

# Dhamma Therapy Revisited

*Cases of Healing through Vipassanā Meditation*

Compiled by

**The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw**

of

**Burma**



Translated by

**Aggacitta Bhikkhu**

Sāsanārakkha Buddhist Sanctuary



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# Preface

IN the early '80s I started to translate the appendix compiled by Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw in the book version of “A Special Discourse on Vipassanā,” a talk he delivered to Rangoon<sup>1</sup> University students in 1974. Sandwiched between his scholarly introduction and conclusion lies the appetising main portion of the work dealing with the miraculous healing of sicknesses in the course of intensive *vipassanā* meditation.

These cases were either related personally by the yogis or recorded by highly competent meditation teachers. In the process of finalising the translation, I coined the term ‘Dhamma therapy’ as *vipassanā* meditation is the heart of Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha. While the aptness of ‘Dhamma therapy’ seems to be self-evident because the subject matter deals with healing through *vipassanā* meditation, it is even more obvious when you realise that ‘Dhamma-striving’ and ‘Dhamma-sitting’ are popular Burmese expressions for meditation.

It is indeed a most humbling experience to look anew at a published translation done more than 25 years ago when my knowledge of Pāli was still rudimentary. Neither the fact that the work was published without my vetting the proofs (I had just begun my private quest for forest seclusion) nor that I had merely translated Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw’s Burmese translation of the Pāli passages is valid justification for the glaring deficiencies that I now perceive in it. In this revised edition, I have tried to make amends to the best of my current ability.

One of my original motivations for undertaking the translation of this somewhat obscure appendix was to provide inspiration for English-speaking newcomers to the practice of *vipassanā*. Many of them, unlike their more fortunate Burmese counterparts, would probably not have the opportunity to do long-term intensive retreats under the daily scrutiny and guidance of skilful teachers ever ready

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<sup>1</sup> Now known as Yangon.

to give inspiration and persistent encouragement. They must therefore be content with having to fight the often losing battle against painful, boring, restless, or sleepy sitting sessions.

However, after completing the first draft of the translation, it occurred to me that old-timers may also be inspired by many of the accounts which remind us of the unfailing power of courage, persistence, endurance and patience. Such accounts may even whet the appetite of more adventurous general readers who may not be so interested in liberation and enlightenment. Being inspired by the miraculous success stories, they may be drawn to a more profound appreciation of the wonderful Dhamma by personally experimenting with *vipassanā* practice—even though they may be initially motivated by a purely mundane wish to be rid of some chronic ailment. Any initial success may spur them to become more committed to the practice and eventually upgrade their motivation to a loftier one.

The hardcore Theravādin stickler for evidence from canonical, commentarial and sub-commentarial sources to support the claims of contemporary yogis will find a welcome challenge in Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw's authoritative introduction and conclusion to the main exposition.

Aggacitta Bhikkhu  
July 2009



# Acknowledgement

**M**ANY people contributed to the publication of the translation in the early '80s. Sayādaw U Paṇḍitābhivamsa, then Ovādācariya Sayādaw of Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, Burma, clarified some of the more difficult Burmese translations of Pāli terms in his typically precise and succinct way. The late Dr U Ba Glay, then Vice-President of the Buddhasāsanānuggaha Organisation (which manages the Mahāsi Meditation Centre in Rangoon/Yangon), gave encouragement and supplied English equivalents for some Burmese medical terms and English spellings of Burmese proper nouns. When I was briefly back in Malaysia (April – June 1982) editing the second draft translation, a couple of Burmese medical expatriates then attached to the Tanjung Rambutan Psychiatric Hospital helped to check, confirm or supply alternatives for some of the more abstruse English translations of symptoms and illnesses found in the Burmese original. The inquiries were made through Lim Koon Leng, a staff member of the hospital who was also a lay supporter and member of the meditation society in which premises I was then residing.

Hoe Soon Ying and Lee Saw Ean prepared the first typescript at very short notice, while Goh Poay Hoon assiduously made amendments through seemingly endless rounds of revisions. In those pre-PC days, this was quite a feat of patient dedication. Steven Smith of Hawaii who was then Ven U Dhammadhaja took valuable time off from his meditation retreat at Vivekasrom, Chonburi, Thailand (February – March 1983) to read through a late draft and gave some valuable suggestions. Finally, Buddhasāsanānuggaha Organisation approved the translation for publication in 1984.

To all these contributors, I am abundantly grateful.

# Notes on the Translation

## General

I HAVE replaced the word-for-word, Pāli to English (*nissaya*) style of translation employed in the main text of the original edition with a simpler, less literal translation and shifted the accompanying Pāli texts to the footnotes. This retains the translator's freedom of rendering, while enabling the more knowledgeable reader to critically appraise the interpretation. Apart from these Pāli texts and unless otherwise stated, I am responsible for the contents of the footnotes.

## Sati and mindfulness

More popular among the English translations of the Pāli word *sati* are 'mindfulness' and 'recollection.' The Burmese Pāli scholars formally render it as 'recall' (literally, 'getting the mark,' 'note'). *Sati* has been assimilated into the Burmese language and combined with other words, giving meanings such as 'remember,' 'remind,' 'pay attention,' 'be careful,' 'beware,' 'be aware,' 'warn,' 'caution,' and so on. 'Recall' may be an accurate and sound translation of the Pāli term, but to use this formal rendition in the practice of *vipassanā* meditation without first clarifying its sense would be confusing.

Hence, Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw does not hesitate to point out that 'recall' practically means "the observant noting, by labelling 'seeing, seeing,' 'hearing, hearing,' etc. at each of their respective occurrence." It should be noted that the stress on the 'here and now' in *vipassanā* practice refers to the moment of perceptible occurrence of all sensory processes within oneself—including mental activity such as thoughts, imaginings, emotions, etc.—and not to the 'present' of the Abhidhamma time-scale of unit-consciousness.

In this work I use 'mindfulness' for *sati* and change it according to the Pāli grammatical form, e.g. *sato* = 'being mindful' or 'mindfully.' Note that "mindfulness" should also connote the 'recollective' mode implicit in the original meaning of 'recall.' In practical *vipassanā* terms, this means 'looking' back at an immediate past occurrence,

e.g. when you note “thinking, thinking” the moment you realise that a thought has occurred. Obviously when you are noting “thinking, thinking,” the thought is an immediate past object that you are ‘looking’ back at, i.e. remembering, recollecting, or recalling.

### **Dhamma-striving and meditation**

‘Striving for the Dhamma’ and ‘Dhamma-striving’ are variations of ‘to Dhamma-strive,’ a literal rendering of the short but precise Burmese phrase used to express a practice that demands so much exertion, perseverance, and commitment. In the original edition entitled *Dhamma Therapy*, I experimented with these renderings in place of the English ‘meditation’ and ‘to meditate’ in order to convey their connotations, but I now think that the nuances are not worth preserving at the expense of the word ‘meditation’ which is now widely understood to roughly mean “Engaging in mental activity of a spiritual nature, but not necessarily confined to thinking.” While this is not exactly the meaning of the Burmese terms ‘Dhamma-striving’ or ‘Dhamma-sitting,’ I nevertheless concede to render them as ‘meditation’ for the sake of easy reading.

### **Guide to non-English words**

Any non-English word, other than proper nouns, that occurs only once in the main text is either accompanied by its English translation in round brackets or explained in a footnote. Other non-English words in the main text, including some proper nouns, and a few medical terms are explained in the Glossary on p 51.

# How the Buddha Was Cured of Illness

**D**URING his forty-fifth and final Rains Retreat (*vassa*) the Buddha was residing at Vesāli Township, in the village of Veḷuva. It is recorded in the Mahāvagga of the Dīgha Nikāya (DN 16, LDB p244) and the Mahāvagga of the Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN 47:9, CDB p1636) that the Buddha was then afflicted with a serious and pervasive illness, of which he was eventually healed through Dhamma therapy:

“At that time [in Veḷuva Village] a severe illness arose in the Blessed One who had entered the Rains Retreat (*vassa*). Deadly, excruciating [physical] feelings occurred. Being mindful and aware, the Blessed One endured them without being distressed [or oppressed].”<sup>2</sup>

The above canonical record of how patience was maintained while he was being mindful and aware, and of the apparent non-occurrence of oppression or distress due to pain are further elaborated on in the Commentary:

**“Being mindful and aware he endured”** means “having made mindfulness such that it manifests clearly [i.e. having properly established mindfulness], having discerned [the nature of feeling] through [insight] knowledge, he endured.”<sup>3</sup>

The Sub-commentary glosses:

**“Having discerned through knowledge”** means “having discerned with [insight] knowledge the momentary existence of the [painful] feelings [as they break up into segments], or their suffering nature, or the absence of

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<sup>2</sup> *Atha kho bhagavato vassuṇṇatassa kharo ābādho uppajji, bālḥā vedanā vattanti māraṇantikā. Tā sudam bhagavā sato sampajāno adhvāsesi avihaññamāno.*

<sup>3</sup> *Sato sampajāno adhvāsesīti satim sūpaṭṭhitam katvā ñāṇena paricchinditvā adhvāsesi.* Sayādaw U Paṇḍitābhivamsa further clarifies *sūpaṭṭhitam* thus: “so that it properly (*su*) sticks to (*upa*) and stays on (*ṭhita*) the targeted object of attention.”

atta.” **“He endured”** means “while subduing the pain and by virtue of noting/noticing whichever mannerism [i.e. *anicca*, *dukkha* or *anatta*] thoroughly ‘digested’ [by insight], he accepted and tolerated those feelings within himself. He was not overwhelmed by the pain.”<sup>4</sup>

The Commentary continues:

**“Without being distressed”** means “without making repeated or frequent shifting/moving actions in order to alleviate the painful sensation, he endured, [as if] not being oppressed, [as if] not undergoing pain or suffering.”<sup>5</sup>

The above is an exposition according to the Commentary and Sub-commentary. Nowadays when yogis gain an insight into the moment-to-moment occurrence of pain and its segmental breaking up while engaged in mindfully noting “pain, pain,” and so forth, the relief of pain and the painless state of ease and comfort may be experienced. That the foregoing exposition is in conformity with the practical experience of yogis today is quite obvious.

Continuing with the canonical record:

“At that time it occurred thus to the Blessed One: “If I should pass away into parinibbāna<sup>6</sup> without having informed my attendant disciples, without having notified the community of monks, this act of mine would indeed not be proper. It would be well if I should dwell, having removed this illness by [diligent] effort and undertaken the repair of vitality.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Nānena paricchinditvā ti vedanānaṃ khaṇikataṃ, dukkhataṃ, attasuññatañca yāthāvato nānena paricchijja parituletvā. Adhivāsesi ti tā abhibhavanto yathā-parimadditākārasallakhaṇena attani āropetvā vāsesi, na tāhi abhibhuyyamaṇo.*

<sup>5</sup> *Avihaññamāno ti vedanānuvattanavasena aparāparaṃ parivattanaṃ akaronto apīḷiyamāno adukkhīyamānova adhivāsesi.*

<sup>6</sup> Utter release from birth and death. So, “pass away into parinibbāna” means “die utterly without being reborn.”

<sup>7</sup> *Atha kho bhagavato etadahosi: “Na kho metaṃ patirūpaṃ, yvāhaṃ anāmantetvā upaṭṭhāke anapaloketvā bhikkhusaṅghaṃ parinibbāyeyyaṃ. Yamnūnāhaṃ imaṃ ābādhaṃ viriyena paṭiṭṭhāmetvā jivitasāṅkhāraṃ adhiṭṭhāya vihareyyan”ti.* “Having undertaken the repair of vitality” means “Undertaking the restoration of the ability to sustain life.”

The Commentary points out two types of [diligent] effort—one relating to *vipassanā* meditation and the other to *phalasangāpatti*. That the latter is meant by “diligent effort” may not be so clear since *phalasangāpatti* is due merely to the effect of the Noble Path (*ariyamagga*) brought forth by the power of *vipassanā* meditation. Instead it will become quite clear that diligence in *vipassanā* meditation only is being referred to.

“Then (after thinking thus) the Blessed One dwelled, having removed the illness through (meditative) effort (and) undertaken the repair of vitality. (Thus dwelling) at that time the (deadly and intense) illness of the Blessed One was stilled (i.e. cured).”<sup>8</sup>

In this connection the Commentary further elaborates on how the illness vanished.

