

Webu Sayadaw Insight Meditation

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INSIGHT MEDITATION

BY

VENERABLE WEBU
SAYADAW

KYAUKSE, MYANMAR

INTRODUCTION

Venerable Webu Sayadaw (1896-1977) (Ashin Kumara) was one of the most outstanding Myanmar Buddhist meditation masters of the 20th century, and reputed to be an Arahant, i.e., a person who has, in practice, understood the Four Noble truths and attained the end of suffering. Ven. Webu Sayadaw lived in Kyaukse, Mandalay Division, Upper Myanmar, and was greatly honoured and respected by thousands of devotees throughout Myanmar. His monastery was full of innumerable visitors who want to see him and listen to his teachings in the morning, noon and night.

It is not for the people to be content with just visiting and listen to his teaching. Once the Buddha said to Vakkali monk, that it would be futile experience if seeing Buddha in person, and not following his teaching or making practical attempts.

People need to continuously learn, recollect, practice, and cultivate the insight meditation without delay whenever they have time, as instructed by the Venerable Webu Sayadaw and thus, the benefits of visiting him will be achieved.

This practical handbook[1] was written as a guide to practice insight meditation, by explaining clearly in simple language on the techniques provided by the Sayadaw.

BuddhasĔsanaÑ CiraÑ ThiŌŌhatu

The Teaching[2]

on ‘Insight Meditation’ by Webu Sayadaw: A path to be followed

(1) Vipassanā (insight meditation) is to see what really is. It is an observation of real things.

(2) If meditators do not see things as they really are, it is not Vipassanā.

(3) What really is not to be sought elsewhere, it is in one's own body. It is ever present there.

(4) What the reality inside the body is the in-breath and out-breath.

(5) It is the truth that the in-breath and out-breath are ceaselessly present from the birth to death.

(6) The breathing-in and breathing-out exist while working, talking, thinking, walking, sitting, studying, having meal, and even sleeping.

(7) While the process of the breathing in and out is going constantly without any pause, it can only be noticeable by paying special attention. Like the saying - "If we are careless, we cannot even see the big cave around us. If we are observative, we can see a tiny dust particle".

(8) The observation or awareness means that a meditator must notice the touching at the nostrils of the in-breath and out-breath.

(9) ‘Touch’ or ‘Contact’ is the matter (rupa) and ‘knowing’ or ‘awareness’ is the function of mind (nama).

(10) This continuous awareness, understanding and realization of arising (appearance) and passing away (disappearance) of both mind (nama) and matter (rupa) in the body is the Vipassanā meditation.

(11) When the alteration on the nostrils of breathing in and out (appearance and disappearance) is continuously observed, the concentration of insight (Vipassanā-samadhi) develops gradually and becomes stronger after some period of practice. The concentration is more intense when the sensation of off and on observed on the nostrils spread to other parts of the body.

(12) When a process of becoming and cessation in the whole body is observed, (according to pali text; anicca-saṅkhāro, Meghiya, anattasaṅkhāro) the characteristic of impermanence (anicca) is understood well, and then the truth of non-self will be noticed spontaneously. The main work is to observe the touch of air at the nostrils, and while doing so, the meditator will attain the understanding naturally whatever one should understand.

(13) As insight meditation develops, it reaches in realization of path knowledge (magga-nana) and fruition knowledge (phala-nana). This realization is as evident and satisfying as quenching one's thirst with cool water. The realization is made at the present lifetime, noticed by self (sanditthiko).

(14) After attaining the knowledge of path and fruit, the meditator should look back on the way the insight meditation was practiced and return to the practice and progressive realization, in order to rejoice over the attainment of fruition (phala-samapati).

(15) With firm faith and energy, one should observe a constant touch of in- and out-breath. Do not waver. Do it now and the sustained practice would yield high results.

The above fifteen points are the teachings of insight meditation given by Ven. Webu Sayadaw, in a brief.

