secret of success. 'It is therefore important to note the most 'insignificant' actions of the day, such as opening a door. We have to abandon all hierarchy, believing that sitting is more important than walking which is more important than eating, and so on.

It is not only sensations, emotions, the wandering mind, and actions, that have to be noted, the category of thought which we experience as intentions also needs to be acknowledged. An intention is thought laced with desire, and not all desires are unskillful. In fact, we are trying to empower those intentions that are skillful such as the desire to meditate. The reason we note intention is because all actions of body, speech and thought have intentions as their instigators. To note an intention gives us the time to recognise it as either wholesome or unwholesome. We can then let go of the intentions we discern will lead us to dissatisfaction, and empower those which will lead us to contentment.

This is the understanding of kamma. It is the will (cetana) that the Buddha calls kamma. Will is that power that takes something out of the potential into the actual. We have to empower an intention for it to be realised. If we take the standing position and note the intention to walk—we can do so for a long time—suddenly the foot will move. The power that has translated intention into an action is will and, in so doing, has committed an act of kamma. These actions, when repeated, create our habits, and a compendium of habits is our personality. It is this personality that is driving us to our destiny. So, noting intentions becomes an essential part of the progress towards liberation.

Noting, then, is a technique, a contrivance, whereby we can begin to train the attention to remain still on the presenting object and, more importantly, trick the intellect into coming to a full stop. It is all that conceptual thinking that distorts the way ‘knowing’ sees; it knows only by way of categories, memory and concepts. By halting that process of conceiving, and by keeping perception in its simplest form at the point of contact, this intuitive intelligence sees everything again as a child—but not with a child’s understanding. That intelligence is primed to observe the Three Characteristics which is how it liberates itself from the delusion of a mistaken identity and the possession of the psychophysical organism. This body, this heart, this mind is not me, not mine, and do not in themselves constitute a self.

2.5. Translated English Books on Vipassana

The practice of Vipassana 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 (rupa). Mental phenomena are acts of consciousness or awareness (nama). These 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'.¹⁵

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 (vayodhatu). 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 slows it down, nor makes 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 vipassana meditation, what you name or say doesn't matter. What really matters are 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

¹⁵ Mahsi Sayadaw, **Practical Vipassanā Exercises**, (Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1993), pp. 24-26.

and the mental awareness of it should coincide in the same way as a stone thrown hits the target. Similarly with the falling movement.¹⁶

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 cittanupassana.

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 dukkhavedana (feeling of unsatisfactoriness) and noting them is vedananupassana. Failure or omission to note

¹⁶ Mahasi Sayadaw. **Insight Meditation**, Bhikkhu Pesala (ed), Practical Vipassana Meditation Exercise, Rangoon, (Burma: Mahasi Meditation Centre, 1997), p. 44.

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 Nibbana." 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 (samadhi) cannot develop. If concentration cannot develop, insight cannot result and there can be no attainment of the path (magga), the fruit of that path (phala) or nibbana. 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 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 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.

2.6. Burmese Books Related to Mahasi Method

2.2.1 Sayadaw, Ven. Mahasi. *Practical Insight Meditation*; 16, Hermitage Road, Rangoon, Burma: Sāsana Yeikthā, October, 1970.

This book introduces the importance of happiness and the method about how to maintain happiness. It basically gives a brief introduction to the method practiced in this very tradition.

To illustrate this point, attention may be drawn to the commonplace habits of cleaning and tidying up one's body, the endless pursuits of food, clothing and shelter. Furthermore, the tremendous technological advantages of standard living, including, the means of transport and communications, for prevention and cure of diseases and ailments have been giving material comfort of its highest. All these means are, in the main, concerned with the care and nourishment of the body. Of course, they are essential. Hence, these human efforts and achievements cannot possibly bring about the alleviation or eradication of suffering associated with old age and disease, domestic infelicity and economic troubles, in short, with non-satisfaction of wants and desires. Sufferings of this nature are not overcome by material means; they can be overcome only by mind training and mental development.¹⁷

¹⁷ Sayadaw, Ven. Mahasi. *Practical Insight Meditation*; 16, Hermitage Road, Rangoon, (Burma: Sāsana Yeikthā, October, 1970), p. 23.

Then, it becomes clear that the right way must be sought for training, stabilizing and purifying the mind. This way is found in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta, a well-known discourse of the Buddha, delivered well over 2,500 years ago. The Buddha declared thus:

“This is the sole way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destroying of pain and grief, for reaching the right path, for the realization of nibbāna namely the four foundations of mindfulness.”

The four foundations of mindfulness are 1) the contemplation of the body, 2) the contemplation of feelings, 3) the contemplation of mind, and 4) the contemplation of mind objects.

Obviously, this way should be followed by those in search of happiness, with a view to getting rid of the impurities of mind, which are the cause of their sufferings.

2.2.2 Sayadaw, Ven. Mahasi, Trans. By U Pe Thin. Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā, 54, Sangharaja Mawatha, Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1990.

This book stresses three virtues, namely, the virtues of moral conduct (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā). One should undoubtedly possess these three virtues. The practice of these virtues is a gradual process.

It is not, however, advisable to work for moral conduct alone. It is also necessary to practice concentration (samādhi). Concentration is the fixed or tranquil state of mind. The ordinary mind is in the habit of wandering here and there. It cannot be kept under control, but follows any idea, thought, etc. In order to prevent this wandering, the mind should be kept repeatedly to a selected object of concentration.

On gaining practice, the mind gradually abandons its distractions and remains fixed on the object to which it is directed. This is concentration. There are two kinds of concentration: mundane concentration (lokiyasamādhi) and supramundane concentration (lokuttara-samādhi). Of these two, the former consists in the mundane absorptions, such as the four absorptions pertaining to the world of form (rūpa-jhāna), and the four absorptions pertaining to the formless world (arūpa-

jhāna). These can be attained by the practice of tranquility meditation (samatha-bhāvanā) with such methods as mindfulness of breathing, loving-kindness (mettā), meditation on devices (kasina), etc. By virtue of these attainments one will be reborn in the fortunate plane.¹⁸

However, the lifespan in fortunate plane is not everlasting and liberated. Thus mundane concentration also is not a definite security. It is desirable to work for supramundane concentration, the concentration of the path (māgga) and the fruit (phala). To acquire this concentration, it is essential to cultivate wisdom (paññā).

There are two forms of wisdom: mundane and supramundane. Nowadays, knowledge of literature, art, science, or other worldly affairs is usually regarded as a kind of wisdom, but this form of wisdom has nothing to do with any kind of mental development (bhāvanā). The real spirit of mundane wisdom, on the other hand, has only merits and no demerits of any kind.

True mundane wisdom includes the knowledge used in welfare and relief work, which causes no harm; learning to acquire the knowledge of the due meaning or sense of the scriptures; and the three classes of knowledge of development for insight (vipassanā-bhāvanā), such as knowledge born of learning (sutamayapaññā), knowledge born of reflection (cintāmayapaññā), and wisdom born of meditative development (bhāvanāmayapaññā). The virtue of possessing mundane wisdom will lead to a happy life in higher states of existence, but it still cannot prevent the risk of being reborn in hell or in other states of miserable existence. Only the development of supramundane wisdom (lokuttara-paññā) can decidedly remove this risk. Supramundane wisdom is the wisdom of the path and fruit. To develop this wisdom, it is necessary to carry on the practice of insight meditation (vipassanā-bhāvanā) out of the three disciplines of morality, concentration, and wisdom. When the virtue of wisdom is duly developed, the necessary qualities of morality and concentration will also be acquired.

¹⁸ Sayadaw ,Ven.Mahasi, **Satipattahāna Vipassanā, 54, Sangharaja Mawatha, Kandy, Sri,** (Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1990), p. 34.

2.2.3 Sayadaw, Ven. Mahasi, Trans. By Maung Tha Noe, Edt. By Bhikkhu Pesala. *Fundamentals of Insight Meditation*; Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization Mahasi Translation Committee, August, 2013.

The *Fundamentals of Insight Meditation* - is a series of discourses delivered by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw during the Burmese New Year in 1959. The discourses were first published in Burmese in 1961. This is their first English translation.

This book exhibits that the discourses were addressed to lay people to whom the subtleties of vipassanā practice were totally new. The Sayadaw put great efforts to make his language plain, easy, and concise. He led his audience gradually from the basics to subtler aspects of the Dhamma such as concepts and reality, the process of consciousness, the progress of insight, and the realization of nibbāna. The reader begins with the first lesson — what insight is, and how it is developed. He or she is then instructed how to begin contemplation, how to progress, how to guard against pitfalls in meditation, and, most important, how to recognize insight. He or she is thrilled, encouraged, and made to feel as if he were already on the path to bliss.

Buddhism is a practical religion not just another metaphysical philosophy. It examines the ills of sentient existence, discovers their cause, prescribes the removal of the cause, and points out the path to the release from all suffering. Anyone who aspires to liberation can walk along the path, but he or she must make the effort. No one can get a free ride to eternal peace. The Buddha tells us in the Satipatthāna Sutta that there is only one way — the way of mindfulness. Setting up mindfulness is the essence of the practice of insight meditation, expounded and popularized by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw for about fifty years. In *Samyuttanikaya* it says,¹⁹

“Even so, monks, have I discovered an ancient path followed by the Fully Enlightened Ones of former times. Having followed that path, I teach the monks, nuns, and lay followers.” (S.ii.105-6).

¹⁹ Bhikkhu Pesala, *Fundamentals of Insight Meditation*, (Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization Mahasi Translation Committee, August, 2013), p. 43.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, undertook the practice taught by the Buddha, realized the Dhamma, and then taught his disciples from his personal experience. One attribute of the Buddha's Dhamma is that it invites investigation (ehipassiko). Millions came and saw it over 2,500 years ago. Today, many thousands have come and seen it. This book maps out the way that lies ahead. It is one's guide as one venture from one stage of insight to the next.

2.2.4 Sayadaw, Ven. Mahasi, Trans. By U Ko Lay, Edt. By Bhikkhu Pesala. A Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma; Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization Mahasi Translation Committee, December 2013.

The Dhammacakka Sutta, being the Buddha's First Discourse given to five disciples, is of great significance and importance. The group of five monks had, in fact, been practicing meditation even longer than the Buddha. So, these five ascetics were exceptionally gifted individuals, with many years of prior experience in meditation when they listened to the Buddha's First Discourse.²⁰ Nevertheless, only one of them, the Venerable Kodyañña, realized the Dhamma and attained nibbāna, thus becoming a Stream-winner at the end of this brief discourse. The other four all had to practice meditation under the personal guidance of the Buddha for several days, before gaining the Path of Stream-winning.

However, as the Sayadaw stresses in the last of this series of discourses, in A Matter for Consideration, the realization of the Dhamma can only come about through actual practice, not merely by listening to discourses nor by reading books. Yet, some do a great disservice to the Buddha's practical teaching by discouraging the practice of concentration and insight meditation. I have heard two extreme views: one that listening to discourses is sufficient so there's no need to practice, and the other that nibbāna cannot be attained in this era, so there's no point in practicing. These very dangerous wrong views should be dismissed, and one should practice meditation earnestly in the expectation of developing the path of insight leading to nibbāna.

²⁰ Sayadaw Mahasi, A **Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma**, (Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization Mahasi Translation Committee, December 2013), p. 21.

2.2.5 Sayadaw, Ven. Mahasi, Trans. By U Htin Fatt (MaungHtin), Edt. By Bhikkhu Pesala. *A Discourse on the Anattalakkhana Sutta*; Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization Mahasi Translation Committee, August, 2013.

This book disputes the theory of self and encourages to come out from such wrong views. It explains the value and significance of going beyond soul belief in the path of practicing insight meditation.

All religious beliefs outside of the Buddha’s dispensation fall under the category of beliefs in a self (atta). They hold the view that there is such a thing as a soul, a living entity. They believe that this soul resides in all living creatures, namely, men, deities, or animals, etc. In the midst of a world holding fast touch notions of a self or soul, the Blessed One declared that the soul or living entity is not a reality — it is only a conventional truth. What really exists, in the ultimate sense, is a continuous flux of impersonal processes, just material and mental phenomena.

Thus, it is essential to understand this doctrine of not-self and impersonality taught by the Buddha thoroughly and comprehensively. The doctrine of not-self had already been dealt with by the Buddha while elaborating the Four Noble Truths during the course of teaching the Dhammacakka Sutta. At the time of teaching the Hemavata Sutta too, this doctrine was expounded when the Blessed One explained that “with the arising of the six sense-bases, (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) there arises a being.” The doctrine of not-self was again clarified comprehensively in this Anattalakkhana Sutta. Bearing in mind the importance of this Sutta, and the fact that it is now its turn to receive our attention, being the third discourse given by the Blessed One, I propose to give a series of discourses on the Anattalakkhana Sutta starting from today.