“On that day [probably on the 1<sup>st</sup> waning night of Waso<sup>9</sup>], the Blessed One—just as he had induced new[ly discovered] *vipassanā* meditation on the seat of the great bodhi tree [beneath which he was to attain Buddhahood]—having executed the seven ways of contemplating matter (*rūpa*) and the seven ways of contemplating mind (*nāma*)<sup>10</sup> without obstruction, without entanglement; having conducted to completion the fourteen ways of meditation; having rooted out the pain [of the illness] through great (panoramic) *vipassanā*,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Atha kho bhagavā taṃ ābādhaṃ viriyena paṭipañāmetvā jivitasāṅkhāraṃ adhiṭṭhāya vihāsi. Atha kho bhagavato so ābādho paṭipassambhi.*

<sup>9</sup> Around July.

<sup>10</sup> See Visuddhimagga (6<sup>th</sup> Council Burmese ed.) Vol. 2, pp. 253 ff; or Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli’s *The Path of Purification*, Chap XX, para 46 – 88.

<sup>11</sup> *Bhagavā taṃ divasaṃ mahābodhiṭṭhānaṃ abhinavavipassanaṃ paṭṭhapento viya rūpasattakaṃ arūpasattakaṃ nigumbhaṃ nijjaṭaṃ katvā cuddasahākārehi sannetvā mahāvīpassanāya vedanaṃ vikkhambhetvā,*

The metaphorical usage of the words *gumba* (bush) and *jaṭā* (tangle) is further explained by Sayādaw U Paṇḍitābhivamsa: “without obstruction and entanglement by concepts (*paññati*) of being (*satta*, i.e. human, dog, sentient being, etc.), form (*saṅghāna*, i.e. feet, hand, arm, abdomen, etc.) and mode, or disposition (*ākāra*, i.e. walking, bending, lifting, rising, falling, winking, etc.).”

At this point it becomes apparent that painful sensations can be removed by *vipassanā* meditation.

resolved thus: ‘For ten months [from the 1<sup>st</sup> waning day of Waso till the full moon day of Kasone]<sup>12</sup> let these [painful sensations] not occur,—and attained phalasangāṃhā. Rooted out by *samāpatti*, for ten months [till the morning of the full moon day of Kasone] the [painful] sensations [of the illness] never did arise.”<sup>13</sup>

In the Pāḷi Canon and Commentary it is clearly shown that painful sensations can be removed by means of *vipassanā* meditation or *phalasangāṃhā*. It should therefore be noted that Noble Ones (*ariya*)<sup>14</sup> may be relieved of painful sensations through two ways, namely *vipassanā* and the attainment of fruition (*phalasangāṃhā*); while for ordinary worldlings (*puthujjana*),<sup>15</sup> only by means of *vipassanā*. The possibility of healing sicknesses and removing painful sensations through the one way of *vipassanā* can also be credibly noted in the contemporary case accounts related [by leading meditation teachers of the Mahāsi tradition] in the next chapter.

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<sup>12</sup> Around May.

<sup>13</sup> “*Dasamāse mā uppajjithā*”*ti samāpattiṃ samāpajji. Samāpattivikkhambhitā vedanā dasamāse na uppajji yeva.*

<sup>14</sup> Noble ones—those who have, according to the Abhidhamma, realised nibbāna. See also *ariya* in the [Glossary](#).

<sup>15</sup> A worldling, one who is not an *ariya*.

# Two Cases Related by Mahāsi Sayādaw

## 1. Cured of chronic wind illness

**A**ROUND the year 1945 at a village by the name of Leik Chin about four miles north-west of Seik Khun Village, an elder (*thera*) who had merely heard about Mahāsi Sayādaw's technique of *vipassanā* meditation believed in it and practised accordingly in his own monastery. It seems that just a few days later, extraordinary *vipassanā* concentration and insight knowledge arose and the chronic 'wind' illness,<sup>16</sup> which he suffered from for over twenty years, completely vanished. The chronic illness had tormented him ever since he was an eighteen-year-old novice (*sāmaṇera*) and necessitated daily medicine and massage. Apart from that he was also afflicted by rheumatic aches, which had also required daily massage for relief.

With the complete disappearance of those ailments while engaged in observant noting, he was thenceforth able to live quite comfortably without having to resort to medicines and massage. It was learnt through his bhikkhu disciples that the elder had deep faith and confidence that any illness whatsoever can vanish if observant noting is done in accordance with the technique of *satipaṭṭhāna*<sup>17</sup> meditation. Therefore, whenever he felt unwell or sick he always had recourse to Dhamma therapy without relying on conventional medicine. He would instruct and advise his own bhikkhu disciples, *sāmaṇeras*, and lay pupils to do the same when they fell sick.

## 2. Breaking toddy addiction through mindfulness

Seik Khun born Maung Ma lived in Zaung Dan Village, about two miles west of his birth-place. He was young, married, and heavily

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<sup>16</sup> A Burmese doctor suggested that an approximate English equivalent could be gastric troubles. Yet another said that there is really no equivalent according to the classification of Western medicine, as it refers to any ailment caused by excessive 'wind' or flatulence.

<sup>17</sup> Establishing mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind and mental objects in order to verify that they are actually impermanent, subject to conditionality, unsatisfactory and not-self.



addicted to toddy. Around the year 1945, his brothers and sisters who had meditated in Mahāsi Monastery persuaded him to do the same. He promised that he would do so and agreed to start on an appointed day. On that day when his brothers and sisters called to get him to start his retreat, they found him intoxicated with toddy. The next day, leaving very much earlier, they arrived before he could take the toddy and successfully escorted him to the meditation hut. Maung Ma meditated seriously according to Mahāsi Sayādaw's instructions and found so much satisfaction in the Dhamma that he refused to leave the monastery for home. He said he was going to become a bhikkhu.

"Since you have a family, do carry on till you've fulfilled your obligations. Next time, when it's suitable to be a bhikkhu, then do so." So the meditation Sayādaws cajoled him into going home.

Maung Ma truly revered the Dhamma. It is said that even as he carried goods over his shoulders and peddled his wares, he would maintain unbroken mindfulness; and while reaping paddy too, at each stroke he would try to make at least three mental notes.<sup>18</sup> At one time he wondered whether he still had any longing for toddy. He sniffed a large mug of liquor and then quickly looked into his mind to see if there was any desire to drink it. It seems that while doing so for four, five, or six times *vipassanā* insight arose and, gathering momentum, culminated in a cessation experience.<sup>19</sup>

Later when Maung Ma was undergoing intense suffering due to a fatal illness, he did not lay aside his precious mindfulness. On the night he was to die, he related to his wife, while mindfully noting the sensations in his body: "Oh, now the part of my leg from the ankle to the knee is no longer alive. There is only life till the knee-cap. Oh, now there is life only till the hips...now only to the navel...and now only till the centre of the chest, in the heart." Stage by stage, he described the changes that took place in his body.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "To make a mental note" is a technical term in Mahāsi Sayādaw's meditation technique. It means "To mentally take note" of certain body or mental processes; in this case, "to mentally notice" the body and mental processes involved in the strokes of reaping paddy.

<sup>19</sup> An expression which may be cleverly regarded as non-committal but has, more often than not, a subtle suggestion of the possible experience of nibbāna.

<sup>20</sup> Mahāsi Sayādaw's note: This account is a vivid description of the experience of dying, as told in colloquial language. In textual terminology this description pertains to the terminating of the material life faculty (*rūpajīvitindriya*), together with kamma-born matter (*kammajarūpa*).

Finally he uttered, “Soon, I will die. Do not be afraid of dying. One day you too shall have to die. Do make it a point to meditate...” And indeed, soon after those last words to his wife, he died.

This is an account of how Dhamma therapy can free someone from toddy addiction.

# Seven Cases Narrated by Sayādaw U Sujāta

## 1. Woman cured of tumour in the abdomen

ON the 3<sup>rd</sup> waxing day of Tawthalin, 1324 BE [some time in September 1962], Do Kin Thwe, a woman from Ta Mew, Rangoon, commenced meditation at the city's Mahāsi Meditation Centre. Three days later I saw a group of yogis massaging her.

“What's happening?” I asked.

“I'm having gripping pains,” Do Kin Thwe explained. “There's a tumour in my belly, so I can't sit for long. At home too, when friends or visitors come to sit and chat, after only about half an hour or so, my belly aches so badly I have to excuse myself and get a massage to relieve the pain. I visited the doctor for a check-up and he said there was a large tumour in the belly and an operation was necessary to remove it. That was four years ago. This year he said, 'It won't do. It must be operated on!' However, I may die during the operation and I have not yet attained the Dhamma that is a reliable source of refuge. I have to meditate, I thought. With that intention I came here and now after sitting for barely an hour, I get such terrible pains in my belly...”

“And you never even let me know of this at the very start!” I exclaimed. “The Buddha has already expounded in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (DN 22, LDB p335ff) that one can be mindful in all the four postures of walking, standing, sitting, or lying. In your case, to prevent the pain from occurring in the belly, you can lean on a wall while you sit, sit on a reclining chair, or even lie down and carry on observant noting. Sit only in such a way that will not be painful. You may sit or lie down, and be mindful as you please. When concentration and insight knowledge arise, your tumour may possibly vanish,” I pointed out to her.

“I will continue to strive according to Sayādaw's instructions. However, I would still like to visit the doctor for a check-up,” she requested, and I gave her my permission. So she went back home and saw the doctor. It seemed that after examining her the doctor said,

“You shall have to undergo an operation to have it removed. You must not continue to meditate. If you do, you might die!”

I came to know that only when she returned, after having spent two days at home.

“In that case you should persist in your meditation. Whether or not you’ll die or the tumour will disintegrate, we shall surely know. If you wish to sit on a chair or sit leaning against the wall and the like, you may do so. While lying down also be mindful. During meal-time too, while gathering food with your fingers, taking and lifting it, opening the mouth, putting it into the mouth, chewing, swallowing and so on, you should continuously be mindful of all that as you eat. All this is in accordance with what the Buddha discoursed on, namely in eating, drinking, chewing, tasting, one does so with full awareness,<sup>21</sup> and which Mahāsi Sayādaw had further explained and instructed as the task of *vipassanā* meditation...”

Daw Kin Thwe continued meditating according to the above instruction. About fifteen days later, while mindfully taking her meal, she perceived a very putrid odour. Wondering what it was, she reflected for a moment; then thought that it must be due to her tumour.

“If that is the case, your tumour is probably disintegrating,” I reminded her and continued to encourage her. Sure enough, just as I said, her large tumour was gradually disintegrating and it eventually vanished from her belly. Daw Kim Thwe was overjoyed. When she went back to her doctor for another medical examination, he was taken aback.

“Ha! Your tumour’s no longer there! Whatever did you do?” he asked in surprise.

“I meditated at the Mahāsi Meditation Centre, see. Though you said that if I did I might die, not only am I not dead now but even my tumour has completely disappeared!” she triumphantly replied.

The doctor exclaimed, “Hey, is that so? Your Dhamma is truly a wonder, huh!” The doctor was an Indian, it seems.

## 2. Monk cured of tumour in the abdomen

A bhikkhu of eight *vassa* from Kim Byar Village, Shwe Bo Town, arrived in Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, and commenced

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<sup>21</sup> *Asite, pīte, khāyite, sāyite sampajānakāri.*

meditation on the 3<sup>rd</sup> waxing day of Tasaungmone, 1336 BE [some time in November 1974]. His name was U Sobhana and he had suffered from a tumour in the abdomen ever since he was a seventeen-year-old novice (*sāmaṇera*). After meals the tumour would press against the right side of the abdomen and become tight so that it was almost impossible to sit, he said. If he had no alternative, he would have to press his hand against the part under which the tumour was situated, and then only could barely sit. Many told him that he had to be hospitalised to surgically remove the tumour, but he was afraid of being operated on, and so just left things as they were.

During his first retreat at Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, he did not lie down after meals but instead headed straight for the Simā Hall to sit and continue meditating. While sitting he pressed his hand on the tumour spot. After about twenty days of ardent effort, he no longer had to press against the tumour spot for he found that he could sit very comfortably after meals and with good mindfulness too. Only then did he realise that his tumour had vanished. He could sit for over three hours and for a period of five days he was able to maintain unbroken mindfulness throughout the day and night without even lying down to sleep. On the 45<sup>th</sup> day into his retreat he qualified for Nyanzin.<sup>22</sup> Even now (in the late '70s), at Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, U Sobhana is carrying out his duties as resident bhikkhu.<sup>23</sup> His tumour never recurred and he is ever in good health.

