

SUITABLE BUDDHIST MEDITATION RETREATS FOR FOREIGNERS
IN THAILAND

รูปแบบโครงการปฏิบัติธรรมที่เหมาะสมสำหรับชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย

Miss Dounkamon Tongkanaraksa

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
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นางสาวดวงกมล ทองคนารักษ์

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาพุทธศาสตรดุษฎีบัณฑิต
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มหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย
พุทธศักราช ๒๕๕๓

(ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย)

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 Date of Completion : 30 March 2011

Abstract

This dissertation has been conducted to study Buddhist meditation retreats suitable for foreigners in Thailand. The objectives of the research are: (1) to study Theravada Buddhist meditation, (2) to study Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand, (3) to develop a suitable model for Buddhist meditation retreats. The research methodology is documentary research with participant observations and in-depth interviews. It uses, as case studies, Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), the Middle Way Meditation Retreat, the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), and Wat Pah Nanachat.

The result of the study shows how foreign-practitioner's meditation practice is affected, through an introduction to Theravada Buddhist teachings at the above-named Thai Meditation Centres. Data is collected on application of meditation skills, following a structural progression based on the development of both tranquillity and

insight and factors that support meditation practice as follow: severing the ten impediments (palibodhas), having good friends (kalyānamitta), finding a subject suitable to a temperament, and having things favourable to mental development (sappāya). Additionally, the study of Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand shows that meditation retreats and temples with meditation practices for foreigners should offer separate classes for students at different levels - visitors, beginners, intermediates and advanced meditation practitioners - and also offer an ordination programme. In addition, they should apply the concept of sappāya or factors favourable to mental development to support the retreat.

- ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์ : รูปแบบโครงการปฏิบัติธรรมที่เหมาะสมสำหรับชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย
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- วันสำเร็จการศึกษา : 30 March 2011

บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์เรื่องรูปแบบโครงการปฏิบัติธรรมที่เหมาะสมสำหรับชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย มีวัตถุประสงค์ข้อ (๑) เพื่อศึกษาการปฏิบัติธรรมในพระพุทธศาสนาเถรวาท ข้อ(๒) เพื่อศึกษาโครงการปฏิบัติธรรมสำหรับชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทยและข้อ(๓)เพื่อพัฒนารูปแบบโครงการปฏิบัติธรรมที่เหมาะสมสำหรับชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เป็นงานวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพซึ่งใช้วิธีการสังเกตโดยมีส่วนร่วม (Participant Observation) และการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก (In depth-Interview) จากกรณีศึกษา โครงการปฏิบัติธรรมสำหรับชาวต่างประเทศ วัดมหาธาตุ (คณะ ๕), โครงการปฏิบัติธรรม “The Middle Way Meditation Retreat”, ณ สวนป่าหิมวันต์ อ.ภูเรือ จ.เลย, โครงการปฏิบัติธรรมสวนโมกข์นานาชาติ (International Dhamma Hermitage), จ.สุราษฎร์ธานี และวัดป่านานาชาติ อ.วารินชำราบ จ.อุบลราชธานี

ผลการวิจัยพบว่าการปฏิบัติธรรมในพระพุทธศาสนาเถรวาท ทั้งสมถและวิปัสสนาตลอดจนปัจจัยที่เกื้อกูลการปฏิบัติธรรม เช่นการตัดปลิโพธ การแสวงหากัลยาณมิตร การเลือกกรรมฐานที่เหมาะสมกับผู้ปฏิบัติธรรม และสัปปายะในการปฏิบัติธรรม ล้วนมีผลต่อผู้เข้าปฏิบัติธรรม นอกจากนี้รูปแบบการปฏิบัติธรรมที่เหมาะสมสำหรับการปฏิบัติธรรมของชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย ควรมีจัดโครงการปฏิบัติธรรมแยกตามกลุ่มของผู้เข้าปฏิบัติธรรม เช่น การจัด

คำแนะนำเบื้องต้นสำหรับนักท่งที่สนใจการปฏิบัติแต่ยังไม่พร้อมที่จะเข้าฝึกอบรม โครงการ
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List of Abbreviations

A	Aṅguttara-nikāya
D	Dīgha-nikāya
M	Majjhima-nikāya
S	Samyutta-nikāya
Sn	Sutta-nipāta
V	Vinaya
Vbh	Vibhanga

Other Abbreviations:

ed.	Edited by
etc.	et cetera / and other
ibid.	ibidem / in the same book
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place
no.	number
op.cit	opere citato/ as referred
p.	page
PTS.	Pali Text Society
tr.	translator/ translated by
vol (s)	volume (s)

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of Study

Thai Buddhism is based upon the Theravada tradition after the original teachings of the Buddha and his foremost disciples as recorded in the Pāli Tipiṭaka. Thais have followed the Buddha's teachings for many centuries. Thais also welcome foreigners to come and practice the Buddha's teachings. The supportive environments of Thai temples or meditation centres provide inspiration and opportunity for spiritual development. At the present time, many foreigners come to practice meditation in Thailand. Entering a temple for a meditation retreat is an increasingly popular activity for foreigners, and many temples across the country have developed programs specifically for international practitioners.

“The Vipassanā Meditation Center”, Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), Bangkok offers a meditation class for international practitioners everyday called “The Insight Meditation Practice Program for a Good Life”. Group retreats can also be arranged by giving information at least two or three weeks prior the event. The vipassanā at Wat Mahādhātu uses techniques similar to those taught by Mahasi Sāyadaw and are based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness described in the Mahā satipaṭṭhānasutta.¹ Concentration is developed on the rise and fall of the abdomen, then, awareness is directed at the body and sensations. Many foreign visitors per year take courses at this centre for meditation studies, and the number continues to grow. At the present time, many participants attended the retreat from different countries such as Canada,

¹ Pataraporn Sirikanchana, **A Guide to Buddhist Monasteries Meditation Centers in Thailand**, (Bangkok: Printing House of Thammasat University, 2004), p.21.

Germany, UK, US, Australia, France, Belgium, Norway, Russia, Korea, Japan, and so on².

“The Middle Way Meditation Retreat” at Suan Pa Himmawan is located near Phu Ruea National Park in the Northeastern province of Loei, Thailand. This centre has been placed in the top three of all international retreats worldwide.³ The meditation teaching of this centre uses Samatha-Vipassanā meditation following the Dhammakāya approach originated from Phramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro), the great late abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen. Its objectives are to develop individual meditation skill and to learn about meditation and self development. This meditation centre offers seven day retreats. It has had more than 720 participants from 71 countries in Europe, Asia, America, Africa and Oceania.⁴

Suan Mokkh: the Garden of Liberation in Surat Thani province has a meditation centre called “International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH)”, founded by the late Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu in 1989. The purpose of this Dhamma practice is to get free of the tyranny of the ego in order to live peacefully and usefully. The temple offers 10 day retreats for foreigners in English beginning on the first day of every month. About 100-150 people attend each monthly retreat. The course offered two interrelated subjects: Dhamma and meditation. Meditation instruction focuses on mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati).

Another temple that attracts some foreigners is Wat Pah Nanachat (WPN), the “International Forest Monastery” in Warin Chamrap, Ubon Ratchathani province, in the Northeast of Thailand. It was established by Venerable Ajahn Chah in 1975 as a place where his foreign disciples could live and learn the Buddha's teachings.

² Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), **Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Meditation Retreat Report**, (Bangkok: Wat Mahādhātu. 2008), p.1.

³ Travel+ Leisure. **10 Top Meditation Retreats**. (on-line). source: <http://www.travelandleisure.com> (1 January 2010).