The following paragraphs provide a simple guide for lay people to make them easy understanding and to practice effortlessly, until the attainment of supramundane path and fruition.

How to meditate?

If one wants to meditate, choose a place to sit peacefully. First, pay respect to the triple gems – Buddha, Dhamma, and SaÑgha –; respected parents and teachers, and then vow ten, or eight, or five precepts as one wishes. Then, share the good wishes and merits with all living beings, guardian gods, and the noble ones including Webu Sayadaw. Please apologize to respectful ones for some disrespectful acts that may have been committed, and say for forgiveness to others who may have done something wrong and criticizing against you. Then, please make a request to the Lord Buddha respectfully for giving and teaching a technique of meditation. It is better to keep in mind as if a request is made to Webu Sayadaw. After that, please practice as follow;

Please start observing the touch of in-breaths and out-breaths on the nostrils. If not, please breathe a little stronger than normal. You will notice the touch appeared and disappeared. You need to keep your mind on the part of nostrils where air passed through. Paying constant attention on every in-breaths and out-breaths, and observe the touch carefully and continuously with mindfulness.

Sometimes, the mind may wander from the place of the touch of in-breaths and out-breaths to another site of the body or even beyond. If such thing happened, keep the mind back on the touched place. The constant touch of every in-breath and out-breath must be

noticed at all time. Thus, the notice of the constant touch is called as a practice of insight meditation (Vipassanā) on mind and matter, which is the ultimate reality.

The act of the constant touch is a tangibility 'matter'. The 'knowing' is the nature of mind. The 'touch' is a materiality aggregate. Pleasant or unpleasant, or neutral feeling, which occurs due to touch, is called as a 'feeling aggregate'. The characteristic of recognition is called as a 'perception aggregate'. Volition, the characteristic of Cetanā, is called as 'mental formation aggregate'. The characteristic of knowing an object is called as 'consciousness aggregate'. Therefore, it is said in the Buddha's text: 'an observing of a constant event - an act of touch is a real practice of insight meditation through which the arising and passing away of mind and matter can be seen'.

Vipassanā

Paṭṭhiṃ Ḍhapetvā aniccādi-kārena vividhaṃ passatīti vipassanā

Translation: (So = A certain one), passti = sees, vividhaṃ = analytically, (nāmarūpaṃ = mind and matter), Ḍhapetvā = except, or excluding, paṭṭhiṃ = designation objects, aniccādi-kārena = through the nature of impermanence and etc., Iti = therefore, vipassanā = is called as 'Vipassanā'.

Meaning: A real vipassanā (insight meditation) is an observation of the arising and passing away of mind and matter (ultimate reality) at the present lifetime.

Therefore, please carefully observe constant touch of in-breaths and out-breaths, without paying attention to anything else.

When the observation of constant touches on in-breaths and out-breaths is practiced more and more intensely, one could observe the arising and passing away of mind and matter at other parts of the body which looks like that of wavelets, raindrops, snows, and needles.

Such acts of touches are a nature of the reality matter. It is better to observe the touch on the nostril when touches are not obvious. More sensations could be observed in other parts of the body, when the power of concentration becomes intense.

When you move your mind to different parts of the body, you may lose the observation of appearance and disappearance. Keep back the concentration on the nostrils and make progressive moves. Even busy people could meditate at least two hours a day, early in the morning or before going to bed, or even wakeful time at night. If someone is free for whole day, they could practice for whole day.

If the meditators

practice willingly and with determined desire, they will find nothing but the arising and passing away in the whole body, from head to toe, inside and outside, without exception of any space in the body. By keeping the mind constantly on 'knowing' the arising and passing away (from nostrils to other parts of the body, there would be no time for thinking about any other things. Within self, the meditator do not see and find the whole body, or anyone of the 32 impure parts of the body such as head, foot, hand, etc.,. Therefore, the wise people says, 'When impermanence is seen, continuity (santati = flow) is not able to lose'. It is also said in the PĒli text,

'Anicca-saĀino, Meghiya, anattasaĀsaĀhĒti'

Translation: Meghiya = Oh Meghiya!, Anicca-saĀino = when the impermanence is seen, anattasaĀsaĀhĒti = the perception of non-self is obvious.

