

Step by Step

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Step-by-Step

Nineteen Essential Dhamma Talks

by Sayadaw U Jotika

Note: The following nineteen talks were delivered by Sayadaw U Jotika in Australia in A.D. 2011. He is a Mogok meditation teacher, and his instructional Dhamma talks were more detailed than others and quite systematic. I hope these talks can give practitioners some useful guidance in their practice.

Talk One: Sitting Meditation — On Ānāpāna Samādhi

To be able to practise in a balanced way, the yogi has to sit in a cross-legged posture. The waist and the body have to be straight. If the body is inclining forward, then the breath will not be full and will not get enough air. The mind will not become clear, leading to torpor and nodding.

Even if the body is not inclining forward, if the head inclines downward, this can also lead to torpor. Therefore, the neck should be straight.

The entrance of the nose is the doorway for the in-breath and out-breath. With mindfulness (*sati*), observe this place. The touching of the air is quite refined and may not be clear at first. To know this, establish and stick *sati* at the entrance of the nostrils. Close your eyes and let the mind observe this place. This is staying with *sati*, breathing in and out naturally.

The nature of the practising yogi's mind is also important. Some people think they have to control and restrict their minds. Therefore, they lose interest and become afraid of suppressing their minds. As a result, they are not keen on practice and have no desire to do it.

(Polluting or defiling the mind is extremely easy, much easier than purifying it.)

Breath meditation (*ānāpāna*) is letting the mind stay with a faultless object. If we do not train it, the mind goes here and there, and then the defiling dhammas of greed, hatred, and delusion arise.

These unwholesome dhammas are burning people, yet they are still looking for faulty objects. *Ānāpāna* is not searching for an object to contemplate; instead, it exists all the time. It is a faultless object that has the nature of peacefulness. Therefore, by practising *ānāpāna*, the mind becomes peaceful and cool.

We have to prepare our minds before the practice. This is the way of noble beings (*ariyas*). By uplifting the mind, joy arises. Stimulating the mind so that it has the desire to practise—these are important points. Now, let us start the practice.

Do not breathe artificially, either the in-breath or the out-breath, and do not use force in breathing. Breathe in a normal, natural way. The only extra task is to keep *sati* at the entrance of the nostrils. Some people breathe forcefully. I do not say that this is wrong, but yogis then need strong effort, and the body must be strong and healthy. Otherwise, within a short period, one becomes tired and falls apart. Do not tense the mind; let it relax.

Note: There are many ways of *ānāpāna-sati bhāvanā*. It is like an art. Yogis have to find a suitable way according to their character and nature; this requires experimentation.

The yogi has to know the touching of the in-breath and out-breath at the nostrils. If one is able to know the refined touch, one will also be able to know the refined mind and body, or at least to discern them. One can then be mindful of them and know their nature.

Mogok Sayadawgyi explained that knowing the in-breath and out-breath means contemplating the touching and the knowing of them. After becoming skilled in touching and knowing, he instructs the yogi to contemplate the wanting mind that breathes in and out.

At the beginning of the practice, attention must be included—for example, knowing “in-breath” and “out-breath” as not-self, and then noting the in-breath and out-breath. After becoming familiar with this, there is no need to name them. If one does not practise in this way, thought objects will come in.

For example, if you do not sit on a chair, someone else will come and sit on it. The heart is like a chair, and other mind states are like guests. Now is not yet the time to contemplate objects from the six sense doors. This stage is still training the mind to become calm.

Except for the in-breath and out-breath, do not pay attention to anything else—such as sounds, pain, aches, and so on.

In this way, one does not get lost in objects. If no external objects come in, one can contemplate without naming. When no hindrances arise, the mind becomes peaceful. In this way, the long and short in-breaths and out-breaths gradually become equal.

If the mind is not calm, it will not be balanced. After sharpening a knife, it is able to cut things. In the same way, insight practice is possible only when there is good *sati*. Otherwise, sometimes one discerns *anicca*, and sometimes one does not. If defilements arise, one cannot easily attain path and fruit.

Therefore, the yogi has to practise *ānāpāna* in the four postures. This is a practice for the whole day.

[Note: Most people think that watching the breath is only for the sitting posture. How to train the mind in daily life is essential for spiritual development. If not, everyone will continue increasing their defilements every day.

According to Sayadawgyi’s teaching, training the mind means knowing the touching of the breath in every posture. Soon Loon Sayadawgyi trained his mind in daily activities by touching and knowing physical sensations. Because of this, his practice developed very quickly.

Many of Ajahn Mun’s disciples use a “Buddho” mantra in their daily practice as an example. Luangta Mahā Boowa also practised in this way. The famous Chinese elder monk Guang Qin (廣欽老和尚) used the Amitābha mantra in his daily practice.]

Talk Two: Sitting Meditation and Consuming Food

Before starting the main practice, one has to carry out some preliminary work (*parikamma*) or duties.

1. **Ask for forgiveness** from the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha), as well as from parents and teachers (from beginningless saṃsāra up to the present). This helps protect *samādhi* from disturbances.
2. **Offer the body** to the Triple Gem and to one's teachers. This reduces excessive concern for the body and prevents disturbances. During sitting meditation, too much concern about the body and frequent changing of posture make it difficult to see *khandha-dukkha*.
3. **Spread goodwill (*mettā*)** to the surroundings and to all beings, for protection and for the sharing of merits. (See the story of the *Mettā Sutta*, *Suttanipāta*, Uragavagga, Sutta No. 8.)
4. **Request meditation instruction** from the Buddha or from one's teachers. With conceit, even if one can discern *anicca*, one cannot see Nibbāna; thus conceit itself can be a hindrance, for example, Venerable Anuruddha. Making requests before a Buddha statue or a spiritual teacher serves as a reminder for yogis to practise with reverence.

With *parikamma*, the mind gains a sense of security, especially in quiet places (for example, deep forests, Dtaw Dum Forest is a good example.) In this way, the mind is not overly concerned with the body and can move straight towards Nibbāna.

Therefore, this duty or preparatory work should be done by every yogi. Practising meditation means enriching oneself with the Dhamma. If one does not do so, one instead nourishes unwholesomeness and latent defilements. The enrichment of greed, hatred, and delusion, together with unskillful actions, leads to the *apāyas*.

Mindfulness (*sati*) is very important for discerning latent defilements (see some examples given by U Sun Lwin in his talks). Indeed, we can say that the beginning of the Dhamma is mindfulness.

Among the forty meditation objects, ānāpāna is the best. *Kasiṇa* objects (usually prepared as visual disks) require preparation. *Asubha* (corpse) meditation can be too demanding. (I once met a Western monk who practised in Sri Lanka with corpses in a cave where human bodies were disposed of; he even took some colour photographs of them.) Ānāpāna, however, can be practised anywhere and acquires more time rather than special conditions. (Without special conditions, yogi gets more time for the practice.)

Some people think that ānāpāna meditation is only related to the Buddha, the *agga-sāvakas*, and the *mahā-sāvakas*.

(For example, Sāriputta, Mahā Kassapa, and others. They also teach people in this way. This is a commentary-based interpretation. The Buddha never taught people impossible things, such as the existence of a Creator or Creation.)

This is a problem of misinterpretation. As a result, some people gave up their practice. (If there are differences, we must follow the suttas.) If we do not try for ourselves, we should not speak blindly.

To teach the *phusa* method for a beginning yogi: *phusa* means touching or contact, the same as *phassa*.

1. Take a posture that you can maintain for a long time.
2. The waist and body should be straight. If the head inclines downward, it leads to torpor; if one leans backward, it leads to agitation or fear, and the body becomes imbalanced.
3. Let the mind watch at the entrance of the nostrils and breathe in a natural way. Observe the touching of the in-breath and out-breath at the nostrils.

If you practise with desire and interest, the practice will develop. At the beginning of the practice, if there is no experience of attention and noting, laziness will arise, leading to nodding, or the mind will move toward external objects. Therefore, practise with faith and confidence—this is an important point. It will lead to success; otherwise, one cannot succeed. Without enjoyment and interest in practice, development cannot occur, and one must change one's state of mind.

Without a vigorous mind, one cannot succeed in worldly matters. The same applies to spiritual endeavour—it requires even more confidence and vigour. When you practise, the power of the mind must be accompanied by confidence

and vigour in order to succeed. Practise with patience and endurance in relation to difficulties, restlessness, and inconveniences.

When you have *sati*, you know the restless mind. Without mindfulness, you do not know what is happening, and this is delusion (*moha*). Pulling the mind back to the object is right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*).

For ordinary people, when they do a good and noble work or task, if they do not succeed three or four times, they usually give up. Noble persons, however, keep trying until they succeed. This is the difference between them. If you try again and again, it becomes right effort. In this way, *sati* and *viriya* repeatedly pull the mind back to the object, and after some time the mind will settle down.

How can something precious be achieved easily? You have to try many times—this is the meaning of *bhāvanā* (cultivation). To make a good knife, heating the iron and striking it only once is impossible. In Dhamma practice, it is even more difficult. Do not give up. Keep pulling the mind back to the nostrils. Do not lose mindfulness; otherwise, it will lead to nodding.

Many people do not know the nature of breathing from birth until death. To die without *sati* is delusion—*moha* or *avijjā*—which leads to *saṅkhāra*. Practise *ānāpāna* with effort in the four postures: sitting, walking, standing, and lying down. Train continuously until you are able to do it naturally.

Some people find it easier in studies and good memories due to their strong ability to concentrate. This is the power of *sati* and *samādhi*. In the Mahāsi system, the mind is concentrated at the abdomen; in the Saya Thet system at the middle of the head. (This is not for *samādhi* but for *vipassanā* cotemplation after *samādhi* has been established through *ānāpāna*.) Although the objects may differ—abdomen, middle of the head, and so on—they all occur within oneself and are known directly, not through thinking. Seeing them in the present moment and knowing them as they are is *ñāṇa* (knowledge). All of these are contemplations of the four great elements.