⁴ The Middle Way Retreat, **The Middle Way Meditation Retreat Summary Report**, (Patumthani: Wat Phra Dhammakaya, 2009), p.3.

Dhamma-Vinaya, as the Buddha referred to his teaching, includes a detailed code of conduct for Buddhist monastic followers.⁵ At this temple, no single meditation technique predominates. One approach is creative, using a variety of appropriate meditations and reflections from the Theravada tradition. Mindfulness of breathing forms the basis for the most formal meditation. This temple is primarily a training centre for foreigners who are preparing to take ordination. An interested layman first becomes a “pakhaow” or an anāgārika who wears a white robe and lives a homeless life. After three months, he can go forth as a novice and wear a yellow robe. Full ordination (upasampadā) can take place about one year later.⁶ In order to enter the meditation retreat here, one has to learn basic meditation before one comes because there is no formal instruction for beginners although the teacher will answer questions from participants.

According to the above information, there are many famous meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand. However, there is no standard model for the retreats. Furthermore, there is no research about it, so this dissertation studies and analyzes in-depth the meditation programs for foreigners using four case studies: Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), Bangkok, the Middle Way Meditation Retreat in Phu Ruea, the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) of Suan Mokkh, and Wat Pah Nanachat in Ubon Ratchathani. Subsequently, a suitable model for each retreat will be developed.

⁵ Wat Pah Nanachat (WPN), **The International Forest Monastery**. (on-line). source: <http://www.watpahnachat.org/index.php> (3 December 2010).

⁶ Pataraporn Sirikanchana, **A Guide to Buddhist Monasteries Meditation Centers in Thailand**, p 72.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1.2.1 To study Theravada Buddhist meditation.
- 1.2.2 To study Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand.
- 1.2.3 To develop a suitable model of Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand.

1.3. Statement of Problems

1.3.1 What is Theravada Buddhist meditation?

1.3.2 How do Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand function and what difficulties do they face?

1.3.3 What is the most appropriate model for Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand?

1.4 Scopes of Research

The scopes of this research are as follows:

1.4.1 The contents regarding meditation practice in this thesis are based on the Theravada Buddhist texts such as the Tipiṭaka, Visuddhimagga and so forth.

1.4.2 The contents regarding Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand are based on case studies of:

1.4.2.1 The Vipassanā Meditation Center, Wat Mahādhātu
(Section 5), Bangkok,

1.4.2.2 The Middle Way Meditation Retreat at Suan Pa Himmawan
(Phu Ruea), Loei province,

1.4.2.3 The International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), Suan Mokkh,
Surat Thani province,

1.4.2.4 Wat Pah Nanachat (WPN), the International Forest Monastery, Warin Chamrap, Ubon Ratchathani province.

1.4.3 The SWOT analysis of the Buddhist meditation retreats are done only for physical analysis such as accommodation, location, food and refreshments, and so forth. It will not be used for spiritual analysis.

1.4.4 Guideline Models for meditation retreats are focused on factors favourable for meditation practice (sappāya) and meditation retreat schedule. The models are not focused only one principle and meditation method.

1.5. Definition of Terms Used in the Research

1.5.1 “Abode” refers to all buildings and design of the centre. This includes sleeping quarters, meditation hall, cafeterias, gardens and so on.

1.5.2 “Foreigners” means people from countries other than Thailand; people of states or nations other than Thailand.

1.5.3 “Meditation Teaching” means the overall meditational framework used in meditation retreats that the temple or the retreat centre uses to teach the participants, such as mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati), light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa), and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna).

1.5.4 “Meditation Retreat” means the meditation retreat at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), the Middle Way Meditation Retreat, International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), and meditation or ordination at Wat Pah Nanachat.

1.5.5 “The Middle Way Meditation Retreat” means the Middle Way Meditation Retreat program for Foreigners (beginners class) at Suan Pa Himmawan (Phu Ruea), Loei province, Thailand.

1.5.6 “SWOT Analysis” is abbreviation for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is applied for physical analysis such as accommodation, location, food and refreshments of the meditation retreats.

1.5.7 “Suitable Buddhist Meditation Retreats” means appropriate meditation retreats centres or temple for meditation practice.

1.5.8. “Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5)” means “The Vipassanā Meditation Center” (V.M.C), Wat Mahādhātu Yuvaratransarit Ratchaworamahawihan (Section 5), Bangkok.

1.6. Review of the Related Literature

Many texts and much research deal with Buddhist meditation and meditation retreats for foreigners as indicated below.

Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, in the “Path of Purification” (Visuddhimagga) (1956), (translated by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu) explains the tranquillity and the insight meditation very clearly. The 40 subjects of meditation⁷ for tranquillity meditation which comply of the ten meditation Devices (kaṣiṇa), the ten kinds of Foulness (asubha), the ten kinds of Recollections (anussati), the Divine Abidings (brahmavihāras), the Perception of repulsiveness in nutriment (āhāre paṭikūlasañña), Defining of the elements (catudhātuvavaṭṭhānam), and the Immaterial States (arupa)⁸ are explained. Then, the Insight meditation (vipassanā), the ground of vipassanā and its objects (ārammaṇas), its roots, and its practice are clarified in this text.

Dhammaratana, U., in “Guide Through Visuddhimagga” (1964), outlines the system with reference to the essential points. The same details can be understood without much difficulty. It is with this object in view that this text book has been written to serve as a guide through the Visuddhimagga.⁹ Despite the fact that, the Visuddhimagga uses old and complicated language, the Guide Through Visuddhimagga explains it and makes it easy to understand.

⁷ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, 5th edition, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 199), p. xliii.

⁸ Peter Masefield, (tr.), **Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā: Elucidation of the Intrinsic Meaning so Named the Commentary on the Vimāna Stories**, (Oxford: PTS., 1997), p.133.

⁹ Dhammaratana, U, **Guide Through Visuddhimagga**, (Kandy: The Dushan’s Printers, 1964), p.1.

Venerable Paravahera Vajiragñāna Mahāthera in his book “Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice” (1987) explains a suitable place for meditation. He explains that the early disciples selected nine types of places for habitation, considering the dwellings most suitable for the practice of meditation such as a forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a hillside, a rock cave, a cemetery, the depth of a jungle, an open field, or a heap of straw.¹⁰ Furthermore, this book presents the theory of Buddhist meditation and presents the doctrine of meditation in the Tipiṭaka. It also describes the subjects and methods of meditation and gives further explanation of cutting off impediments, the search for a friend or teacher, choice of Kammatṭhāna, a suitable place for meditation, time and posture for meditation and so forth. Besides, the insight meditation also is clarified.

“The Satipatṭhāna Sutta, the Direct Path to Realization” (2003) by Anālayo explains the Satipatṭhāna Sutta in discourses and the division in commentarial traditions in connection with actual practice.¹¹ He also gives a practice-related perspective on the teaching and practice of insight meditation. The idea of concentration and the tranquilization effect on the insight progress is the focus of his discussion. It provides valuable insight on the role of internal factors in the progress of insight.

Ñāṇaponika Thera, in his book, “Heart of Buddhist Meditation, a Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness” (2005) presents the Theravada teachings on meditation, including an explanation of the Mahasatipatṭhāna Sutta. The purpose of this book is to draw attention to the far-and deep-reaching significance of the Buddha’s “Way of Mindfulness” (satipatṭhāna), and to give initial guidance to an understanding of these teachings and their practical application. In addition, this book is issued in the deep conviction that the systematic cultivation of

¹⁰ Paravahera Vajiragñāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, (Petaling Jaya: P.K.S., 1987), p.113.