2.2.6 Sayadaw, Ven. Mahasi, Translating. By Bhikkhu Pesala. *On the Nature of Nibbāna*; Rangoon: Buddha Sāsanānuggaha Organization Mahasi Translation Committee, August, 2013.

This book of Dhamma concerning nibbāna namely, “On the Nature of Nibbāna” embraces the basic method of practical insight meditation and also how the peace of nibbāna is achieved while practicing insight meditation. Wherever the Pāli text and Commentaries are difficult to understand, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw has given precise and clear explanation.

He offers lucid instructions to those meditators following a wrong path with erroneous views to enable them to tread on the Right Path. To cite an example, the Sayadaw has clearly instructed that if, at the beginning of the exercise in meditation when every phenomenon that takes place at the six sense-doors cannot possibly be noted, one of the more obvious bodily behaviors should be noted first, e.g., while walking, the act of walking and maneuvering of limbs should first be observed and noted; as also in respect of other bodily actions. The most obvious physical phenomenon — the rising and falling of the abdomen — is emphasized for the meditator, to note. When concentration gains momentum all other phenomena occurring at the six sense-doors may be noted.²¹

In this series of discourses, the concept of nibbāṇa has been fully elucidated beginning from the attainment of the stage of sa-upādisesanibbāṇa up to the final destination of anupādisesanibbāṇa arrived at by death called ‘parinibbāṇa.’ Further explanation given is, “Buddha has taught that with the achievement of the stage of Arahantship when defilements have ceased to exist, the remnant of material aggregates, still remains and that this state is known as sa-upādisesa. After the demise or ‘parinibbāṇa’ of an Arahant, both the remnant of physical aggregates and defilements cease to exist and all matter, mind, and mental formations become extinct. This complete cessation and extinction is known as anupādisesanibbāṇa.”

2.7. Books by Mahasi on Vipassana

We observe the breath, or rather the sensations caused by breathing, in order to bring a moment-to-moment concentration. This calms the heart-mind because it is a neutral object. There are various places where people feel the sensations of breathing more acutely—at the nostrils or upper lip, at the rising and falling of the chest, and in the abdomen. All of these places are valid in terms of vipassana meditation. The Mahasi, however, favored the abdomen as a place of observation.

²¹ Sayadaw Mahasi, (Translating. By Bhikkhu Pesala.) **On the Nature of Nibbāna**, (Rangoon: Buddha Sāsānānuggaha Organization Mahasi Translation Committee, August, 2013), p. 32.

Observing the abdomen is related to slow walking. Just as we observe and experience the foot rising and falling, so we experience the abdomen rising and falling. This means that for the better part of the day, a meditator is aware of the characteristic of transience in a very obvious way. Transience or impermanence (anicca) is one of the ways in which the Buddha asks us to investigate ourselves. Is there anything we experience which is permanent? Two other avenues of investigation are unsatisfactoriness (dukkha) and not-self (anatta). Insights into these Three Characteristics of Existence lead to liberation from all suffering.

The Mahasi did not teach the method of placing one's attention on the breath at the nostrils because by this means there is a tendency, by way of concentration, to lose contact with the body. That is why observing the breath at the nostrils is a popular and effective way of achieving those higher states of concentration known as the Absorptions (jhana). When concentration becomes locked into one-pointedness on a single object, the effect is to suppress everything else, and this stops the process of purifying the heart, our emotional life. This is not to say that concentration practice cannot go hand in hand with vipassana. Indeed, it is well supported in the discourses. Rather, the Mahasi espoused the direct path of vipassana only (ekayano maggo) as it is taught in the Discourse on How to Establish Mindfulness (satipatthanasutta MN 10). Nor does this mean that observing the breath at the nostrils is not a valid technique in vipassana meditation. Indeed, although the Mahasi preferred the abdomen as a place of primary observation, he did not ban anyone from observing sensations at the nostrils.

However, when we center on the abdomen or the chest (when the breath is shallow), we remain very much in contact with body. This allows any turbulence in the body caused by our states of mind to manifest and burn off. This is the psychotherapeutic effect of vipassana. Our emotions, moods and mental states express themselves through the body often as blocks, aches and pains and so on, and sometimes as raw emotion. All this mental turbulence has to be allowed to express itself within consciousness, and it all has to be borne patiently.²²

²² Bodhidhamma, Bhikkhu, **Vipassana as taught by The Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma**, (Rangoon, Burma: Mahasi Meditation 12 September 2013), p. 1.

Posture

When meditating I tend to sit cross legged in the formal, and perhaps poncey looking Burmese style – but I do not feel that this is an imperative, as I will discuss in the part 2, noting can be employed in pretty much any situation. Although the predominant school of thought teaches that sitting cross legged enables the greatest level of concentration and alertness, there have already been several discussions here arguing the merits, or lack thereof, of such a view. I would personally say that if you already sit cross legged for meditation then continue to do so, but if you prefer to sit in a chair, stand or even lie down then these techniques will still be easy to follow. The important thing is that you can be safe, comfortable and able to maintain a good level of focus – it's not easy to do this when you are asleep.²³

How do I note?

Once you are in your preferred posture it is a good idea to try and settle the mind – again if you already have a routine for this, such as a body scan, then stick with that. If not, then you can begin noting right away. Perhaps begin with a couple of deep breaths and then start noting the word 'sitting' or 'standing' or whatever word best describes your chosen position.

By 'noting' what I mean is to repeat your chosen word over and over again – this should be internal, there is no need to audibly vocalize. The word, however, is only a tool by which to frame your experience, so at this point just feel what it is like to sit or stand. As you are repeating the word (sitting, sitting, sitting... standing, standing, standing) also experience the physical sensation of sitting (or standing) as a whole activity – at this point we are only settling and focusing the mind.

After a few minutes transfer your focus to the breath, where it will remain for a while before allowing your mind a little more freedom. As you breathe hold

²³ Sayadaw, Mahasi. **Brahmavihara Dhamma**, (Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, 1985), p. 24.

your attention at the abdomen, feeling how it rises with the in-breath and falls with the out-breath. As the abdomen rises note 'rising... rising... rising', and as the abdomen falls note 'falling... falling... falling'. As with many other forms of meditation the idea here is not to take control but to experience each breath as it comes. I would recommend trying to maintain this intentional, Samatha style concentration for around 5 – 10 minutes, the purpose being to nurture a basic level of focus and provide a platform from which the attention can start from and return to as necessary. So, for this first period just gently bring your attention back to the abdomen each time that it wanders.

After 5 -10 minutes you should be ready to gently release some of the slack from those mental reins. Continue to focus on the breath, but now if the mind is stimulated by a distraction change your noting word appropriately. The word that I would choose depends on the nature of the distraction and I will discuss some possibilities below.

Before I continue, it is worth saying a little about how often one should keep the focus on any given experience. Some sources say that one should keep the focus where it is, until the distraction has passed. For example, if it is a sound – a dog barking for instance – then one might repeat the word; 'sound... sound... sound...' until either the noise has ceased or it has no longer become the main focus of attention. If the noise has ceased and there is nothing else to grab your attention, then return to the breath. If there is something that muscles in on your focus, then make this the object of the noting.

Other sources that I have come across suggest a slightly different approach, where by one notes the distraction in between breaths. With the example of the barking dog that might go a little like this; 'rising... rising... rising... falling... falling... falling... sound... rising... rising... rising... falling... falling...' and so on.

I tend to use a combination of both depending on how pervasive the distraction is and how high my levels of concentration are at the time. If they are high I might stay with the sound but if they are low and I am regularly wandering

without any particular point of focus then I will incorporate the breath as a helpful foothold.

Which Words Should I Use?

As mentioned above it is important that any words used are as neutral and free from judgment as possible, they should be single words and not preceded or followed by any intentional embellishment. If your face is itching then the word should just be 'itching', not 'face itching' and certainly not 'my face is itching'. You should not be attempting to imagine a face itching or an abdomen rising or a dog barking – although that will happen – rather one is only trying to experience these things as they occur. The purpose of noting words are not to describe or add to what is happening but rather to assist us in our mindful observations.

The amount of possible distractions is practically infinite and it is not possible to suggest words for each and every eventuality. Instead I will briefly discuss what I think are the three main categories of distraction Physical, Cognitive and Emotional.

Physical:

For me it is the physical events that are easiest to identify and it is here that I spend most of my time. I also think that it is the physical occurrences that are easiest to note. Here are the most common (or perhaps obvious) sensations with examples of words that I use in my practice:

Itching. I use the word 'itching', as discussed above.

Pins and needles. Usually it's 'tingling' although this might alter with varying intensities.

Pain. I tend not to refer to it as 'pain', which I think has negative connotations. Instead I will note the type of pain – so it might be 'sharp', 'tight' or some such identification.

Temperature. Again this depends on what the temperature is, so it could be 'cool', 'warm', 'hot' or 'cold'.

There are many other, more subtle physical sensations that will arise, such as the sensation of the hands touching each other or the feet touching the floor. The key word here is touching – as the attention is focused on the hands resting against each other the noting word ‘touching’ can be used.

Cognitive:

Cognitive distractions are very common in my practice and are the ones that lead inevitably away from the mindfulness that I am trying to nurture. My method of noting thoughts is very simple but it can be more complicated if you wish. For a more detailed account of how to note various cognitive thoughts you can probably not go too far wrong than referring here, to Mahasi Sayadaw himself.

Rather than analyze the type of thought too deeply I only note the very basic characteristics. This might just be a word such as ‘thinking’, ‘planning’, or ‘remembering’. I think that it’s here where it may be easiest to fall into the trap of feeding – rather than being mindful of – an over-active imagination, which is why I like to keep the words very simple and nondescript. If done effectively the very act of noting will stop the train of thought in its tracks and one can return their focus to the breath, or whatever object happens to tickle our restless fancy.²⁴

Emotion:

I find emotion very difficult to identify while I am meditating, unless it happens to be quite strong. More often than not, however, my emotions are very subtle and do not grab my attention. When they do it is usually a response to some kind of cognitive activity like anticipating an exam or remembering doing something well, the former might make me anxious and the latter happy – both of which would also be my noting words.

There are of course, a huge array of emotions, some highly intrusive and many understated. I imagine that with experience one can become able to note

²⁴ U Htin Fatt (trs), *On the Nature of Nibbāna by The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma*, (First printed and published in the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, 1981), p. 52.

many emotions with ease but until this happens automatically I do not think that it is a good idea to spend time searching – only note what comes to the surface, of its own accord.

I like this technique a lot – it is the one that I use most often. I like the relative freedom that it affords but I also like the structure it enables – with this method, what might be considered distractions can be transformed into phenomena on which we can meditate. However, there is a slight paradox here: in order to develop mindfulness, which supposedly exists before our brains create their mental formations, we are using a kind of mental formation. It is helpful then, to consider this technique as a stepping stone from which the active process of ‘noting’ can gradually be dropped. I would also suggest that this technique is used in conjunction with other styles (not necessarily at the same time), although this is only my personal view.

Chapter III

Research Methodology

The present research will be a qualitative and documentary research. The research will be divided into the following stages:

- 3.1 Research Approach,
- 3.2 Research Design,
- 3.3 Population,
- 3.4 Data Collection,
- 3.5 Data Analysis.

3.1 Research Approach,

This research is Qualitative approach concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the forms which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis

3.2 Research Design

- 1) In-depth Interview
- 2) The data of this study are collected from books by Mahasi or technique documentations. This research collects and analyzes the result of information about meditation styles of Mahasi Tradition, general academic textbooks, thesis, and academic journals.

3.3 Population

Population: This research is qualitative research which aims to identify, categories, and analyze the data. This research uses the techniques of in-depth interview with 10 mediators who are meditating at Mahasi Sayadaw Meditation center

in Myanmar, and 5 teachers who have good techniques and experience about Mahasi Sayadaw teaching styles.

3.4 Data Collection,

Collecting Materials: Collecting the related materials from the primary and secondary sources. Try to understand the related terms with contexts and to categorize them.

The researcher will interview some local scholars about teaching styles of vipassana meditation masters and practitioners and consider their opinions as well.

3.5 Data Analysis

Analysis of the Data: After collecting materials and information from both primary and secondary sources, the data will be analyzed. The analysis of the data will lead to a comprehensive understanding of the method practiced in Mahasi tradition.