The benefits of *ānāpāna* are as follows:

1. It leads to knowing the nature of mind and body.
2. The in-breath and out-breath always exist, so mindfulness can continue without interruption. (This can be regarded as one of the results of the We-bu system.)

3. It occurs internally, not externally, enabling deeper understanding of the internal nature of the *khandhas*.
4. It has no occupational hazard and can be practised anywhere and at any time.

For example, consider *Buddhānussati*—contemplation of the qualities of the Buddha. Would someone practise that in a toilet? *Ānāpāna*, however, can be practised anywhere without limitation.

[Note: Realization of the Dhamma can happen at any time and in any place. For example, The-in Gu Sayadaw became an *anāgāmī* while relieving himself in a bamboo thicket. Even in a toilet, it can be a suitable place to contemplate *asubha*, loathsomeness, decay, and related themes. A true yogi should always keep a contemplative object in mind and not allow defilements to enter.

In some of his talks, We-bu Sayadawgyi mentioned the following: “Have you ever been mindful of the in-breath and out-breath for twenty-four hours without a break? If you can, you will know its result.”]

If the mind has stiffness, or if a lot of saliva comes into the mouth, this is not good for *samādhi* practise. With continuous practice, the in-breath and out-breath become very refined and may even seem as if they have stopped, that is, they become unclear. There is no need to be afraid or frightened, and there is no need to search for the breath. One should not breathe strongly in order to make it clearer.

Simply collect the mind at the entrance of the nostrils and observe. For example, if a train station has only one entrance, you only need to wait for the guests at that entrance.

Some people experience gooseflesh during *ānāpāna* practice. Do not follow these experiences; let the mind remain only at the entrance of the nostrils. Rapture (*pīti*) can pull the yogi away from the object. If rapture is not followed, *samādhi* will gradually become stable. Do not let the mind chase after these experiences; simply ignore them.

Sometimes the body experiences sensations like a shower of coolness. This is similar to grinding rice paddy: we are not concerned with the husks, only with the white grains. If yogis do not care about rapture and happiness, *samādhi* becomes

stronger, and rapture and happiness will naturally increase. If one experiences them often, one becomes accustomed to them.

When the mind can be collected at one place, its power becomes stronger. Later, when practising insight, this power can be used to contemplate seeing, hearing, and other phenomena.

Contemplation During the Consuming of Food

(Sayadaw gives instructions on reflection on food before eating. This is taught primarily for monks, but laypeople can also practise it.)

For most people, eating is motivated by enjoyment or beauty. After correcting our mental states and then consuming food, we should reflect that the body is constructed of the four great elements and is supported by conditions: action (*kamma*), mind (*citta*), temperature (*utu*), and nutriment (*āhāra*). This is not “me” and not “mine.”

In eating, there are two main contemplations: chewing and swallowing. Just as in walking one notes lifting, stepping, and placing down the foot, when chewing food one notes “chewing,” and when swallowing, one notes “swallowing.”

If these are noted as the main objects, *sati* does not fall away. One must note them with interest. During eating, put in effort to maintain mindfulness so that *sati* does not slip away. This is the practice of a yogi cultivating mindfulness, or of someone training himself towards Nibbāna.

After swallowing food, the mind may arise with the intention or desire to take more food. Note this as “wanting to take.” Observe the nature of these movements. While chewing, the mouth is moving; after swallowing, it becomes calm. Wanting to take food has the nature of stimulation; taking food has the nature of movement. One must contemplate these processes in order to discern them clearly.

These are the main contemplations related to eating. They must be practised repeatedly and carefully. Only through gradual, step-by-step practice does progress arise—like climbing stairs, one step at a time.

Talk Three: Ānāpāna and *Sati* in Hearing

Insight meditation (*vipassanā*) means practising so that knowing-knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and the reality of the *khandhas* fit together. To understand this point, mindfulness (*sati*) must first be established, and *samādhi* must also be included.

When the in-breath and out-breath enter and touch at the nostrils, beginning yogis should note them as “going in” and “going out.” Now we contemplate reality and knowing together, without letting the mind wander outward.

Sometimes the in-breath is short and the out-breath is long, for example when one sighs; sometimes it is the opposite. At times, the in-breath and out-breath are not equal. Therefore, in the Ānāpānasati practice, the Buddha instructed us to contemplate and know short and long breaths.

Some practitioners contemplate the beginning, the middle, and the end of the breath and note them, but they cannot follow continuously and become tired. To know the beginning, middle, and end means to know the whole breath—from the beginning through the middle to the end. This is knowing the breath exactly as it is, from the start of the in-breath to its end, and from the start of the out-breath to its end.

Only when knowing and reality fit together precisely does the mind not go outward, because it is carefully attending to what is actually happening.

Sayadawgyi often instructed practitioners to practise ānāpāna for fifteen or twenty minutes at the beginning of sitting meditation.

[This was mentioned in many of his daily talks for general listeners. For those practising under his direct guidance at the centre, the instructions might differ. (See Sayadaw’s short biography by U Kyaw Thein, who practised under his guidance at the centre; Sayadaw instructed him to develop *samādhi* through ānāpāna until it became stable.)]

Even for those who have already discerned *anicca* at the beginning of sitting, *samādhi* must still be established.

This is a general principle at other times but not at near death, there is no need to do *samādhi*, because there is no time for it. (In many scriptures, when the Buddha visited monks who were ill or dying, he always taught them *vipassanā*

(insight meditation). At times of good health and in ordinary circumstances, however, people should calm the mind and purify it from the hindrances.

It is like a knife: after sharpening it, one can cut things. Even if one has already discerned phenomena before, after re-establishing *samādhi* one can discern more clearly than before. If the mind moves away, pull it back to the object. If you bind a wild bull to a post, at first it will struggle, but after some time it will calm down. In the same way, with unshakable resolution and effort, *sati* becomes stable and the mind calms down; thus *sati* and *virīya* develop into *samādhi*.

At the beginning of practice, even the touching of the in-breath and out-breath is not clear. With practice it becomes clearer, and with further development it becomes very refined. Some yogis then think that they are no longer breathing, as if the breath has stopped. Wanting to make it clear again, some breathe strongly. This is like going upward and then coming down again. Yogis should not do this.

When refinement occurs, yogis must have strong *sati* and not become confused. With strong *sati*, *samādhi* also increases. When the breath becomes refined, one should not search for it. The air will naturally appear again at the entrance of the nostrils, where the yogi watches with strong mindfulness. When it appears again, it may arise as a mental sign, like a wisp of smoke or a bar.

Some yogis play with this mental image, moving it in and out of the body; others simply let it remain at the entrance of the nostrils. Playing with the sign externally involves sending it out about an arm's length, increasing the distance step by step, and then drawing it back again. (See the Kanni ānāpāna system or the teachings of Mye-zin Sayadaw.)

What happens when practising in this way? Interestingly, it dispels sloth and torpor. (The Kanni system is not intended solely for this purpose; it also increases *saddhā*—confidence in the Dhamma—and supports *samādhi* and insight.) It strengthens *virīya-magga* and supports effort, leaving no room for sloth and torpor.

Some practitioners direct the breath internally from the nostrils to the chest and abdomen, feeling the tension of the in-breath and out-breath and the gradual reduction of that tension. This increases the power of *sati*. Others play with the *samādhi-nimitta* (mental sign); in such cases, the mind moves and *samādhi* declines.

Therefore, yogis have to pay close attention at the entrance of the nostrils, just as when cutting a log with a saw one concentrates only on the cutting point. This quickly leads the mind to one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). This is the correct way to work with mental signs (*nimitta*).

When a yogi becomes dull or does not experience pleasure in *bhāvanā*, it can be helpful to work skillfully with the sign. (This is also mentioned by a Thai Ajahn who developed the skeleton sign.) However, if one wishes to develop strong *sati*, one should keep the attention internal. For *samādhi*, the sign should remain at the entrance of the nostrils.

Jhānic factors may arise quickly for some practitioners who have perfected their practice over many lives. With stable *samādhi*, the mind becomes calm and peaceful, and rapture (*pīti*) may arise like a shower. At this point, the yogi should not follow rapture, but continue watching only at the nostrils. Rapture is indeed wholesome, but it can pull the mind away and deceive the yogi. Only by not following it does *samādhi* improve.

According to the *Ānāpānasati Sutta*, if one practises the sixteen stages, rapture arises many times—this is the gradual path. Developing rapture means that rapture arises with both the in-breath and the out-breath. Some practitioners experience rapture only when breathing in but not when breathing out. This indicates an incompleteness in *bhāvanā*. The reason is that while breathing in, the mind inclines toward the object, but it does not do so while breathing out. Others experience the reverse.

To avoid this imbalance, do not force the in-breath or the out-breath; simply follow the breath naturally. In this way, gooseflesh and rapture arise with both in-breath and out-breath. If the practice inclines too much to one side, the other side weakens. Therefore, balance is essential.

At this stage, *ānāpāna* practice is like an art. When rapture arises, gooseflesh appears, the nerves open, and the circulation of blood and air becomes smooth.

[In Ajahn Ṭhānissaro's breath meditation, he taught the balancing of breath energy throughout the whole body in order to establish *samādhi*.]

After that stage, there are no aches in the knees or back during contemplation. The yogi takes pleasure in *bhāvanā*. Sometimes rapture (*pīti*) becomes coarse and

the mind no longer inclines toward it. As rapture subsides, pleasure and coolness arise in the mind. This is happiness (*sukha*).