¹¹ Anālayo, **Satipatṭhāna, the Direct Path to Realization**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2003), p.3.

Right Mindfulness, as taught by the Buddha in his Discourse on satipaṭṭhāna, still provides the most simple and direct, the most thorough and effective, method for training, and developing the mind for its daily tasks and problems as well as for its highest aim: mind's own unshakable deliverance from Greed, hatred, and delusion.¹²

Phramaha Boonna Abhiboonno (Boonsak), in his thesis, "A Comparative Study of Meditation in the Visuddhimagga and the Vimuttimagga" (2005), found that meditation in both texts has different procedures in practice but the result of the practice focuses on the same direction. Meditation in the Visuddhimagga helps clean the mind and keep the mind in one-pointedness. In the Vimuttimagga, meditation helps control the change and restlessness of mind in one way and increases the bliss and peace of mind in the other. When it is practiced in full scale, it can help practitioners attain salvation, the highest goal of meditation practice.¹³

Sarah Shaw, in her book, "Buddhist Meditation, An Anthology of Texts from the Pāli Canon", (2006) gives a representative sample of the various kinds of meditation.

She outlines forty different meditation subjects¹⁴ such as, the ten (kasiṇa) practices, the ten kinds of foulness (asubha), the ten kinds of recollections (anussati), the four divine abidings (brahmavihāra), the perception of loathsomeness in food (āhāre paṭikūlasañña), the defining of the four elements (catudhātuvavaṭṭhānam), and the Immaterial States (arūpa).

Alexander Wynne, in his book, "The Origin of Buddhist Meditation", (2007) identifies that Buddha was taught meditation by Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. He also explains that the Buddha must consequently have been trained in a meditative school whose ideology was provided by the philosophical portions of

¹² Nāṇaponika Thera, **Heart of Buddhist Meditation, A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2005), p.7.

¹³ Phramaha Boonna Abhiboonno (Boonsak), "A Comparative Study of Meditation in the Visuddhimagga and the Vimuttimagga", **M.A. Thesis**, (Graduate School: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 2005), p. abstract.

¹⁴ Shaw, Sarah, **Buddhist Meditation, an Anthology of Texts from the Pāli Canon**, (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.xii.

early Upanishads. This hypothesis is confirmed in the Parayanavagga, where the Buddha teaches an adapted practice of Alara Kalama's goal to some Brahmins, and appears to be fully conversant with the philosophical presuppositions of early Brahminic meditation. In addition, he argues outlined as follows: the Buddhist list of four formless spheres (space, consciousness, nothingness, neither perception nor non-perception) was inherited from the two teachers of the Bodhisatta; Formless meditation is related to element meditation; therefore element meditation was borrowed from the same non-Buddhist source as was formless meditation, i.e. the milieu of the two teachers; the doctrinal background to element meditation and formless meditation is provided by the list of six 'strata' (dhātu-s); the list of six 'strata' is based on early Brahminic cosmogonies; Brahminic cosmogonies provide the doctrinal background to meditation in early Brahminism, the most basic presupposition of which is the early Brahminic identification of man and cosmos; therefore, element meditation and formless meditation were borrowed from a Brahminic source in which meditation was the practical counterpart of cosmological Speculation; viii) the Brahminic source is probably the two teachers, a fact suggested by the correspondences to the goals of the teachers ('nothingness' and 'neither perception nor non-perception').¹⁵

Pataraporn Sirikanchana, in "A Guide to Buddhist Monasteries and Meditation Centers in Thailand" (2004), explains the details of Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), Wat Phra Dhammakaya, International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) of Suan Mokkh, and Wat Pah Nanachat. She presents the main concepts of their meditation teaching. She also reports about living at a temple or a meditation centre, the practicalities of living, the meditation techniques, and she presents the better known temples and monasteries while providing practical information about their activities

¹⁵ Alexander Wynne, in his book, "The Origin of Buddhist Meditation", (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.44.

such as, their address in Thai, the teaching methods, the meditation instructors, daily routine activities, food, accommodation, and other information.¹⁶

Rory Mackenzie, in “New Buddhist Movements in Thailand: Towards an Understanding of Wat Phra Dhammakāya and Santi Asoke” (2007) researched new Buddhist movements which emerged in Thailand in 1970s. He explained about the inception and development of the Wat Phra Dhammakaya movement and also explains the Dhammakaya meditation. In addition, he found that students are confident in the veracity of their models of spiritual purification. He also describes this highly progressive movement as having a strong focus on meditation.¹⁷

Phramaha Narong Cherdungnoen’s dissertation, “A Study of Sati (Mindfulness) in Buddhism: Theory and Practice in Thai Tradition” (1993), presents a study of mindfulness both in practice and history, starting from early Buddhism in India to early Buddhism in Thailand. The details focus on the rise and development of Satipaṭṭhāna practice in the Thai tradition, from Araññavāsi in Sukhothai, Varatana in Ayudhya, Nānasamavara in Early Bangkok Period, and Dhammayuttikanikāya. In addition, this dissertation provides a brief survey of three meditation schools in Thailand: Suan Mokkhabalāram, Chaiya of Buddhādāsa; Vipassanā Meditation Center of Wat Mahādhātu and Wat Nong Pah Pong of Ajahn Chah.¹⁸

Jeffrey Scott Bowers, in his published MA thesis, “Dhammakāya Meditation in Thai Society” (1995), presents the movement and the environment of meditation in Thai society by explaining the Dhammakāya meditation technique, and the modern movements utilizing it to better understand the importance to these movements. The

¹⁶Pataraporn Sirikanchana, **A Guide to Buddhist Monasteries Meditation Centers in Thailand**, p.12.

¹⁷ Mackenzie, Rory, **New Buddhist Movements in Thailand: Towards an Understanding of Wat Phra Dhammakāya and Santi Asoke**, (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. x.

¹⁸ Phramaha Narong Cherdungnoen, “A Study of Sati (Mindfulness) in Buddhism: Theory and Practice in Thai Tradition”, **PhD. Thesis**, (Department of Buddhist Studies: University of Delhi, 1993), p. abstract.

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meditation institutes eventually became Wat Phra Dhammakaya and Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām, and, although it shares students with Wat Paknam, they have their own goals and objectives. By examining the technique and the movements, and what they offer to their students, a more complete understanding of Thai society in general can be gained.¹⁹

An Analysis of Phra Mongkol-Thepmunī's (Sodh Chandasaro) Buddha Dhamma Propagation (2003) by Mae Chee Amphai Tansomboon, acknowledges that Phra Mongkol Thepmunī taught directly in accordance with the Buddha's Dhamma-Vinaya. His teaching is an integrated meditation technique starts from concentration meditation (Samatha) then follows by Insight meditation (Vipassanā). He said "To stop is to succeed"²⁰ both in meditation and in everyday life. Stopping the mind still at the centre of body permits climbing a ladder of increasingly pure spiritual bodies and mental states from the mundane through celestial and Noble State (Dhammakāya) to Nibbāna. This was his rediscovery of the Dhammakāya meditation technique which had been long lost to Theravada Buddhism. The method is not detailed in the Tipiṭaka but is simply a meditation technique for practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna).

"Foreign Buddhist Monks under the Lineage of Phra Ajahn Chah: A Case Study of Wat Pah Nanachat, Ubon Ratchathani" (2002), by Pratibha Pabbhasrawong found that it is Phra Ajahn Chah's emphasis on practice and teaching which attracted foreign monks. They appreciated his methods of teaching, his style and method of investigating and practicing Dhamma. Phra Ajahn Chah motivated them to prove the results of the practice by themselves. The result of his approach was increasing interest, spiritual awakening among foreign monks and the growing number of foreign

¹⁹ Bowers, Jeffery Scott, "Dhammakaya Meditation in Thai society", **M.A. Thesis**, (Graduate School (Thai Studies): Chulalongkorn University, 1995), p.1.