Chapter IV

Result of Research

In this chapter, researcher focuses on Mahasi Sayadaw's original meditation styles and inside meditation development. Mahasi Sayadaw vipassana meditation is very famous in Myanmar and the whole world. Here, there are some important points discussed such as; 1 Meditation and its Kinds, 2 Characteristics of Mahasi Method, 3 Guideline of Mahasi Method, 4. Effectiveness of Mahasi Method.

4.1 Meditation and Its Kinds

The meditation and its kinds are divided into two parts and the analysis of Mahasi method in this research paper such as; 1. Tranquility Meditation and 2. Insight Meditation. Below it will discourse briefly. It will be discussed as below.

4.1.1 Tranquility Meditation

The purpose of Tranquility (Samatha) Meditation or Concentration (Samadhi) Meditation, is subduing the defilements known as the five hindrances (Panca Nivarana Dhamma) so that wisdom and insight can arise when one begins the practice of Insight (Vipassana) Meditation. The five Nivarana Dhamma are: sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor (sleepiness), restlessness and remorse and doubt. The method of subduing these five hindrances is available even outside the teachings of the Buddha. The meditation the Buddha taught to subdue the five hindrances is known as Tranquility Meditation. This type of meditation leads to tranquility and one pointedness of the mind.¹

¹ Nanaponika, Thera. **Heart of Buddhist Meditation: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's way of Mindfulness**, (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2005), p. 10.

The Buddha taught forty objects that can be used for Tranquility Meditation based on the nature of the person. Breathing Awareness Meditation (Anapana Sati Bhavana) is the most popular and is what the Buddha himself used to attain Enlightenment. It is also the best type of tranquility meditation to use to subdue the restless and diffused (monkey) mind. The practice of this meditation results in the realization of the mental absorptions (Jhana). However, these (Jhana) are temporary states of mind. To eradicate the five hindrances permanently and to eliminate the remaining defilements known as the latent defilements (Anusaya).

4.1.2 Insight Meditation.

Insight Meditation, or Vipassana, is a form of meditation that developed during the earliest of the Buddha's teachings and is preserved in the Theravada school of Buddhism. In its essence, Insight Meditation is a simple and direct way to "see things as they are," free from distortion. In seeing ourselves and the world with greater clarity, we begin to bring understanding to our habitual patterns of being.

Through the sustained cultivation of mindfulness and concentration, the mind gradually learns to let go of its conditioning and begins to experience a kind of peace that is independent of changing circumstances.

It is a truism to say that nobody likes suffering and everybody seeks happiness. In this world of ours, human beings are making all possible efforts for prevention and alleviation of suffering, and enjoyment of happiness. Nevertheless, their efforts are mainly directed towards physical well-being by material means. Happiness is, after all, conditioned by attitudes of mind, and yet only a few persons give real thought to mental development, fewer still practice mind training in earnest.²

To illustrate this point, attention may be drawn to the commonplace habits of cleaning and tidying up one's body, the endless pursuits of food, clothing

² Mahasi Sayadaw, **Practical Insight Meditation: Basic and Progress Stages**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971), p. 9.

and shelter, and the tremendous technological progress achieved for raising the material standard of living, for improving the means of transport and communications, and for prevention and cure of diseases and ailments. All these efforts are, in the main, concerned with the care and nourishment of the body. It must be recognized that they are essential. However, these human efforts and achievements cannot possibly bring about the alleviation or eradication of suffering associated with old age and disease, domestic infelicity and economic troubles, in short, with non-satisfaction of wants and desires. Sufferings of this nature are not overcome by material means; they can be overcome only mind training and mental development.

Then, it becomes clear that the right way must be sought for training, stabilizing and purifying the mind. This way is found in the Maha Satipatthana Sutta, a well-known discourse of the Buddha, delivered well over 2,500 years ago. The Buddha declared thus: "This is the sole way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destroying of pain and grief, for reaching the right path, for the realization of nirvana, namely the four foundations of mindfulness." The four foundations of mindfulness are (1) the contemplation of the body, (2) the contemplation of feelings, (3) the contemplation of mind, and (4) the contemplation of mind objects.³

Obviously, this way should be followed by those in search of happiness, with a view to getting rid of the impurities of mind, which are the cause of their sufferings. If one were asked whether he wished to overcome sorrow and lamentation, he would surely say, "Yes." Then he, nay everybody, should practice the four foundations of mindfulness.

If one was asked whether he wishes to destroy pain and grief, he would not hesitate to reply in the affirmative. Then he, nay everybody, should practice the four foundations of mindfulness.

³ Mahasi Sayadaw. **Practical Insight Meditation Basic Practice**, (Rangoon, Burma: Thathana Yeiktha, Mahasi Meditation Center, October 1st, 1970), p. 7.

If one were asked whether he wishes to reach the right path and realize nirvana, the state of being absolutely free from old age, decay and death and from all sufferings, he would certainly give an affirmative answer. Then he, nay everybody, should practice the four foundations of mindfulness.

How shall one practice the four foundations of mindfulness? In the Maha Satipatthana Sutta, the Buddha said, "Dwell practicing body contemplation, feeling contemplation, mind contemplation and mind-objects contemplation." Without the guidance of a well-qualified teacher, however, it will not be easy for an average person to practice these contemplations in a systematic manner in order to make progress towards development of concentration and insight.

4.2 Characteristics of Mahasi Method

Here researcher classified the three part of characteristic such as; 1 Escaping Samatha, 2 Direct Vipassana and 3 Simplicity.

4.2.1 Escaping Samatha

The "noting what happens" is quite a big difference. It's a matter of emphasis. If your aim is deep concentration then I think you'd focus on a simple object, and keep returning to it without delay. With the Mahasi and related approaches you use a complex object (abdominal motion, motion of the feet, touch points, etc.) that tends to have a lot of variability. And the emphasis is (depending on the teacher) not so much to worry about sticking with that object, because the "interesting" observations have to do with what's happening to the mind when it gets drawn to something else.

Ānāpānassati can take two directions. If the meditator strives to be mindful of the form or manner of the in-breath and the out-breath, then it is samatha meditation and leads to one-pointedness of mind. On the other hand, if the meditator notes the sensation of the in-breath and out-breath as it moves and touches, then it is vipassanā meditation. The element of wind or motion (vāyo-dhātu) is matter (rūpa), while the awareness or consciousness of the sensation is mind (nāma). Therefore, ānāpānassati can be considered as vipassanā, and can lead to high

levels of insight wisdom. However, in the *Visuddhimagga*, in the section on mindfulness of the body (*kāyānupassana*), fourteen objects of meditation are discussed, and further subdivided into objects for tranquility (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) meditation. In the *Visuddhimagga*, *ānāpānassati* is presented as an object of tranquillity meditation.⁴ Consequently, if we are to instruct meditators to develop *ānāpānassati* as part of insight meditation, we will be inviting much unwanted and unwarranted criticism and controversy. And neither Mahasi Sayadaw or myself would want to argue here that the *Visuddhimagga*, the rightly venerated classic, is at fault here.

It has been said that by noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, meditators are distancing themselves from the teachings of the Buddha. The answer to this is a firm and definite “no.” Quite apart from the success that meditators have achieved by noting rising-falling, there is much solid evidence in the Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Saāyatana Vagga Saṃyutta*, to show that the method is very much a part of the Buddha’s teachings regarding mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of the elements (*dhātu*), and mindfulness of the five aggregates (*khandha*).

4.2.2 Direct Vipassana

Munindra-ji’s way of teaching Vipassana focused from the beginning on what was conducive to insight. He instructed in the method of the so called ‘pure Vipassana (*suddha vipassana*)’ that in the last century was revived by the Burmese Vipassana Master Mahasi Sayadaw and for its pragmatic simplicity is based on the oldest Buddhist tradition. In this approach you start developing concentration by practicing moment by moment mindfulness of any activity, also using the breathing as object, and practicing insight into the impermanence of all phenomena from the first qualifying moment of concentration.

In this way we develop insight into the stream of thoughts, emotions and sensual objects and their interrelatedness (*Paticca Samuppada*). This development is based on knowledge as direct-experience of the impermanence (*anicca*) of all

⁴ Nyānaponika Thera, **The Heart of Buddhist Meditation**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2005), p. 95

phenomena, the potential suffering (dukkha) inherent in phenomena and their ultimate nature of avidness or no-self (anatta). We come to understand the momentary and dependent no-core-self that leads to much suffering when not understood.

And in meditation on loving kindness (Metta) we develop understanding of the spiritual nature of our interrelatedness to all other living beings. We do this by developing the emotion of tender love connected with the methodical expansion of the intention that all living beings may be happy, that they all may be free from suffering and attain Enlightenment and Nirvana.⁵

4.2.3 Simplicity

What makes concentration meditation difficult yet so simple is the task of relaxing yet increasing alertness. Generally, if we get more alert we get tenser, if we relax we tend to get less alert. It's the balance of the spiritual faculties of equanimity and energy. What makes insight mindfulness vipassana meditation difficult yet simple is the task of being mindful of body movements, sensations, emotions and intentions in the present moment without getting into the labeling aspect of perception. For example, if the neighbor's dog is barking while you are meditating rather than thinking the concept dog as in the thought, "Oh the neighbor's dog is barking again!" You note the slight anger, noting anger, anger and then hearing, hearing. As you get deeper in insight you can immediately go into hearing the sound as a series of rapid waves of sound at less than a microsecond of sound. Feeling pain, say in your knee, you pull your mind away from the concept of the knee hurting and note, pain, pain and any aversion to the pain as aversion, aversion. Again as you go deeper in insight such as in a retreat you experience pain as a series of less than a microsecond spikes of sensation as series of waves of sensation. But it's difficult to get the story line out of one's head, the automatic continual comparing current sensory data with past experience to label it. Man, women, dog, cup, child, shirt, etc., these are all concepts that the mind uses on a functional basis. But to get to the quantum level of bodily and mental process to access

⁵ Joseph, Goldstein. **The Insight Meditation Society (IMS)**, (U.S.A.: Vipassana Retreat Centers, 1976), p. 2.

insight into the ultimate nature of existence and Nibbana (Nirvana) beyond that you must go beyond this tendency of consciousness to materialize the formless field of energy into a static form. One controversy in vipassana is whether to use so called noting in mindfulness meditation. This is emphasized in the Burmese vipassana method of Mahasi Sayadaw, the monk who got to play the role of Mahakassapa at the sixth Theravada Buddhist Council. Mahakassapa after Buddha's death asked the questions and Ananda, Buddha's attendant chanted the answers to the Sutta discourses of Buddha and Upali chanted the answer to the rules and ethics section of the Pali scriptures. Mahasi Sayadaw was one of those very rare highly accomplished Buddhist scholars with high genius abstract reasoning who had attained intuitive wisdom with vipassana probably to the Once-Returner level of Nibbana. Mahasi got to ask the questions and one of the monks with photographic memory who had memorized all the Theravada books, about 11 books answered orally. Thus Mahasi Sayadaw had the privilege of being the moderator of the sixth Buddhist council since the Parinibbana of Buddha. Mahasi helped many tens of thousands of men and women attain Nibbana liberation. With the noting style you use labeling to help overcome labeling.⁶ Instead of going into the automatic comparing of present sensory experience with the past experience you used the label of describing the process of sensation and mentality in the present moment. Then when you get to the rise and fall level of seeing the waves of sensation and mental mind moments you drop the silent verbal noting going beyond verbal discursive mode into pure insightful mindfulness.

4.3 Guideline of Mahasi Method

Every goal has guideline to gain perfect benefit. In this discoursed researcher want to show a perfect guideline of Mahasi meditation style.

4.3.1 Preparatory Stage

If you sincerely desire to develop contemplation and attain insight in this your present life, you must give up worldly thoughts and actions during the training.

⁶ Bhikkhu, **Nanamoli Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, (Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), p. 631.