At the beginning of practice, *pīti* and *sukha* arise together, but as practice continues, only *sukha* remains. Sometimes *sukha* arises with the in-breath but not with the out-breath; then one has to balance them. Rapture and happiness can deceive people. Therefore, do not follow them. Instead, collect the mind at the entrance of the nostrils.

Even though pleasure arises through the power of *bhāvanā*, it is important not to take delight in it and lose the object, that is, the breath. This leads to stable *samādhi* at the nostrils.

One has to practise in all four postures. In daily life, during free moments, one can practise *ānāpāna*—for example, while waiting for a bus or riding on a bus. Watching the breath while counting is a skilful use of time.

(Other supports can also be used, such as a mantra (“Buddho”), or simple observation of the breath.)

Counting can be practised as follows: one–one, two–two, three–three, and so on, up to five–five. Then start again from one–one, two–two ... up to six–six, seven–seven, and gradually increase up to ten–ten.

During counting from one–one to ten–ten, if the mind stays with the object, the yogi completes one round. If a mistake is made, one should return to one–one and begin again.

[Note: This way of counting the breath is used in the Kanni system to develop a light *nimitta* (mental sign).]

This method is also suitable when using rosary beads. With more counting rounds, confidence (*saddhā*) increases. In this way, one not only maintains *sati* but also applies careful attention to the object.

Some people use very simple counting, such as one to ten, one to ten. This is easy, but because it is easy, they may not take it seriously. The first method emphasizes keeping the object firmly when the mind tends to move away. Concern about losing the object encourages stronger mindfulness. Although it is more

difficult, it requires greater care with *sati*, and as a result mindfulness becomes stronger.

There are three factors involved in this practice. These are:

1. **Being mindful of the air**—touching and knowing it.
2. **Maintaining awareness of the counting** (for example, one–one, two–two).
3. **Taking care not to miss the rounds of counting** (such as one to six, one to seven, and so on).

This method causes the hindrances to fall away quickly. One has to practise with firm resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*), deciding in advance how many rounds to complete—for example, five hundred rounds or a thousand rounds. This leads to *samādhi* quickly. If a yogi misses a round, they cannot continue that count and must begin again from the start. Therefore, they must be very careful.

To fulfil the resolution (the firm standpoint), one must apply great care and mindfulness. In a short period, this develops *samādhi*.

[Note: Some yogis who have experienced the Kanni system have reported records of this practice, and these seem to support this point.]

If one is skilled in ānāpāna practice, one can use rapture (*pīti*) according to one's intention, directing it to any part of the body. It is like an electric current, opening the channels of nerves, blood, and air, and it can be healing. With the discerning of refined *pīti* and *sukha* as they arise, confidence in the Buddha and Dhamma increases.

However, with ānāpāna alone one cannot withstand all the impacts of worldly objects from the surroundings. To develop endurance, it is still necessary to contemplate whatever arises at the eye, ear, nose, and other sense doors.

Now we turn to contemplation of the hearing mind (hearing consciousness). We cannot endure sounds themselves, nor can we control the hearing mind. Quarrels and conflicts can arise instantly with stick, knife or gun. Through hearing, mental reaction of lust arises and also leads to other pain and sorrow. Therefore, one needs to contemplate the nature of hearing.

Ānāpāna is the stage of establishing mindfulness (*sati*). Contemplating phenomena in turn through the six sense doors is the stage of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

Hearing consciousness arises due to causes. These are sound, the ear, space, and attention. Hearing arises dependent on these four factors. If there is no attention, one does not hear, or the sound is not clear. In an airtight room, one cannot hear sounds; if someone is deaf, there is no hearing. Thus, hearing is a result of conditions.

Therefore, hearing is a phenomenon of cause and effect. It does not happen by itself, nor is it created by a permanent God. It does not exist beforehand.

Sayadawgyi instructed yogis to contemplate where hearing arises—at the ear—and not to follow the sound. If one contemplates by following the sound, one may also discern *anicca*, but *sakkāya-ditṭhi* (personality view) can arise in the mind. The Buddha taught the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* by contemplating both internal and external phenomena; however, before becoming a stream-enterer, yogis should emphasize internal contemplation. When practice matures, there is no problem.

Do not take hearing as “me” or “mine,” and do not frame it as “I hear.” This leads to wrong view based on identity. Instead, do not differentiate sounds as praise or blame; simply note hearing as impermanent (*anicca*), or note it as hearing-consciousness.

With improper attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*), defilements enter the mind. For example, taking pleasure in a woman’s or a man’s voice can give rise to lust (*rāga*). If one cannot stop this, return to the nostrils, and then attend to sounds again in turn. This is training in hearing, not yet insight contemplation; it is an exercise of the ear-door. (It is like studying rather than taking an examination.)

When hearing arises, note it until it stops, and after it stops, return to the in-breath and out-breath. The yogi should not try to stop the sound. If one does not know what to do, delusion enters the mind. Sometimes yogis even anticipate sounds to arise, especially music or attractive voices. Here I am correcting common mistakes that often occur among practitioners. This stage is training in mindfulness.

[Note: We should read a sutta in the *Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta* and contemplate how we use the six sense doors in daily life in the modern world. This is Sutta No. 235 (The Exposition on Burning). From this, we can understand why so many problems and so much suffering arise continuously—from the family level to the international level.]

Talk Four: *Sati* on Seeing and Hearing, with Eating

According to the exhortation (*ovāda*) of Sayadawgyi, the beginning of *vipassanā* starts from *ānāpāna*. At the beginning of sitting meditation, one practises *ānāpāna* for fifteen or twenty minutes. When the hindrances are absent, the mind becomes purified. Otherwise, the mind is overwhelmed by *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*, and it is not easy to practise insight for a long time. If the mind becomes clear, calm, and happy, one can practise for longer. Do not tense the mind or practise with excessive force; practise with confidence.

Contemplating the rising and falling of the abdomen (the Mahāsi system) does not mean “seeing” the abdomen. It means knowing the pressure and movement of the air. In the same way, *ānāpāna* is not about seeing the air coming in and out, but about knowing the touching and the knowing at the entrance of the nostrils. If one contemplates at the top of the head, one knows movements, sensations, warmth, and coolness. Wherever one contemplates, the main point is training the mind to have stable *sati*.

With experience, one comes to know the desire-to-breathe mind. This moment is very brief and, at the beginning, is not easy to contemplate. Therefore, one should collect the mind at the entrance of the nostrils, where the touching is clearer and lasts longer.

When *sati* becomes strong, one can begin to contemplate *satipaṭṭhāna*, that is, phenomena arising from the six sense doors. There are three levels: *satipaṭṭhāna*, *satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā*, and the completion of *satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā*.

Now I will speak about the contemplation of seeing consciousness. If one does not contemplate seeing, then from seeing arise affection, clinging, and action—this is the linking of the Dependent Arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) process.

To deal with seeing, it is necessary to know the arising of seeing consciousness. If one does not know its arising, one cannot know its cessation. Therefore, contemplate seeing at the eye. If one does not understand why seeing arises, wrong view and doubt will arise.

Visible form, the eye (a blind or closed eye cannot see), light, and attention (*manasikāra*)—these are the four conditions for seeing to arise. Seeing does not exist beforehand; it does not arise by itself, nor is it created by a permanent God. It arises now due to conditions. When one discerns these causes, contemplation becomes knowledge of conditions relating to mind and matter. If one does not repeatedly reflect in this way during contemplation, doubt will arise again and again. This is why Mogok Sayadawgyi taught yogis to clear away wrong view and doubt before developing insight.

Taking seeing as “seeing someone” becomes an external identity view; taking it as “I am seeing” becomes an internal identity view. Instead, take seeing with right attention, simply as seeing consciousness. If one interprets seeing in many ways—as man, woman, or object—greed, anger, and delusion arise, and lust may follow. Even people of very different ages can become couples over many lives because of this process.

If one cannot stop at seeing, then return to the in-breath and out-breath; in this way, thoughts cannot arise. This makes it easier to contemplate vanishing phenomena, as defilements do not enter. Most thoughts are related to defilements, and only a few are wholesome.

The seeing mind, the in-breathing and out-breathing minds, the hearing mind, and other such states are all objects of *satipaṭṭhāna*. Practise with these objects until one becomes skilled. If one does not know what to contemplate, delusion enters and defilements arise. Therefore, do not search for special objects of contemplation; simply contemplate whatever phenomenon arises.

Greedy and angry are easy to recognize, but the arising of delusion is difficult to know. Even when a yogi does not hear a sound, expecting it to arise is already delusion. In such cases, one should return to contemplating the in-breath and out-breath, which always exist.

Whatever happens, contemplate whatever arises, but no contemplation is affecting the practice—for example, releasing air out from the bottom.

Whoever is able to contemplate whatever arises in the body—wherever they live or stay—will find that contemplation is not difficult, even in a big city. There is no need to run away or search for special places. Objects of contemplation are always present.

(For these reasons, the Mahāsi system is especially suitable for everyday life practice, as it closely follows the detailed structure of the *Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. Mogok Sayadaw also mentioned this important point in some of his talks.)

The main obstacle in practice is delusion or ignorance. Because of delusion, craving (*taṇhā*) arises, leading to greed (*lobha*) and aversion (*dosa*). Therefore, do not take pleasure in *samādhi* based only on the in-breath and out-breath.

There have been many people who suffered because they were unable to contemplate their seeing and hearing.

(We can read many such stories in the suttas and Jātaka tales, and we can also observe this in our surroundings and daily lives.)

Do not let *sati* fall away. This is the main point in practice. Without mindfulness, one cannot discern the arising of phenomena, nor their vanishing.