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<sup>22</sup> Meditation teachers trained in the Mahāsi tradition were expressly instructed not to make any personal confirmation of yogis' attainments in insight, especially supramundane achievements. This is indeed a healthy and humble acknowledgement of our fallibility; for only a Sammāsambuddha can confirm another's attainment with absolute certainty. Therefore, so that yogis who have penetrated deeply enough into the Dhamma can know exactly where they stand, a three-hour tape-recorded lecture, delivered by Mahāsi Sayādaw himself, called "Nyanzin" or "The Process of Insight," is replayed fortnightly at Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon. The talk describes in detail the actual experiences encountered at the various stages of *vipassanā* insights and beyond. Admission is strictly confined to those yogis who have striven to the satisfaction of and are personally recommended by their respective meditation teachers.

<sup>23</sup> He became Mahāsi Sayādaw's personal attendant for several years until the latter's demise in 1982.

### 3. Large tumour disintegrates

Fifty-four-year old U Aung Shwe of Daing Wun Kwin, Moulmein, had a large tumour in his abdomen. When he visited a doctor for a medical examination, he was informed that an operation was necessary. Instead, with the support of the Dhamma which is a dependable source of refuge, he arrived at Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, and started meditation on the 5<sup>th</sup> waning day of Nayone, 1330 BE [around June 1968]. One day while meditating he experienced, through insight, a sudden bursting of the tumour in his abdomen followed by its disintegration and the rapid discharge of gushing blood. It was as if he was actually hearing it with his ears and seeing it with his eyes. He was completely rid of the tumour. Continuing meditation to the satisfaction of his teachers, he eventually attained all the *vipassanā* insights to full completion. Even till this very day he is healthily and happily rendering his service to the Sāsana in both fields of study (*pariyatti*) and practice (*paṭipatti*).

### 4. Cured of arthritis of the knee

On the 1<sup>st</sup> waning day of Wagaung, 1313 BE [around August 1951] forty-year-old Ko Mya Saung arrived at Myin Gyan Yeikthā, a Mahāsi branch meditation centre, and commenced meditation under the resident Sayādaw. Ko Mya Saung had suffered from arthritis of the knee for five years. Despite treatment by various doctors, the ailment was not cured. He was stirred by *saṃvega* and came to Myin Gyan Yeikthā to meditate. While meditating, his knees swelled, and the more the pain was noted, the more intense it grew. As Sayādaw had instructed, he persisted in noting it unrelentingly. The pain became so excruciating that tears rolled down his cheeks and his body was thrown forwards and backwards or suddenly jerked upwards in the most awkward manner. This lasted for about four days. And while thus engaged in mindful noting he saw, in a vision, his knee together with the bones breaking apart. In great alarm he screamed, “Haw! Do it man! It broke! My big knee broke!”

After that incident he was so scared that he did not dare to meditate. However, with Sayādaw’s encouragement, he resumed mindful noting. Eventually the swelling and pain completely disappeared and Ko Mya Saung was never troubled by it again.

## 5. Sayādaw cured of occult affliction

Fifty-five-year-old Sayādaw U Sumana from Nga Da Yaw Village Monastery, north-west of Myin Gyan, arrived at Myin Gyan Yeikthā on the 2<sup>nd</sup> waxing day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Waso, 1319 BE [around August 1957], and meditated. The Sayādaw suffered from unbearable discomfort due to a large lump in his belly and although he had been able to obtain some temporary relief through the treatment by various doctors, he was unable to get it completely cured. Spurred by *saṃvega*, he decided to meditate.

It seems that in the course of his retreat, he was pushed, pulled, nudged, jolted and constantly molested by four spell-casting witches. He related that he could even see their shapes and forms, and when he persisted to make incessant note of them, he experienced unbearable constriction and pain in his belly. Terrified, he started to make preparations to go home. Then the Myin Gyan Yeikthā Sayādaw said to him, “Don’t be afraid. The affliction will surely vanish in time. Note mindfully to overcome it. Noting mindfully means developing the seven causal factors of insight (*satta sambojjhaṅgā*)... If you’re really scared, we’ll post a guard to watch over...” Soothed by his teacher’s words of assurance and encouragement, Sayādaw U Sumana changed his mind about going home and strove on. Early one morning, an intense pain inside the abdomen prompted him to empty his bowels. While doing so, he noticed greenish, reddish, yellowish and bluish lumps and mucus being excreted. His body felt light and nimble; thenceforth, he was completely cured of his affliction. He was so immensely satisfied and overjoyed that he quickly went up to his teacher at the Yeikthā and exclaimed, “My afflictions are all gone! Completely gone! They’ve vanished!” Thus Sayādaw U Sumana started meditation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> waxing day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Waso month, and within the following month of Wagaung he was completely healed. Restored to normal health, he continued to strive on at the Yeikthā till the end of the Rains Retreat.

## 6. Old man cured of asthma

Seventy-year-old U Aung Myint of Le Thit Village, east of Myin Gyan, commenced meditation at Myin Gyan Yeikthā on the 7<sup>th</sup> waning day of Tawthalin, 1326 BE [around September 1964]. He had suffered from asthma for about thirty years. Handing over thirty

kyats,<sup>24</sup> which he had brought with him, to Myin Gyan Sayādaw's kappiya,<sup>25</sup> he requested of his teacher, "If I die, please make use of this money to perform my funeral rites."

"Don't you worry, dakāgyi!<sup>26</sup> I shall take care of everything," Sayādaw assured him. "Just try hard and strive on!"

Six days later as a result of meditating, his condition became much worse. For two whole days he could not even eat rice gruel because he had fits of breathing difficulty, which greatly weakened him so that he slumped over like a hunch-back while sitting. Other yogis who had gathered around to help him thought that the old man was about to die and informed their teacher. Sayādaw arrived and gave some words of encouragement as he instructed the aged yogi to note his tiredness. U Aung Myint faithfully began noting, "tired, tired." After two hours the tiredness was replaced by a sense of ease and comfort.

About a week later he had a relapse and again for three whole days was unable to eat. Many thought that he was surely going to die. Sayādaw once again assured him that the affliction was about to vanish and, after further encouragement, instructed him to endeavour to be mindful. Hearing that, the people around the aged yogi smiled incredulously and commented, "He's almost at the point of death! How can he be mindful any longer?"

As for U Aung Myint, while intently being mindful—just as Sayādaw had encouraged—he saw with insight, in the mind's eye, his belly burst open and mucus and lumps of green, red, yellow, and blue matter issuing forth.

"My big belly's burst open, sir!" he cried out.

After that he continued noting mindfully according to Sayādaw's instructions, and was never again bothered by asthma, for it had completely vanished. Because U Aung Myint had once been a bhikkhu who later disrobed, his acquired preaching ability enabled

<sup>24</sup> Burmese currency, 1 kyat, was officially equivalent to US\$0.04 (unofficially, US\$1.00 could fetch about 60 kyats) in the early '80s. The value of money must have been much higher, and the cost of living much lower, in the sixties in rural Burma.

<sup>25</sup> An abbreviation of the Pāli term *kappiyakāraka*—one who makes things allowable for bhikkhus, i.e. a bhikkhu's steward or attendant.

<sup>26</sup> A polite term used by bhikkhus to address elderly laymen, derived from the Pāli word *dāyaka*—giver (of requisites to bhikkhus). Thus "*dakāgyi*" means "big giver."



him to show the Dhamma<sup>27</sup> to friends and relatives back at home. Even till this day (1973) he is still alive and in good health.

## **7. Cured of leukodermic rashes, itch and pain**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> waning day of Tazaungmone, 1336 BE [around November 1974], twenty-year-old Maung Win Myint of 90 Upper Pan Zo Tan Road, Rangoon, commenced meditation at the city's Mahāsi Meditation Centre. Eventually he was cured of his skin disease. This is his testimony:

When I was just over sixteen years old, I went to stay in Shwe Gyin. There I ate various types of venison, the flesh of wild cats, snakes, iguanas, and other sorts of smelly meat, with little discretion. A year after eating those meats, my whole body including the arms and legs, began to itch and become painful. My blood turned unclean and impure. My complexion was spotted with white patches of leukoderma. Every night I constantly had to get up to scratch the irritating itch, which seemed to be erupting throughout the night. Because of this disease I could not make progress in school and fell behind in promotion.

I went to Dr M J for exactly three months of treatment without missing a single day. I had to take medicine and an injection daily. Each shot cost me eight kyats. I was not cured.

Then I went to a skin specialist, Dr K L, and again was given injections and medicines. After two months of treatment nothing much changed. Medical fees came up to ten kyats per day. I could only enjoy myself for brief moments when attending theatrical shows and other entertainment. Most of the time I felt pretty depressed by the irritating itch. From the age of sixteen until twenty I had to endure these sensations without even getting a single day of mental ease or comfort.

On 2 December 1974, my grandfather sent me to this Yeikthā so that I could start meditation. Within two minutes after I sat down the itch came. It did not disappear though I mindfully noted it. On 11 December the itch grew so intolerable that I fled from the Yeikthā, but even back at home the itch persisted, and I alternated between

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<sup>27</sup> "To show the Dhamma" is a literal translation of a Burmese expression which means "To give instruction on and guidance in the practice of meditation."

scratching and trying to be mindful. Dawn soon broke and Grandpa called to send me back to the Yeikthā. Though not really wanting to follow him, I had to come back. In the afternoon I went up to Sayādaw and told him that I had not been able to be mindful because the itch was unbearable.

“Note to overcome it! The itch will eventually disappear. When you take an injection, you have to pay for it and you will feel its pain. If you just note mindfully, you don’t need to spend anything and you don’t feel any pain at all!” Sayādaw answered in encouragement. Then he went on to urge me, “Be patient and intently note the itch with uninterrupted mindfulness! Eventually it will vanish.”

Inspired, I went back to sit for the 4.00 – 5.00 pm session. Barely five minutes had gone by when the itch came. Resolute in overcoming it, I duly noted “itching, itching,” and sure enough, eventually it disappeared! I was overjoyed. During the first sitting session of the night, from 6.00 – 7.00 pm, the itch returned. This time it was really intense, and it caused tears to fall. Though I was persistent and firmly continued to note it, quivering and shivering like someone possessed by spirits, the itch did not go away. Then I brought my attention back to the rise and fall of the abdomen, and began watching and noting that instead. While I was doing so the itch suddenly and miraculously disappeared! I haven’t the slightest idea how that happened.

In the days that followed, every time that itch occurred, it would eventually vanish upon being noted. I was very happy and my enthusiasm for sitting was tremendously strengthened. On the 20<sup>th</sup> the itch came again. At first it simply would not go away though I noted it. Tears fell, and I was sweating. Suddenly, the entire body was seized by convulsions, but I was resolute, and it was only through persistent noting that the itch finally vanished. How that could have happened, I simply had no idea at all!

During the 3.00 – 5.00 am sitting session on 10 January 1975, my legs, arms, back and head were itching badly. With mindful noting, the itch disappeared, but later, while I was still engaged in the process of mindful noting, the en-tire body suddenly became itchy. On being firmly noted, all itching sensations abruptly vanished, as though leaving the body through the crown of the head. The uncomfortable heat that I had also been feeling disappeared too in a similar way. At around 11.00 am, as I was sitting outside for a while just before

bathing, a stray dog came to sit beside me. I chased it away because I could not stand its stench, but the stink was still there even when I entered my room.

“Wherever is the stink coming from?” I wondered, and started to look around, only to discover that my own body was the very source of the stench! Quickly I bathed, washing and scrubbing my body with soap, but to no avail, for the foul odour could not be eliminated. For exactly two days, until the 12<sup>th</sup>, I stank, but because I felt rather embarrassed, I did not tell Sayādaw about it at that time. After that, while I was mindfully noting it, the dog-stink vanished. All the itching and irritating sensations also disappeared. My blood became clear and pure again, the white patches of leukoderma vanished, and my skin was restored to its normal fresh, smooth and pleasant complexion.

Afterwards when I went to the Dermatological Hospital for a medical check-up, the nurses were greatly surprised, for they had once said, “No matter how many injections you are given, this disease might never be cured!” No wonder they were surprised! Then when they asked how the disease got cured, I explained, “I went to Mahāsi Meditation Centre and meditated. As I continuously observed and noted all the mind and matter arising, the disease vanished altogether.

“Hey!” they exclaimed, full of praise, “This Dhamma is really powerful, huh!”

This is the testimony of Yogi Win Myint who had suffered from an itchy skin disease called leukoderma for three years, as related to Sayādaw U Sujāta.

# Cases from Sayādaw U Nandiya

(of Satipaṭṭhāna Yeikthā, Taw Ku Village, Mu Done Township)

## Abandoned incurable cured

**W**HEN U Nandiya, a meditation teacher, was still a layman he was afflicted by numerous illnesses. He had suffered for years from hemiplegia, hydrocele and frequent spells of giddiness. Abandoning him as an incurable, native doctors refused to treat him.