This course of action is for the purification of conduct, the essential preliminary step towards the proper development of contemplation. You must also observe the rules of discipline prescribed for laymen, (or for monks as the case may be) for they are important in gaining insight. For lay people, these rules comprise the Eight Precepts which Buddhist devotees observe on the observance days (uposatha) and during periods of meditation. An additional rule is not to speak with contempt, in jest, or with malice to or about any of the noble ones who have attained states of sanctity. If you have done so, then personally apologize to him or her or make an apology through your meditation instructor. If in the past you have spoken contemptuously to a noble one who is at present unavailable or deceased, confess this offense to your meditation instructor or introspectively to yourself.⁷

The old masters of Buddhist tradition suggest that you entrust yourself to the Enlightened One, the Buddha, during the training period, for you may be alarmed if it happens that your own state of mind produces unwholesome or frightening visions during contemplation. Also place yourself under the guidance of your meditation instructor, for then, he can talk to you frankly about your work in contemplation and give you the guidance he thinks necessary. These are the advantages of placing trust in the Enlightened One, the Buddha, and practicing under the guidance of your instructor. The aim of this practice and its greatest benefit is release from greed, hatred and delusion, which are the roots of all evil and suffering. This intensive course in insight training can lead you to such release. So work ardently with this end in view so that your training will be successfully completed. This kind of training in contemplation, based on the foundations of mindfulness (satipattana), had been taken by successive Buddhas and noble ones who attained release. You are to be congratulated on having the opportunity to take the same kind of training they had undergone.

⁷ Bhikkhu, Thanissaro, **One Tool Among Many. The Place of Vipassana in Buddhist Practice**, (Legacy edition: Access to Insight, 2011), p. 9.

It is also important for you to begin your training with a brief contemplation on the "Four Protections" which the Enlightened One, the Buddha, offers you for reflection. It is helpful for your psychological welfare at this stage to reflect on them. The subjects of the four protective reflections are the Buddha himself, loving-kindness, the loathsome aspects of the body, and death.

First, devote yourself to the Buddha by sincerely appreciating his nine chief qualities in this way: Truly, the Buddha is holy, fully enlightened, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a welfare, world-knower, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and mankind, the awakened one and the exalted one.

Secondly, reflect upon all sentient beings as the receivers of your loving-kindness and identify yourself with all sentient beings without distinction, thus: May I be free from enmity, disease and grief. As I am, so also may my parents, preceptors, teachers, intimate and indifferent and inimical beings be free from enmity, disease and grief. May they be released from suffering.

Thirdly, reflect upon the repulsive nature of the body to assist you in diminishing the unwholesome attachment that so many people have for the body. Dwell on some of its impurities, such as stomach, intestines, phlegm, pus, blood. Ponder on these impurities so that the absurd fondness for the body may be eliminated.

The fourth protection for your psychological benefit is to reflect on the phenomenon of ever-approaching death. Buddhist teachings stress that life is uncertain, but death is certain; life is precarious but death is sure. Life has death as its goal. There is birth, disease, suffering, old age, and eventually, death. These are all aspects of the process of existence.

To begin training, take the sitting posture with the legs crossed. You might feel more comfortable if the legs are not interlocked but evenly placed on the ground, without pressing one against the other. If you find that sitting on the floor interferes with contemplation, then obtain a more comfortable way of sitting. Now proceed with each exercise in contemplation as described.

While occupied with the exercise of observing each of the abdominal movements, other mental activities may occur between the noting of each rising and falling. Thoughts or other mental functions, such as intentions, ideas, imaginings, are likely to occur between each mental note of rising and falling. They cannot be disregarded. A mental note must be made of each as it occurs.⁸

If you imagine something, you must know that you have done so and make a mental note, imagining. If you simply think of something, mentally note, thinking. If you reflect, reflecting. If you intend to do something, intending. When the mind wanders from the object of meditation which is the rising and falling of the abdomen, mentally note, wandering. Should you imagine you are going to a certain place, note going. When you arrive, arriving. When, in your thoughts, you meet a person, note meeting. Should you speak to him or her, speaking. If you imaginarily argue with that person, note arguing. If you envision or imagine a light or colour, be sure to note seeing. A mental vision must be noted on each occurrence of its appearance until it passes away. After its disappearance continue with Basic Exercise I, by being fully aware of each movement of the rising and falling abdomen. Proceed carefully, without slackening. If you intend to swallow saliva while thus engaged, make a mental note intending. While in the act of swallowing, swallowing. If you spit, spitting. Then return to the exercise of noting rising and falling.

Suppose you intend to bend the neck, note intending. In the act of bending, bending. When you intend to straighten the neck, intending.

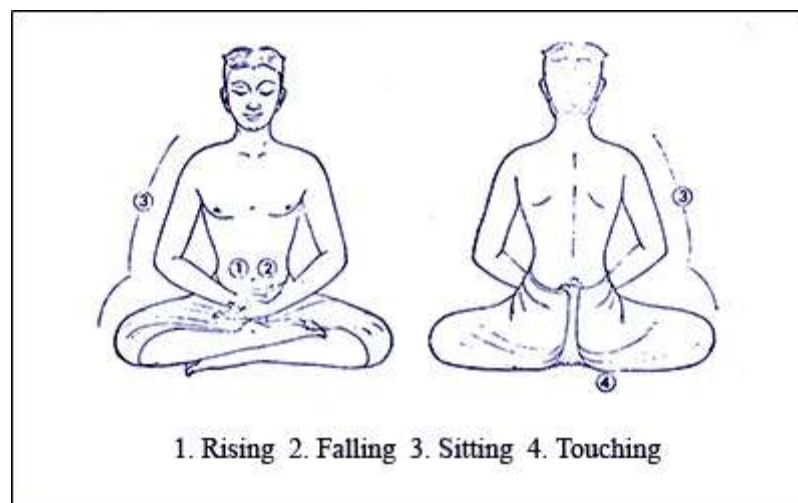
In the act of straightening the neck, straightening. The neck movements of bending and straightening must be done slowly. After mentally making a note of each of these actions, proceed in full awareness with noticing the movements of the rising and falling abdomen.

4.3.2 Sitting Meditation

Sitting is an erect posture of the body consisting of a series of physical activities, induced by consciousness consisting of a series of mental activities. It is just

⁸ Mahasi Sayadaw, **Practical Vipassana Meditation Exercises**, Tr. By U Nyi Nyi, (Rangoon, Burma: Mahasi Meditation Center, 1997), p. 5.

like the case of an inflated rubber ball which maintains its round shape through the resistance of the air inside it. The posture of sitting is similar in that the body is kept in an erect posture through the continuous process of physical activities. A good deal of energy is required to pull up and keep in an erect position such a heavy load as this body. People generally assume that the body is lifted and kept in an upright position by means of sinews. This assumption is correct in a sense because sinews, blood, flesh and bones are nothing but materiality. The element of stiffening which keeps the body in an erect posture belongs to the group of materiality and arises in the sinews, flesh, blood, etc., throughout the body, like the air in a rubber ball.



The element of stiffening is the air element, known as vayo-dhatu. The body is kept in an erect position by the air element in the form of stiffening, which is continually coming into existence. At the time of sleepiness or drowsiness, one may drop flat because the supply of new materials in the form of stiffening is cut off. The state of mind in heavy drowsiness or sleep is bhavanga, the "life-continuum" or passive subconscious flow. During the course of bhavanga, mental activities are absent, and for this reason, the body lies flat during sleep or heavy drowsiness.⁹

During waking hours, strong and alert mental activities are continually arising, and because of these the air element arises serially in the form of stiffening.

⁹ Stephen Procter, **The Mindfulness Meditation Method**, (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1990), pp. 15-17.

In order to know these facts, it is essential to note the bodily posture attentively as "sitting, sitting, sitting." This does not necessarily mean that the body impression of stiffening should particularly be searched for and noted. Attention need only be fixed on the whole form of the sitting posture, that is, the lower portion of the body in a bent circular form and the upper portion held erect.

It may be found that the exercise of observing the mere sitting posture is too easy and does not require much effort. In these circumstances, energy (viriyā) is less and concentration (samādhi) is in excess. One will generally feel lazy and will not want to carry on the noting as "sitting, sitting, sitting" repeatedly for a considerable length of time. Laziness generally occurs when there is an excess of concentration and not enough energy. It is nothing but a state of sloth and torpor (thina-middha).

More energy should be developed, and for this purpose, the number of objects for noting should be increased. After noting as "sitting," the attention should be directed to a spot in the body where the sense of touch is felt and a note made as "touching." Any spot in the leg or hand or hip where a sense of touch is distinctly felt will serve the purpose. For example, after noting the sitting posture of the body as "sitting," the spot where the sense of touch is felt should be noted as "touching." The noting should thus be repeated using these two objects of the sitting posture and the place of touching alternately, as "sitting, touching, sitting, touching, sitting, touching."

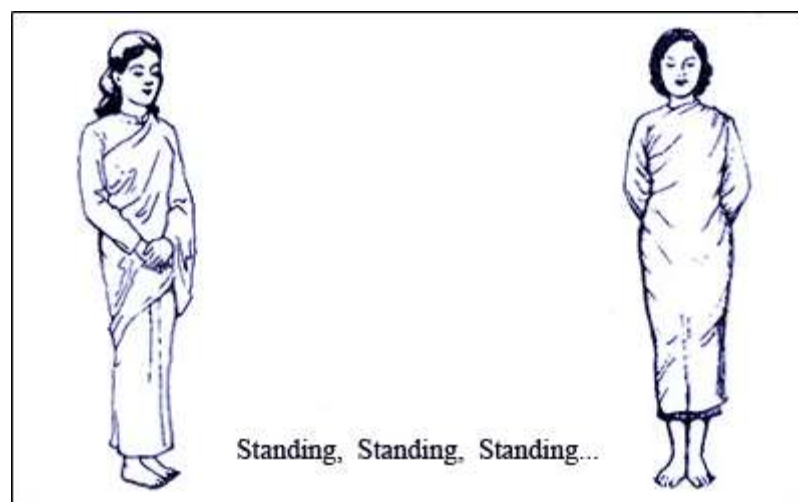
The terms "noting," "observing" and "contemplating" are used here to indicate the fixing of attention on an object. The exercise is simply to note or observe or contemplate as "sitting, touching." Those who already have experience in the practice of meditation may find this exercise easy to begin with, but those without any previous experience may at first find it rather difficult.

4.3.3 Standing Meditation

As with sitting and lying down, the meditation object here is the posture itself. You might want to practice this exercise for five, ten or fifteen minutes before

doing walking meditation. Stand straight with the arms held in front of the body, one hand clasping the wrist of the other; or clasp the hands behind your back.

Your eyes may be open or closed. If you open your eyes, don't pay attention to what you're seeing. Let your attention stay with the kinesthetic "feel" of the posture. If you wish, you may focus on one area of the body, such as the soles of your feet. Now take a mental "snapshot" of the posture, noting "standing." Ignore the rising-falling motions. Just keep observing standing, being aware of knowing the posture from moment-to-moment.



4.3.4 Walking Meditation

Choose a lane or path where you can walk up and down undisturbed. Divide one hour of walking meditation into three segments.

For the first twenty minutes you can walk relatively fast. Note "left, right, left, right" while paying attention to the predominant sensation in the relevant legs and feet.

For the next twenty minutes, walk a little slower. Note "lifting, placing" or "lifting, lowering" while paying close attention only to the foot that is moving. When you note "lifting," try to have the noting and the attention coincide at exactly the moment when the heel leaves the ground. When you note "placing" or "lowering," start with the first moment of heaviness arising in the foot. Register the first touch on

the ground and stick with the shift in weight until the foot is fully still. Then move your attention to the other foot, the one that is about to move.

During the final twenty minutes, walk as slowly as possible. Note “lifting, moving, placing” while paying attention to the moving foot only. The slower you go, the faster you will progress!¹⁰

During walking meditation, you will be aware of sensations or movement. There may be trembling or unsteadiness, especially at first. The movement will not be continuous, and you may also experience slightly odd sensations. For example, you may feel as if you or your feet are being pushed.

Practice restraint of the senses, not looking here and there. Nor is it necessary to look at the feet; just place your gaze a little ahead of yourself, so that you can see where you are going. Sense-restraint while walking develops concentration; it also avoids unwholesome mental states not yet arisen.

Slow down all your movements on retreat. Moving super slowly is a great tactic, which helps us see many, many minute details in the body and the mind. Myriad things arise that we are usually not aware of; seeing them develops wisdom. However, if you succeed only in feeling restless, or if a torrent of thoughts develops, find a place where your mindfulness can coordinate with your body movements.

You should be aware of all activities without exception. If there is a sound on waking, it should be noted. Notice sitting up in bed. Also be aware of meals, of taking food onto the plate, and of all the complex activities required for eating.

4.3.5 Eating Meditation

One thing that I have gained from meditation (specifically this method and the Soto Zen technique of Zazen) is an understanding that each moment consists of a magnificent symphony of sensation, emotion and thought – a symphony that I was almost completely unaware of, despite the fact that it is present at all times. There

¹⁰ Nyanaponika, Thera., **The Heart of Buddhist Meditation**, (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1998), pp. 107-109.

have been several occasions when this realization has been strongly reinforced and one of those was when I was on retreat learning Mahasi Vipassana, and applying it to the act of eating.