Meaning: When the impermanence is seen, the perception of non-self is also seen naturally. How? Initially, arising and falling, going on according to their own intrinsic nature, are seen through the knowledge of rise and fall (udayabbaya-ĒĀa), so the nature of non-self, insusceptibility to the exercise of mastery, is obvious to the vipassanĒ meditator.

The continuity of rising and falling is more obvious and strong and a meditator, when achieving the knowledge of dissolution (of formations), through which only dissolution can be seen, can find only falling. Therefore, he/she does not see the designation objects. When he/she does not find any physical form of designation in mind, there is nothing of any body parts, 32 kinds of parts of the body (i.e. avoidness of the body).

When mere movement of sensation is seen, a VipassanĒ meditator gets knowledge of non-self and spontaneously realizes that this is neither me, nor my body, nor male, nor female, nor gods, nor any supernatural or supernatural ones, and there is no solid, heap, designations, and any measurements of huge or tiny, short or long, etc. Therefore, Webu Sayadaw said that there is nothing to do, but to observe only the arising and dissolving (appearance and disappearance) spontaneously.

When it is seen nothingness and non-self, there is a question - Why is not there any solid of permanent form? It should be answered, 'because of observation/awareness of instant movement of reality'

"Ultimate Reality is apart from shape."

Sabbepi paramatthadhammanĒma sabbaso saĀhĒnarahitĒ honti.
ŒkĒravikĒrakiriyamattĒ eva aĀmattepi saĀhĒne dissamĒne tasmiĒ vatthusmiĒ
anekĒparamatthadhammĒ honti

Translation: Sabbepi = all, paramatthadhammanĒma = ultimate realities, honti = are, sabbaso = absolutely, saĀhĒnarahitĒ = free from appearance

of form, shape, size, colour etc. ŒkĒravikĒrakiriyamattĒ
 eva = These are just actions of phenomena. DissamĒne = when it is seen, aŌumattepi = the slightest, saŌhĒne =
 appearance of form, shape, size, colour etc., tasmĒn vatthusmiĒ = at the object,
 honti = there are, anekĒparamattha-dhammĒ = numerous
 ultimate realities.

Meaning: Ultimate reality is the just action, so it is voidness or lack
 of the appearance of form, shape, size, colour etc. There is any slightest
 appearance. Therefore, Webu Sayadaw asked for the observance of the "Just
 action" of a constant touch.

As mentioned before,
 when a meditator achieves the knowledge of the dissolution (of formations)
 through which one can see the impermanence of things, he or she has no attachment
 to his or her own body, all properties, spouse, sons and daughters, and
 relatives, and naturally wishes to be free from thirty-one kinds of plains (the
 cycle of birth and death, called SaĒsĒra).

He/she
 would be bored with the world of conditioned things, and always considers -
 “How can I be free from them very quickly?” At the time, he understands that it
 is the best to live by meditating incessantly with diligence. One can get
 guidance from other meditation teachers and good friends and can improve the
 state of gaining insight knowledge and reach the goal. In the PĒli canons, it is said as
 follow:

SammĒ passaĒ nibbindati, nibbindaĒ virajjati, virĒgĒ
 vimuccati, vimuttasmiĒ vimuttamhĒti ŌĒŌaĒ hoti.

Translation: SammĒ passaĒ = When one sees things as they really are, nibbindati = he feels revulsion. NibbindaĒ = Due to
 revulsion, virajjati = greed fades away. VirĒgĒ = Due to fading away (of
 greed), vimuccati = he is
 liberated. VimuttasmiĒ = When
 he is liberated, ŌĒŌaĒ hoti = there
 arises the knowledge, vimuttamhĒti
 = that I am liberated.