After becoming a bhikkhu, he had a serious attack of fever and four months of medical treatment brought only slight improvement. Mustering up as much strength as possible from the little left, he resolutely approached Sayādaw U Paṇḍava of Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Monastery, Moulmein for meditation.

However, he did not immediately commence his retreat upon arrival because he was feeling rather weak, but while waiting to recover strength he again contemplated, “Old age, pain, and death do not put off the days or tarry. If I keep postponing I will surely fall into the abyss of foolishness. On this very day I shall start meditation!”

So, with a resolute mind he began to meditate right on that day. He did not speak to a single person, locked himself up in his room and resolutely meditated. He relentlessly watched and noted all sensations that arose, with diligence.

By not changing postures frequently and being patient, he could steadily remain attentively mindful for longer and longer stretches of time—from an hour to two, two to three, three to four hours, and so forth. By the time he was able to do so for a six-hour stretch, the coarser painful sensations had diminished, and when he could remain immovable and mindful in one single posture for twelve hours, all the finer sensations completely vanished. In the most natural way he was relieved of all evident painful sensations as well as the various illnesses he was then suffering from. It should be noted with conviction that this healing and relief resulted from great fortitude in the persistent application of intent mindfulness.

It may justly be said that it is extremely difficult to find such rare qualities of great fortitude and diligent effort as were found in U Nandiya. Any painful sensation whatsoever that occurred was never ignored, but made the very object of intent mindfulness; not with the attitude of “I simply will not stand it if I don’t win.” Instead, with the view of “My task is to be mindful of whatever occurs,” he continued noting mindfully. And in doing so he was indeed eventually relieved of all painful sensations.

Fifteen years ago when he had 17 Rains (*vassa*), U Nandiya started showing the Dhamma<sup>28</sup> to yogis. The method shown was of course, based on Mahāsi Sayādaw’s way of meditation. Special encouragement was given to maintain any one posture. By instructing yogis intending to change positions to be mindful of those very initial intentions to shift, before they actually changed, he gradually lengthened the time of a posture from fifteen minutes to half an hour, and so forth. This prolongation of a posture may seem to be a tall order—to be mindful to the extent of “Shouldering an unbearable burden.” Not so. As the Burmese saying goes, “If strength is inadequate, lower your pride.” So too, if yogis were unable to continue being mindful, they could change postures and then be mindful.<sup>29</sup> In this way, yogis were able to strive for an hour to two, two to three hours, and so forth, for increasingly longer periods. They were also able to be mindful of whatever sensations that occurred.

Some yogis could remain mindful in a single posture for twelve hours and even up to fifteen hours without shifting their bodies or limbs. Some were instructed to practise more in postures that were appropriate for their states of health.

For instance, those suffering from giddiness and hemiplegia were instructed to be mindful mainly in the standing posture, while those suffering from piles, mainly in the sitting posture. Accordingly, when they could remain mindful for six hours or more, they were relieved of their illnesses. As they noted mindfully their postures became much more stable. Subsequently all the painful sensations and ailments completely vanished and they felt great ease and comfort.

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<sup>28</sup> See footnote 27.

<sup>29</sup> Translator’s paraphrase: “If the pain became so intense or unbearable that the yogis were no longer able to note objects keenly, they could change position so that mindful noting could be effectively continued in another posture.”

Yogis were recommended to start being mindful in the sitting posture. When unable to prolong mindfulness in that position they were advised to be mindful while walking. So too from walking to standing and from standing to lying, but since the yogi is most likely to fall asleep in the lying posture, instructions were given to start by being mindful while sitting and then change postures as in the order listed above, maintaining each posture for one to two hours. While thus engaged in unbroken mindfulness and the changing of postures, the yogi's body will become heavy, unmoving and stiff as a corpse as he lies stretched on the bed. He will not fall asleep. Instead, unclouded by *avijjā* (not-knowing), but indeed with mindfulness and knowledge, he will remain still and calm, noting without any interruption. This tranquillity may last for one whole day or even as long as a day and night. Yogis have recounted personal experiences of discovering their illnesses and painful sensations actually disappearing, with the body feeling very light when they moved from the still and mindful state.

Below are some cases, from among the many, of yogis who experienced the disappearance of illnesses and pain through gradual prolongation of a posture and in the case of male yogis, with Sayādaw U Nandiya nearby, personally watching over the frightened ones.

## 1. Cured of bronchitis and malaria

Sayādaw U Vaṃsapāla of Dhammikāyone Monastery, Kyaik-Kar Village, Mu Done Township, had suffered from giddiness, asthmatic bronchitis and malaria since 1950. Though he had recourse to what he thought was suitable medicine, they gave only temporary relief. The ailments recurred every now and then.

Spurred by *saṃvega* he meditated, at first for a period of two weeks. In the month of Tawthalin, 1335 BE [around September 1973], he again meditated for a second time for about three months. He was able to be continuously mindful through the sitting and standing postures for twelve and eight hours respectively and was appreciably relieved of the ailments and pain.

Thus inspired, he returned to strive for the third time so that the ailments might be completely cured. Indeed, within a week he could be continuously mindful for fourteen hours in all the three postures of lying, sitting, and standing. Giddiness, asthmatic bronchitis, malaria

and all the former painful sensations vanished once and for all. This third meditation retreat lasted for five months and thirteen days.

One day while Sayādaw U Vaṃsapāla was thus engaged in being mindful of painful sensations, the gong for lunch was struck. In spite of that he did not shift but continued observant noting. Later in the night, after the pain had vanished, unpleasant sensations of giddiness, hunger and heat occurred almost simultaneously. With mindful noting of those very sensations, giddiness disappeared after about two hours, followed by hunger and finally heat.

## **2. Cured of a host of ailments**

Senior monk U Uttara of Ga Mone Monastery, Tagun Village, Mu Done Township, had been afflicted for years with giddiness, heart ailment, piles, urinary troubles, jaundice, ache in the buttocks, and lumbago. In the year 1975 he entered the Rains in Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Monastery and meditated. He was almost at the point of tears as intense and unbearable pain occurred. Instructions were given to be mindful of it just as it happened. At first he was only fairly able to note mindfully, but day by day, mindfulness improved. By the time he was steady in his posture, the painful sensation had diminished in intensity; and when he could be mindful for a continuous stretch of six to seven hours, all the above-mentioned painful illnesses vanished. Today he lives quite comfortably in his resident monastery, continuing to practise mindfulness with no need for massage.

## **3. Cured of urinary problem**

A resident bhikkhu, U Ñāṇadhaja of Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Monastery, Taw Gu Village, Mu Done Township, suffered from constricting pains in the abdomen. A doctor advised an operation.

“Before going for the operation, try meditation!” Sayādaw U Nandiya advised him.

“I frequently feel the need to urinate every now and then. Yet when I do go, only a little bit comes out.”

“Your belly pain could probably be due to this,” said Sayādaw U Nandiya encouragingly, and instructed him to be mindful. “Whenever you feel like wanting to urinate, you should intently note ‘wanting to urinate, wanting to urinate’.”

He noted mindfully as instructed and expelled a total of twenty-seven tiny white stones in succession. U Nāṇadhaja was thus completely cured of abdominal pain and the frequent urge to urinate.

#### **4. Complete cure for a bhikkhu**

U Sin, a late-comer into the Saṅgha who had been ordained under, and was then residing with his preceptor (*upajjhāya*) U Nandiya, suffered from giddiness, fatigue, constricting pains and was hard of hearing. One day, meditating according to Sayādaw U Nandiya's instructions, he was able to be continuously mindful for about six hours; whereupon the painful sensations diminished, and he felt quite relieved. With continuous observant noting he was completely cured. All those painful sensations never occurred again even when he maintained mindfulness for increasingly longer periods of time, right up to twelve hours.

#### **5. Cured of giddiness**

Eighteen-year-old Ma Than Yi, daughter of Tagun villager U Thein Hlaing, had suffered from giddiness for over ten years. She came to the Yeikthā, and with faith and diligence, meditated intently. On the third day she was able to be continuously mindful in a single posture for about three hours. She could then also mindfully note her giddiness. Each time it was noted, the giddiness vanished. Later on, though she was mindful for prolonged periods, the giddiness never occurred again. She had been completely cured.

#### **6. Cured of ten-year ailment after ten days**

Twenty-year-old Ma Khin Than, daughter of Taw Gu villagers U Ngo and Daw Win Kyi, had suffered from constricting pains in the abdomen for over ten years when she came to the Yeikthā to meditate. On the third day when mindfulness could be maintained for three hours, she vomited some lumps from her belly. She also had diarrhoea. Instructions were given to be mindful of her symptoms as they happened. After ten days the ailment never occurred again, right up till today.

#### **7. Abdominal pains disappear**

Sixty-year-old U Win of Naing Hlone Village had suffered from constricting pains in the abdomen for many years when he arrived



at the Yeikthā to meditate. At about 8.00 pm on the third night, as he was being mindful according to instructions, he vomited about two spittoons of hard solid matter.<sup>30</sup>

The abdominal pain disappeared too. With his continued observant noting, the sickness never occurred again.

## **8. No more dependent on a masseur**

Seventy-year-old U Tut of Tagun Daing Village suffered from giddiness and pains; so he always had to have a masseur standing by to attend to his needs. He was also afflicted with piles and bronchitis. He came to the Yeikthā for meditation. At first he was able to be mindful for only about an hour. He prolonged it progressively to up to four hours. All the various painful sensations gradually diminished until eventually they vanished completely.

## **9. Cured of a stomach tumour**

Daw Ngwe Thein of Tagun Village had intestinal colic and a tumour in her belly. Medicine dispensed by a clinic did not cure her ailments; so she went to the General Hospital for a check-up and was told by the doctor that she would have to undergo an operation. She was already seventy-five years old and because of weakness she did not dare to undergo the operation.

“If I die, let me die with mindfulness,” she said, and came to the Yeikthā for meditation. At the beginning, she could not be mindful for long in a single posture, but was gradually able to prolong her mindfulness. As much as she could be mindful, her ailments diminished too. When she was able to maintain mindfulness in a single posture for a five to six-hour stretch, all her sicknesses vanished. Now (1975) at the age of seventy-eight, it has been three years since they disappeared, never to recur.

## **10. Another cured of a tumour**

Fifty-five-year-old Daw Sein Ti of Kyaik Kwe Village suffered from constricting pains due to a tumour in the abdomen. For the past fifteen years she had had to take soda. She came to the Yeikthā for the Dhamma therapy prescribed by the Buddha<sup>31</sup> and was mindful

<sup>30</sup> Literally “indurated faeces,” which would obviously be out of place in this context; so, it is possibly undigested food, which is somewhat similar to indurated faeces.

<sup>31</sup> Literally, “for treatment with Dhamma-medicine given by the Buddha.”

according to the teacher's instructions. Day by day, as her posture became steadier, the intensity of the illness diminished too. When she could be mindful for a seven-hour stretch, the illness and all painful sensations completely vanished. Now (1975) she is already sixty, and no longer needs to take soda, nor are there any more constricting pains in the belly. Her meditation retreat lasted sixteen days.

### **11. Chronic pains of forty years eradicated in a retreat**

Ever since she was thirty, Daw Ma Le of Tagun Daing Village had suffered from abdominal pains. In the past, meditation centres<sup>32</sup> had not yet been established. So the thought of meditation did not occur to her. When she was seventy years old, a meditation centre near her village had become quite prominent; so one day she went and meditated. Just like most people, she could only be fairly mindful at the beginning, but practising according to the teacher's instruction to gradually prolong and maintain the posture, she could eventually be mindful for five to six hours at a stretch. Then her illness vanished. Now (1975) she is already eighty-eight and her illness has never recurred.

### **12. Cured of illness of twenty years**

U Yasa, a resident bhikkhu of Mahāyin Monastery, Kun Dar Village, Mu Done Township, had suffered from giddiness and hydrocele for over twenty years when he arrived at the Yeikthā to meditate. Only when he reached the stage where posture could be maintained for four hours did his illness diminish in intensity, giving some relief. As he carried on noting mindfully, they completely disappeared. And when he could be continuously mindful in the standing posture for twelve hours, the sickness never recurred.

### **13. Cured of paralysis**

Daw Khyi, a lady from Kant Baloo Town, Shwe Bo District, had fallen from a tree and a leg became partially paralysed. At Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon she met a nun from Myowa Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Monastery, Moulmein and followed her via Moulmein to arrive at Taw Gu Village Yeikthā. At first she still could not be very mindful. However, as she gradually improved and could

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<sup>32</sup> Literally, "Dhamma-showing Yeikthās." See footnote 27 for "Dhamma-showing" and glossary for "Yeikthā."

be mindful for four hours at a stretch, her disability and pain diminished in intensity, giving some relief. About a month later she was able to be continuously mindful for seven hours and was completely healed of hemiplegia.