²⁰ Mae Chee Amphai Tansomboon, "An Analysis of Phra Mongkol-Thepmunī's (Sodh Chandasaro) Buddha Dhamma Propagation. **M.A. Thesis**. (Graduate School: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2003), p iii.

visitors. Wat Pah Nanachat has brought great harmony as well as increased interaction among the monks, lay people and the community. Therefore, the growth of Wat Pah Nanachat is intimately propagating Buddhism in Thailand as well as abroad.²¹

Sudarat Bantaokul, in her thesis, *Vipassanā Ñāna (Insight knowledge): “An Analytical Study of Solasañāna (The Successive stages of Sixteen knowledges) in Theravada Buddhism”* (2003), shows the development of the sixteen stages as an approach to understanding the Buddhist view of reality. The characteristic of intrinsic nature and the three universal characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self are described. The aim of this study is also to distinguish between the knowable and knowledge. It also explains the causes and conditions of the arising and weakening of insight knowledge.²²

Phassarapha Phaisarnariyasap, in her thesis, “Most Venerable Mun Bhuridattha Thera’s Method of Citta Bhāvanā “Buddho” Practice” (2006), studies the practice of meditation in Theravada Buddhism and critically analyzes Venerable Mun Bhuridattha Thera’s method of practice and biography. Venerable Mun Bhuridattha Thera taught his followers Sila, Samādhi and Paññā. His method of teaching consisted of Pariyattisaddhamma, Patipattisaddhamma, and Pativedhasaddhamma. Venerable Mun Bhuridattha and his disciples spawned a lineage spanning three generations of teachers and students, who still practice the method of meditation outlined in the *Mahāsatiṭṭhānasutta* concerning contemplation of the body. In addition, his teachings have had an impact on Thai society and the Buddhist world.

Tassanee Wongsyuen in “An Analytical Study on Meditation Practice with Mindfulness Regarding the Body (*Kāyagatāsati*) in Theravada Buddhism” (2007),

²¹Pratibha Pabbhasrawong, “Foreign Buddhist Monks Under the Lineage of Phra Ajahn Chah: A Case Study of Wat Pah Nanachat, Ubon Ratchathani”, **M.A. Thesis**, (Graduate School: Thammasat University, 2002), p. abstract.

²²Sudarat Bantaokul, “Vipassanā-Ñāna (Insight knowledge): An Analytical Study of Solasañāna (The Successive stages of Sixteen know ledges) in Theravada Buddhism” **M.A. Thesis**, (Graduate School: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2003), p.2.

mentions that the Buddha taught the subject of meditation on mindfulness relating to the body both to monks and lay people to enable them to train their minds in concentration by focusing on the thirty-two states to realize the non-beauty, the dirt and the changing state of all aggregates.²³ The practice of the subject of meditation on mindfulness relating to body is suitable for the behaviour of every person, both Thais and foreigners.

Phramaha Phaiboon Vipulo (Lurtristhanakul), in “A Study on the Concept of Senāsana in Buddhism” (2008) aims to study senāsana in Buddhism. Its objectives are to find meanings, purposes, factors, and types of senāsana, and to analyze them as the four basic necessities, the items of making merit, and the senāsana for meditation practice of laymen in nowadays. The findings are: there are two types of senāsana in Buddhism. Natural senāsana: for examples, tree shades, forests, and caves. These natural resources are used as meditation practices and Buddhism dissemination places for monks. Constructed senāsana, for examples, monks’ lodgings, chanting halls or Vihara, and crematorium. The public shares in building senāsana for monks in order to provide facilities and help to societies. This is a connection of human beings in sharing their duties.

In addition, the value in supporting Buddhism by public means members of the public shows their making merit, and their contributions through their donations and helps in settings buildings. These actions are led and coordinated by monks with the priority purposes on developing society and also accelerating other developments. The values on observing precepts according to Vinaya means monks learn rules or Vinaya and they do not violate those rules because they observe rules for senāsana laid by Saṅgha as their highest standards, which is specified both in building by themselves or by others. The values on art and culture conservation values, means

²³ Tassanee Wongsyuen, “An Analytical Study on Meditation Practice with Mindfulness Regarding to the Body (Kāyagatāsati) in Theravada Buddhism”, M.A.Thesis, (Graduate School: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2007), p.iv.

senāsana are always decorated by Buddhist art. They show the noble wisdom, races, culture, ways of life, and Thai art inheritance. The Values related to attainment means senāsana in Buddhism are related to Buddhist attainment. Where they are in quiet, simple, serene, Suan Mokhapalaram, Wat Nhongpaapong, Wat Padaraphirom, they facilitate meditation practice. They lead to the essence of Buddhism, with the true knowledge and practice.²⁴

Phramaha Wichai Yatijayo (Rithwirule), in his thesis, “A Study of Nark Monastery Development to Meditation Centre in the Scripture” (2008) presents the Nark Monastery development model to meditation Centre in the Scripture. This participating qualitative and developed research aims to study the meditation centre Management Model in the Scripture; Tipitaka, Atthakatha and other scriptures concerned, to examine the regulation of the monastery under the Saṅgha Committee to become the meditation centre and to explore the management model, components and suitable factors of Nark Monastery to be an effective meditation centre in the Scripture, the Saṅgha (Committee and International Buddhist office of the Buddhism.

The results of study indicate that there are many factors for the success of the development of Nark Monastery Meditation Centre Model as follow: the readiness of Nark Monastery, community, and monks to support a meditation centre. A consideration of development planning should concern abode, resort, food, climate, and understanding of Nark Monastery members (persons); the clarification of meditation curriculum and policy of the Nark Monastery (speech); the plan of Nark Monastery development has to facilitate the scriptures and encourage an efficiency of the monastery’s education management (position); faith and confidence of meditators in and for the Meditation Centre. In addition, the contribution of this study also demonstrates that attitude of people in community around monastery and collaboration with monastery members shows significant support in the success. Additionally, this research can

²⁴ Phramaha Phaiboon Vipulo (Lurtristhanakul), “A Study on the Concept of Senāsana in Buddhism”, **MA thesis**, (Graduate School: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2008), p. abstract.

conclude that the appropriate meditation centre must merit seven advantageous conditions; suitable abode, suitable resort, suitable speech, suitable person, suitable food, suitable climate and suitable posture, and good friend. Nark Monastery Centre is a success in all characteristics; seven advantageous conditions and good friend in the Scripture, the Saṅgha Committee and International Buddhist office of the Buddhism regulation.²⁵

Pornthep Rungkhunagorn studies “Effects of Ānāpānasati Training on Serenity, Meaning and Purpose in Life, and Genuineness of the Beginning Practitioners in Monthly Ānāpānasati Training Program at International Dhamma Hermitage” (2009). The purpose of this research is to study the effects of ānāpānasati training on serenity, meaning and purpose in life and genuineness of beginning practitioners in the monthly training program at International Dhamma Hermitage, Suan Mokkh, Chaiya, Surat Thani. The research was quasi-experimental research. There were one experimental group and one control group. Research design was pre test-post test control group. The samples were 46 Thai people who were assigned by purposive sampling either to an experimental group and a control group, each group comprising 23 persons. The experimental group participated continuously for seven days in ānāpānasati training in the monthly ānāpānasati training program at international Dhamma Hermitage. The control group did not participate the training and lived normally. The instruments used in this study were the Serenity test, the Meaning and Purpose in Life test, and the Genuineness test. The instruments were given to each of samples before and after training program. The analysis of t-test and analysis of covariance were used for data analysis.