Meaning: This is the law of nature for repulsion when one sees the reality
 through insight knowledge. If a meditator works hard on meditation, he/she gets
 the knowledge of Path (magga) and
 Fruit (phala), and is free from the
 woeful plains. If he/she knows the
 liberation, they live happily and peacefully. There is no word to express if he/she
 gets the knowledge of Path and Fruit of Arahat.

“Seeing
 the reality (of things) through insight knowledge” means “the right understanding
 of three characteristics — impermanence (anicca),
 suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anatta) — of mind and matter (Ultimate
 realities). Of the three characteristics, the only
 understanding ‘impermanence’ is very important. When it is understood, suffering
 (dukkha) and non-self (anatta) will be seen spontaneously.

In insight meditation, seeing impermanence
 is the main point.

Visesato pana imasmiÑ ÒÈÓe
aniccalakkhaÓa-dassanamevapadhÈnaÑ tasmiÑ diÓÓheyeva itarÈni kameva diÓÓhÈni
honti (ParamatthadÈpanÈ Sa~gahamahÈÓÈkÈ, page no.441)

Translation: Visesato pana = Especially,
imasmiÑ ÒÈÓe = in the knowledge of
insight, aniccalakkhaÓadassanameva
= only understanding of the characteristic of impermanence, padhÈnaÑ = is the most important.
TasmiÑ diÓÓheyeva = If it is
understood, itarÈni = the
others (two), kameva = in
order, diÓÓhÈni honti = will
be understood.

Meaning: In insight meditation, it is the most important to see
impermanence. If one does, the other characteristics will be seen
spontaneously. Therefore, it is said in PaÓisambhidÈ
text, “Seeing impermanence is suitable step toward Four Paths”.

[so
vata bhikkhave bhikkhu sabbasa~khÈre aniccato samanupassanto anulomikÈya
khantiyÈ samannÈgato bhavissati - Page no.409]

One deserves the
four paths, after impermanence is seen.

Bhikkhave = Monks!, vata = indeed, so bhikkhu
= (when) that monk, anupassanto
= sees, sabbasa~khÈre = all conditioned things, aniccato = as
impermanence, bhavissati = he
will be, samannÈgato = endowed
with, khantiyÈ = the knowledge
of insight, anulomikÈya = which
is suitable for four paths.

Meaning: When impermanence of
conditioned things is seen, one would qualify to get the four kinds of Paths
and Fruits. Of (ten kinds of) insight knowledge,
the knowledge of dissolution is very strong. Therefore, it is called as “Balava-vipassanÈ-ÒÈÓÈ” (Strong-insight-
knowledge).

An insight meditator, who possesses strong insight knowledge, may
get the knowledge of Path and Fruit at any time, anywhere, any position. It
cannot be said, “Impossible to do so”.

Yassa saddhÈ
balavatÈ, vipassanÈ ca ÈraddhÈ, tassa gacchantass tiÓÓhantassa nisÈdantassa
nippajantassa khÈdantassa buÓjantassa maggaphalapaÓivedho nÈma na hotÈti
natthi. (Vibha~ga-aÓÓhakathÈ, page
no.32)

Translation: SaddhÈ = the confidence,
yassa = of such meditator, balavatÈ
= becomes strong, ÈraddhÈ = and practises, vipassanÈ ca
= also insight meditation. Tassa = for him, natthÈti na hoti = there is
no negative effect, magga-phala-paÓivedho

nĒma = on the realization of Paths and Fruits, gacchantass = while he is going, tiĀhantassa = while standing, nisĒdantassa = while sitting, nippajjantassa = while lying down, khĒdantassa = while chewing food, buĀjantassa = while swallowing food.