#### 14. Persuaded by relatives to meditate

Before U Nandiya established Taw Gu Village Yeikthā, he was residing at Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Monastery in Kok Karait Town teaching the Dhamma. Around the year 1963, there was a woman in the town called Daw Kyaw Khin who suffered from ascites, which swelled up her belly as though she was pregnant. She went for a medical check-up, and the doctor said, “We must operate. It will cost about a thousand kyats, but we do not guarantee it will be cured.”

Because of fear, she did not go for the operation, but because of her relatives’ encouragement and pressure on her to meditate, she arrived at the Yeikthā quite against her own wishes.

“There are bold ghosts and fierce spirits of the departed (*peta*) in that Yeikthā, and they could very well scare the wits out of you!” This rumour had gone round and Daw Kyaw Khin had heard it too—only too well. No wonder she did not want to come!

Upon her arrival, Sayādaw U Nandiya gave instructions to be mindful in the lying position, the posture most appropriate for her condition. As she mindfully noted her posture, her body felt increasingly heavy until it became immovable. Thinking that she was being possessed by a bold ghost, she lost her mindfulness.

“I’ve been possessed by a bold ghost! I’m going to die! You all have come to kill me, huh! I’m not staying any longer! Send me back,” she cried hysterically as she struggled in a frenzy to get up. Angry at all those people who had sent her to the Yeikthā, she scolded them roundly.

“Don’t leave, dakamagi.<sup>33</sup> Don’t be angry. Well, do apologise for what you’ve unwittingly said, of course. You’ve been very fortunate to be able to come and meet me, you know, and I’m regarding the situation on an intimate brother-sister basis. If you don’t want to lie down, don’t, but listen to what I have to say. Well, you can walk over there for a while. When feeling heavy, note ‘heavy, heavy,’ and if you feel light, note it as ‘light, light.’ Do keep on noting for an hour or

<sup>33</sup> A feminine form of dakāgyi. See footnote 26.

two; for as long as you can. If you can't walk any more, just stop and stand over there. When you feel heavy, note 'heavy, heavy' and if it's light, note 'light, light.' Do keep noting for as long as possible. Then if you can't stand any longer sit by the side of your bed and note for a while. When feeling heavy, note 'heavy, heavy,' and when light, note 'light, light' for as long as you can. If again you can't sit any more lie gently on the bed and if you feel heavy, note 'heavy, heavy.' If you feel light, note 'light, light.' Just carry on noting, that's all. If you should fall asleep, let it be! When you're lying down, don't be afraid of anything! I will send loving-kindness (*mettā*) and watch over..." Thus Sayādaw coaxed her to keep on noting.

The dakamagi, who was afraid to lie down, finally assumed the lying position because she could no longer be mindful in the other three postures. With the intention to sleep, her whole body became heavy and immovable and she was quite calmly mindful. However, instead of falling asleep, she maintained mindfulness for three hours and the whole body became light. Her distended belly also deflated and regained its normal condition. Upon getting up she reported joyously to Sayādaw, "I'm so amazed, Bhante,<sup>34</sup> really amazed! My whole body has become so light, Bhante! My belly has gone down too, Bhante!"

## 15. Sickly after a fall

A boy named Yang Aung of Taw Gu Village suffered from constricting pains, headaches, and tumours in the abdomen after falling down from a tree. Nothing much came out of the healing efforts made by native doctors. An elder monk (*thera*) even pronounced, "Liver failure, incurable." The complexion of his whole body was very sickly. He came to the Yeikthā and while meditating felt something inside the abdomen, like a top spinning. It also ached. After about ten days a sound like "gayoke" came from the abdomen. "It's burst open," he thought. At the same time a rotten smell emitted from his mouth. There was saliva and heat. On another day he felt light and relieved. When he could be mindful in either one of the sitting or standing postures for a continuous stretch of six hours, all the illnesses vanished. He was also able to be mindful sitting for six hours followed by another six of lying down at a stretch. Later he became a *sāmaṇera*

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<sup>34</sup> Venerable Sir (often used when addressing a bhikkhu).

and until today (14<sup>th</sup> waning day of Tabodwe, 1338 BE, i.e. around February 1976) he is still residing in Taw Gu Yeikthā.

## 16. Mentally deranged boy

A boy named Maung Than Win from Moulmein became mentally deranged, speaking and doing as he liked. An exorcist could not help him. The Psychiatric Hospital was no help either. In spite of taking medicine prescribed by the doctor from the General Hospital, there was no improvement in his condition. He finally came to meditate at Taw Gu Yeikthā. Gradually his mind calmed down. When he could stay mindful in a single posture for about six hours, he was completely cured of his condition. Right now, i.e. 14<sup>th</sup> waning day of Tabodwe, 1338 BE [around February 1976], he is still a *sāmaṇera*.

## 17. Miscellaneous cases

- a. Ma Kyin Myaing of Moulmein was cured of piles while noting mindfully and continuously in the four postures, as instructed by the teacher.
- b. Daw Pyone of Mu Done Town was cured of deafness while meditating.
- c. Maung Me of Taw Gu Village was cured of hydrocele and constricting pains in the abdomen while noting for four hours in the sitting and standing postures. He had suffered from these ailments for three and ten years respectively. He no longer needs massage as in the past.
- d. UHnyunt, a gentleman from Kawk Pi Daw Village, had suffered from hydrocele for about ten years when he came to the Yeikthā to meditate. He could be mindful in the standing and sitting postures for three hours. Within seven days, he was cured of the affliction.
- e. Ma Kun Me, a lady from Naing Hlone Village, had suffered from partial paralysis of the leg and high blood pressure for about ten years. She came to the Yeikthā, meditated and as a result, was cured of these ailments.
- f. Daw Them Tin of Kawk Pi Daw Village was cured of her month-long partial paralysis of the leg through mindfulness, within a week after arriving at the Yeikthā.

- g. Daw Dhammavati, a nun from Ka Lawk Thawk Village, came to meditate at the Yeikthā. She was mindful through all the four postures, and could note observantly for as long as twelve hours in the standing and sitting positions. She was cured of the piles, which had afflicted her.
- h. Sixty-year old U Waw of Taung Bawk Village came to meditate at the Yeikthā. Before seven days, he was cured of partial paralysis of the leg, a condition which he had suffered from for about five years.

### Note by Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw

The above report (nos. 1 – 17) was submitted to Mahāsi Sayādaw by U Nandiya of Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Yeikthā, Taw Gu Village, Mu Done Township in the month of Tabodwe, 1338 BE [February 1976]. Sayādaw U Nandiya himself was able to remain continuously mindful while standing or sitting for more than twelve hours at a stretch, and in the lying posture, he could remain mindful for twenty-four to twenty-six hours continuously. It is said that until he got up from the bed there was no shifting of body and limbs, his body posture remaining just as when he first lay down.

Yogis who came to him were also typically instructed to prolong their observant noting, following his own example. Especially typical were instructions to maintain observant noting while standing for three hours initially, then progressively prolong the time. Presently he is already ninety years old with thirty-two Rains, still healthy and able to move about. In his foregoing report only cases of healing were given. Occurrences of special insight knowledge were not described. However, it should be noted that the healing of serious illnesses comes about through the power of strong [i.e. highly developed] enlightenment factors associated with knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbayañāṇa*) and subsequent insights occurring in yogis who are able to maintain unbroken mindfulness in a single posture for prolonged periods of three hours and more.

# Some Remarkable Cases: Sayādaw U Paṇḍita

## 1. Old ailments healed within a month

**F**IFTY-YEAR-OLD Daw Khin Sein of 32, Race Course South Side, Ta Mwe, Rangoon, had been afflicted by a lump in the abdomen from the age of forty-five. This caused painful stiffness in the upper chest (epigastrium), headache, giddiness, dyspepsia and other disorders. These symptoms would be aggravated if she ate food that was difficult to digest. Treatment with traditional, western and various medicines had no effect.

Finally her own son, a doctor, suggested that surgery might be necessary. However, because Daw Khin Sein was frightened by the thought of having to undergo an operation, or perhaps because the desire to meditate had just arisen, she arrived at the Yeikthā on the 8<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Hnaung Tagu, 1337 BE [April 1975].

After a few days of meditation, she suffered a serious attack of the symptoms caused by the lump. “Coming to the Yeikthā was a mistake,” she lamented then, and even thought of fleeing the Yeikthā. Besides, the symptoms of an old injury in her big toe caused by a tough sundri<sup>35</sup> log during her younger days recurred, bringing her to the point of tears. An ache in the upper arm which she had suffered from two years ago also recurred, quite intensely too.

Although the recurrence of these old ailments tormented her severely, she carried out the teacher’s instructions with diligent effort. Then, while engaged in intent mindfulness, the old wound caused by the log and the pain in the upper arm completely vanished. Her body felt cool and comfortable, without any sign of those ailments. So there was an increase in enthusiasm for meditation, and on the twenty-eighth day into the retreat, the large lump which had gone right up till the upper chest and caused so much discomfort, moved downwards. It then disintegrated with a ‘phyoke!’ Sound, and dissolved. Consequently, the blood discharged from the disintegra-

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<sup>35</sup> Burmese name of a species of timber.

tion of the large lump soiled her lower garments, so that they had to be frequently changed in the next few days.

Thus she also had a penetrative insight into the heavy burden of the body. And though she had thought that this great discharge of blood would make her weak; on the contrary, she felt surprisingly much stronger than before. She felt comfortable and experienced clarity of mind and body.

With the disintegration of the large tumour, the accompanying ailments were completely cured too. So apart from expressing her thanks to the Sayādaws she was also filled with boundless gratitude for her husband who had allowed her to meditate. After that she continued meditating with keen faith to the satisfaction of the Sayādaws and attained extraordinary *vipassanā* insights. Though in the past she had to be careful about her choice of food, from that time on she could eat as desired, no longer having to be selective. Within ten days after returning home, she went for a medical checkup and was informed that an operation was no longer necessary. Till today [1977], Daw Khin Sein is still healthy, managing social and spiritual affairs much better than ever before.

## 2. Hypertension of 29 years cured in a single retreat

Fifty-nine-year-old Daw Than, who lived in the Labourer Quarters at Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, had suffered from hypertension since the age of thirty. Treatment with traditional, western and all sorts of medicines gave some relief, but did not result in a total cure. As the hypertension was persistent, she had to check her blood pressure daily. She experienced much body and mental suffering. Though there was a desire to meditate, she did not do so, thinking that with her bad state of health she would not be able to be mindful.

However in the month of Kasone, 1337 BE [May 1975], because the desire became very strong, she strove for *vipassanā* Dhamma at the Yeikthā, which was also her own home. Nothing very significant occurred at the beginning, but about five days into the retreat, her blood pressure was so very high that she was unable to lift up her head. And when her children from home called to take her for medical treatment she thought, “It would be much better and nobler for me to die while meditating.” So she did not return home, but continued to strive on.



While sitting mindfully, she swayed, leaning as though about to fall over. The whole body was heavy and sluggish. Thus engaged in being continuously mindful of whatever was occurring—following the teacher’s instructions not to allow any slip in mindfulness—she felt something burst within her chest. Lights emitted from her whole body which was engulfed in heat. After that her meditation was very good. At the beginning she had to try quite hard to sit mindfully even for an hour. However, after that incident, for the later part of her retreat, she could sit mindfully for as long as two and a half hours; yet it felt as if she had been sitting joyfully and comfortably for only a short moment without any tiredness at all. The whole body felt light and painful sensations were absent for they had been extinguished. She continued striving to the satisfaction of the Sayādaws till she ended the retreat and upon leaving the meditation centre no hypertension was detected. Previously her face was slightly swollen and the head always felt heavy; now there was no longer such discomfort. Upon checking, she found no indication of hypertension. In a written statement Daw Than declared that she was completely cured of hypertension through the ‘grace’ of *vipassanā* Dhamma. Presently, she is as healthy and well as ever.