The results indicated that firstly, the post test level of serenity and the post test level of genuineness of the experimental group were higher than their pre test

²⁵ Phramaha Wichai Yatijayo (Rithwirule), “A Study of Nark Monastery Development to Meditation Centre in the Scripture”, **MA thesis**, (Graduate School: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2008), p. abstract.

level at .05 level of significance. Secondly, the post test level of meaning and purpose in life of the experimental group was not higher than its pre test level at .05 level of significance. Thirdly, the post test level of serenity and the post test level of genuineness of the experimental group were higher than the post test level of the control group at .05 level of significance. Finally, the post test level of meaning and purpose in life of the experimental group was not higher than the post test level of the control group at .05 level of significance.²⁶

Joanna Cook, in her book, “Meditation in Modern Buddhism – Renunciation and Change in Thai Monastic Life” (2010) explains that in contemporary Thai Buddhism, the burgeoning popularity of vipassanā meditation is dramatically impacting the lives of those most closely involved with its practice: monks and Mae Chee (lay nuns) living in monastic communities. She also recommends that for Thais, meditation should become a central focus of life and a way to transform the self. This ethnographic account of a thriving Northern Thai monastery examines meditation, and explores the subjective signification of monastic duties and ascetic practices, drawing on fieldwork done both as an analytical observer and as a full participant in the life of the monastery. In addition, she analyzes the motivation and experience of renouncers, and shows what effect meditative practices have on individuals and on community organization. The particular focus on the status of Mae Chee – part lay, part monastic – provides a fresh insight into social relationships and gender hierarchy within the context of the monastery.²⁷

From the above information, we can see that there is no research about the suitable Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand so this dissertation

²⁶ Pornthep Rungkhunagorn, “Effects of Ānāpānasati Training on Serenity, Meaning and Purpose in Life, and Genuineness of the Beginning Practitioners in Monthly Ānāpānasati Training Program at International Dhamma Hermitage”, **M.A.Thesis** (Graduate School: Chulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1999), p. abstract.

²⁷ Joanna Cook, **Meditation in Modern Buddhism – Renunciation and Change in Thai Monastic Life**. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.2-10.

will study the meditation programs for foreigners and propose a suitable model for the meditation retreats. This research is based on the case study of Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), the Middle Way Meditation Retreat, the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) of Suan Mokkh, and Wat Pah Nanachat.

1.7 Research Methodology

The research methodology is shown in the following items.

1.7.1. Gathering data from primary source such as Tipiṭaka and Theravada texts,

1.7.2. Collecting data from (secondary) sources such as academic research, dissertations and thesis, journals, temple journals, newspapers, college and university libraries, CD, and the Internet;

1.7.3 Participants observation by the researcher and in-depth interviews (15 people for each retreat) separated into three groups as: project president (1 person), project coordinators, and staff (4 people) and participants (10 people).

1.7.3.1 Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) on 1-12 July 2009, and 1-7 March 2010.

1.7.3.2 The Middle Way Meditation Retreat on 23-29 December 2008, and 10-16 May 2009,

1.7.3.3 The International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), on 1-10 December 2008, 31 October -11 November 2009,

1.7.3.4 Wat Pah Nanachat on 21-23 December 2008, 16-18 May 2009.

1.7.4. Critical analysis of the meditation retreats;

1.7.4.1 Analysis of the meditation teaching

1.7.4.2 Analysis of factors supporting the meditation retreat

1.7.4.3 SWOT analysis: (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).

1.7.5 Developing a suitable model for the retreats.

1.7.6 Evaluation and feedback of the developed model by seminar with Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), The Middle Way Meditation Retreat, The International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), and Wat Pah Nanachat.

1.7.7 Conclusions and recommendations.

The research process is shown in the following chart.

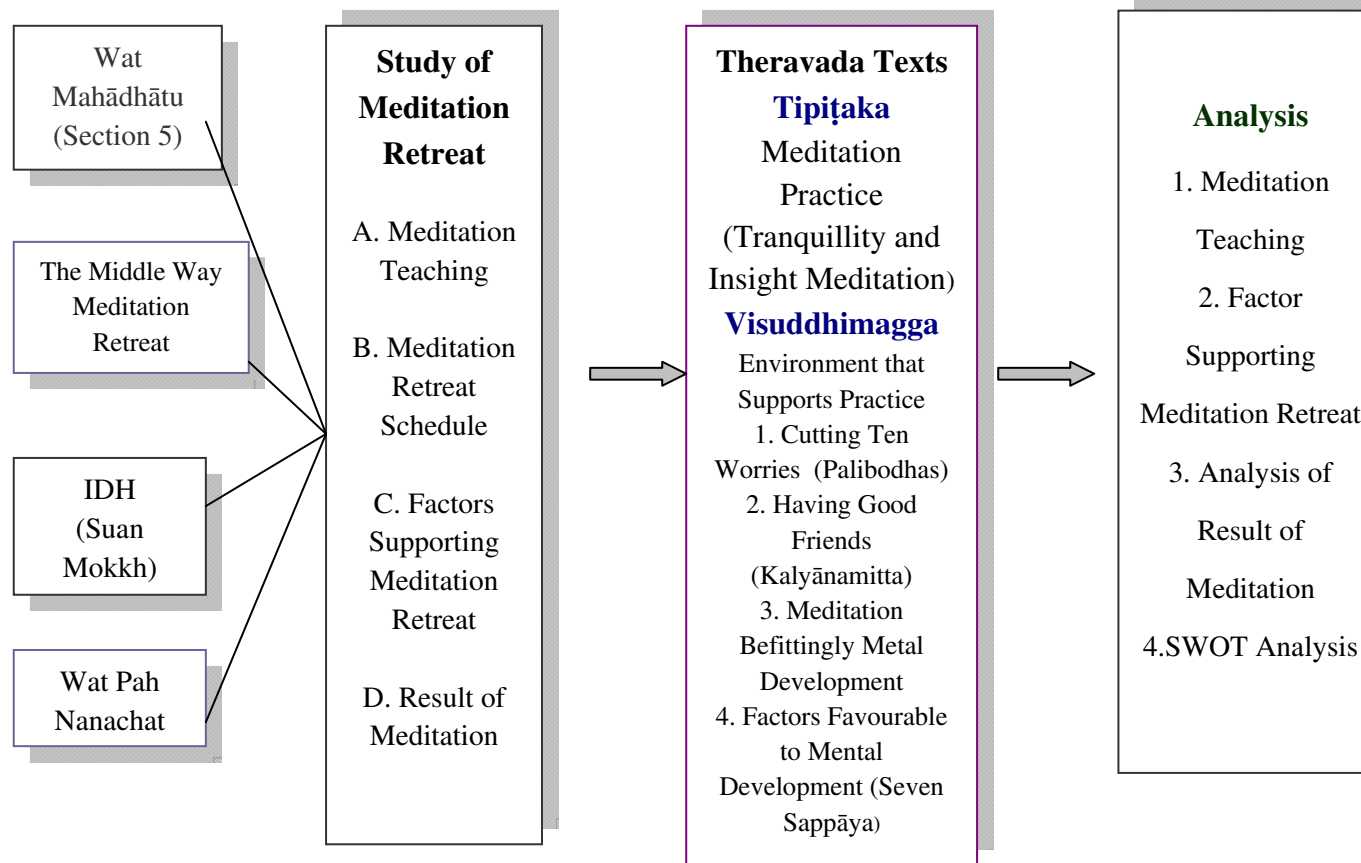


Figure 1: The Research Process

1.8 Expected Benefits

- 1.8.1 Have a clear understanding of Theravada Buddhist meditation.
- 1.8.2 Acknowledge the benefits and the obstacles of Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand.
- 1.8.3 Obtain a suitable model of Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand.