Meaning: If the knowledge of dissolution is achieved, the practice of insight meditation becomes strong. The meditator has strong confidence, wishes to further practice. While he/she is endowed with such qualities, it should not be thought that this insight meditator may not get the knowledge of Paths and Fruits

If

this knowledge is achieved, the meditator may attain the knowledge of Paths and Fruits while going, standing, sitting, awaking, eating, drinking and no need to fix time, place and posture.

It is urged that the meditator, who has achieved the knowledge of dissolution, and whose insight knowledge has been strong, should further practice with diligence to attain a minimum of first Path and Fruit.

Way to practice: When the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self are seen obviously, after having achieved the strong insight knowledge, it is easy to attain the knowledge of Path and Fruit because the power of meditation is so strong.

If

there is no enough capacity to attain, the power of meditation will fade away and disappear. However, it is necessary to change the posture and to observe again only the arising and passing away incessantly. If doing so, sooner or later the meditator will attain the previous level, strong insight knowledge.

When the strong insight knowledge is attained, one of the three doors — contemplation of the signless, desireless and the void — is reached, and so do the knowledge of reflection and the knowledge of equanimity about formations.

The knowledge of Path and Fruit can be attained immediately after achieving the knowledge of equanimity about formations or after achieving the knowledge of equanimity about formations in several times. However, while the strong insight meditation is succeeded, he/she is sure to attain the first Path and Fruit if the meditator perseveres in meditation.

The attainment of knowledge of Path and Fruit

What is the situation

when the knowledge of Path and Fruit was about to surely attained? The object of Insight meditation is also changeability (changeable) that while meditating from observing obviously and quickly the characteristic of impermanence etc., of the conditioned things to observing an element of unconditioned, signless of formations.

If it is not the rigorous and swift action for observing changing

of the characteristic etc., of conditioned things that turn to weak and slow, and then the object of meditation becomes gentle bit by bit (gradually). After releasing the object, the meditator takes also the object of NibbĒna, which is supramundane, supreme, devoid of worldly objects, and nothingness of arising and passing away.

Thus, Webu Sayadaw described the situation at which one realizes the NibbĒna by achieving the knowledge of Path and Fruit from insight knowledge. He described it as a situation similar to a moment of having cool water at the time of quenching. Another example is like jumping over a channel from one side to another. Many examples could be accessed by reading Visuddhimagga text or the NibbĒna-dĒpanĒ, a book written by Ledi Sayadaw.

There

are four kinds of insight meditators: (i) Sukha-paĀipadĒ, (ii) Dukha-paĀipadĒ, (iii) DandĒbhiĀĀĒ, and (iv) KhippĒ-bhiĀĀĒ. (Vbh.P.344) Sukha-paĀipadĒ meditator is one who may attain easily the knowledge of Path and Fruit through meditation. Dukha-paĀipadĒ persons have to attain the knowledge with struggles. DandĒbhiĀĀĒ is one who can attain it after a long time. KhippĒ-bhiĀĀĒ can attain very quickly.

Thus,

to attain the knowledge easily and happily, or with struggle and difficulties, or quickly, and or slowly is due to the capacity of perfection (pĒramĒ). However, irrespective of these, one should meditate with diligence in order to close the gate of woeful planes.

The

technique of insight meditation explained in this book as as prescribed by Ven Webu Sayadaw, that of ĀpĒna (breathe). The ĀpĒna may be either calm meditation (samatha) or insight meditation (vipassanĒ).