If *samādhi* becomes excessive, sudden loud sounds may lead to fright. Therefore, *samādhi* and *virīya* must be kept in balance. (Sounds can become a hindrance to the development of *samādhi*.)

Now, regarding the consuming of food, I will explain how to reflect for people who have strong craving for food.

[This teaching refers to the story of parents and their baby boy in the desert, found in the *Āhāra Sutta* of the *Nidāna Saṃyutta*, Sutta No. 63(3), commonly known as the “Son’s Flesh” Sutta.) This is an important sutta that every person should know.

This sutta explains the four kinds of nutriment necessary for the maintenance of beings: edible food, contact (*phassa*), mental volition (*cetanā*), and consciousness.]

The sight of food—its colour, shape, and appearance—can give rise to greed and anger.

[In the *Vessantara Jātaka* (No. 547), Devadatta, in a past life as a brahmin, overeaten food he could not digest and died on the spot. (This illustrates the danger of craving and lack of mindful reflection.)

Some years ago in May-myo City, Upper Burma, a village man killed his wife on the spot at the dining table by striking her head with firewood. This happened because he did not see the chilies dish on the table. Therefore, yogis must contemplate the seeing of food. If attention is given to steaks, chicken meat, and similar objects, wrong view can arise. Making sounds while eating can also give rise to anger—for example, the sounds of spoons, forks, knives, chewing, and so on. Therefore, one must also contemplate sounds when eating with others.]

Talk Five: *Sati* on Smelling, Tasting, and Sensation

In the *Milindapañhā*, the dialogue between King Milinda and Venerable Nāgasena explains that insight is the task of watching and observing the five aggregates (*khandhas*) with direct knowledge (*ñāṇa*). It is like a man watching his own monkey: the yogi must observe whatever arises as if it were a stranger.

Before establishing strong *samādhi*—and after dealing with seeing and hearing—I will now explain smelling consciousness. Smelling arises due to four causes (as explained earlier). If one takes it as “this smell” or “I smell,” identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) arises. One must know it simply as smelling consciousness.

Do not take smells as “fragrant” or “smelly.” Thinking in this way causes greed (*lobha*) or aversion (*dosa*) to arise. This is a matter of view. For example, fermented fish paste is considered pleasant by some because they enjoy its smell, while Westerners may find it offensive. Similarly, durian fruit is loved by some and disliked by others.

When noting smells, do not differentiate them as a woman’s smell (such as perfume or body scent) or a man’s smell, as lust can arise in this way. Contemplate smelling at the nostrils, not at the wrong place (such as imagining the smell as coming from outside). Knowing it as smelling consciousness is correct. When there is no smell, return to the in-breath and out-breath.

Eating consciousness arises due to the tongue, saliva, food, and attention. If attention is given to chicken meat, pork, or other foods, identity view arises in the form “I am eating.” Do not pay attention to good or bad flavours. If one does so, it becomes contemplation of feeling rather than insight.

Note on Tastes and Body Consciousness

Note the tastes of sweet, sour, salty, hot, and so on, simply as eating consciousness.

Now I will talk about body consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇa*). Sometimes it arises together with pleasant feeling or unpleasant feeling. Pain, aches, tiredness,

warmth, coolness, and similar sensations arise in the body. These are bodily consciousnesses.

Body sensitivity (*kāya-pasāda*) also exists in the internal organs, such as the heart, lungs, bones, and so on. It has a wide range, nearly the whole body. During contemplation, do not include the specific place, such as “knee pain” or “back ache,” in your noting. In speech we may mention the place, but in contemplation we should not.

I will explain the difference with an example. If pain arises in the left chest, one may become frightened, thinking of heart disease. In this way, the location becomes identity view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). You must remember that in the contemplation of body consciousness, one should not include the place where it arises, and one should not differentiate it as good or bad.

The mind is strange. In contact with objects—for example, when touching a man or a woman—if attention is given to concepts, lust can arise. Instead, note it simply as body consciousness, and then return to the in-breath and out-breath.

[Note: Concepts deceive people and beings. Because of wrong view and other defilements, humans create many problems and much suffering.]

Some years ago, when I was staying in a forest, I went to see a dentist who was a woman. I had no other choice. I had to contemplate her as *asubha*, unattractive. It was also a very hot season, and when I felt her contact, it was sticky and sweaty. This made the experience feel disgusting.

Monks must be very careful when they go to hospitals or clinics for medical checks. They cannot escape contact with female nurses. Therefore, wise attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) and mindfulness (*sati*) are very important in daily life when dealing with defilements.]

Seeing Consciousness to Body Consciousness

From seeing consciousness to body consciousness, the five kinds of sense consciousness are external and arise only from time to time; these are like guest

minds. In-breathing and out-breathing minds, however, exist all the time; these are the two host minds.

In insight contemplation, an important point regarding body consciousness is that pain may seem extreme and may even be thought of as life-threatening. This is not actually so. It is not truly a strong painful feeling, but rather appears intense because of the power of *samādhi*. It is like seeing bacteria through a microscope.

This also happens due to clinging to self-view.

[Therefore, it is important to dispel wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) beforehand. Sakkāya-diṭṭhi is the most dangerous defilement. It is harmful to humans, and when combined with craving (*taṇhā*), it can lead to many unwholesome actions. With understanding, humans can avoid many problems and much suffering in today's world. (See my translation of *Bhavaṅga Meditation* by Sayadaw U Candimā.)]

The four causes mentioned above have a clear purpose. When the causes cease, the result also ceases. It is “not me,” unstable (*anicca*), and arises due to causes. If you contemplate in this way, you will not suffer much.

The key point here is whether you have right attention or not. Depending on the kind of attention, greed and anger arise. With understanding, contemplate them with right attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*). Do not contemplate by trying to control pain or aches; they will only become worse. Contemplate with a relaxed mind.

Now I will talk about changing postures. Pains and aches arise when sitting for a long period. If this happens, you must change the posture—but not impulsively or without mindfulness of mind and body. First, note the desire of the mind to change. Then follow the movements with careful noting, changing slowly and patiently.

The reason for this is that in the beginning of practice, knowing (*ñāṇa*) is still slow and not sharp enough to follow quick movements. Therefore, one must contemplate movements in detail—moving and stopping, moving and stopping—so that knowing does not fall away. In this way, only then is the posture changed with mindfulness intact.

In all these explanations, contemplation of impermanence (*anicca*) has not yet been included. If you are able to contemplate the arising clearly, knowing becomes sharp, and you will also be able to discern the vanishing.

By following whatever is arising in oneself and observing it carefully, one does not yet see the arising and falling (impermanence, *anicca*). Without knowing the truth of suffering (*dukkha*) yet, one should not force it to happen, as that will disturb the practice.

On the first day, we established mindfulness (*sati*) through *ānāpāna*. We had only one task, and the practice was easy and gentle. Now we contemplate the arising phenomena of the five sense doors. With many notings, the practice becomes more demanding, but knowledge (*ñāṇa*) develops.

Talk Six: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, Bodily Sensation, and the Three Governing Principles (*Adhipati*)

(Here I omit the last of the four *adhipati* and mention only three. This teaching can be found in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book of the Threes, Sutta No. 40(10).)

First, develop *sati* through *ānāpāna*. After that, contemplate whatever arises—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching—as I explained yesterday.

Now I will continue talking about body consciousness. In Mogok Sayadaw’s usage, itching, pleasant sensations, and unpleasant sensations are all body consciousness. Whatever arises in the body should be noted simply as body consciousness. It is not limited to the skin only, but also includes all internal organs and other bodily parts.

There are several important points to remember:

1. **Do not include the location.** For example, when pain or aching arises, note it simply as *body consciousness*, without including the place (e.g., “chest pain”).
2. **Do not contemplate it as a feeling of good or bad.** At this stage, this is not contemplation of *vedanā*; it is contemplation of consciousness only.
3. **Do not pay attention to the object of contact.** For example, if the contact involves a man or a woman, identity view and lust may arise.
4. **Do not think about why it happened.** Instead, contemplate that the result arises due to causes—this is right attention.

Body consciousness arises not only from contact with hard or soft objects, but also from heat and cold. If one discerns warmth and coolness in fine detail (with close, continuous observation), mindfulness (*sati*) becomes powerful.

With careful and continuous knowing, effort is sustained. When the mind does not run away and remains with the object, this is *samādhi*. Knowing these arising phenomena simply as mental phenomena is right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). When combined, this becomes *sati-paññā*. Yogis must contemplate whatever

arises in order to know it clearly. If nothing is arising, return to contemplation of the in-breath and out-breath.

(Sayadaw spoke about the three governing principles; however, the sutta explanation is clearer.)

Contemplate by stripping away clinging to self—for example, understanding: “This is not my breathing.” Do not take pleasure at the nostrils (that is, do not cling to *samādhi*). Contemplate in turn whatever arises from the six sense doors. Even though this practice is difficult, it develops knowledge. It is like studying in school: as the levels progress, the material becomes more difficult, but knowledge increases. At this stage, practice is still at the level of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

Among the six sense doors, contemplation has not yet included the mind door (*mano-dvāra*).

Now I will speak about contemplation during eating. While eating, one must first strip away wrong view; otherwise, one becomes stuck in concepts and identity view. When consuming food, one should have knowledge of paramattha dhamma. If one relates to food through concepts, identity view arises toward external objects. Clinging to the eating mind as “me” becomes *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*, turning inward. During contemplation of eating, one must also be aware of the other sense doors (hearing, smelling, etc.). This spreading-out contemplation is the task of *satipaṭṭhāna* applied to the most distinct objects.

Contemplation of primary objects establishes *sati* (here, *ānāpāna* and the eating mind). To discern the vanishing of phenomena is *satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā*. Without knowing the arising of phenomena, one cannot know their vanishing. Therefore, we develop *satipaṭṭhāna* in order to discern the arising of phenomena.