Chapter II

Buddhist Meditation in Theravada Buddhism

This chapter explains Buddhist meditation in Theravada Buddhism such as in the Tipiṭaka and the Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), and so forth. Firstly, the Meditation (kammaṭṭhāna), both tranquillity meditation (samatha kammaṭṭhāna) and insight meditation (vipassanā kammaṭṭhāna) are illustrated. Then, factor support practice such as cutting off worries (palibodhas), having Good Friends (kalyānamitta), finding a subject suitable to a temperament and having suitable things favourable to mental development (sappāya) are explained.

2.1 Meditation Practice

In regard to practice meditation, the practitioners should start with proper behaviour and speech (sīla), then continue with mental training (samādhi) and then reach the final level, developing wisdom (paññā) to the point of overcoming ignorance (avijjā), craving (tanhā) and attachments (upādāna) as explained in the Three-fold Training (tisikkhā) which are training in higher morality (adhisīla-sikkhā), training in higher mentality (adhicitta-sikkhā) and training in higher wisdom (adhipaññā-sikkhā).¹

Training in higher morality (adhisīla-sikkhā) can prevent or discourage the arising of evil and encourage opportunities for good action. At the same time, it can develop the practitioners' minds and discernment. Training in higher mentality (adhicitta-sikkhā) can develop the quality and efficiency of the mind, so it is most

¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), *Samyutta-Nikāya: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, vol 1. (Oxford: PTS., 2000), p.374.

conducive to noble conduct and the development of wisdom. In addition, training in higher wisdom (adhipaññā-sikkhā) is the observation and understanding all things as they really are. It can enable one to conduct one's life wisely, to adopt the right attitude towards things, which is conducive to welfare, and to have a clear and trouble-free mind.² When the practitioners have trained in higher morality and continued with mental training (samādhi) or practice meditation, they can reach the final level, developing wisdom (paññā) to the point of overcoming ignorance (avijjā), craving (tanhā) and attachments (upādāna). To develop the practitioner's mind and discernment, the practitioners should train in higher morality (adhisīla-sikkhā) with proper behaviour and speech, so they can proceed to meditation practice.³

In general, meditation (kammaṭṭhāna) means concentration (one-pointedness) of the moral mind. It refers to the subjects of meditation, meditation exercise, and the act of meditation. According to P.A. Payutto, meditation means “the base of work for the mind” or the mind's working place. It may also mean the object used for developing meditation and training the mind, the meditation object.⁴ Meditation (kammaṭṭhāna) can be called bhāvanā which means a systematic training of the mind, cultivation or development of the mind.⁵ There are two main meditation practices which are tranquillity meditation (samatha bhāvanā or samatha kammaṭṭhāna) and insight meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā or vipassanā kammaṭṭhāna).

² P.A. Payutto, **Buddhadhamma Expanded and Revised (abridged)**, (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1996), pp. 302-303.

³ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, 5th edition, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1991), pp.14-15.

⁴ P.A. Payutto, **Buddhadhamma Expanded and Revised (abridged)**, p. 509.

⁵ Phra Mahā Singhathon Narāsabho, **A Guide to a Happy Life**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Press, 1971), p.78.

2.1.1 Tranquillity Meditation (Samatha Kammaṭṭhāna)

Tranquillity meditation, as a translation of samatha bhāvanā or samatha kammaṭṭhāna means tranquillity, concentration, unshaken-mind, serenity or calmness, an purified state of mind. It is a synonym of “samādhi” which means concentration, fixing of the mind on a single object.⁶ It is the indispensable foundation and precondition of insight through purifying the mind from the five mental defilements or hindrances. The basic purpose of tranquillity meditation is to still the mind and train it to concentrate. It also gives the mind something to work with, something on which it can settle and not wander randomly. It can be anything when the mind fixes onto it, and induces the mind to stillness.⁷

In general, there are three levels of concentration. Firstly, “Preparatory Concentration” (parikamma-samādhi) which is the initial effort that one makes to concentrate when beginning the mental exercise. Secondly is the “Access Concentration” (upacāra-samādhi) which gives access both to the practice of tranquillity and of insight. When used for insight meditation, it is traditionally referred to as “momentary concentration” (khaṇika samādhi). Thirdly, is “Fixed Concentration” (appanā samādhi), or the concentration of attainment. It occurs when the mind becomes fully absorbed in the meditation subject or it contemplates the sign to the exclusion of all thoughts or perceptions. This is fixed concentration.⁸

In addition, there are three signs of concentration. The first two levels of concentrations (parikamma samādhi and khaṇika-samādhi) are correlated with the three signs (nimitta). There is the “Primary Sign” (parikamma-nimitta) which is the simple, normal sense perception of the meditation subject. Next is the “Learning

⁶ Nyanatiloka, **Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines**, 3rd ed. by Nyanapoika, (Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1991), p.155.

⁷ P.A. Payutto, **Buddhadhamma Expanded and Revised (abridged)**, p.509.

⁸ Amadeo Solé-Leris, **Tranquillity & Insight: An Introduction to the Oldest Form of Buddhist Meditation**, (Kandy: Karunatne & Sons Ltd., 1999), pp. 27-28.

Sign” (uggahanimitta) which takes place when the focus of attention of the meditator grows steadier and more intense. The meditator develops a continuous and detailed perception of the subject, which remain clear even in the intervals when there is no direct observation. It is an indication and that the mind is beginning to hold on to the perception of the subject in a sure and undistracted manner. When meditators practice the learning sign as a base, they can reach a higher degree of concentration as indicated by the appearance of the counterpart sign (patibhāga nimitta).⁹

Additionally, the Visuddhimagga enumerates forty subjects for tranquillity meditation.¹⁰ There are the ten Meditation Devices (kasiṇa), the ten kinds of Foulness (asubha), the ten kinds of Recollections (anussati), the Divine Abidings (brahmavihāras), the Perception of Repulsiveness in Nutriment (āhāre paṭikūlasaññā), Defining of the Elements (catudhātuvavaṭṭhāna), and the Immaterial States (arūpa).¹¹

2.1.1.1 The Ten Meditation Devices (kasiṇa)

Kasiṇa refers to an object used for concentrating the mind. According to Nyānatiloka, kasiṇa means, “all, complete, whole”. It is the name for a purely external device to produce and develop concentration of mind and attain the four absorptions (jhāna). One of the ten kinds of external objects is to concentrate on the four “bhūta-kasiṇa” (the four great physical elements): earth, water, fire and wind. The four “vaṇṇa-kasiṇa” (colours): green, yellow, red, white and the two

⁹ Ibid., p.30.

¹⁰ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, 5th edition, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 199), p. xliii.

¹¹ Peter Masefield, (tr.), **Vimānavatthu-aṭṭhakathā: Elucidation of the Intrinsic Meaning so Named the Commentary on the Vimāna Stories**, (Oxford: PTS., 1997), p.133.

miscellaneous kasiṇa: light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa) and air or limited-space kasiṇa (paticchinnaākāsa-kasiṇa).¹²

In the Aṅguttara Nikāya the cultivation of the jhāna through one or more of the ten kasiṇa is cited as an attribute of a faithful follower of the Buddha:

O monks, a monk who practises the (jhāna of) paṭhavī-kasiṇa even for a moment, for the duration of a snap of the fingers, is said to be the monk who lives not empty of jhāna, who follows the master's teaching, who acts upon his advice, and who (rightly) partakes of the alms offered by the country or the pious. How much more they who practise it more.¹³

The same statement is repeated for each kasiṇa.