ĀpĒna for
Arahatta-phala

Translation: Tattha = In the ĀpĒna meditation, assĒsapassĒsa-pariggĒhikĒsati = the awareness of in-breaths and out-breaths,
dukkha-saccaĀ = is (included in)
the truth of suffering. Purima-taĀhĒ
= The prior craving, tassĒ
samuĀhĒpikĒ = by which awareness is generated, samudaya-saccaĀ = is (included in) the truth of cause of suffering. Ubhinna-appavatti = Disappearance of both, nirodha-saccaĀ = is the truth of cessation of suffering. Dukkha-parijĒnano = Either full understanding the suffering, samudaya-pajahano = or eradicating the cause of suffering, nirodhĒrammaĀo = having cessation (nibbĒna) as its object, ariyamaggo = is the truth of noble path. EvaĀ = Thus, catusacca-vasena = through the four truths, pĒpuĀĒti = one reaches, nibbutaĀ = to the cessation (of all defilements), ussakkivĒ = by achieving step by step. Iti = Therefore, idaĀ = this (ĀpĒna meditation), niyyĒnamukhaĀ = is the gate of liberation from the cycle of birth and death, ekassa bhikkhuno = for a certain monk (or meditator), abhiniviĀĀhassa = who is convinced (of touch), assĒsa-passĒsa-vasena = through in-breaths and out-breaths, yĒva arahattĒ = until the fruition of Arahantship.

NibbĒna can be seen
through ĒnĒpĒna-sati.

ŒnĒpĒnassati, bhikkhave, bhĒvitĒ bahulĒkatĒ cattĒero satipaĒhĒne
parip|reti. CattĒero satipaĒhĒnĒ bhĒvitĒ bahulĒkatĒ sattabojjha~ge parip|renti.
Sattabojjha~gĒ bhĒvitĒ bahulĒkatĒ vijjĒvimuttiĒ parip|renti. (UparipaĒsa, P.124)

Translation: Bhikkhave = ‘Monks! zĒnĒpĒnassati = if awareness of
in-breaths and out-breaths, bhĒvitĒ
= is developed, bahulĒkatĒ = and much practiced, parip|reti = they perfect, cattĒero satipaĒhĒne = the four
foundations of mindfulness. CattĒero
satipaĒhĒnĒ = If the four foundations of mindfulness, bhĒvitĒ = are developed, bahulĒkatĒ = and much practiced, parip|renti=
they perfect, sattabojjha~ge = the seven
enlightenment factors. Sattabojjha~gĒ
= If the seven enlightenment factors, bhĒvitĒ = are developed, bahulĒkatĒ
= and much practiced, parip|renti
= they perfect, vijjĒvimuttiĒ
= clear vision and deliverance.

Through ĒnĒpĒna, one may become Arahantta at
once

(MajjhimaĒsa
AĒhakathĒ)

Translation: Idha = In the teachings of the Buddha, bhikkhu = a
monk, anuyutto = who develops, ĒnĒpĒnassatiĒ = awareness of
in-breaths and out-breaths, pĒpuĒti
= may perfect, arahattaĒ = the Arahantship, khetvĒ = having
eradicated, sabbĒsave = all
defilements, nisinnova = and
sitting, ekĒsane = at only place. TathĒ asakkonto = If he is
unable to do this, maraĒakĒle = when he is about to pass away, hoti
= has to become, samasĒ = a kind of arahanta called ‘SamasĒ’.
Asakkonto = If he is unable to do
this, nibbattivĒ = having been born, devaloke = at the world of Deva (gods), sutvĒ
= and having heard, dhammaĒ = the
Dhamma, dhammakathikadevaputtassa = by Dhamma-preacher god, pĒpuĒti
= may attain, arahattaĒ = Arahantship.
Tato viraddho = If it is missed,
anuppane buddhuppĒde = and if
there is no Enlightened-one (Buddha), sacchikaroti = he may attain,
paccekabodhiĒ = the ‘Individual Enlightenment’. TaĒ asacchikaronto = If
it is not so, hoti = he may be, khippĒbhiĒ = one who posses a
swift direct-knowledge, sammukhĒbhĒve = at the present, buddhĒnaĒ = of
Buddhas, bhĒyattherĒdayo viya = like BhĒhiya Thera and etc.