The contemplation of eating has three main points:

1. Reflect on the purpose of eating food.
2. Strip away wrong view by reflecting on food as elements (*dhātu*).
3. Contemplate during the actual process of eating.

Talk Seven: Sāriputta’s Instruction on Mind Consciousness

Insight contemplation as taught by Venerable Sāriputta is expressed as:

“Kāyaṃ imaṃ sammasatha, parijānātha punappunaṃ;
Kāye sabhāvaṃ disvāna, dukkhassantaṃ karissatha.”

Here, *khandha* (body) does not refer to the physical body as a fixed form or shape. Rather, it refers to phenomena that arise due to causes—for example, hearing consciousness, which arises dependent on conditions. This is *viññāṇakkhandha*, arising in the present moment.

(Sayadaw explains mind and body in terms of concept and reality.) True contemplation is contemplation of paramattha *khandha* (ultimate reality). If we examine the whole world of existence, it consists only of mind and body. One must watch and observe the *khandhas* with *sati* and *paññā*. Whether pleasant or unpleasant feeling (*sukha* or *dukkha*) arises, one watches and observes. Insight knowledge does not stop or destroy phenomena.

If we expand the analysis, mind and body are understood as:

- the **five aggregates (khandhas)**,
- the **six sense bases (āyatanas)**, which become twelve when including their objects,
- and the **eighteen elements (dhātus)**.

With mindfulness, one knows the arising. By knowing with wisdom (*paññā*) the arising of phenomena as merely *khandhas*, clinging to self falls away. In this way, personality view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) gradually disappears.

Do not confuse this with book knowledge. Knowledge learned from others is *anubodha-ñāṇa*. Knowledge that arises directly from practice is *paṭivedha-ñāṇa*—direct knowing of the nature of mind and body. Phenomena vanish immediately after arising; they are impermanent (*anicca*).

Momentary discernment of seeing, hearing, and other sense processes cannot immediately destroy clinging, because we have been clinging throughout countless

rounds of existence. Therefore, we must contemplate repeatedly, many times, to develop insight knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*).

This contemplation should be practiced in all four postures. With sustained contemplation, one begins to see dissolution. Externally, the body may appear unchanged, but internally it feels empty, filled with continual dissolutions.

At last, with the development of knowledge, one discerns the truth of *dukkha* and no longer wants it. With no desire for it, that knowledge leads to cessation. (Here he is explaining a verse of Venerable Sāriputta.)

Now I will talk about thinking minds (thoughts) and how to contemplate them. If you are unable to note them specifically as *lobha* mind, *dosa* mind, and so on, simply note them as “thinking mind” or “thought.”

Mogok Sayadaw explains that if one discerns change, one is seeing dissolution. Change (*vipariṇāma*) does not mean “the same.” In ordinary usage, people say something has “changed” when it becomes sick (in Burmese, this word can also mean “going wrong”). But in reality, changing from one state to another is already change—for example, when flowers fall, that is change. When a tree flowers, people tend to think of it as development, not change, yet the nature of phenomena is always changing. This constant change reveals the unsatisfactory characteristic (*dukkha-lakkhaṇa*).

[Note: This point is extremely important for human beings to contemplate thoroughly. Because of delusion, we create many problems and much suffering through sensual pleasures based on self-view, greed, and anger.]

Non-delusion (*amoha*) is contemplative knowledge. At an immature stage, when this knowledge becomes stronger, it can itself become an object—for example, after discerning dissolution, a yogi may think, “This too is in the state of dissolution.” At that point, the yogi must contemplate the thought and the subsequent mind. (Explained many kinds of thoughts.)

Thoughts are not disturbances to insight practice; they also become objects (for example, *ehi-passiko*—“come and see”). In *samatha* practice, thoughts are hindrances, but in insight practice they are objects. One should contemplate their arising and observe that they are not of a permanent nature.

For example, in the in-breath and out-breath, contemplate the two endings. Observe the small gaps where the breath stops. Knowing that the breath is not existing at that moment is knowing its vanishing. During the immature stage, one knows this in a coarse way; as practice matures, the yogi discerns dissolution in many parts along the in-breath and out-breath.

If one becomes skillful, one can also catch the desiring mind that wants to breathe in and breathe out. In the beginning, this is difficult because the process is very refined.

Therefore, at times Sayadawgyi taught yogis to know the in-breath and out-breath, and at other times to know the desiring mind that wants to breathe in and breathe out.

Now I am explaining how to catch the dissolution of the in-breath and out-breath. These are *host minds*, whereas the *guest minds* are the impermanent phenomena (*anicca*) that arise and pass away. Tomorrow I will explain how to contemplate their dissolutions.

(He then gives a lecture on eating.) Contemplation of the eating mind is a costly contemplation because it involves money and preparation, whereas seeing, hearing, and so on do not. Moreover, eating does not occur frequently; it only happens while consuming food. Therefore, one contemplates eating only during the act itself, in order to discern its arising and falling.

Talk Eight: Observing Anicca from the Six Sense Doors

Sayadawgyi says that looking at one's own death is insight. Kammic death—the end of a life—cannot be seen. But *now* there is knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of death, so one can see one's own death in the present.

For example, you can now discern with knowledge that a speaking sound, after being heard, no longer exists. If one truly dies, one cannot see it. When many deaths converge together, this becomes what is called the Great Death.

If you want to be freed from the Great Death, you must make effort to be freed from the small deaths, that is, from *anicca*. These words have profound meaning and correspond to the Dependent Arising (D.A.) process.

To see and discern these small deaths requires effort, mindfulness (*sati*), and contemplation with wisdom (*paññā*). After seeing the small deaths, one will see Nibbāna, which is freedom from the Great Death.

The Buddha taught that *ānāpāna* has sixteen stages. It is suitable for people practising in forests and mountains. After establishing *samādhi*, and as *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* (self-identity view) falls away, one should then contemplate whatever arises at the six sense doors—seeing, hearing, and so forth—as they occur.

After *samādhi* becomes more refined, observe seeing, hearing, and other phenomena in terms of their non-sameness, noting them in detail. If the noting mind becomes so close that it is no longer able to note them as “seeing,” “hearing,” and so on, then at that time simply continue with knowing only.

How far must one contemplate in *satipaṭṭhāna*—that is, contemplation of arising phenomena? One must contemplate until the *khandhas* disappear in one's knowledge. Some people think that only the lower body or upper body disappears, but this is not correct. Before the compactness (*ghana*) of the body disappears, the contemplative mind experiences wide gaps. Therefore, yogis still know the existence of the body.

It is like two rows of fences or trees in a garden: when they are far apart, you can see through to the other side; when they are too close together, you cannot see through them.

In the same way, there is no time to attend to individual arising phenomena, because the yogi sees the mind series one by one, continuously, in rapid succession. For example, with knee pain: before, the concept of “knee” seemed clearly present. Now, one cannot attend to it in that way—the knee seems to have disappeared. People sitting nearby may still see the knee, but in the yogi’s mind it has disappeared. (This is similar to the nature of *jhāna*, but occurring in a different dimension.)

Some may think they are floating in the air. Yogis should not take this as real, nor should they open their eyes to check or touch the floor with their hands.

The yogi contemplates form (*rūpa*) by seeing one’s own forms (not the external world), and contemplates mind by seeing one’s own minds. At that time, *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* (self-identity view) falls away. However, this level is still within *satipaṭṭhāna*.

One must then climb to *bhāvanā* (*satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā*). At this stage, phenomena are not seen as “me,” but only as minds arising in series. This is the state of a small stream-enterer (*cūḷa-sotāpanna*)—the discernment of mind and matter conditionally. If one discerns this directly, one will never forget this view.

Therefore, such a yogi will not fall into woeful existences (*apāyas*) for one or two lives. This knowledge does not come from books or from others. It comes from direct practice, by using the *khandhas* themselves and by establishing *sati* and *samādhi*.

Let us continue to observe the mind series—whether it is stable or not.

Before, we took these *khandhas* as “my *khandhas*.” Now, clinging to self falls away, and there is only seeing phenomena as *khandhas*. Yesterday, I taught the contemplation of the rising and falling of the in-breath and out-breath. When this becomes mature, one sees the rising and falling of the minds that desire to breathe.

Regarding painful feelings, one must observe that pains are not the same in every moment. If pain appears continuous and lasts for a long time, it can become unbearable and one may abandon the practice. Only by discerning non-sameness can one see the rising and falling (*anicca*).

Talk Nine: The Four Satipaṭṭhānas

There is also an interpretation of contemplation of dhamma (dhammānupassanā) as contemplation without differentiation between mind and matter, simply contemplating the arising phenomena. Here, “dhamma” means all phenomena.

(He explains the four satipaṭṭhānas and their relationship to human character.) Sayadawgyi taught that a yogi may contemplate any one of the four satipaṭṭhānas, according to one’s preference and temperament. In some of his talks, Mogok Sayadaw said that if a yogi discerns anicca quickly, then any satipaṭṭhāna object suitable to that yogi’s character may be used. The object one prefers often has the strength of collectedness.

First, establish sati with ānāpāna. After that, contemplate whatever arises from the six sense doors. Then contemplate the rising and falling of the in-breath and out-breath. Today, contemplate the rising and falling of all dhammas.

According to the teaching (*desanā*), three sub-moments are mentioned: arising, presence, and dissolution. However, because dissolution happens extremely quickly, yogis usually discern only arising and dissolution. If you are watching and observing non-sameness, you will discern dissolution.

When contemplating painful feelings, unbearable pain indicates clinging to self. During eating, what is difficult to contemplate is thinking (as explained earlier in the detailed discussion on eating).