1) Earth Kasiṇa (paṭhavī-kasiṇa)

The practitioner who wants to practice the earth kasiṇa should sit relaxed and apprehend the sign in earth, either prepared or unprepared. For one who has previous experience, the sign arises, spontaneously, when he sees earth such as a ploughed-area or on a threshing-floor. For the beginner, who has no previous practice, he should make a kasiṇa by using clay which should not be of any of the four colors: blue, yellow, red, or white. It should be of a light red like “aruṇa” as the shade that appears in the sky at dawn. The frame upon which the clay disc is placed should not be too near a Vihāra or a residence, for fear of interruption. Then, he should make the framework, either movable or fixed, as may be convenient. If it is a movable frame, consisting of four sticks, the top should be covered with a piece of cloth or a mat and upon this the clay should be spread after all traces of grass, roots, pebbles and sand have been removed from it. The clay must be made smooth, kneaded and worked until

¹² Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, 5th edition, p.110.

¹³ A I 41.

it is of the proper consistency; and it should then be fashioned into a disc one span and four inched in diameter.¹⁴

Having practiced the Earth Kasiṇa, the practitioners should keep their minds upon the sign of earth as a concept and meditate, repeat the name of earth (paṭhavī), such as “earth (paṭhavī)”, “the Great One (mahī)”, “the Friendly One (medinī)”, “ground (bhūmi)”, “the Provider of Wealth (vasudhā)”, “the Bearer of Wealth (vasudharā)”, etc whichever suits their manner of perception. Moreover, “earth” is also a name that is obvious, so it can be developed by saying “Earth, earth”. It can be repeated with eyes open or with eyes shut. The practitioners should go on developing it in this way many times until the learning sign arises.

The difference between the earlier learning sign (uggaha-nimitta) and the counterpart sign (paṭibhāga-nimitta) is the following: in the learning sign any fault in the kasiṇa is apparent but for the counterpart sign, it appears as if breaking out from the learning sign, and a hundred times, a thousand times, more purified, like a looking-glass disc drawn from its case, like a mother-of-pearl dish well-washed, like the moon’s disc, coming out from behind a cloud, like cranes against a thunder cloud. But it has neither colours nor shape; for if it had, it would be recognizable by eye, gross, susceptible of comprehension and stamped with the three characteristics. But it is only a mere mode of appearance. As soon as it arises, the hindrances are quite suppressed, the defilements subside, and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration.¹⁵ In addition, the earth kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as the state described as “Having been one, he becomes many”¹⁶, etc., and stepping or standing or sitting on space or on

¹⁴ Paravahera Vajiraṇāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, 3rd Edition, (Jaya: P.K.S., 1987), p.148.

¹⁵ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, (Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1956), p. 130.

¹⁶ D I 78.

water by creating earth, and the acquisition of the bases of mastery ¹⁷ by the limited and measureless method.

2) Water Kasiṇa (āpo-kasiṇa)

The practitioner who wants to practice Water Kasiṇa should sit comfortably and apprehend the sign in water, either prepared or unprepared. For the one with previous experience, the sign arises for him in water that is not made up, such as a pool, a lake, a lagoon, or the ocean. For someone who has no experience, he should fill a bowl or a four-footed water pot to the brim with water uncontaminated by soil, taken in the open through a clean cloth (strainer), or with any other clear unturbid water. He should put it in a screened place on the border of the monastery and sit comfortably. He should neither review its colour nor bring its characteristic to mind.

Apprehending the colour as belonging to its physical support, he should mentally repeat one of the words for water (āpo) such as “rain” (ambu), “liquid” (udaka), “dew” (vāri), “fluid” (salila). He should develop the kasiṇa by using the obvious “water, water”. The counterpart sign appears inactive, like a crystal fan set in space, like the disk of a looking-glass made of crystal. With the appearance of that sign he reaches access jhāna.¹⁸ The water kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as diving in and out of the earth¹⁹ causing rain, storms, creating rivers and seas, making the earth and rocks and palaces quake.²⁰

¹⁷ M II 13.

¹⁸ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. By Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 130.

¹⁹ D I 78.

²⁰ M I 253.

3) Fire Kasiṇa (tejo-kasiṇa)

Anyone who wants to practice with the Fire kasiṇa should apprehend the sign of fire. For practitioners who have experience, they can apprehend the sign which arises in them in any sort of fire as in the fiery combustion, in the lamp's flame or in a furnace or in a place for baking bowls or in a forest conflagration.

On the other hand, the practitioners who have not had previous experience should make a fire by splitting some firewood that has been well-cut and dried, and made into bundles. They should carry it to a clean, quiet place, under a tree or in a shelter, and make a fire with it. Taking a mat or a piece of cloth, they should make a hole in it, one span and four inches wide. Setting it up before the fire like a screen, they should sit down and gaze at the fire through that hole. Then they should take the sign in the middle of the flame which is of one colour. Keep their minds upon fire as a concept and meditate, repeating the name of fire (tejo) such as “the Bright One (pāvaka)”, “the Leaver of the Trail (kaṇhavattani)”, “the Knower of Creatures (jātaveda)”, “the Altar of Sacrifice (hutāsana)”. They should develop the kasiṇa by using “fire, fire.” When developing Fire kasiṇa, any fault of kasiṇa might occur such as a piece of burnt wood, a burning coal, ash or smoke. However, if the Fire kasiṇa develops like the counterpart sign, it appears motionless like a piece of red cloth set in space, like a gold fan, like a gold column. With such appearance the practitioners reach access jhāna.²¹ In addition, the fire kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as smoking, flaming, causing showers of sparks, countering fire with fire, ability to burn only what one wants to burn,²² causing light for the purpose of seeing visible objects with the divine eye, and burning up the body by the fire element at the time of attaining nibbāna.²³

²¹ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 178.

²² S IV 290.

²³ M A IV 196.

4) Air Kasiṇa (vāyo-kasiṇa)

The practitioner who wants to develop the air kasiṇa (vāyokasiṇa) should capture the sign in air and that is done either by sight or touch. He should notice the top of (growing) sugarcane moving or the top of trees and so forth. Then he should establish mindfulness in this way or establish mindfulness where the wind strikes a part of his body after entering by a window opening or by a crack in a wall, and using the names for wind (vāta), “breeze (mālu)”, “blowing (anīla)”. He should develop the kasiṇa by repeating the word “air, air.” After developing the air kasiṇa, the learning sign appears to move like the swirl of hot steam on rice gruel just withdrawn from an oven. The counterpart sign is quiet and motionless.²⁴ The air kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as going with the speed of the wind, causing wind storms.²⁵

5) Blue Kasiṇa (nīla-kasiṇa)

The practitioner who wants to practice the blue kasiṇa should sit comfortably and apprehend the sign in blue, whether in a flower or in a cloth or in an element of the blue such as blue stone or metal. For the person who has experience with the blue kasiṇa, the sign can appear when seeing a bush with blue flowers, or such flowers spread out on a place of offering, or any blue cloth or gem.

Anyone else should take flowers of the blue lotuses, girikaṇṇikā (morning glory) flowers, etc., and arrange them in a basket or a round tray without pollen or stalks so they can assume the form of a round, dense, blue object and spread them out to fill a tray or a flat basket. He can also make a device of a blue metal, a blue leaf or else, it may be a disc, painted blue, of a diameter of one span and four inches, and with a border of some other colour. It may be movable and fitted with a frame like the

²⁴Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.179.