On the first day all I seemed to note was ‘intending... chewing... swallowing’.

This was fine, but as the retreat went on the noting words that I was able to use increased to such an extent that I felt quite overwhelmed and surprised at just how complex the experience of eating was. There was the lifting of the spoon, the temperature of the food, the sounds (spoon hitting teeth or squelch of saliva), the texture of the food, the emotions and thoughts that arose as a direct consequence of eating – the list seemed endless.

However, the thing that surprised me the most was that ‘taste’ was the very last thing that I noted.

Now, one might assume that the food must have been tasteless and I have to admit that, being the first time that I had lived on a purely vegan diet, I was previously concerned that it would be. This was not the case – the food tasted wonderful and yet the sensation that is usually the only one that holds my attention when eating took a back seat, there was so much other stuff going on of which I am usually completely unaware.

4.3.6 Sleeping Meditation

When sleepy, make a mental note, sleepy. After you have gained sufficient concentration in contemplating you will be able to overcome drowsiness and you will feel refreshed as a result. Take up again the usual contemplation of the basic object. If you are unable to overcome the drowsy feeling, you must continue contemplating drowsiness until you fall asleep.

The state of sleep is the continuity of sub-consciousness. It is similar to the first state of rebirth consciousness and the last state of consciousness at the moment of death. This state of consciousness is feeble and therefore, unable to be aware of an object. When you awake, the continuity of sub-consciousness occurs

regularly between moments of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking. Because these occurrences are of brief duration they are not usually clear and therefore not noticeable. Continuity of sub consciousness remains during sleep — a fact which becomes obvious when you wake up; for it is in the state of wakefulness that thoughts and sense objects become distinct.

Contemplation should start at the moment you wake up. Since you are a beginner, it may not be possible yet for you to start contemplating at the very first moment of wakefulness. But you should start with it when you remember that you are to contemplate. For example, if on awakening you reflect on something, you should become aware of the fact and begin your contemplation by a mental note, reflecting. Then proceed with the contemplation of rising and falling. When getting up from the bed, mindfulness should be directed to every detail of the body's activity. Each movement of the hands, legs and rump must be performed in complete awareness. Are you thinking of the time of day when awakening? If so, note thinking.

Do you intend to get out of bed? If so, note intending. If you prepare to move the body into position for rising, note preparing. As you slowly rise, rising. Should you remain sitting for any length of time, revert to contemplating the abdominal movements.¹¹

During a meditation retreat, when devoting the entire day to vipassana, it's important to practice in all four postures: sitting, walking, standing, and lying down. Not that you should spend equal time in each pose. Typically, sitting and walking are practiced anywhere from thirty to sixty minutes at a time, standing and lying down, from five to fifteen.

Only an advanced meditator can practice lying down for long periods without getting sleepy or losing mindfulness. And although standing can be practiced longer, it's usually too uncomfortable for the novice to maintain for long periods.

¹¹ Mahasi Sayadaw, **Practical Insight Meditation**, (Rangoon, Burma: Mahasi Meditation Center, 1971), p. 8.

In the beginning, therefore, unless you are ill, do not exceed the fifteen-minute maximum for lying down. Change into the reclining pose slowly and mindfully, following the step-by-step technique of stopping between movements.

As you change from standing to lying down, note each small action: observe the sensation of contact as you bend each knee to the floor and lower the torso. Move the legs one at a time, placing one on top of the other. Note the contact there, too. Label these actions with the word "moving."

Lie on your side, with the arm closest to the floor extended under your head or on the floor in front of the chest, the uppermost arm resting against the side of the body. (You may place a pillow under your head).

Now observe the lying down posture, taking repeated mental snapshots, as with sitting. As you do so, note "lying" or "lying down." Ignore the rising-falling motions.

For a more detailed explanation of how to observe bodily posture, please see Exercise 4.

Alternatively, instead of the posture itself you can observe the rising and falling abdominal movements (but do not also watch the posture. Choose one or the other). You can also practice the hand motions exercise while lying on your back. In that case, ignore the posture and abdominal movements and observe only the movement of the hands.

4.3.7 Meditation on General Activities

While occupied with the exercise of observing each of the abdominal movements, other mental activities may occur between the noting of each rising and falling. Thoughts or other mental functions, such as intentions, ideas, imaginings, are likely to occur between each mental note of rising and falling. They cannot be disregarded. A mental note must be made of each as it occurs.

If you imagine something, you must know that you have done so and make a mental note, imagining. If you simply think of something, mentally note, thinking. If you reflect, reflecting. If you intend to do something, intending. When the

mind wanders from the object of meditation which is the rising and falling of the abdomen, mentally note, wandering. Should you imagine you are going to a certain place, note going. When you arrive, arriving. When, in your thoughts, you meet a person, note meeting. Should you speak to him or her, If you imaginarily argue with that person, note arguing. If you envision or imagine a light or colour, be sure to note seeing. A mental vision must be noted on each occurrence of its appearance until it passes away. After its disappearance continue with Basic Exercise I, by being fully aware of each movement of the rising and falling abdomen. Proceed carefully, without slackening. If you intend to swallow saliva while thus engaged, make a mental note intending. While in the act of swallowing, swallowing. If you spit, spitting. Then return to the exercise of noting rising and falling.

Suppose you intend to bend the neck, note intending. In the act of bending, bending. When you intend to straighten the neck, intending. In the act of straightening the neck, straightening. The neck movements of bending and straightening must be done slowly. After mentally making a note of each of these actions, proceed in full awareness with noticing the movements of the rising and falling abdomen.

4.3.8 Time and Schedule

Morning Schedule

03.45 - 06.00: start practicing the mindfulness observation of all physical motion as soon as you wake up and get up from the mattress. During this time, practice sitting meditation once (at least 1 hour). Optionally, you can do walking meditation instead. (you must wake up at the schedule time)

06.45 – 07.00: join breakfast at the refectory. (breakfast is available at the refectory only). During the meal, practice mindfulness observation throughout the time. The time schedule might be changed due to the sunrise time. (you must join breakfast at the scheduled time.)

07.00 -07.30: join the morning chant as an offering to the Buddha. The chant such as the Nine Qualities of the Buddha, etc., will be recited in order to increase your faith and mental stability. You will also extend loving kindness to all

beings, wishing them to be as blissful as yourself. Then dedicate merits of good deeds to all beings: Dāna, Sīla, and bhāvanā including merits of Vipassanā meditation. (you must join the morning chant on time.)

0.7.30 – 09.00: Join the Dharma listening in order to foster your practice development. The time schedule is subject to change as appropriate. For the days when Dhamma listening is not available, you must practice the observation of the bodily movement. Then practice sitting meditation instead.

09.00 -11.00: practice observation of the bodily moment. Then practice sitting meditation once (at last 1 hour), or you can do walking meditation instead, individual interview might be arranged during the time.

11.00 – 12.00: join for lunch at the refectory. During your meal, practice Mahāsatiṭṭhāna, maintain continuity in the observation of bodily actions. (you must join for lunch on time.)

12.00 -13.00: Do personal tasks: taking a shower, washing clothes, etc., along with mindfulness observation practice. Do not make noise. Finish your tasks in time. In case of Dhamma listening is arranged after lunch to express gratitude for laypersons who host lunch, the personal tasks hour will be compensated. You must finish your tasks within an hour counting from the time Dhamma listening is finished. Then gather for the regular practice schedule.

13.00 – 15.00 practice the observation of the bodily movement. Then practice sitting meditation once (at least 1 hour), or you can do walking meditation instead. (complete your 1-hour practice session in time.)

15.00 – 17.00: Join the Dhamma listening. Have fruit juice. (the Dhamma listening schedule is subject to change as appropriate.) (you must join the Dhamma listening on time.) For the days when the Dhamma listening is not available, mindfully practice the observation of the bodily movement. Then practice sitting meditation once (at least 1-hour), or you can do walking meditation instead.

17.00 -19.00: practice the observation of the bodily movement. Then the practice sitting meditation once (at the least 1 hour). Or you can do walking

meditation instead. If deemed appropriate, the individual interview will be arranged. (arrange your interview at the schedule time.)

19.00 – 21.00: practice the observation of the bodily movement. Then practice sitting meditation once (at least 1 hour), or you can do walking meditation instead. The schedule time can be extended to 21.30 o'clock (complete your 1-hour practice session time.)

21.30: retire to your room. In case you are not going to sleep, you can practice sitting meditation or walking meditation (at least 1- hour), or you can practice loving-kindness meditation. Talk is not allowed in any case. (staying up and talking to the other people is a serious violation of the rules.) (you must go to sleep at the schedule time.)¹²

Practice Sessions in a day

Morning: 3 sessions of sitting meditation, 3 sessions of walking meditation or 3 sessions of standing meditation.

Noon to afternoon: 2 sessions of sitting meditation, 2 sessions of walking meditation or 2 sessions of standing meditation.

Evening: 1 session of sitting meditation, 1 session of walking meditation or 1 session of standing meditation.

Night: 2 sessions of sitting meditation, 2 sessions of walking meditation or 2 sessions of standing meditation

4.4 Effectiveness of Mahasi Method

In this discourse are classified two-part General Effects and Spiritual Effects.

4.4.1 General Effects

Research into the effects and mechanisms of mindfulness training draws predominantly on quantitative research. There is a lack of understanding about the

¹² Mahsi Sayadaw, **Practical Vipassana Exercises**, (Rangoon, Burma: Buddha Dhamma Education Association, 1993), pp. 87-90.

subjective experiences of experienced mindfulness meditators, which may provide additional insights into the effects, processes and context of mindfulness training. This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of a novel group of experienced mindfulness mediators who practice Vipassana Mahasi (VM) meditation. The study aimed to understand how experienced VM practitioners make sense of the effects of practice and what processes they ascribe to it. Participants attended semi-structured interviews, and their responses were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Results yielded overarching themes including

- (a) Improvements in hedonic and eudemonic well-being;
- (b) Insights into self, others and perception of reality;
- (c) Attaining equanimity; and
- (d) Physical and interpersonal difficulties.

Participants perceived (VM) as a ‘cleansing’ process whereby maladaptive responses were eliminated through mindfulness, other supportive mental qualities, decentering and nonattachment. The findings revealed a complex and dynamic set of interdependent outcomes and processes, which are reinforced by Buddhist teachings and ethical practices. This study highlights the need for additional interdisciplinary research into topics such as insight generation and supportive mental qualities cultivated during (VM), novel states of well-being informed by Buddhist constructs and interpersonal difficulties related to long-term practice. Findings also suggest that incorporating Buddhist teachings and ethics into mindfulness-based interventions may enhance practitioner understanding and implementation of meditation techniques.

4.4.2 Spiritual Effects

The most important thing to know are the true qualities of a spiritual friend a kalyanamitta.

Eloquence, humor or intensity of speech isn’t what I mean. Those are only superficial qualities. The main quality of a kalyanamitta is his or her depth — the twin qualities of wisdom and compassion. They should be well developed.

Next, one must approach this spiritual friend and practice Dhamma. Only after you practice and achieve good results then you can take that method as beneficial and correct.¹³

A teacher's personality can be like honey but unless it's free and not sticky the fly will die. So the method of freedom should exceed attraction to personalities.

Another aspect of a strong spiritual teacher is that they do not criticize others. Anyone who understands the true Dhamma, especially after they have reached the stage of ariya⁴, there will be no such thing as uplifting oneself or denigrating others. The Buddha made it clear that the objective of Dhamma was to end dukkha, to extinguish the internal fires of greed, hatred and ignorance. In so doing the goal of practice may be the same yet the approach may be different.

For example, all know there are many different schools of medicine. The point is to know medicine, to help others, be of great value to others. But first one needs training.

They approach a good school with competent teachers. Through persistence and great dedication one gets a preliminary degree in both theory and a bit of practice. Then if one wants to specialize, become highly proficient, one goes on, or goes further in their training. Nevertheless, no matter how well trained someone becomes, medicine is a complex area of study and as the saying goes, nothing can fully prepare you for the test of application once you are outside of school. But without training you're a quack, and a danger to society. You're dealing with people in life and death circumstances and you better know what you're doing.