Talk Ten: On Insight Knowledges

(Sayadaw explains the verse composed by Mogok Sayadawgyi.)

This verse appears in a sutta that explains the five factors for realization: strong faith, good health, practice with a straight-forward mind, diligent practice, and discernment of anicca.

One must have confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, and also confidence in kamma and its results. One should avoid unskillful actions (unwholesome and harmful deeds) and cultivate skillful actions—such as dāna, sīla, and cāga—which greatly support samādhi.

I would like to mention how Sayadawgyi himself practiced at his place. During periods of practice, whoever came to see him, he would not receive them. He followed a very disciplined routine.

(Some disciples mentioned that Sayadawgyi never used a clock, yet whatever he did according to his timetable was always very accurate.)

Do not try to make arising and dissolution happen by yourself. If samādhi has strength, the inclination of the mind can shape experience according to desire—for example, wanting rapture to arise. This should not be done.

[Here, I would like to present U Sun Lwin's experience when he was practicing at U Ba Khin Meditation Centre. Practicing ānāpānasati, on the third day he reached upacāra samādhi; the five jhānic factors arose, and all his bodily pains disappeared. It was August, during a season of heavy rain. He did not bring an umbrella.

The yogi's dwelling (Dhammasālā) and the eating place were about 100 yards apart. He decided to make an experiment. At that time, he was in a strong samādhi state and made an assertion of truth (*sacca-kiriya*): "I did not bring an umbrella. May this truth cause the rain to stop for a while." Instantly, the rain stopped. He ran to his cell, and after arriving, the rain began again.

At first, he thought it might be coincidence, but for ten days, it happened repeatedly—each time he made the assertion of truth.]

You must contemplate these experiences as a stranger, without identification. In the initial stage, the yogi discerns both arising and dissolution. (With the development of *ñāṇa*, insight knowledge deepens progressively.)

There is no attention to arising; instead, attention rests only on dissolution, seeing it clearly. This is the knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga ñāṇa*). Pain and ache exist only as *sabhāva* phenomena, known merely as momentary events, like brief flashes.

At first, bodily form is still perceived; later, only the nature of dissolution remains. The mind no longer goes out toward objects of form. As dissolutions become more frequent, fear may arise, and phenomena are perceived as dangerous—this is the knowledge of fearfulness (*bhaya ñāṇa*). Seeing dissolution clearly is knowing the essenceless nature of things.

Later, one becomes weary of the dissolutions. Some people mistakenly take this weariness to be toward external objects or family members. In reality, it is weariness toward phenomena arising from the six sense doors. If the weariness is directed toward external objects, that indicates sticking and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). One must be weary only of *paramattha* objects; otherwise, one remains trapped in concepts.

The yogi sees dissolutions in all situations—whether getting up from sitting, changing posture, or opening the eyes. Why does this happen? Because the arising process becomes shorter, and dissolution is seen more clearly. If one clings to arising or becomes frightened by it, the process appears longer.

When *kilesas* are fewer, the mind becomes drier and non-clinging, seeing dissolution within a short period. Upon reaching the stage where the arising process narrows, this becomes the knowledge of disenchantment (*nibbidā ñāṇa*), with variegated objects of contemplation.

This leads to *nibbidā ñāṇa*. If *paññā* declines, this knowledge can fall back. It is therefore referred to as contemplation of variegated objects arising from the six sense doors. If the objects are incomplete or not clearly variegated, happiness may lead to *lobha*, pain to *dosa*, and insight knowledge declines.

Thus, one must fear arising and passing away (*anicca*)—not pain itself. This is the proper use of variegated contemplative objects in insight practice.

Some people misunderstand the knowledge of rise and fall (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*) as merely seeing the short gaps between arising and dissolution. In truth, this knowledge knows dissolution in an inclusive way. It is like raindrops falling continuously.

In the knowledge of dissolution, discernment appears section by section, very clearly. At the beginning, phenomena may be seen as being in a confused or crumbling state, because knowledge is not yet sharp enough and cannot follow the rapidity of dissolutions. This is not yet the stage of narrowing down *anicca*. With weak knowledge, dissolution is seen only in a vague or chaotic manner.

When weariness toward conditioned mind and body arises, knowledge matures and the yogi begins to see dissolution distinctly (as described above). These two points are important, because some yogis mistakenly take this immature knowledge to be mature realization. When knowledge develops further, dissolutions are seen clearly, section by section, without doubt.

At that point, observing only dissolution becomes *nibbidā ñāṇa* (knowledge of disenchantment) together with *muñcitukamyatā ñāṇa* (knowledge of desire for deliverance).

What is the significance of this? Even when the yogi's eyes are open, *anicca* is seen at any time and in any posture—except during sleep. In the yogi's mind, it is like a person whose body is encircled by fire. Therefore, a strong desire for deliverance of the mind arises.

Talk Eleven: On Insight Knowledges

Beginning yogis, and yogis whose sati and samādhi are not yet strong, need to contemplate with the perception of noting (as in the Mahāsi system). When sati and samādhi become well established, one can contemplate directly the arising objects without verbal noting.

However, with refined objects and insufficient mindfulness, the yogi may slip into torpor. Therefore, it is important to contemplate whatever phenomena arise, not only defilements such as greed (*lobha*) and anger (*dosa*). Contemplating refined objects incorrectly leads to wrong view and delusion. For example, merely hearing a sound without contemplation becomes wrong view; not contemplating it becomes delusion.

At the knowledge of rise and fall, anicca is known in an inclusive way. When dissolutions are seen clearly in sections, this is bhaṅga ñāṇa. It is no longer like the earlier crumbling or collapsing experience—such as sesame seeds bursting in a hot pan (as explained previously in Talk Ten).

When the vanishing is seen clearly, the arising again also becomes clear. In this way, one is freed from uccheda-diṭṭhi (the view of annihilation). Even at the stage of knowledge of disenchantment, one is still seeing only anicca. However, the arising process becomes increasingly narrowed, and anicca becomes clearer.

The yogi must continue to put forth effort in all four postures, and the desire for deliverance of the mind will naturally arise. Whether the eyes are closed or open, the yogi continually sees anicca; it feels as though he is encircled by fire. A strong desire arises to see the place where dukkha ceases.

Previously, seeing anicca felt pleasurable and even thrilling. Now, there is no desire for it. Instead, there is a wish to be freed from anicca itself. A change in knowledge is a change in the nature of the mind. In reality, the entire process of knowledge is itself anicca.

Mogok Sayadaw repeatedly warned practitioners not to take pleasure in these experiences, because attachment to them can block realization. Whatever is occurring here is still only anicca and still dukkha; path knowledge has not yet

arisen. Insight can still fall back at this stage—for example, when one stops practicing due to weariness or discouragement.

Therefore, the yogi must apply continuous effort, like a person rubbing two pieces of bamboo together until fire appears.

Talk Twelve: Knowledge of Equanimity and Jhāna

(Recounting the teaching on ānāpānasati)

In the beginning, it is helpful to practice with the eyes closed. Once one knows how to do it properly, practice with open eyes is also possible. If ānāpāna is practiced correctly, it can lead to insight; otherwise, it may end in samatha practice alone. This point was also emphasized by Mye Zin Sayadaw in his explanation of developing the light nimitta.

If one focuses only on the light nimitta, it leads to samatha. However, if the yogi contemplates sensations—such as warmth and coolness at the nostrils, or the movements of the abdomen—the rising and falling of the abdomen is contemplation of the four elements.

Ānāpāna arises continuously, and the khandhas likewise rise and fall continuously; they share the same nature. To take ānāpāna as “*my contemplation*” is a form of wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). This is because sati, viriya, and samādhi are not possessed by one individual alone; they are universal qualities that arise according to conditions.

If practice collapses through clinging to self, this is truly a tragedy. However, a yogi can resume practice if *diṭṭhi* has already been stripped away prior to the development of knowledge. In this regard, the Mogok Dhamma talks are particularly helpful.

Each time the in-breath exists, there is arising; when it no longer exists, there is vanishing. The same applies to the out-breath. There is no need to label or name it—knowing it is sufficient.

If no object arises from the six sense doors, the yogi should contemplate the rising and falling of the in- and out-breaths; otherwise, the practice will revert to samatha.

There are two modes of contemplation:

1. Contemplating objects arising from the six sense doors, relying on sati.
2. Relying on samādhi, by attentively collecting and stabilizing the mind on an object.

Some ask whether, when pain is present and a sound is heard, one should turn to contemplate the sound instead. The answer is yes, if hearing is more distinctive

at that moment. This is not a matter of searching for an object. When there is no pain, but hearing arises, contemplation naturally occurs in the present moment.

Collected contemplation with samādhi power means, for example, contemplating pain at the painful spot until it falls away, without turning toward other objects that may arise. This requires strong sati and viriya, and great care: one must not contemplate with the desire for the pain to disappear. Otherwise, kilesa will intrude.

When samādhi is collected upon non-sameness objects—that is, changing phenomena such as pain—the yogi discerns their rising and falling. Pain does not arise as a single mass, but as a series of aching blips, moment by moment. At first, anicca is seen only inclusively, not yet with sharp distinction.

As ñāṇa develops, the yogi begins to see dissolutions clearly and precisely, and insight becomes far clearer than before. (This continues into the subsequent stages of insight knowledge.)

At the time when desire for deliverance arises, the arisings begin to appear similar in nature. Rising and falling seem equal; pain appears as “one, two,” thoughts as “one, two,” and so forth. Here, each arising phenomenon clearly displays the process of arising and vanishing.

Previously, contemplation required time, but now the life span of anicca becomes equalized. Some people mistake a comfortable or stable sitting posture for the knowledge of equanimity, but this is incorrect. A good sitting posture is not equanimity. Equanimity consists solely in knowing arising and vanishing.