### 3. Heart surgery bypassed in ten-day retreat

Daw Myint Myint Kyi of 11 Shan Lein Road, San Kyaung Section, Rangoon, had been tormented by heart disease since the age of twenty-three. In the year 1328 BE [1966] she went for a medical check-up and was informed that she had to undergo an operation in fourteen days’ time. Aiming to be established in the Three Refuges—should she die while being operated on—she invited the Saṅgha headed by Mahāsi Sayādaw for a meal. She offered gifts, took refuge and precepts and performed the water ritual in the dedication ceremony.<sup>36</sup> At that time, Mahāsi Sayādaw remarked that it would be good if she could meditate before going for the operation. So she came to the meditation centre and after five days she felt as though

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<sup>36</sup> Burmese Buddhist custom requires a water-pouring ritual after—though at times, even before—performing a significant meritorious deed, especially Saṅghadāna (e.g. hosting a meal for the Saṅgha, offering a completed monastery building to the Saṅgha). The ritual dedicates the deed towards the fulfilment of the donor’s aspirations, such as ‘sharing’ merits with specific persons and eventual liberation from all suffering.

the whole body was filled with pus. Her heart ached. Since she could not be mindful while sitting, she walked mindfully. Then after four to five hours of walking mindfully she sat to meditate at 10.00 pm. About twenty minutes later she was startled by an explosive sound; she felt her heart burst apart and her arms and legs flung open awkwardly. She also 'saw' a marble-sized lump bursting. After that though she continued observant noting, except for a good feeling in her posture, nothing else happened. Meditating for another five days proved to be just as good.

After only ten days of meditating, she had to go back for a medical check-up whereupon the doctor declared that there was no longer any need for an operation. After that whenever the slightest pain occurred, mere mindfulness of it would result in it disappearing. This April (1977) when she went for a medical check-up at the hospital, the doctor said that the hypertension had been cured completely. Daw Myint Myint Kyi herself also said that she felt really good without the slightest discomfort. Her hypertension had been completely cured by mere observant noting, without having to go through any surgery.

# Special Cases of Cures: Sayādaw U Saṃvara

## 1. Leg injury of six years cured within a month

**D**AW Thein Khyit of 119, 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Rangoon, fractured her ankle<sup>37</sup> while nursing her grandchild when the rope of the swing she was sitting on snapped. The doctor inserted screws in her leg. However because of her injury, she could not bend her legs properly and so she had to suffer much discomfort. It seemed that this condition had been so for six years. Then she came to the meditation centre and on the twentieth day into her meditation retreat which she had started on the 8<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Kasone, 1339 BE [May 1977], she could bend her leg and sit as desired; for with the deepening of mindfulness the injury was totally healed. Presently [in the month of Nayone (June)] she is still meditating in the meditation centre.

## 2. Childhood ‘wind’ ailment cured in two weeks

Sixty-four-year-old Daw Nu of 1 Hsin Hla Road, Ah Lone Section, Rangoon, had suffered from ‘wind’ since the age of fourteen or fifteen. Often recurring every two or three months, it felt as though the chest and the back were pressing against each other, giving rise to much discomfort. On the 14<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Hnaung Tagu she arrived at the meditation centre and meditated. About a week later the illness recurred. Her chest was constricted and the belly swelled up so tightly that she thought she was about to fall over. While noting mindfully according to her teacher’s instructions, she expelled phlegm after which she felt at ease. Three or four days later the symptoms reappeared as she was noting. She felt something moving gently within her back. As a result of unrelenting mindfulness, she was completely cured. She persevered in her meditation till she qualified for Nyanzin. Presently she is still around, happy and in good health.

<sup>37</sup> A more accurate translation gives “Had her malleolus bone (one of the two protruding knob-like bones just below the ankle) fractured and crushed.”

### 3. Chronic pains of twenty-one years cured in a retreat

Seventy-year-old Daw Hla of 118, 5<sup>th</sup> Lane, off Sakkawut Road, North Okkalapa, had suffered for twenty-one years from pain in the nape and stinging, pricking numbness that extended from the temple to the eye sockets. She always had to have ointments and medicated oils with her so that she could apply them whenever needed. Eventually one of her eyes was ruined. She had to avoid offensive singeing smells<sup>38</sup> and was carefully selective in her diet. On stooping (or nodding) she would feel stinging pain in the head. On the 1<sup>st</sup> waning day of Tagu, 1338 BE [April 1976], she came to the meditation centre to meditate. Three days later she felt stinging pains within her nape. Though she noted mindfully they did not go away. However, she persevered according to her teacher's instructions, and just as a firmly fixed wedge is extracted, the painful sensations vanished. As she continued to meditate, her concentration and insight deepened. While previously she had to see the doctor monthly, now she doesn't need to; she has done away with all the ointments and medicated oils too. With those ailments completely cured, she is now very happy.

### 4. Cured of burning constrictions

Sixty-six-year-old Daw Tha of 421 Dhamma Yone Road, Section 16, South Okkalapa, was afflicted with ever-present painful constrictions in the back of the shoulder and back and her breathing was affected. Massage gave only momentary relief. If she sat down quietly for ten to fifteen minutes she would feel burning constrictions within her back as if being jabbed with a burning stick. On the 4<sup>th</sup> waning day of Kasone, 1339 BE [around May 1977], she came to the meditation centre to meditate. She carefully and mindfully noted rising-falling-sitting-touching-constricting, according to her teacher's instructions. As a result of such mindfulness the constriction vanished. Two or three days later it recurred, but disappeared again when she noted intently only to appear another time, constricting unbearably. She persisted in noting and it steadily

<sup>38</sup> "...an offensive singeing smell, as any oily substance when fried or otherwise subjected to the action of fire; also applied to the sulphurous fumes of lucifer matches...persons who are ill with fever, or suffering from any other serious ailment amongst the Burmese, are in great terror of such smells, and many deaths are attributed to their effect (on the human system)."—Judson's Burmese-English Dictionary.

decreased in intensity in stages. Then all at once it completely vanished. Breathing became easy and comfortable. Even now she is still happily meditating.

### **5. Stiff thigh of five years cured**

Sixty-three-year-old Daw Nyan Ein of 108 Anawratha Road, Rangoon, suffered from stiffness of the right thigh for about five years. When she walked the thigh would become taut. When bowing down before the Buddha image, she could not sit properly. She had to sit in a most awkward position, propped on one knee. She needed massage twice or thrice a month, but it did not help much. Though many had urged her to meditate, she had not dared to since she could not even sit properly. Finally on the eve of Thingyan,<sup>39</sup> the 10<sup>th</sup> waning day of Hnaung Tagu, 1338 BE [April 1976], she came to the meditation centre. As a result of serious observant noting according to the teacher's instructions, a month later she was able to sit normally. Then with continued observant noting, the stiffness in the thigh completely disappeared. She recovered her health and she persevered meditating mindfully until she qualified for Nyanzin. Presently she is still meditating.

### **6. Cured of asthmatic bronchitis of four years**

Sixty-eight-year-old Daw Kyin Yone of 439 Kone The Road, Rangoon, had suffered from asthmatic bronchitis since about four years ago before she came for meditation. It became much worse during the hot season and exhausted her. If she got into a coughing fit, she would spit out about half a spittoon of phlegm. Having coffee and other desserts would aggravate the illness and cause a relapse. She could not sleep normally and had to do so lying prone. Each night she would have to get up—sometimes up to three times. It was much worse during the day. She had spent over two to three thousand kyats on medical fees. On the 11<sup>th</sup> waning day of Ta Baung 1338 BE (March 1976) she came to the meditation centre to meditate. After ten days the asthmatic bronchitis vanished while she was noting mindfully. No longer did she have to be careful with her diet. She

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<sup>39</sup> The Burmese New Year-cum-Water Festival, a particularly auspicious occasion, especially for the pious, to observe the eight precepts and for meditation. In 1981 there was a peak total of 2,300 yogis just in Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, over the week-long festival.

continued meditating until she qualified for Nyanzin. She is still around, ever in good health.

### 7. Eleven years of gastric troubles gone in twenty-two days

Fifty-two-year-old Daw Kin Shwe of 231, Awbar Road, Taik Kyi Town, had suffered from gastric problems ever since she was forty-one. Without food, the stomach would be painful; and with too much food, it ached. She survived mostly on rice gruel. Hospitalisation and injections gave only temporary relief. Treatment by traditional Burmese doctors also had the same result. She spent an enormous amount on medical fees and grew thinner. Finally, she resorted to soda, always having it nearby to fulfil her needs. For eleven whole years she was tormented by such gastric troubles.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Hnaung Tagu, 1338 BE [April 1976] she arrived at the meditation centre to meditate. Four to five days later the disease vanished as she was noting mindfully. She had a relapse on the twentieth day. However, on instructions from the teacher, she noted the pain mindfully and intently and the disease totally vanished after two days. It never came back again. On the 7<sup>th</sup> waning day of Kasone [about forty-two days after her arrival at the meditation centre] she qualified for Nyanzin, and then continued to strive on until the 8<sup>th</sup> waxing day of Nayone [i.e. the following month]. Presently she no longer needs to watch her diet and can enjoy eating once more. She put on weight, dispensed with injections and took home unused, the medicines that she had brought with her for use while in retreat. Right now at the time of recording this account [10<sup>th</sup> waning day of Nayone] she is healthy and happy.

### 8. Thigh injury of two years cured in fifteen days

Fifty-two-year-old Daw Tin Tin of 42 Ye Kyaw Myaung Kyi Road, Rangoon, fell and injured her left thigh. Treatment with various medicines gave some relief, but not a total cure. During *pūjā*,<sup>40</sup> and even when requesting the precepts, she could not sit properly because of the pain. It had been so for two years when she came to the meditation centre for meditation on the 1<sup>st</sup> waning day of Hnaung Tagu, 1338 BE [April 1976]. Upon sitting, after having made a

<sup>40</sup> Religious service of worshipping the Triple Gem (the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha) by making material offerings and reciting Buddhist devotional passages.

resolution to do so for an hour, she experienced discomfort as though a large lump was protruding at her buttock. Duly noting that, she thought it left through her thigh with a bubbling sound. At the beginning she could sit only three times a day. After about fifteen days into the retreat she could sit for two to three hours at a stretch, and for more than five times a day. Finally she could sit for as long as four hours continuously. Fifteen days later she was totally healed of the sickness.

Presently she is well and happy; no longer having to depend on medicines or massage. Altogether she meditated for about fifty days until she qualified for Nyanzin. At home she would practise observant noting whenever possible.

There are still innumerable accounts of such people who were remarkably healed of illnesses. However, it is believed that this much evidence will suffice.

# Healing as a Result of the Enlightenment Factors

**T**HAT critical illnesses have been cured without the help of mantras<sup>41</sup> or conventional medicines, as related in the accounts above, is indeed a very wonderful thing. Of course, for those who have a high regard only for conventional medicines, such cases would not be credible. Nevertheless because the above-mentioned accounts of persons healed of illnesses are evidently true, disbelief would only render the knowledge on such matters beyond one's ability to understand.

At one time, Ven Mahākassapa Thera was unwell, afflicted with illness. Upon listening to the Buddha discourse on the seven enlightenment factors (*bojjhaṅga*) he was completely cured. Ven Mahāmoggallāna Thera also listened to a similar discourse given by the Buddha and was completely cured of illness. The Buddha himself was also totally healed of an illness when he listened to the discourse on the enlightenment factors (*bojjhaṅga*), which he had asked Ven Cunda Thera to deliver.<sup>42</sup> These events are well-known to almost every Buddhist [in Burma], and to those who have heard or known thus, the healing power of the *Bojjhaṅga* Discourse is acceptable and credible.

In such instances of healing we may ask, “Do illnesses vanish because of the sound of the discourse being delivered/recited; or is it because of the arising [of certain positive emotions such as clear faith, or] of the enlightenment factors within oneself as a result of being attentive to the discourse?”

While it is accepted [commonly by the Burmese] that healing can come about because of the [sound of the] recited discourse, it should also be noted that illnesses can vanish as a result of clear faith and so forth, arising from listening to the recited discourse. Likewise it is also plausible that healing can occur because of the power of the enlightenment factors arising within oneself while one is listening mindfully to the discourse. Among these three means, the final one

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<sup>41</sup> A sound, syllable, word or group of words that are considered capable of creating transformation.

<sup>42</sup> See SN 46:14 – 16, CDB pp1580 – 1582.



is the most stable. Therefore, a brief explanation will be given on how healing occurs through the third cause.