However, as I said, when one goes outside into the real practice of medicine one may encounter certain diseases never before known or come across. So instead of treating them in the usual way, or the traditional way, the doctor may invent a personal approach to the treatment of that disease. But in so doing, a doctor may treat just the symptoms and the

¹³ Stephen Gray, **Spiritual Planet**, (England: Vancouver, British Columbia park street press, 2018.), p. 27.

symptoms may subside in the patient. The patient may temporarily even feel good again and the doctor may shout success. This isn't the Dhamma. This is nothing more than smothering a fire with a blanket, thus forcing the fire to go underground where it resurfaces someplace else at a later time. All the while it smolders in the soil of their spirit.

Another aspect of the practice of non-violence is its tendency to elevate the devotee to the higher realms (uparibhāgavāra). In the Sallekha Sutta, the Buddha says that all unwholesome deeds tend to land the doer in the lower realms, whereas all wholesome deeds ensure rebirth in the higher realms. All unwholesome deeds have their roots in greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha). Major misdeeds such as killing and stealing may lead to rebirth in the lower realms. Minor misdeeds motivated by desire or ill-will do not cause much suffering to the wrong-doer, but they tend to prolong misery in the cycle of life. Those who have committed gross misdeeds such as killing have to suffer not only in the lower realms, but also in the human world where they may be reborn by virtue of their wholesome kamma. Retribution follows for many lifetimes in the form of a short life-span, physical afflictions, poverty, and so forth. Ill-health is often the karmic result of aggression committed in a previous existence. An unwholesome deed will, at best, lead to rebirth as a poor, wretched celestial being in the heavenly realm, and at worst it means damnation in Avīci, the lowest hell. In the time of Kakusandha Buddha, a Māra called Dūsī, instantly landed in Avīci hell because of his wicked deed against the Buddha and the Arahant.¹⁴

At present, those Yogis who are continuously contemplating and noting rupas and namas arising from the six sense-doors, that is, contemplating what is going on in one's mind and body, in accordance with the teachings on mindfulness meditation (Satipatthana) are free from five nivaranas, obstacles to the progress of meditation, when their mind becomes tranquil and stabilised. This is called Citta Visuddhi, purity of mind. With the mind becoming tranquil and cleansed of the nivaranas at every moment of contemplating and noting, it occurs to the mind of the mediator with awareness that what is contemplated and known is quite different

¹⁴ Mahāsi Sayadaw, **Practical Insight Meditation: Basic and Progressive Stages**, (Rangoon, Burma: Mahasi Meditation Center, 1991), p. 22.

from the mind that contemplates and knows, i.e., these two are distinguishably known. When the rising movement of the abdomen is contemplated and known, the rupa, that is the rising abdominal wall, and the mind - nama that contemplates and knows, are distinguishably known. Similar knowledge will be realized in contemplating the falling of the abdomen and the acts of walking, stepping, dropping, bending and so on. Every time it is so contemplated and noted, what is to be known and the knowing mind, rupa and nama (matter and mind) are well appreciated as the only two attributes of an individual representing material and mental elements which form an aggregate of a sentient being. This appreciation or the knowledge dispelling to a certain extent the arrow of Ditthi is known as ditthivisuddhi.

Thereafter, if contemplation and noting is carried on, cause and effect will be distinguishably known in that because of mental inclination to bend, bending (which is rupa) takes place. So also, because of the will to walk, the act of walking (rupa) happens, and because of the object of sensation which is to be known, the knowing-mind occurs, etc. At that moment, the piercing arrow of doubt called "kankha" has been cleared away to a reasonable extent. From then onwards, at every moment of contemplation and noting, the beginning of the phenomenal occurrence and the final dissolution of what has occurred will be clearly perceived and realized. The nature of such arising and dissolution in respect of the other phenomenal occurrences in the body and mind, such as stiffness and upward and downward movements of the abdominal wall, and of bending, stretching, lifting, stepping, and so on will be distinctly known part by part when contemplation is in full swing. When realization comes, it will be fully appreciated with awareness that these are mere characteristic of anicca (impermanence) and of misery constituting the nature of anatta without substance or atta.

4.5 Interview with Translators

Venerable U Janaka who is a teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar said that Mahasi Sayadaw's recorded introduction talk (for new yogis)

gives the essential instructions, beginning with noticing or observing the primary object of attention in the mindfulness meditation (Satipatthana), namely, the rising and falling of the abdomen.

In terms of scriptural explanation, we are made up of psycho-physical phenomena, which are arising and passing away all the time. A yogi is expected to experience them at the six sense doors through the mindfulness. When a sight is seen, for instance, the eye and the sight are physical phenomena, while the resultant consciousness of seeing is a mental phenomenon. Similarly, with the experiencing with sound, smell, taste, touch and mental objects, and several movements of the body such as folding and stretching of the arms, turning or leaning (inclining) of the body and the taking of steps in walking, Mahasi Sayadaw has instructed that all kinds of happenings should be closely noticed the moment they become obvious to us, with no exception of even trifling incidents.

Although Mahasi Sayadaw's instructions are given in very clear and simple language, yogis encounter some difficulties when they come to follow them in actual practice. To help yogis to overcome such difficulties, meditation teachers of this Centre explain and demonstrate to beginners how to notice or observe the primary objects of attention; i.e., rising falling of the abdomen, and secondary objects of attention like thoughts or reflections, feelings or sensation, and external stimuli like sights and sound or other acts of behavior the moment they take place. Yet, some beginners find it difficult to put them into practice properly and to report their experiences clearly to the teachers. To obviate such difficulties, the meditation teachers have devised maxims or aphorisms that are easy to remember and helpful to the better understanding.¹⁵

Venerable U Kawwida said that My first conversation was with Senior Dharma Teacher, Kamala Masters. Kamala has practiced Insight Meditation for over forty years in the lineage of the Burmese teacher Mahasi Sayadaw. Many consider

¹⁵ Interview with Venerable U Janaka, A teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 12 December, 2018.

Mahasi Sayadaw to be the grandfather of the modern mindfulness movement, as so many of the leading Western teachers have worked directly with him and his senior students (Anagarika Munindra, Sayadaw U Pandita). In this episode, Kamala and I explore the historical impact of Mahasi Sayadaw, his unique method of ‘noting’ meditation, and the kinds of experiences and transformations that come with this path. Kamala is also one of the main editors for the recently released English Translation of Mahasi Sayadaw’s seminal work on meditation: *Manual of Insight*.

I found Kamala to possess a profound depth of integrity, wisdom, and warm compassion.¹⁶

Disclaimer: as the first of these conversations, I humbly acknowledge to having committed a handful of ‘rookie’ errors. Those will, hopefully, be smoothed with experience going forward and I thank you for your patience.

Venerable U Kaya Sa Wa said that if you feel a painful sensation in your knee, first you note it as "Pain, pain." If it persists, continue to note it and investigate the painful sensation. “Where exactly is it?” “Does it always arise in the exact same place?” “Does it get more and more intense or fluctuate?” “Is the painful sensation experienced as hardness?” “Is it burning?” “Is it throbbing?” “If you do not pay attention to it, does it fade away?”

With the abdominal movements, likewise, when you’re able to keep your attention on them for some time, how do you experience them? “Is it a single rising or falling movement?” “Is it pressure or tension?” “Is it a whole succession of movements, one after another, until the rising or falling are complete?”

Investigation of phenomena (*dhammavicaya sambojjhaṅga*) is a vital factor in the practice of insight. We must know the meditation objects’ specific characteristics (hardness, softness, etc.) as well as their general characteristic (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self).

¹⁶ Interview with Venerable U Kawwida, Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 15 December, 2018.

The two jhāna factors of initial application (vitakka) and sustained application (vicāra) are involved here, like picking up a brass bowl, then rubbing it.¹⁷

Venerable U Dhammasara said In case of seeing the apple note how seeing is different moment to moment as well, is it really the same seeing all the time? Is it the same light touching your eye? Is seeing the apple a stable experience, what happens when you blink or hear a sound?

You should be made aware that technically you are noting in Past sense as in noting recognition of an experience as per Satipatthana or a more accurate description and/or reflecting on its nature.

Most Rupa is relatively stable and various sense-consciousness arise subsequently and incredibly fast, so in the example of looking at an apple one can note aspects of what is being experienced in the context of the concept of "looking at an apple" so one would note "seeing/looking" as one kept looking one would perhaps reflect, noting "reflecting as it was noticed as a second (Mind) Satipatthana as consciousness goes back and forth between Eye base and Thinking Base, perceiving and grasping thoughts and forms, one can try noting faster whenever you notice a jump between different sense-base-consciousness's as in you notice any changes in posture, movements, feelings, etc. and note what it was as per Satipatthana or better defined.

What will often happen is that you will notice things arising and ceasing overwhelmingly fast, so you can just note "knowing" it to be so and perhaps being "overwhelmed" or "doubting" if it (overwhelming's or doubt) arises and slow down or pick a more solid, clear-cut theme. also use "knowing" "knowing" universally if you know what happened or what can be said to have happened or be happening, if you know there was sustained attention, or you know you are kind of lost, have made a decision or have come to a conclusion in your reasoning, if you know you hold a view etc.

¹⁷ Interview with Venerable U Kaya Sa Wa, Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 20 December, 2018.

Another important thing is If you think to yourself that you are noting too fast, definitely slow down, if you think that it's too slow, pick it up a notch. I definitely didn't mean for this post to sound like one should try to catch everything, however OP made me suspect like OP maybe wasn't noting enough, it is definitely damaging to be overly focused on speed of noting, not too fast and not too slow.

Noting "knowing" is in general one of the most important Dhammas to note, also when you know it is an apple that you are seeing, not knowing. Whenever there is doubt about the noting, note the doubt as well.¹⁸

Venerable U Sandasiri said that "I felt that this description gave some more information on the process. But from the responses I see that I indeed might have taken the example too far. Maybe I was making the object too much into an object, instead of observing a flow. So there is not just the characteristics of the object, but also how things change."

From the Vism. the terminology is 'general characteristics' (anicca, dukkha, anatta) and specific characteristics (to a particular object) of which the former are of most importance, particularly anicca from which the other two are generally said to be derived. In like manner it is also necessary to come back to the general teaching rather than becoming obsessed with one teacher's methods just as in his training he had a thorough grounding. Knowledge of the general characteristic of impermanence should be developed along the lines of the contemplations on impermanence of the body, including external materiality as laid down in the first foundation of mindfulness. People find this hard because of the emotional connotations of death but it is an essential exercise. The characteristic of impermanence does not become apparent because when rise and fall (birth, maturity, death) are not given attention it is concealed by continuity. Seeing the apple only at it's ripest stage, red, shiny, round, is a perversion driven by the primal unwholesome root of desire; let the apple decay and experience its full life cycle. Organic objects are good for this

¹⁸ Interview with Venerable U Dhammasara, Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 21 December, 2018.

because their life is in a more or less short time frame, but inanimate objects also have a cycle of existence which is to be known¹⁹

4.6 Summary of Interviews:

Mahasi Sayadaw's recorded introduction talk (for new yogis) gives the essential instructions, beginning with noticing or observing the primary object of attention in the mindfulness meditation (Satipatthana), namely, the rising and falling of the abdomen.

In terms of scriptural explanation, we are made up of psycho-physical phenomena, which are arising and passing away all the time. A yogi is expected to experience them at the six sense doors through the mindfulness. When a sight is seen, for instance, the eye and the sight are physical phenomena, while the resultant consciousness of seeing is a mental phenomenon. Similarly, with the experiencing with sound, smell, taste, touch and mental objects, and several movements of the body such as folding and stretching of the arms, turning or leaning (inclining) of the body and the taking of steps in walking, Mahasi Sayadaw has instructed that all kinds of happenings should be closely noticed the moment they become obvious to us, with no exception of even trifling incidents.

The primary object of attention, to which the mind should be tethered as it was, is the rising and falling of the abdomen as the yogis breathes during sitting practice. In the absence of any other noticeable object of attention, the yogi should keep on watching or observing it. The mind should also revert to it when a secondary object of attention has been noticed and fallen away. The yogi is expected to report whether he is able to observe the movement of the rising abdomen from the beginning to the end. As he inhales, the abdomen begins to rise somewhat rapidly and goes on rising as he continues to inhale. When the yogi ceases to inhale, the rising movement comes to an end.

¹⁹ Interview Venerable U Sandasiri, Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 28 December, 2018.

When observing the rising movement of the abdomen, the entire movement should be experienced and known. The observing or noticing mind should be focused on the physical process of the rising abdomen through all the successive stages from the beginning to the end. The beginner would not, of course, be able to notice all the stages of the movement but he should strive to be able to do so. He is urged to strive, thus, to ensure serious and sufficient concentration of the mind on the object.