At this stage, arisings are short, even, and uniform, appearing section by section, closely following one another. “Closer rising and falling” does not mean knowing phenomena vaguely or inclusively, as some yogis assume. That indistinct knowing belongs to immature knowledge.

When knowledge is immature, many saṅkhāra dhammas arise simultaneously, and the yogi does not know which object to contemplate, leading to confusion. When knowledge becomes sharp, the yogi can contemplate precisely and without confusion. This calm, balanced contemplation is equanimity.

Equanimity means contemplating without making choices. It is also equanimity to experience phenomena without judging them as good or bad. These are the strengths of equanimity.

To give an analogy: if fresh paint is applied over paint that has not yet dried, the surface will not appear clear. In the same way, at the beginning, defilements have not yet thinned, so insight is not clear. As the kilesas thin out, the yogi sees all phenomena as having the same nature, clear and without distinctions.

This stage differs from the knowledge of disenchantment. There, rising and falling are equal, but the field of contemplation is broader, and thoughts can still arise between objects, similar to what occurs in the jhāna process.

At this time, gooseflesh may arise, and happiness may also appear. With each contemplation, the mind feels cool and refreshed. If such factors arise at this stage, they are to be understood as factors of enlightenment, not as corruptions of insight.

These are not the same kinds of rapture (pīti) as those experienced at the beginning when seeing anicca. In the early stage, before clear discernment, a glossy or bright appearance of anicca may arise and lead to rapture. Now, however, rapture arises from discerning the truth of dukkha. This rapture is born from contemplation of truth, not from delight in appearance.

These raptures also need to be contemplated. Depending on which bojjhaṅga (factor of enlightenment) is predominant, different types of jhāna may arise. For example, one must know them correctly as Path knowledge (magga) together with the corresponding jhāna levels—first jhāna, second jhāna, and so on.

When Path knowledge arises, rapture and first jhāna arise together (conascent). With continued effort and repeated moments of pīti, higher jhānas may arise. For this type of yogi, if the mind inclines toward pīti, it can arise at any time.

However, there is an important distinction:

- **Samatha pīti** arises only in relation to a single object.
- **Vipassanā pīti** arises through all **six sense doors**.

Whatever arises at the six sense doors, when it is contemplated correctly, vipassanā pīti arises. Therefore, vipassanā jhāna is more stable.

(Some forest monks and scholars believe that only samatha has jhāna and therefore doubt the commentaries, but this view is incomplete.)

Talk Thirteen: Dealing with Some Problems

After practising for many years, or when tiredness arises, a yogi may become lazy or weary of practice. These are manifestations of kilesa-māra, the corruption of defilements. When a practitioner becomes well known, gains followers, or receives offerings (lābha), many forms of kilesa-māra may arise and obstruct practice.

When knowledge is sharp, refinement of the mind develops, and the yogi may begin to see objects of desire—such as people or beings. One should not follow them, but instead contemplate them. The yogi may also hear sounds or voices. This happens because anicca is not being seen clearly at that moment.

Therefore, one should not fall into hesitation or uncertainty, should not think about them, and should not be afraid of fearful appearances. Whatever arises must be contemplated. Whether it seems right or wrong, one should simply watch and observe it.

With sati and ñāṇa, all phenomena arise and dissolve. If mindfulness is lost and the yogi stops following phenomena closely, obstructions affect the anicca process, and insight knowledge declines. Therefore, without continuous mindfulness, sustained practice, and perseverance, insight cannot be maintained.

Note. In the Burmese tradition, meditation practice always begins with the preliminary duties (see Talk Two). This is because, through long saṃsāra, there are unseen beings and accumulated kamma, and as a result obstructions and disturbances may arise during practice—most often during samatha.

There are accounts of such incidents, for example during long periods of solitude, as described by Ven. U Ādiccaramsī in *Eighteen Days in Solitude*. Therefore, the tradition emphasizes **four protective meditations**:

1. **Buddhānussati** (recollection of the Buddha)
2. **Mettā-bhāvanā** (loving-kindness)
3. **Maraṇānussati** (contemplation of death)

4. **Asubha meditation** (contemplation of the unattractiveness or loathsomeness of the body)

The Kanni meditation system places strong emphasis on these protective practices.

Sometimes, due to the power of samādhi, light may appear, objects may be seen, or even knowledge of past lives may arise. If these experiences are taken as strange or extraordinary, ignorance increases, and thoughts proliferate. (See Sayadaw U Candimā's own account of practice in *The Noble Search*.) Any worldly attainments are unworthy of clinging. Therefore, Sayadawgyi consistently emphasizes listening to Dhamma talks first, and only then practising.

All these experiences occur due to the sharpening of knowledge. Whatever refined objects arise—with the sole exception of Nibbāna—the yogi must contemplate their impermanent nature.

When there is over-effort, samādhi is not strong enough to clearly discern anicca. Knowledge and thought may arise together. For example, one hears a sound, contemplates it, and then a thought follows. These thoughts must also be contemplated.

As one approaches realization of the Dhamma, it is essential to contemplate whatever arises. At the crucial stage of the knowledge of disenchantment (nibbidā ñāṇa), the yogi must continue practising without getting up or stopping the practice until Path knowledge (magga ñāṇa) arises.

If one gets up from the seat at this stage, it is very difficult to regain that level of knowledge. Even if it can be regained, one may need to practise again for a month, a year, or even an entire lifetime.

Yogis must remember that when defilements become thinner, this is precisely the time when they must turn away from them in the direction of freedom and liberation. If defilements are taken lightly, they will instead oppress the yogi even more.

At the time when many instances of anicca are being seen, this is not seeing with the physical eyes. Paramattha dhammas cannot be seen visually in this way. If something is seen visually—such as images of skeletons or corpses—then these are samatha objects, not vipassanā dhammas.

At the stage of the knowledge of disenchantment (*nibbidā ñāṇa*), both bodily and verbal behaviours change. *Sīla* becomes firmly established, and there arises a strong wish to be liberated from *dukkha* (or *anicca*). This longing for liberation is known as *muñcitukamyatā ñāṇa* (knowledge of desire for deliverance).

At this stage, the lifespan of *anicca* becomes uniform and can no longer be contemplated by naming phenomena (such as *vedanā*, mind, etc.). The process is too rapid for conceptual differentiation.

This level can be described as *dhammānupassanā*. The Sayadaw illustrated this using the simile of the elephant's footprint: whatever arises is contemplated at the same level. This is known as equanimity—phenomena can be contemplated calmly, without effort. At the same time, the contemplative knowledge (*ñāṇa*) itself becomes equanimous. Prior to this stage, discernment of *anicca* may still be accompanied by joy.

Sayadawgyi explained that Path knowledge arises at the heart-base. The mind also contemplates at this point. It is like sitting at the centre of a spider's web. Before this, the yogi has to contemplate phenomena according to where they arise—eye-base, ear-base, and so on—so the mind is still moving. At this stage, however, the mind becomes steady and unmoving.

There are two modes of instruction:

1. The teacher gives only the foundational guidance, and the student practises independently. Only when problems or difficulties arise does the student approach the teacher for clarification and advice.
2. The teacher gives complete and detailed instruction on the entire practice, as exemplified in Mogok Sayadaw's Dhamma talks.

This was also the case in the Buddha's time.

Regarding contemplation during eating, some practitioners experience strong craving related to taste. In such cases, one should first apply the perception of repulsiveness with respect to nutriment before eating (as described in the *Visuddhimagga*). After some reflection, and while eating, one then practises *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation.

(Here, the Mahāsi system is particularly effective, as it leads the yogi to become disenchanted with eating and food through direct insight.)

For those who are not greedy for taste, eating can be carried out with satipaṭṭhāna contemplation. In some practitioners, however, the perception of repulsiveness becomes so strong that food appears disgusting, and they are unable to eat due to the arising of aversion.

Note. In some Thai forest monasteries, monks are allowed to eat for only fifteen minutes. As a result, they must eat quickly and cannot enjoy the taste. There are many valid ways of contemplating food and taste from the standpoint of the Dhamma, depending on one's skill and disposition. For example, one may apply the Four Truths of dukkha, particularly saṅkhāra-dukkha, which is a broad and penetrating contemplation that can lead to deep dispassion toward craving.

From experience with the Mahāsi system, careful mindfulness while eating—observing each movement and sensation in detail—leads the yogi to become genuinely weary of eating and food. Any sensual pleasure exists only between two moments of saṅkhāra-dukkha. Thus, every assāda (gratification) is always surrounded by ādīnava (danger). The pleasure is extremely brief when compared with the danger.

Talk Fourteen: Walking Meditation

In walking meditation, walking itself is the host object. The primary objects are the movements involved in stepping and placing the foot down. The Buddha explained walking meditation by dividing it into six parts, although some traditions contemplate it in three parts: lifting, stepping, and putting down.

The yogi must walk with sati, discerning the nature of lifting, stepping, and placing the foot down through continuous noting. Although the labels used in noting are conceptual, what must be discerned is the ultimate nature of each movement:

- In **lifting**, one discerns **lightness**
- In **stepping**, one discerns **movement**
- In **putting down**, one discerns **heaviness** and **touching the ground**

During walking meditation, these three characteristics—lightness, movement, and touch—serve as the **host primary objects**.

If, for some reason, the yogi is unable to note all three parts—such as in daily life—then noting only stepping and placing down is acceptable. Attempting to note all three parts while moving in worldly situations may be difficult and even unsafe. The essential point is not the number of labels, but whether sati is present and continuous, and whether mindfulness is not lost.

At the end of the walking path, if one wishes to stop, one should note the intention to stop before stopping.