According to pĒli literature, there is no doubt one may become Arahant
and etc., through ĒnĒpĒna meditation at the present life. Webu Sayadaw
Sayadaw is known as ‘Arahant’. We would like to remind you not to deceive some
people, who said and write, “ŒnĒpĒna is impossible to develop, there is nothing
to do with insight meditation (vipassanĒ)
but the knowledge of discrimination in mind and matter (nĒmar|pa-paricchada-ĒĒa). Sensation is
not an object of insight meditation but is just the motion of blood, air and
nerves. Insight meditation is not to be observed. Imagine and consider, insight
meditation has already done if it is believed”.

As the Ānāpāna insight meditation technique, mentioned above, if one wants to meditate, he/she should visit Webu Sayadaw and practice there. We may guide if you come to our Office, Development of Practice (PaṬipatti Gyi-pwar-ye Aphwe-gyut), No. 87, 39th Street, Yangon. If you cannot come here yourself, you may ask us and practice through letter, and we will reply how to do. We assure that everyone can become a noble one (Ariya) if really wishes and practices.

Insight

meditation technique of Webu Sayadaw is only pure and based on reality. Ānāpāna is the object of the both of insight and calm meditations and also related to them. The object of calm meditation is in-breaths and out-breaths. The object of insight meditation is the mere act of touch generated by the impact of in-breaths and out-breaths. Initially, neither touch without in-breaths and out-breaths nor in-breaths and out-breaths without touch can be found. It is impossible to separate touch and in-breaths and out-breaths from each other. Both appear together and if one does, another will be together.

However, if in-breaths and out-breaths are observed emphatically, the touch becomes weak and sometimes obscure. When touch is observed carefully, it is more evident than in-breaths and out-breaths. However, the object of calm meditation, in-breaths and out-breaths, and the object of reality, touch, cannot be separated from each other. So, for those who practice attentively the calm meditation through in-breaths and out-breaths, the touch on nostril and body, the object of insight meditation, occur spontaneously and accordingly. Although it is, it may disappear due to carelessness and lack of knowledge about the object of insight meditation.

Knowledgeable

meditators are fond of only calm meditation and the touch, object of insight meditation, as it is ignored, may disappear. Those who attentively observe the touch, object of insight meditation, have experience of designation objects such as in-breaths and out-breaths etc. However, after knowing it as designation objects, the meditator ignores them and attentively observes only the objects of reality (paramattha). Therefore, designation objects become weak and disappear. Nevertheless, although the touch, object of insight meditation, is attentively observed, various designation objects of calm meditation appear in those who keep on Ānāpāna meditation.

How to appear? Occurance of designation objects of calm meditation

The effort of Ānāpāna is based on designation of in-breaths and out-breaths and the touch of reality, so they occur spontaneously. Although the touch, the object of insight meditation, is attentively observed, the designation of in-breaths and out-breaths becomes evident. For instance, the in-breaths and out-breaths become like either ball or rod, or long, or short, or vapour.

These appear like

spreading out nine or eighteen inches or a meter from nostril, or going from nostril to inside, or from throat to chest and navel. The vapour of in-breath and out-breath becomes like smog or mist, or having very white or white soap powder.

Moreover, the in-breaths and out-breaths come in and go out like the flashing powder of gold

or silver, or spark, or a light of firefly, or pearls.

These are the object of calm meditation, which can be seen together with the in-breaths and out-breaths. There are also other objects of calm meditation without the in-breaths and out-breaths. While one is meditating, either the appearance of various sizes such as light balls, the illumination such as taking place of torchlight, and also the sun, moon, stars and comets can be seen.

The various views such as trees, forests, mountains, water, earth, ocean, etc., existed in the world (31 kinds of plains) can be seen. Some views are quite attractive, so the meditators wish to see them forever.

Moreover, human beings, gods, BrahamĒ, dragons, eagles, ogres, monsters, demons, animals, ghosts, and such kinds of sentient beings can also be seen. The meditator may meet, talk to extraordinary ones, and receive miracle power, etc., from them.