There are two factors involved in this kind of meditative practice. The first is the object of attention. The second is the awareness of it. Only on the basis of these two factors, will the yogi be able to say what he has “seen” or experienced.

Chapter V

Conclusion, Discursion, and Suggestion

5.1 Conclusion

This chapter explains all the topics and sub-topic of Mahasi Sayadaw Vipassana Meditation and Insight Meditation system and technique. The aim of this research is to study the concept of Meditation system of Mahasi Method. In this research a definition of the terms for Vipassana Meditation is examined. Next, an attempt has been made as to assess the significance of terms of Sammāsati (mindfulness) in relation to the realization of the Mahasi's teaching, as followed by two meditation traditions of Samatha and Vipassanā meditation.

5.1.1 The Mahasi Method of Vipassana

The practice of Vipassana or Insight Meditation is the effort made by the meditator to understand correctly the nature of the psycho-physical phenomena taking place in his own body. Physical phenomena are the things or objects which one clearly perceives around one. The whole of one's body that one clearly perceives constitutes a group of material qualities (rupa). Psychical or mental phenomena are acts of consciousness or awareness (nama). These (nama-rupas) are clearly perceived to be happening whenever they are seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched, or thought of. We must make ourselves aware of them 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. But in the beginning of one's practice, one cannot make a note of every one of these happenings. One should, therefore, begin with noting those happenings which are conspicuous and easily perceivable.

With every act of breathing, the abdomen rises and falls, which movement is always evident. This is the material quality known as vayodhatu (the element of motion). One should begin by noting this movement, which may be done by the mind intently 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 vipassana 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.

Four Foundation of Mindfulness is the central teaching for the Insight Meditation. The four foundation of Mindfulness is Body, feelings, mind and reality as taught by the Buddha in the Maha-satipatthāna Sutta, the sutta also considers the practice of four foundation of mindfulness as the direct path to Nibbāna and freedom from suffering.

5.1.2 The Effectiveness of Mahasi Method

The vipassana meditation technique taught by Mahasi Sayadaw is characterized by the meditator anchoring his attention on the rising and falling sensations of the abdomen, making that the primary point of observation.

The reason for this is that the rising and falling of the abdomen is always present making that a suitable place for observing the transient and impermanent nature of phenomena. The breath rises and falls all the time. In the same way all phenomena both physical and mental rise and fall incessantly. Having an anchor serves as a way for the mind to not get lost.

In beginning of meditation practice the mind is like a little child always running out to the objects and getting lost. Having an anchor means that the meditator can always come back to the abdomen if things get too intense meaning if e.g. feelings or thoughts get too intense when observing them.

The meditator then carefully observes the five aggregates, i.e. form, feeling, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. One does not interact with the objects of meditation. One simply observes them. One does not have to do anything. One only has to be a witness.

The second part of the technique which is specific to the Mahasi Sayadaw method is "noting". Noting can also be understood as "naming or labelling" of the object that are currently being observed. It can also mean to "remind" oneself of the current object being observed so that the mind will not stray or follow after the object, identifying with it and getting lost.

When one notes an object its important that the mind is sent out to the object. When observing the rising of the abdomen, the meditator simply notes "rising, rising" while attention is pointed at the abdomen and not the mental word in the mind. When the abdomen is falling one simply notes "falling, falling" again while keeping attention on the abdomen at all time. This ensures that the meditator sees the object for what it is - an arisen phenomenon - so that the mind will stay in place and not follow after the object. The meditator is only interested in observing the bare phenomena - ultimate reality only. If one hears a sound one notes "hearing, hearing" and thereby ensuring that one observes only the ultimate reality of the object, i.e. the phenomena of sound. If one sees e.g. a tree one notes "seeing, seeing" thereby keeping the attention on the ultimate reality of the object which in this case is the phenomena of visible light.

Similarly, when thoughts arise one notes "thinking, thinking". If anger arises one notes "angry, angry" or "anger, anger". One does not need to make long complicated words or sentences. A simple word is enough. If pain arises in the body due to e.g. long meditation sessions one notes "pain, pain". If heat arises in the body

one notes "heat, heat" or "warm, warm". One can note the phenomena a couple of times and then return to the rising and falling of the abdomen.

So to sum up the technique. The meditator sits in a comfortable position and anchors the attention on the rising and falling sensations of the abdomen noting "rising, rising" or "falling, falling". When other phenomena arise e.g. thoughts, feelings, sounds, sights, volitions etc. then one notes accordingly to the arisen phenomena. If there is e.g. both a loud sound arising and a strong itchy feeling on the nose, then one chooses the object that is most dominant and notes that. In the beginning of practice, the meditator can limit the observation to only e.g. the form aggregate. With practice the meditator can note more and more phenomena.

The reason for observing and noting the aggregates of clinging is so that the meditator can develop insight into how reality functions, i.e. the 3 signs of existence; annica, dukkha and anatta. By observing and noting phenomena the meditator comes to see that phenomena are impermanent. They arise and cease without any control. One sees that phenomena are uncontrollable and ungovernable. Then one sees that phenomena are unsatisfactory and oppressing. When that is truly realized one comes to realize anatta, i.e. that phenomena have no inner core, no self. Realizing the signs of existence ultimately leads to realizing Nibbana.

5.1.3 The Influence on the Society

Born in Seikkam, Upper Burma, in 1904, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw (1904- 1982) is highly revered as one of the great Theravada Buddhist meditation monks of his age, whose influence stretched well beyond the borders of Myanmar (Burma) into Asia and the western world. Emphasizing the practical element of insight meditation, sayadaw's teaching provided techniques for everyday practitioners to use in their pursuit of enlightenment. Following his death in 1982, Sayadaw's teaching continues to inspire generations of Buddhist practitioners.

Sayadw was enrolled at the local monastery at the age of six and was initiated as a young novice at the age of 12, at which stage he was given the name Shin Sobana. At age 19, he elected to become ordained within the priestly Order,

devoting himself to the study of Theravada texts, passing the rigorous government examinations required of all Buddhist monks. Excelling in the study of scriptures, he became known in 1941 as Mahasi Sayadaw, teaching vipassa(insight) meditation at the monastery in Seikkham, concentrating his efforts on combining scriptural knowledge with the teaching of meditation practice. In accordance with the teaching of the Buddha, sayadaw believed that for any teaching to be effective, it must be put into practice. If a teaching proved to be beneficial, then it should be accepted, and if not , it should be discarded. The Mahasi wrote a comprehensive and widely circulated manual that dynamically combined both doctrinal and practical aspects of meditation.

Following the independence of Myanmar in 1948, Sayadaw was invited to Rangoon to become the guardian of Myanmar's largest lay meditation center, the Mahasi Thathana Yeihka. This center was established to help revitalize the wisdom of the Buddha's teaching in order to help purify the state and society from moral decline. Within the center, monks serve as teachers and guides to the laity, who come to actively practice insight meditation techniques. The impact of the Mahasi Thathana Yeithka was such that within a few years, similar meditation centers were opened across Burma, and subsequently in other Theravada Buddhist countries including Thailand and Sri Lanka. Centers have now been established around the world, including India, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the United States. In recognition of his considerable spiritual attainments, distinguished scholarship and teaching, Sayadaw was awarded the prestigious title of "Exalted Wise One".

The Sixth World Buddhist Council, held in Burma between 1954 and 1956, was organized to promote the Buddha's teaching and practices according to the Theravada tradition, and had the goal of harmonizing the Scriptures and erasing discrepancies that had appeared within Buddhist texts over time. Within the council, Sayadaw played a preeminent role and served as the final editor in the process of interpreting and revising key passages of scripture.

The teaching of Sayadaw can be found within the extensive range of written publications in Burmese, as well as publications in English, including 'Practical

Meditation Insight’ and ‘the Process of Insight’. The legacy of Sayadaw’s contribution to Buddhism, and in particular to the teaching of practical meditation technique, continues to have an impact around the world. Insight meditation, a technique in which the participant concentrates on the rising and falling of the abdomen during the breathing cycle while acknowledge the changes taking place within the mind and body, allows the participant to journey through the steps towards enlightenment.

That such a path could be taken not only by monks but everyday persons had a dramatic influence within the realm of Theravada Buddhism, generating waves of interest in the practice of insight meditation at the Mahasi Thathana Yeithka center.

5.2 Discursion

The Uniqueness of Insight Meditation lies in its ability to give rise to the Insight into the condition existence and see things as they really are; impermanent, devoid of self, and suffering. It helps to rid of wrong views and gives rise to Insight. The practioner undergoes several stages before he or she fully gains liberation from suffering, firstly, he or she goes through the struggling stage in which the practioner has to struggle a lot to stay with meditation, after a while he experiences sailing state in which the meditation gets easier and finally take off stage in which the meditator really begins see the energy flow quite natural in meditation and he also experiences peace and calm, mind becomes more joyful. Four Foundation of Mindfulness is the central teaching for the Insight Meditation. The four foundation of Mindfulness are Body, feelings, mind and reality as taught by the Buddha in the Maha-satipatthāna Sutta, the sutta also considers the practice of four foundation of mindfulness as the direct path to Nibbāna and freedom from suffering. Mahasi Sayadaw is perhaps the most well-known among all the Vipassana teachers in Burma, his teaching on Insight meditation is known as the “New Burmese Method” due to his innovative creative style of teaching Vipassana which differs in some respect from his predecessors. Mahasi Sayadaw was born in peasant family and got ordain as Novice monk very early in his life and higher ordination later on, he also received distinguished honors in his

studies of Pāli, Tipitaka and Abhidhamma, however, it was of his interest in Mahasatipatthana that led him to his teacher Mingun Jetavan Sayadaw, he mastered the practice in very short period and started teaching himself, his fame rouse so high that a wealthy supporter helped him to build Meditation Center in Yangon which become widely known and give inspiration to many more region in Myanmar and neighboring countries to establish the Vipassana Centers such as in Thailand, Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian countries and received many western disciples too. Today, he is the most well-known teacher of Vipassana in Asia as well as in the West with many active centers with many trained teachers to continue the work that Mahasi Sayadaw started.

5.3 Suggestion

In the tradition of Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw, we observe and note everything that comes up, i.e. all mental and physical phenomena. Now, you have pointed out your own hindrance and blockage right here: "Wanting to get results, seeing images or strange stuff". That is your road block. Unless you resolve this matter, it will continue to be a hindrance on your path. Sometimes a meditator may meet a hindrance that is not immediately visible, so it's very good that you know what blocks you.

Then what to do?

As a Mahasi-practitioner, one should note the phenomena of wanting as "wanting, wanting". It could perhaps also fall under the 5th hindrance, Doubt. Here the solution would be to also note the doubt as "doubting, doubting", and to go freshen up on your theory, i.e. the method of practice. A skilled meditator knows the theory that he or she practices. Theory and practice has to go hand in hand. One has to know what to do when hindrances arise, which they will sooner or later for all meditators. When one knows how to deal with them like the inside of one's own pocket, then one can use them to cultivate insights and thereby progress on the path. For reading material, I would suggest the book *How to Meditate: A Beginner's Guide to Peace*, by Ven. Yuttadhammo. It covers all one needs to know regarding the burmese method.

Wanting to get results is one of the greatest pitfalls on the path. Wanting something will ironically stir one further away from getting what one wants. By for example wanting to win Nibbana, one is actually moving further away from that goal, because the wanting itself becomes a road block on the path.

It might also be beneficial for you to read up on the 10 paramitas, namely the 8th paramita, i.e. the Adhitthana-paramita. Adhitthana means "Determination or Resolution". It can be cultivated in the meditation practice, e.g. by choosing to meditate for one hour and not moving at all. This is just an example. There are many other ways to cultivate this paramita. It's very useful in the training of the mind, so that it will stray less. When the Buddha attained his enlightenment, Mara sent his beautiful daughters to the Buddha to tempt him and he sent an army of demons towards the Buddha but he did not move at all. That is an example of Adhitthana.

What practices can aid (or not ruin) the mahasi style meditation?

Regarding the augmentation of your practice, the burmese method is complete in itself. Wanting to augment the practice, should again be noted as "wanting, wanting". Mixing methods is called "Eclecticism" and it's not recommended. Try to stay with one method of practice and if that does not work out, then choose another method of practice. Mixing methods will not give good results since methods are often not designed to be mixed. This will result in one having a halfway house and not a final vehicle.

Sharpen your aim by making sure that the mind is attentive to the entirety of each process. Be aware from the very beginning of all sensations involved in the rising. Maintain a steady attention through the middle and the end of the rising. Then be aware of the sensations of the falling movement of the abdomen from the beginning, through the middle, and to the very end of the falling.