The Buddha had expounded thus to Ven Mahākassapa and Ven Mahāmoggallāna respectively:

“O Kassapa (Moggallāna)! These seven enlightenment factors perfectly discoursed upon by me, when activated within oneself and repeatedly developed, lead to knowing through extraordinary insight; to knowing through penetration; to nibbāna—the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering.”<sup>43</sup>

Herein by the phrase “perfectly discoursed upon” is meant “which have been actually and correctly discoursed upon only after direct personal experience.” Some people are likely to discourse on worldly or spiritual matters without personal experience or direct knowledge, but based on their own speculative reasoning. It cannot be supposed that such types of discourses are really correct. The Buddha discoursed upon the Dhamma only after having had personal experience and knowledge so that others may also experience and know just as he did; so there can be no mistakes: only the impeccable truth. Thus the Buddha extolled, “*Sammadakkhātā*—perfectly discoursed upon.”

Then by “lead to knowing through extraordinary insight” it may be asked: what dhammas are known through what sort of extraordinary way? The Four Noble Truths are known, not through mere learning, but in a very special way—by personal intuitive insight. Within oneself<sup>44</sup> there is only mind and matter. In the whole world, within others<sup>45</sup> too, there is only mind and matter. Ultimately<sup>46</sup> there

<sup>43</sup> *Sattime, Kassapa (Moggallāna), bojjhaṅgā mayā sammadakkhātā bhāvitā bahulikātā abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattanti.*

<sup>44</sup> A more literal but somewhat clumsy rendition would give: “within one’s own continuity (of existence).”

<sup>45</sup> Literally, “within another’s continuity (of existence).”

<sup>46</sup> “Ultimately” in the sense of direct, experiential perception through the six sense doors, i.e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, without passing through any process of deliberate reasoning or conceptual thinking. For instance, you may say conventionally that you are sitting on a ‘chair,’ but if you close your eyes and direct your whole attention to the areas of contact of your body with the seat, you don’t directly experience a ‘chair’—instead you will directly perceive sensations of hardness/softness, warmth/coolness, comfort/discomfort. So, in the “ultimate” sense there is no such thing as a ‘chair’—yet we cannot deny that it does exist on the conceptual and conventional level.

is really no such thing as a living being. It is extraordinary insight to know, through one's own intuitive knowledge, that because of incessant becoming and breaking up,<sup>47</sup> mind and matter is subject to impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*). Would it be possible to experience this sort of insight by mere rote learning of the Bojjhaṅga Discourse? Obviously not. So because he wanted us to know that this sort of insight can only occur by activating the enlightenment factors within oneself and by their repeated activation and development, the Buddha stated, "When activated (*bhāvitā*) within oneself and repeatedly developed (*bahulikātā*)."

So too for "Lead to knowing through penetration." Ignorance (*avijjā*) and delusion (*moha*) shroud us from knowing that at every occurrence of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking, there are only two classes of phenomena, i.e. mind and matter, exhibiting the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*. As a matter of fact, recognising [a visual object as] a woman, man and so forth, as we usually do right after the very first moment of seeing, is mistaken-knowing or delusion (*moha*). In the same way, recognising other sense objects as we usually do immediately after the first moment of hearing, etc. is none other than mistaken-knowing or delusion. So this usual mistaken-knowing of *moha* shrouds us from knowing correctly.

On the contrary, the knowledge following observant noting immediately after seeing, etc. knows true reality, i.e. the becoming and breaking up of mind and matter and its true, nature of impermanence, suffering, and not-self. Knowing the truth in this manner is none other than knowledge arrived at after penetrating through the shroud of *moha*. If the enlightenment factors are activated and developed while noting mindfully at every occurrence of seeing, hearing, etc. knowledge arises upon penetrating [through *moha*] as described. The fact of knowing something that is so difficult to know is thus called penetrative knowledge. The occurrence of penetrative knowing becomes even more apparent when finally nibbāna is realised by insight of the Noble Path (*ariyamagga*). Therefore, it is said, "lead to knowing through penetration."

According to what has just been stated, upon knowing penetratively through *vipassanā* insight and/or *magga* insight, all mental

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<sup>47</sup> A verbatim rendition of a formal expression. Practically, however, the yogi experiences it as "Appearing and disappearing," or "Arising and vanishing."

defilements and the cycles of suffering are extinguished. So the discourse declares: “*Nibbānaya saṃvattanti*”—lead to the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering. After this brief introduction to the discourse, the details were then dealt with as shown below:

“Which seven? Truly, O Kassapa, the enlightenment factor of mindfulness which has been perfectly discoursed upon by me, when activated within oneself and repeatedly developed, leads to knowing through extraordinary insight; to knowing through penetration; to nibbāna—the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering.”<sup>48</sup>

The recall or observant noting of ‘seeing,’ ‘hearing,’ etc., at each of their respective occurrence is *satisambojjhaṅga*. **Bojjhaṅga** is derived from **bodhi** = insight knowledge; and **aṅga** = causal factor, so the combination gives: “Causal factor of insight knowledge.” Actually it refers to the causal factor of *vipassanā* insight and insight of the Noble Path. According to the inferior method of interpretation (*omakanaya*), insight knowledge that discerns mind and matter (*nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*) and the next two subsequent insights<sup>49</sup> can also be considered as enlightenment factors. However, the Commentary explains that according to the superior method of interpretation (*ukkaṭṭhanaya*), the enlightenment factors start only from knowledge of arising and passing away (*udayabbayañāṇa*). The foregoing cases of the healing of sickness and vanishing of pain are likely to become apparent starting from the said stage of *udayabbayañāṇa*. Nevertheless, yogis who are meditating resolutely, ardently and wholeheartedly are likely to experience relief of their sickness from the time *vipassanā samādhi* becomes good.

So every time there is observant noting, e.g. ‘rising,’ ‘falling,’ ‘sitting,’ ‘touching,’ ‘thinking,’ ‘painful,’ ‘seeing,’ ‘hearing,’ and so forth, that recall is *satisambojjhaṅga*. It should be noted that the relief and subsequent healing of illnesses and pain is due to the enlightenment factor of mindfulness (*satisambojjhaṅga*) developed with every occurrence of observant noting. Depending on how good the noting through mindfulness is, *dhammavicaya* and the rest of the enlight-

<sup>48</sup> *Katame satta? Satisambojjhaṅgo kho, Kassapa, mayā sammadakkhāto bhāvito bahulikato abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati.*

<sup>49</sup> Insight knowledge that grasps conditionality (*paccayapariggahañāṇa*) and insight knowledge of comprehension (*sammasanañāṇa*).

enment factors will occur strongly too. *Dhammavicaya* is the intuitive insight that examines mind and matter, thereby discerning its unique natures, and common characteristic of becoming and breaking up, i.e. *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*. This intuitive insight is being developed while thus discerning, at every occurrence of observant noting. Needless to say, with this intuitive insight otherwise called *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga*, “knowing through extraordinary insight” and so forth are accomplished. Hence the Buddha proclaimed:

“Truly O Kassapa, *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga*, which has been perfectly discoursed upon by me, when activated within oneself and repeatedly developed, leads to knowing through extraordinary insight; to knowing through penetration; to *nibbāna*—the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering.”<sup>50</sup>

Next, effort is needed to note mindfully at every occurrence of observant noting. This effort is the enlightenment factor of energy (*viriyasambojjhaṅga*). Then when observant noting is exceptionally good, joy and enthusiasm (*pīti*) become apparent. It is remarkably evident especially when *udayabbayañāṇa* occurs. Following that, the peaceful state of body and mind is *passaddhi*. This *passaddhi*, too, manifests when noting is good. Concentration (*samādhi*) is the nature of the mind being firmly settled or placed on, as if sticking onto the noted object, at each occurrence of observant noting. This is evident at every moment of observant noting right from the point when noting starts to be good. The Buddha extolled these enlightenment factors beginning with the enlightenment factor of energy thus:

“Truly O Kassapa, *virīya°*, *pīti°*, *passaddhi°*, *samādhisambojjhaṅga*, which has been perfectly discoursed by me, when activated within oneself and repeatedly developed, leads to knowing through extraordinary insight; to knowing through penetration; to *nibbāna*—the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering.”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo kho, Kassapa, mayā sammadakkhāto bhāvito bahulikato abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati.*

<sup>51</sup> *Virīya°, pīti°, passaddhi°, samādhisambojjhaṅgo kho, Kassapa, mayā sammadakkhāto bhāvito bahulikato abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati.*

When noting and (insight) knowledge is exceptionally good, i.e. no special effort is needed either to make the noted object clear<sup>52</sup> or to note observantly, insight may occur as if automatically knowing.<sup>53</sup> At this point it becomes evident that there is neither excess nor lack, but a balance of faith or confidence (*saddhā*) and wisdom (*paññā*), and of energy (*virīya*) and concentration (*samādhi*). This state of balance is the enlightenment factor of equanimity (*upekkhasambojjhaṅga*) which is very difficult to know. Only when *udayabbaya-ñāṇa* is attained through *vipassanā* meditation can it clearly be known by personal experience. This enlightenment factor of equanimity is also extolled by the Buddha thus:

“Truly O Kassapa, *upekkhasambojjhaṅga*, which has been perfectly discoursed by me, when activated within oneself and repeatedly developed, leads to knowing through extraordinary insight; to knowing through penetration; to nibbāna—the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering.”<sup>54</sup>

The present exposition is the Buddha’s Bojjhaṅga Discourse given to Ven Mahākassapa in detail. The discourse given to Ven Mahāmoggallāna was delivered in an identical manner except for replacing “O Kassapa” with “O Moggallāna.”

After this detailed discourse, the Buddha concluded:

“Truly O Kassapa, these seven enlightenment factors which have been perfectly discoursed upon by me, when activated within oneself and repeatedly developed, lead to knowing through extraordinary insight; to knowing through penetration; to nibbāna—the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering.”<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Translator’s paraphrase; literally, “To be keenly attentive so that the noted object can be seen/known clearly.”

<sup>53</sup> In other words, “As if spontaneously picking up all objects within its field of awareness.”

<sup>54</sup> *Upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo kho, Kassapa, mayā sammadakkhāto bhāvito bahulikato abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ime kho, Kassapa, satta bojjhaṅgā mayā sammadakkhātā bhāvitā bahulikata abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattanti*”ti.

It is said that after listening to this discourse on the enlightenment factors, both Ven Mahākassapa and Ven Mahāmoggallāna were totally healed of their illnesses. This incident can be considered thus: After reflecting on the enlightenment factors that had been developed before the attainment of Arahantship, and then zealously reactivating and developing them while observing *nāma-rūpa* occurring right at that moment, the venerables were freed from the illnesses.

Just as Western doctors of the present age would say that “Should the ‘good’ micro-organisms overwhelm the ‘bad’ ones by destroying them with the help of medicines, then there would be recovery;” so too it may be considered that “The illness is cured because the ‘bad’ matter vanishes or is extinguished, after having been overwhelmed by the ‘good’ and pure (clean) matter causally conditioned into existence by the enlightenment factors.”

Ven Mahākassapa and Ven Mahāmoggallāna were Arahants able to develop the enlightenment factors quite naturally by themselves. However, developing them after having listened to the Dhamma would be much more powerful than cultivating them without having done so. It may also be regarded that the Buddha delivered this discourse for the listener to develop the exceptionally powerful enlightenment factors to heal an illness. Even the Buddha himself, after listening to a similar discourse given by Ven Cunda at the Lord’s request, was rid of his illness. Considering this, it becomes evident that listening to the Dhamma is a matter of great importance. Therefore one should listen carefully and respectfully when the Dhamma is being discoursed upon by whosoever delivers it correctly. One should especially be careful not to adopt the irreverent attitude of “I know it already! This fellow would not be able to say anything more than what I already know!”

Thus far, one can already see that it is possible for the Buddha and Arahants to extinguish suffering of the body such as illnesses and pain by the development of the enlightenment factors, and thus dwell comfortably in their present existences. Also it has been seen that practising individuals who are not yet Arahants can likewise get rid of illness and pain.

On this subject of the Buddha and Arahants dwelling in comfort in their present existences through the development of enlightenment factors while carrying out *vipassanā* meditation,

it is recorded in the Khandha Vagga of the Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN 22:122, CDB p971):

“Though for an Arahant there is neither increment of the new nor growth of the old,<sup>56</sup> when these [*bojhaṅga* and *maggāṅga*<sup>57</sup>] dhammas are activated within oneself and repeatedly developed,<sup>58</sup> they lead to dwelling in comfort in the present existence, as well as to mindfulness and clear comprehension (*satisampajaññā*).”<sup>59</sup>

As for practising individuals who are not yet Arahants, apart from dwelling in comfort after the disappearance of illnesses and pain, they can also obtain the essential benefits of developing the enlightenment factors through *vipassanā* meditation. These are none other than those mentioned, namely knowing through extraordinary insight, knowing through penetration and nibbāna—the extinction of all mental defilements, of all suffering.<sup>60</sup> Comfort of the body felt after being healed of illnesses is but an extra and insignificant benefit. Therefore, those who note mindfully, wishing to be healed of sickness should also strive on until they obtain the benefits of knowing the Four Noble Truths, the true Dhamma, through extraordinary insight and penetration, and of realising nibbāna, the extinction of all suffering, through Path Knowledge (*maggāñāṇa*)<sup>61</sup> and Fruition Knowledge (*phalañāṇa*).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> I.e. through *vipassanā* meditation on the characteristics, namely *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, of the five aggregates of clinging (*upādānakkhandhā*): form, feeling, perception, volitional formations and consciousness (basically *nāma-rūpa*) which are subject to clinging.