Besides, the meditator may see various things, either beings or things, but it does not mean every ĒnĒpĒna meditator has to see everything as written in the book. Some see a little.

Thus, these things like which seen through eye are only designation objects. Of such them, if an illumination object is consistently seen, the meditator may achieve the jhĒna power of calm meditation. If someone wants to know the way how to do, please read the book, ‘skill in insight’ (VipassanĒ pĒragĀ), published by the Board for Development of Practice (PaĒpatti Gyi-pwar-ye Aphwe-gyut).

Those who follow the way of insight meditation through ĒnĒpĒna technique should ignore these mentioned every designation objects of calm meditation. Instead of ignorance of them, if these are attached, it would be the danger of insight meditation and the knowledge of insight meditation would not develop. Do not pay attention on any designation objects. Although the meditator meets, talks, has meal with gods and supernormal ones, and receive some suggestions from them, do not admire oneself, do not be proud and pleased, but share one’s merit with them.

However, if one has good wishes for them and shares one’s merit with them, they will much respect him or her. It cannot be said that beings and things experienced in the ĒnĒpĒna meditation are the real. Some, like dreams, are the things which appeared in the mind.

To take note of this, every meditator who practices insight meditation should regard designation objects experienced in mind as only designation. If light and radiance etc., are found, those are not the real. Therefore, please ignore them. Although some lights, radiances, forms and shapes appear in mind, please observe diligently and persistently the nature of touch, the object of reality. We would like to remind all that the meditators are able to attain the knowledge of Path and Fruit very quickly and on the straight through the right insight meditation.

An examination of Insight Meditation

Nowadays, be careful that there is a genuine technique of insight meditation and fake technique too. The genuine technique is a practice of observe the arising and passing away of a sense or two, or three, or four, or five, or six types of senses; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or knowing at the present moment. When it is seen as observed, there arises the contemplation of impermanence. If it does, the contemplation of suffering and non-self (selflessness) arise simultaneously. Eventually, the supra-mundane path and fruit is attained. This is the genuine technique of insight meditation.

The conception through just consideration, thinking on the past, present, and future of conditioned things, mind and matter is called as fake technique of insight meditation. Such work is not based on a real seeing impermanence of things. It is said in the text as ‘KalĒpa-samasana’ because of just thinking and consideration.

The meditator, who follow the real insight meditation persistently, must find designation objects such as light etc., much or little, when he or she see impermanence. Those who follow ‘kalĒpa-samasana’ may say that they find the impermanence but it is just dream and ideology, not real insight meditation, so they never find the light.

Therefore, every conception through thinking and consideration is not a real insight meditation but just ‘KalĒpa-samasana’. The real insight meditation is only the observe impermanence of things, ultimate reality, and apart from thinking and consideration.

The only one who practices the real insight meditation may become a stream enterer person (sotĒpanna) and he or she really realizes the NibbĒna through the knowledge of paths and fruits. After realizing the NibbĒna for the first time, the meditator should extend it for more an hour or less an hour with determination to achieve the further stages of the supramundane until he or she fulfill his or her wishes. Do not think of doing this and that. Thus, if the meditator practices the insight meditation persistently, he or she will overcome the objects of insight meditations and then will take NibbĒna as its object. Thus, it is a sure sign of a real steam enterer (sotĒpanna) if NibbĒna is experienced through determination.

Pure and simple, the presentation of this book intends, for every one, to be able to practice the technique of Venerable Webu Sayadaw, an Arahanta monk, and to realize NibbĒna easily.

[1] Translated FROM Myanmar Text by Ashin Kumara, Sitagu Myanmar Buddhist Vihara, New Delhi and U Than Sein, October, 2006

[2] Venerable Webu Sayadaw emphasized one of the technique "anapana-sati", which is one of the many techniques contained in the Teachings of the Buddha Gotama (Tipitaka).