Although we describe the rising and falling as having a beginning, middle and end, this is only in order to show that your awareness should be continuous and thorough. We don't intend you to break these processes into three segments. You should try to be aware of each of these movements from beginning to end as one complete process, as a whole. Do

not peer at the sensations with an over-focused mind, specifically looking to discover how the abdominal movement begins or ends.

Meditators comprehend, not intellectually or by reasoning but quite intuitively, that a process such as lifting is composed of distinct mental and material phenomena occurring together, as a pair. The physical sensations, which are material, are linked with, but different from, the awareness, which is mental.

We begin to see a whole succession of mental events and physical sensations, and to appreciate the conditionality that relates mind and matter. We see with the greatest freshness and immediacy that mind causes matter, as when our intention to lift the foot initiates the physical sensations of movement, and we see that matter causes mind, as when a physical sensation of strong heat generates a wish to move our walking meditation into a shady spot. The insight into cause and effect can take a great variety of forms. When it arises, though, our life seems far more simple to us than ever before. Our life is no more than a chain of mental and physical causes and effects. This is the second insight in the classical progress of insight.

As we develop concentration, we see even more deeply that these phenomena of the lifting process are impermanent and impersonal, appearing and disappearing one by one at fantastic speed. This is the next level of insight, the next aspect of existence that concentrated awareness becomes capable of seeing directly. There is no one behind what is happening; the phenomena arise and pass away as an empty process, according to the law of cause and effect. This illusion of movement and solidity is like a movie. To ordinary perception it seems full of characters and objects, all the semblances of a world. But if we slow the movie down we will see that it is actually composed of separate, static frames of film.

Finally, suggestion shows as the following;

5.3.1. Start Small with 3-5 Minutes (or Less).

Some great new data collected from users of the Lift goal-tracking shows that most beginner meditators started with 3-5 minutes. Even three minutes can feel

like a darn long time when you first start meditating, so you could even start smaller. For example, paying attention to the sensations of taking 3 breaths.

5.3.2. Understand what meditation can do for you if you have issues with stress, anxiety, irritability, or overthinking.

Meditation is a great way to increase your resilience to stress. If you have anxiety, it will help reduce your general tendency towards physiological over arousal and calm your nervous system.

5.3.3. Understand the Principles of Meditation.

Beginning meditators often think the goal of meditation is to get to the point that they can focus without becoming distracted.

5.3.4. Do Meditation Your Own Way

Most of my clients don't like meditation mp3s. They usually report finding them too "new age." Since walking helps people concentrate and reduces distractibility, a meditation that involves walking can be a great place to start.

5.3.5. Reduce All-or-Nothing Thinking

Realistically, there are only a small amount of people who will be willing to meditate on a regular basis.

Another approach is to do formal daily practice of meditation (such as the walking meditation) for an initial period, and then start just incorporating meditation into your day in informal ways.

Due to the limitation of the scope and the objectives one cannot dwell on many of the study topics that otherwise requires great deal of attention. Here are few of the topics that may be worth further research.

1. Practice "Teflon" consciousness, observing consciousness, being the fair witness, awareness without an object, the neutral compassionate watcher of thoughts.

2. Learn to be your own meditation guide. Practice leading yourself in a guided meditation. This helps focus the purpose of your meditation and invests you in its creation and fulfillment.

3. If possible create a sacred place, even it is very small in your home which is used just for meditation.

4. Be aware of the benefits of your meditation at the end of the session, noticing how you feel, physically, mentally and emotionally

5. Remember meditation is as much about refinement of consciousness as it is expansion of consciousness.

Bibliography

1. Primary Sources

- Anguttara Nikaya. **Chattha Sangayana**, CD-Rom version 4, Vipassana Research Institute, 1999. Trans Bukkhu Bodhi. Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2012.
- Bhikkhu Piyananda. **Why Meditation? Gems of Buddhist Wisdom**. Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1993.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu (trs). **Numerical Discourses of the Buddha, a Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya**. Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2012.
- Digha Nikaya. **The Long Discourses of the Buddha**. Trans. Maurice Wlashe. Boston: Wisdom Publication, 1995.
- Hare, E.M. and Woodward, F.L. (trs.). **The Book of Gradual Sayings (Aṅguttara Nikāya)**. vols. I-IV. Oxford: PTS, 1995.
- M. Leon Feer. **Samyutta Nikāya**. vols. I-V. Ed. Oxford: Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1970-1991.
- Mahasi Sayadaw (trs.). **Satipatthana Vipassana**. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1990.
- Maung Tha Noe, (tr.) **Fundamentals of Vipassanā Meditation**. Rangoon: Buddhasasana Nuggaha Organization, 1992.
- Mrs. Rhys Davids, T.W. and Rhys Davids, C.A.F. (trs.). **Dialogues of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)**. Vols. I-III. London: PTS, 1995.
- Mrs. Rhys Davids. **Visudhimagga of Buddhaghosa**. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1975.
- Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu and Bodhi, Bhikkhu. Ed. **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (Majjhima Nikāya)**. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society (BPS), 1995.
- Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu. (trs.). **The Path of Discrimination (Patisambhidhamagga)**. London: PTS, 1982.
- Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu. (trs.). **The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)**. Kandy: PTS, 1991.
- R Morris, Warder (revised). **Anguttara Nikāya**. vol. I. Ed. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1989.

- R Morris. **Anguttara Nikāya**. vol. II. Ed. Oxford: Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995.
- T.W. Rhys Davids and Carpenter. **Dīgha Nikāya**. vol. I-II. Ed. Oxford: Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1982-1995.
- Walshe, Maurice. (trs.). **The Discourses of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)**. Kandy: BPS, 1996.
- Woodward, F.L. (trs.). **The Book of Gradual Sayings (Aṅguttara Nikāya)**. Vols. I-II. Oxford: PTS, 1995.

2. Secondary Sources

(I) Books:

- Bodhidhamma, Bhikkhu. **Vipassana as taught by The Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma**. Rangoon, Burma: Mahasi Meditation, 2013.
- Fronsdal, Gil., **Insight Meditation in the United States: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**. USA, California States: University of California Press, 2017.
- Gil Fronsdal, **Insight Meditation in the United States: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**. USA, California States: University of California Press, 1998.
- Goenka, S. N. **Vipassana Research Institute Founded in the Tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin**. India, Mumbai: The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Press, 2010.
- Mahasi Sayadaw. **Insight Meditation**. Bhikkhu Pesala (ed). Practical Vipassana Meditation Exercise, Rangoon, Burma: Mahasi Meditation Centre, 1997.
- Mahasi Sayadaw. **Practical Insight Meditation Basic Practice**. Rangoon, Burma: Thathana Yeiktha, Mahasi Meditation Center, 1970.
- Nanaponika, Thera. **Heart of Buddhist Meditation: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's way of Mindfulness**. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2005.
- Robert H. Sharf. **Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry**. Department of Psychiatry, Canada: Faculty of Medicine, McGill University press, 2018.
- Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **A Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma**. Tr. By U Ko Lay. The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sāsānānuggaha Organization Mahāsi Translation Committee, December 2013.

Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **Fundamentals of Insight Meditation**. Tr. By Maung Tha Noe. The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sasananuggaha Organisation Mahasi Translation Committee, 2013.

Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. **Satipathana Vipassana**. Tr. By U Pe Thin. The Union of Burma, Rangoon: Buddha Sasananuggaha Organisation Mahasi Translation Committee, 1990.

(II) Electronics:

Gil Fronsdal. “The faces of Buddhism in America”. **Insight Meditation in the United States, Vol5 (1998)**. [Online]. Source: <http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/books-articles/articles/insight-meditation-in-the-united-states-life-liberty-and-the-pursuit-of-happiness/> [21 December, 2018].

Mr. S. N. Goenka. “What is Vipassana?” **Journal of Vipassana Research Institute all Rights Reserved. Vol. 5 (2010): 100-120**. [Online]. Source: <http://www.vridhamma.org/VRI-Introduction>. [21 December, 2018].

(III) Interviews:

Interview with Venerable U Janaka. A teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 12 December 2018.

Interview with Venerable U Kawwida. Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 15 December 2018.

Interview with Venerable U Kaya Sa Wa. Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar. Interview, 20 December 2018.

Interview with Venerable U Dhammasara. Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 21 December 2018.

Interview with U Sandasiri. Senior meditation teacher of Mahasi Sayadaw meditation center of Myanmar, 28 December 2018.

Appendix

Appendix A

Assessors of the Research Questionnaire

12 January 2019

Dear

Asst, Prof, Dr.....

Faculty of Humanities

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Wong Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand.
I am Ven. Tejaniya, a graduate student of Master of Arts Program, major in Linguistics Program, Faculty of Humanities Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Wong Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand. Now I am conducting a research on the topic “A Study of Meditation Teaching Styles of Mahasi Sayadaw Tradition” in partial fulfillment of the Master’s Degree Program.

The main point of data collection will specially be in the box of my research objectives. It is the most important part of the Master’s Degree in English (International Program) before graduation.

There are two main objectives of my thesis as the following:

1. To study the meditation teaching styles of Mahasi Sayadaw tradition.
2. To study the effectiveness of these styles of this tradition.

You are kindly requested to be one of my interviewees. Please do not hesitate to express your valuable opinions the interviews period. Your answer will help me to add my research to be comprehensible data. Your answer will be kept confidential.

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation and kindness for interviews.

Yours Sincerely

Tejaniya

Graduate Student

(MA in Linguistics, MCU)

Appendix B

The Result of Index Objective Congruence (IOC)

The Research Interview

A Study of Meditation Teaching Styles of Mahasi Sayadaw Tradition

Table 1: Show number of Open-ended questions of the interviews which are Meditation teaching techniques.

| Questions Used for Interviewing Teachers at the Mahasi meditation center. | | The Committee of Research Tool Evaluation | | | IOC | Note (if any) |
|---|---|---|----|----|-----|---------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | |
| 1 | What is your view on Meditation teaching techniques? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 2 | How do you maintain your students during teaching meditation? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 3 | What teaching styles do you use to the foreign trainees? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 4 | What is the main part of meditation? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |

Table 2: Show number of Open-ended questions of the interviews which are which are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

| Questions Used for Interviewing Teachers at the Mahasi meditation center. | | The Committee of Research Tool Evaluation | | | IOC | Note (if any) |
|---|---|---|----|----|-----|---------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | |
| 1 | How do you use technique for easily meditation skill? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 2 | How do you use English speaking for non-Myanmar trainees? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 3 | How do you feel to teach in English foreign trainees? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 4 | Do you feel computable to teach in English version? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 5 | Which teaching styles do you usually use for meditation? | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |

.....
 (.....)

Investigator of tool

...../...../.....

Appendix C

Questionnaires for the Research Study

Questionnaires In-Depth Interview

Part 1: General information of the respondents

1. Name..... 2. Surname.....

3. Sex

() male () female

4. Age

() 20-25 years old () 26-30 years old () 31-35years () 36 years old up

5. Level of Education.....

6. Occupation/position.....

7. Work experience.....

8. Status of seeing.....

Part: 2 Open-ended questions which are English teaching techniques

1. What is your view on Meditation teaching techniques?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. What is the main objective of Mahasi meditation teaching styles?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How do you feel about Mahasi meditation method?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. What are Mahasi teaching techniques having an affect on learning skills?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your kindness

Appendix D

The Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC)

| Question | The Committee of Research tool Evaluation | | | IOC | Note (if any) |
|--|---|----|----|-----|---------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | | |
| Questions Used for Interviewing people | | | | | |
| 1 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 2 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 3 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 4 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 5 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 6 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 7 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 8 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 9 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |
| 10 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 1 | useable |

(.....)

Investigator of too

...../...../.....

Biography

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Name | : Ven. Tejaniya |
| Date of Birth | : 4 th October, 1980 |
| Nationality | : Myanmar |
| Present Address | : Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Ayutthaya, Lam Sai, Wang Noi, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, 13170, Thailand. |
| Permanent Address | : Ywar Thar, Sintgu Township, PyinOo Lwin, Mandalay, Myanmar |
| Email | : utejaniya2009@gmail.com |
| Languages Spoken | : Myanmar, English and Thai (a little). |
| Education | : M.A. Student International Program (Linguistics) in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Wang Noi, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Thailand. |
| 2013 - 2017 | : B.A. Bachelor of Arts International Program (Faculty of Buddhism) from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Wang Noi, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Thailand. |
| Other | : Meditation Teacher, Kyunpinmeditation center Sagain Division, Myanmar. |