<sup>57</sup> Path-factors, i.e. factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

<sup>58</sup> This occurs while discerning the characteristics, namely *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, of the group of prominent *nāma-rūpa* apparent with each present occurrence of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing and so forth.

<sup>59</sup> *Natthi, khvāvuso, arahato uttari karaṇīyaṃ katassa vā paticayo; api ca ime dhammā bhāvītā bahulikatā diṭṭhadhammasukhavihārā ceva saṃvattanti satisampajaññā ca.*

A detailed exposition of the above Pāli passage has already been dealt with in Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw’s published work, [A Discourse on Silavanta Sutta](#) (Part 8, [Benefits Arahants Get in Meditation](#)).

<sup>60</sup> *abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattanti.*

<sup>61</sup> Path (Insight) Knowledge—according to the commentaries, the insight of the *ariyamaggacitta* into nibbāna.

# Appendices

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- Saṃyutta Nikāya
- Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
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### Abbreviations

		Reference according to
DN	Dīgha Nikāya	Sutta number
LDB	The Long Discourses of the Buddha	Page number
SN	Saṃyutta Nikāya Saṃyutta	number : Sutta number
CDB	The Connected Discourses of the Buddha	Page number
BE	Burmese Era	
CE	Common Era	

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<sup>62</sup> Fruition (Insight) Knowledge—according to the commentaries, the insight of the *ariyaphalacitta* into nibbāna.



## Glossary

Terms below are in Pāli unless otherwise stated. Italicised words in the explanations below (e.g. *bhikkhu*) are separately explained.

**Abhidhamma:** a later collection of analytical treatises based on lists of categories drawn from the teachings in the suttas.

**anatta:** not-self, absence of self (*atta*).

**anicca:** impermanent.

**Arahant:** worthy one—liberated person who has eradicated all mental defilements.

**ariya:** noble; noble one, one who has at least entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of superior persons and transcended the plane of worldlings; according to the commentaries, one who has attained any of the four *ariyamaggas*.

**ariyamagga:** noble path. There is a commentarial notion that awakening occurs through a definite, linear series of *cittas*, of which three or four realise nibbāna, i.e. perceive nibbāna. The second *citta* is called *ariyamagga*—noble path, while the third and fourth belong to the category of *ariyaphala*—noble fruition.

**atta:** self; permanent, unchanging, sentient entity free from afflictions and with total control over experience.

**avijjā:** ignorance.

**bhikkhu:** mendicant; Buddhist monk.

**bojjhaṅga:** causal factor of insight knowledge (see p 42).

**citta:** consciousness; (in commentaries) mind-moment.

**dāna:** charitable donation, generosity

**Dhamma:** Universal Truth; teaching; Teaching of the Buddha.

**Dīgha Nikāya:** Collection of Long Suttas.

**dukkha:** suffering; pain; misery.

**hemiplegia:** (English) partial paralysis of the legs.

**hydrocele:** (English) swelling of the scrotum.

**kyat:** (Burmese) Burmese currency (see footnote 24).

**magga:** path; *ariyamagga*.

**moha:** delusion.

**nāma:** name; mentality; according to the Abhidhamma Commentary, any phenomenon that has the faculty of inclining towards an object or inclining the object to itself, e.g. conscious phenomena such as mind and mental states.

**Nyanzin:** (Burmese) Process of Insight (see footnote 22).

**ñāṇa:** knowledge; insight.

**nibbāna:** the extinction of all mental defilements and emancipation from the round of birth and death.

**Nikāya:** Collection; usually referring to the collections of Theravāda Pāli suttas.

**paññā:** wisdom.

**Pāli:** the Canon of Theravāda Buddhist texts, as opposed to the commentaries and sub-commentaries; ancient language in which Theravāda scriptures are preserved.

**phalasaṃpatti:** fruition attainment. There is a commentarial notion that one who has awakened through an earlier, initial realisation of nibbāna via the *ariyamagga* can wilfully re-experience nibbāna later for a desired duration. This subsequent re-experience is called “fruition attainment” because it is only possible as a result, or fruition, of the earlier, initial realisation.

**rūpa:** form; phenomenon that is devoid of the faculty of knowing and is characterised by breaking up and continuous transformation under the influence of temperature changes—practically this refers to the objects of the five senses, i.e. colour, sound, smell, taste, and body sensations such as heat/cold, heaviness/lightness, hardness/tenderness, movement/tension and so forth.

**samādhi:** mental focus or concentration; mental steadiness.

**sāmaṇera:** novice Buddhist monk, originally referring to an under age renunciant (below 20 years old) aspiring to become a *bhikkhu*.

**sambojjhaṅga:** synonym of *bojjhaṅga*.

**Saṅgha:** Community of Buddhist monks or nuns.

**Sammāsambuddha:** Fully Self-awakened One, one who rediscovers the Dhamma for himself, teaches the way for its realisation and establishes a Saṅgha.

**saṃvega:** sense of spiritual urgency.

**Samyutta Nikāya:** Collection of Connected Suttas.

**Sāsana:** doctrine/teaching/instruction of the Buddha; the Buddha’s Dispensation.

**sati:** recall; mindfulness; observant noting (see p10).

**satiṭṭhāna:** establishing of *sati* (see footnote 17).

**Sayādaw:** (Burmese) venerable teacher.

**sīla:** moral virtue.

**sutta:** discourse attributed to the Buddha or his contemporaneous disciples.

**thera:** elder; senior bhikkhu with over 10 successive *vassa*.

**Theravāda:** Doctrine of the Elders—one of the two main traditions of Buddhism (the other being Mahāyāna) claiming to have the earliest, most authentic extant record of Gotama Buddha's teachings.

**Theravādin:** advocate or follower of Theravāda.

**udayabbayañāṇa:** insight knowledge of rise and fall, i.e. insight into the momentary arising and passing away of *nāma-rūpa*.

**vassa:** abbreviation for *vassāvāsa* (rainy season residence); year standing, i.e. monk age.

***vipassanā*:** clear, discriminative (yet not judgemental) observation of mental and physical phenomena (*nāma-rūpa*) occurring within oneself in order to understand its true nature.

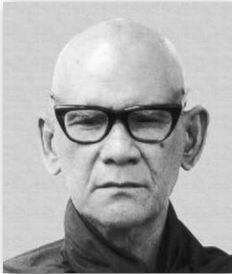
***virīya*:** effort, energy.

**Visuddhimagga:** The Path of Purification—an important manual of Buddhist meditation based on the Pāli Canon, the ancient Sinhala commentaries and the views of the theras of the Mahāvihāra School, written by the great Indian commentator Ven Buddhaghosa approximately in 430 CE in Sri Lanka.

**Yeikthā:** (Burmese) safe, peaceful retreat; meditation centre.

**yogi:** earnest meditator.

## Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw



**Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw:** was born in 1904 in Seikkhun Village in Upper Burma. He became a novice at age twelve, and ordained at age twenty with the name U Sobhana. Over the course of decades of study, he passed the rigorous series of government examinations in the Theravāda Buddhist texts, gaining the newly-introduced Dhammācariya (Dhamma teacher) degree in 1941.

**I**N 1931, U Sobhana took leave from teaching scriptural studies in Moulmein, South Burma, and went to nearby Thaton to practise intensive *vipassanā* meditation under the Mingun Jetawun Sayādaw U Nārada. This teacher had done his practice in the remote Sagaing Hills of Upper Burma, under the guidance of the Aletawya Sayādaw,

a student of the renowned forest meditation master Thelon Sayādaw. U Sobhana first taught *vipassanā* meditation in his home village in 1938, at a monastery named for its massive drum “Mahāsi.” He became well-known in the region as Mahāsi Sayādaw. In 1947, the then Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu, invited Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw to be resident teacher at a newly established meditation centre in Yangon, which came to be called the Mahāsi Sāsana Yeikthā (also internationally known as Mahāsi Meditation Centre).

Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw was a questioner and final editor at the Sixth Buddhist Council, which began on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1954. He helped establish meditation centres all over Burma as well as in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand. By 1972, the centres under his guidance had trained more than 700,000 meditators. In 1979, Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw travelled to the West, holding retreats in *vipassanā* meditation at newly founded centres such as the Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Barre, Massachusetts, USA. In addition, meditators came from all over the world to practise at his centre in Yangon. When he died on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1982 following a massive stroke, thousands of devotees braved the torrential monsoon rains to pay their last respects.

## Publications

Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw published nearly seventy volumes of Buddhist literature in Burmese, many of these transcribed from talks.<sup>63</sup> He completed a Burmese translation of the *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification), a lengthy treatise on meditation by the 5<sup>th</sup> century Indian Theravādin Buddhist commentator and scholar Ven Buddhaghosa. He also wrote a monumental original volume entitled *Manual of Vipassanā Meditation*. His English works include:

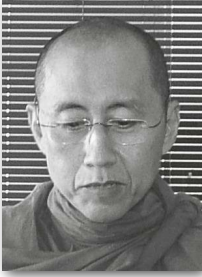
- Practical Vipassanā Exercises
- Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation
- The Progress of Insight—an advanced talk on *vipassanā*
- Thoughts on the Dharma
- Manual of Insight.

Based on entry in the [Wikipedia](#)

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<sup>63</sup> Some of them have been translated into English and published. In recent years a complete set was reprinted by Selangor Buddhist Vipassanā Meditation Society, 29-B Jalan 17/45, 46400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. t./f. 603 7955 0596.

## Ven Aggacitta Bhikkhu



**Ven Aggacitta Bhikkhu:** A Malaysian Theravāda Buddhist monk who received higher ordination (*upasampadā*) from his preceptor (*upajjhāya*) Ven Mahāsi Sayādaw at Mahāsi Meditation Centre, Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar), in 1979.

**A**FTER several periods of intensive meditation there, Ven Aggacitta began to study the Burmese language and later learned basic Pāli grammar and Pāli-Burmese translation from Sayādaw U Paṇḍita. It was during this time that he attempted his first translation work, resulting in the publication of *Dhamma Therapy* in Malaysia in 1984.

Since then he has trained under various other teachers, notably Sayādaw U Tissara (Yankin Forest Monastery), Sayādaw U Āciṇṇa (Pa Auk Forest Monastery) and Sayādaw U Tejaniya (Shwe Oo Min Dhammasukha Forest Centre).

Besides practising meditation, he studied advanced Pāli and translation in Thai and Burmese under Sayādaw U Dhammananda at Wat Tamaoh, Lampang, Thailand, from 1983 to 1984. He continued to study the Pāli Tipiṭaka in Burma and researched on its interpretation and practice until his return to Malaysia at the end of 1994.

In 2000 he founded Sāsanārakkha Buddhist Sanctuary, a Theravāda monk training centre nestled among secluded valleys and brooks near Taiping, Perak, Malaysia.

Languages that he is knowledgeable in are English, Bahasa Malaysia, Hokkien, Burmese, Thai and Pāli.

### Publications

Among his major literary contributions are:

- *Be Present, Be Prudent* (authored, 2009)
- *Be Present* (authored, 2007)
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- The Importance of Keeping the Five Precepts (authored, 1982)

### **Sāsanārakkha Buddhist Sanctuary (SBS)**

- is Malaysia's first Theravāda Buddhist monk training centre
- is a joint effort of major Buddhist organisations in the country
- is most fortunate to have Ven Aggacitta Mahāthera as its abbot
- provides proper training, in a forest setting, for monastics to realise their personal spiritual goals and help fulfil the needs of the community
- researches into and develops concepts that bring us closer to reality
- provides residential retreat facilities for the public as a reflection of a healthy Saṅgha-laity interdependence.

*Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti.*

The gift of the Dhamma surpasses all gifts.

– **The Buddha** –

We offer a share of the merits accrued in the writing, editing and sponsorship of this gift of the Dhamma to all our deceased relatives from time immemorial and to all other beings. May they appreciate and rejoice in this donation (*dāna*) and be happy, well and peaceful.

*Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!*