Stopping and Turning in Walking Meditation

When stopping, note “stopping” and contemplate its nature as calming down. At the end of the walking path, the sequence is as follows: wanting to stop → stopping. After that, note wanting to turn → turning, and feel directly the nature of movement involved.

Then continue with lifting, stepping, and putting down the foot. For elderly practitioners, it is sufficient to note stepping and putting down. The hands should be placed in front of the abdomen, with the right palm resting on the left. The eyes should be restrained, not wandering here and there, as careless looking will disturb samādhi.

Note on the Thai Forest Tradition

The Thai forest tradition places strong emphasis on walking meditation. Ajahn Mun himself and his disciples practiced many hours of alternating walking and sitting. He taught proper posture and walking practice, as recorded in the forest Dhamma talks of Luangta Mahā Bua. Ajahn Mun also emphasized that what he taught was the same as in the Buddha's time.

Two Ways of Mindfulness in Daily Activities

There are two approaches to mindfulness in movements and activities of daily life:

1. **Slow, deliberate movements**, emphasized in the Mahāsi system. These may appear awkward to some, but they are extremely effective for developing detailed mindfulness, especially when one is alone. When mindfulness is applied carefully, slow movements allow clear discernment.
2. **Natural mindfulness**, appropriate when one is with others—such as during alms round or communal activities.

Mindfulness has a natural beauty. Some enlightened monks embodied this beauty naturally in their deportment, such as Bassein Migadhayone Sayadaw U Sumanācāra (1832–1921).

Talk Fifteen: Walking Meditation and Observing Sensations

(Walking meditation and its benefits)

Walking meditation supports a stable samādhi. The walking path should be no shorter than ten paces. A very short path with frequent turning is not suitable, as it can create restlessness. On the other hand, it should not exceed sixty arm-lengths; an excessively long path is also unsuitable. The Thai forest tradition often recommends around thirty paces.

The path should be even, with a width of about two arm-lengths.

Samādhi in Walking Meditation

(Experiential aspects of walking meditation)

When placing the foot down, it may feel as if the foot is sinking into the earth. Compared with sitting meditation, walking involves less mental proliferation. Therefore, it is generally not necessary to apply detailed verbal labels in walking meditation.

In sitting meditation, detailed noting is more useful to prevent sloth and torpor. In walking meditation, however, no need to note in detail with naming, because the existing and knowing mind may not be occurred together. Therefore contemplate only to know its nature, because the process happens faster.

Refinement of Contemplation in Walking Meditation

Therefore, one should contemplate only to know the nature of phenomena. When samādhi becomes stable, one may then contemplate in greater detail, such as in lifting, stepping, and putting down the foot.

Talk Sixteen: Walking — Observing Movements and Mental States

During walking meditation, the head should not be inclined too low. The eyes should rest naturally at a distance of about six feet (approximately two arm-lengths) ahead. One observes the process of changing while walking.

If seeing, hearing, or thinking (thoughts) arise, these too must be contemplated. As for how long a yogi should walk, this must be decided by oneself, according to one's condition.

As samādhi develops, the yogi forgets the surroundings; the mind becomes absorbed in the contemplative object and may become unaware of time. This may be one reason why some Thai Ajahns were able to walk for many hours on the walking path.

At this stage, I am instructing you not yet to contemplate anicca. Practice is still within satipaṭṭhāna at the initial level, primarily for the purpose of developing samādhi.

Talk Seventeen: Walking — Observing Anicca

I have been speaking about walking practice for four days now. Walking samādhi is generally weaker than sitting samādhi because of continuous movement.

At first, one should contemplate change (vipariṇāma) among different objects. For example:

- **Stepping** is movement,
- **Putting down the foot** is contact.

Their natures are different, not the same. This discernment of difference is called change—also understood as the arising of a new phenomenon, not a transformation into something permanent or soul-like (which does not exist).

Mogok Sayadawgyi said that only by discerning change—not sameness—can one see dissolution.

In the beginning, samādhi is weak, so the yogi does not yet contemplate anicca directly. Instead, one contemplates the arising of different phenomena. Later, as practice matures, the yogi will discern anicca itself, that is, dissolution.

On Observing Whatever Arises

(Here the teacher again emphasizes that whatever arises must be observed.)

After clearly seeing arising phenomena, it becomes easier to discern dissolution (vanishing). Therefore, when samādhi is still weak, especially in walking meditation, one should first discern change.

In the beginning, yogis are instructed to use noting (naming) for two main reasons:

1. They do not yet know how to practise, and
2. They may become lazy in practice without guidance.

Noting and Knowing Are Not the Same

Noting (or perception) and **knowing** are not the same.

- **Noting** is giving a **name or concept** to an experience, such as “seeing,” “hearing,” or “thinking.”
- **Knowing** is direct **confirmation or penetration** of the phenomenon in another way.

Concepts and discernment (*paññatti* and *paññā*) indicate that **samatha and vipassanā are not the same practice.**

(Why are there so many problems and so much suffering in the world? Because human beings become lost in concepts, deceived by their own minds and by defilements (*kilesa*). The mind becomes confused, increasingly defiled, and deteriorates. Yet most people take this condition to be a sign of intelligence.)

Talk Eighteen: Walking — Observing Anicca

In walking meditation, it is often easier to contemplate two points—stepping and putting down the foot—than three points. This makes discernment of anicca more accessible (in comparison with lifting–stepping–putting down).

This is normal walking, which can be practised anywhere. At this stage, one is not yet seeing insight knowledge; rather, both knowledge and objects are still arising together.

During walking, path knowledge can arise. When an object is repeatedly contemplated as anicca, clinging to it gradually falls away. In the same manner, when contemplative knowledge matures, path knowledge arises—that is, when clinging falls away from both the contemplated object and the contemplating mind.

Talk Nineteen: Lying Down — Observing Anicca

(Contemplation on Death and the Unattractive Nature of the Body)

One lies down on the back and undertakes contemplation. Place both hands on the abdomen, one on top of the other. First, contemplate death.

Here the teacher used Mogok Sayadawgyi's verse on death:

“I am sure to die; it is only a matter of time.”

Contemplation on death can be practised by anyone and is highly effective. There are many approaches. Here, I would like to recommend a sutta from the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Book of the Sevens, namely Sutta No. 74 (Araka Sutta) (see Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation).

A person may die at any time, in any place, from any disease, and in any posture.

Sayadaw U Uttama once recounted an incident: an old man came to a monastery in a village. After some time, he went near a fence to urinate and never stood up again. He remained squatting there for a long time. When people became suspicious and went to check, they found that he had already died.

Contemplation on death gives rise to a strong sense of urgency (*saṃvega*), which stimulates effort in practice.

Method of Contemplation While Lying Down

One may contemplate in-breaths and out-breaths, or the movement of air at the abdomen, or whatever bodily phenomena arise.

First, contemplate the in-and-out breath until the mind becomes calm. Then contemplate systematically, step by step, scanning the body from the head down to the feet.

In this way, one directly experiences bodily phenomena (*khandha*), such as:

- warmth and coolness,

- pressure at the point where the head touches the pillow or floor,
- heat and pain arising at the wrists touching the ground,
- heat and pain at the heels.

These areas become distinctive objects for contemplation.

At the beginning of this practice, there are seven primary points of contemplation:

1. In-breath
2. Out-breath
3. Back of the head 4–5. Two wrists 6–7. Two heels. Through observing these points, the yogi learns to discern arising and passing away, leading gradually to insight into anicca.

Contemplation Before Sleep

Every time one goes to sleep, one should begin with contemplation. The reason is that this practice is like discarding everything accumulated throughout the day—all worldly pollution, mental debris, and residual impressions.

These include thoughts connected with greed, anger, and delusion, as well as clinging and actions performed during the day.

Note:

If one reflects on the nature of suffering of becoming from the standpoint of the Dhamma, it may appear depressing. Most human beings engage in many unwholesome actions, and their minds gradually become more defiled and corrupted. Therefore, unless purification is undertaken, one's habitual destinations in saṃsāra tend toward the four woeful states of existence.

Mental States at Bedtime

At bedtime, various mental states and thoughts may arise. These must be washed away through contemplation.

Near sleep, habitual character traits may surface:

- those dominated by **greed**,
- those dominated by **anger**,
- those dominated by **delusion**.

Accordingly, one should apply **suitable contemplations**:

- contemplation of the **unattractive nature of the body (asubha)**,
- cultivation of **goodwill (mettā)**,
- **ānāpāna meditation**,
- and, when appropriate, **contemplation of death** as a supportive practice.

When the body is tired after a long day, it may not be suitable to practise insight immediately. In such cases, one should **first calm the mind** using these supportive meditations.

Resolution Before Sleep

Before falling asleep, the yogi should make a **clear resolution**:

“I will wake up without abandoning the practice.”

On waking, one resumes contemplation without letting it drop. This establishes continuity and forms a habit of practice.

Mogok Sayadawgyi himself instructed yogis to fall asleep and wake up in this way.

Posture for Contemplation Before Sleep

If one wishes to contemplate while lying down, the **reclining posture** is recommended.

- Recline **on the right side** rather than the left. The left side tends to make the heart feel heavy and can induce sleep too quickly, whereas the right side allows for **longer contemplation**.
- The Buddha himself reclined on the **right side**, and he taught monks to do the same.
- One may also lie on the **back**, provided mindfulness is maintained.

The legs should **not touch each other**. If the ankles press together, pain may arise; therefore, they should be **slightly separated**.

Near the Threshold of Sleep

As the mind calms down, supportive meditation gives way naturally to insight contemplation.

Near the point of falling asleep, **mental images (nimitta)**, sounds, or other sense phenomena may appear. Whatever arises at that time **must also be contemplated**, without selection or aversion.

This is the continuation of practice **up to the very edge of sleep**.