²⁵ Ibid., p.183.

earth kasiṇa or fixed to a wall. After that he should bring it to mind as “blue, blue” or “nīlam nīlam”. When developing the blue kasiṇa, any fault of kasiṇa occurs such as the stamens and stalk and the gaps between the petals. The counterpart sign appears like a crystal fan in space, free from the kasiṇa disk. With the appearance of that sign he reaches access jhāna.²⁶ The blue kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as creating black forms, causing darkness, acquisition of the bases of mastery by the method of fairness and ugliness, and attainment of the liberation by the beautiful.²⁷

6) Yellow Kasiṇa (pīta-kasiṇa)

The practitioner who wants to practice the Yellow kasiṇa should apprehend the sign in yellow, either in a flower or in a cloth or in a colour element. Someone who has experience it before can use the flowering bush or flower spread out, or yellow cloth or colour element as sign. The beginner should make the device by arranging them in a basket or a round tray without pollen or stalks. He can also make a device of a yellow metal, a yellow leaf, painted yellow, of a diameter of one span and four inches, and with a border of some other colour. It should be movable and fitted with a frame like the earth kasiṇa or fixed to a wall. After that, he should bring the mind as “yellow, yellow” or “pīlakaṃ pīlakaṃ.” When developing yellow kasiṇa the fault of kasiṇa might occur as the stamens and stalk and the gaps between the petals, etc are apparent. The counterpart sign appears like a crystal fan in space, free from the kasiṇa disk. With the appearance of that sign he reaches jhāna.²⁸ The yellow kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as creating yellow forms, resolving that something

²⁶ Ibid., p. 180.

²⁷ M II 12.

²⁸ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.157.

shall be gold,²⁹ acquisition of the bases of mastery in the way stated, and attainment of the liberation by the beautiful.

7) Red Kasiṇa (lohita-kasiṇa)

Anyone who wants to develop the red kasiṇa should apprehend the sign in red, either a flower or in a cloth or in a colour element. When someone has experienced the sign, it arises in him when he sees a bandhujīvaka (hibiscus) bush, etc, in flower, or such flowers spread out, or a red cloth or gem or colour element. The beginner should make a kasiṇa as the blue kasiṇa disc, from a red flower, chosen for the purpose, a piece of red cloth or an element of this colour. When he meditates he should repeat the word “red, red”, or “lohitakaṃ, lohitakaṃ”. After developing the red kasiṇa, the fault of kasiṇa will occur as same as the blue kasiṇa and when he reaches access jhāna, he will see the sign like a crystal fan in space, free from the kasiṇa disk. The red kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as creating red forms, acquisition of the bases of mastery in the way stated, and attainment of the liberation by the beautiful.³⁰

8) White Kasiṇa (odāta-kasiṇa)

One who wants to learn white kasiṇa should apprehend the sign in white, either in a flower or in a cloth or in a colour element. For the one with previous practice, the sign arises in him when he sees a certain kind of flowering bush or jasmine flower, etc.; spread out, or a heap of white lotuses or lilies, white cloth or colour element; and it also arises in a tin disk, a silver disk, and the moon’s disk. Anyone else should make a kasiṇa in the way already described in the blue kasiṇa,

²⁹ S I 16.

³⁰ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, pp. 180-183.

with white flowers or with cloth or color element. He should bring it to mind as “white, white” or “odātaṃ, odātaṃ.”

When developing white kasiṇa the fault of kasiṇa might occur as the blue kasiṇa. The counterpart sign appears like a crystal fan in space, free from the kasiṇa disk. With the appearance of that sign the meditator reaches access jhāna. The white kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as creating white forms, banishing stiffness and torpor, dispelling darkness and causing light for the purpose of seeing visible objects with the divine eye.³¹

9) Light Kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa)

Anyone who wants to practice the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa) should meditate on light from a hole, from a wall, from a keyhole, or from a window opening. For a practitioner with experience, the sign arises in him when he sees a wall or a floor by sunlight or moonlight or when he sees a circle on the ground caused by sunlight or moonlight coming through a gap in the branches of a dense leaved tree or through a gap in a hut made of closely packed branches.

Anyone else should use that same kind of circle of luminosity or a round patch of light and he should focus his mind on “luminosity, luminosity”, or “obhāso, obhāso”, “light, light” or “āloko, āloko”. Anyone unable to do this should light a lamp or a candle and placing it in an earthen pot with a hole and the mouth covered, set it down facing a wall. The lamp light issuing from the hole will cast a disc of light upon the wall. This will have the advantage of lasting longer than the others.³² When developing the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa), the learning sign (uggaha nimitta) is like the circle thrown on the wall or the ground and the counterpart sign (patibhāga nimitta) will appear like a compact bright cluster of light. The appearance of that sign

³¹ Op.cit.

³² Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.159.

means access jhāna. The light kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as creating luminous forms, banishing stiffness and torpor, dispelling darkness, causing light for the purpose of seeing visible objects with the divine eye.³³

10) Limited Space Kasiṇa (paticchinna-ākāsa kasiṇa)

For developing the limited-space kasiṇa, the practitioner should apprehend the sign in a hole in a wall, or in a keyhole, or in a window opening. For someone who has previous practice, the sign appears in him when he sees a hole in a wall. The beginner should make a hole about four inches wide,³⁴ either in a well-covered tent or pavilion, a mat or similar object. He should develop one of these, or a hole such as a hole in a wall, as “space, space”, or “ākāso, ākāso”. As he meditates, he will see the learning sign (uggaha-nimitta) resemble the hole together with the wall that surrounds it but he cannot extend it. The counterpart sign appears only as a circle of space and it can extend. The space kasiṇa is the basis for such powers as revealing the hidden, maintaining postures inside the earth and rocks by creating space inside them, travelling unobstructed through walls, and so on.³⁵

In summary, when the practitioners practise these kasiṇa with good faith and pay attention to meditation they can reach jhāna which is the path to enlightenment. According to Buddhaghosa, each of the ten kasiṇas can be the cause of fourfold and of fivefold jhāna, the fine-material sphere's own master key³⁶ as explained above. This passages occurs in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Lord Buddha said that:

³³ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, pp. 181-183.

³⁴ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.159.

³⁵ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, pp.182-183.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.182.

Only those who possess the good qualities of faith, wisdom and determination can practise this meditation with success. The jhānas induced by means of the kasīṇa lead to the path of insight, thus enabling the aspirant to accomplish the fulfilment and perfection of knowledge whereby he will attain to the happiness of Nirvāṇa.³⁷

2.1.1.2 Ten Kinds of Foulness (asubha)

“Asubha” means impurity, loathsomeness, foulness. In the Visuddhimagga, it is the cemetery contemplations that are called “meditation-subjects of impurity” (asubha-kammatthāna). The contemplation of the body's impurity is opposite the hindrance of sense-desire and the mental perversion (vipallāsa), which sees what is truly impure as pure and beautiful. There are ten kinds of foulness (of corpses) such as bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm-infested and a skeleton as explained in the following:

1) The Bloated Corpse (uddhumātaka)

The bloated corpse (uddhumātaka) or the swollen corps demonstrates the decay of the form of the body, which is suitable for one who lusts after beauty of form. It shows the fact that the shape of the body is not permanent. Finally, when dead, that beautiful body will be bloated, foul. There is nothing pleasant or lovely. The one who wants to practice the livid corpse as a meditation object should be seated comfortably and fixing the attention on the bloated corpse should repeat the words “Repulsiveness of the bloated corpse, repulsiveness of the bloated corpse” or “Uddhumātaka-ṭṭikkūlaṃ, Uddhumātaka-ṭṭikkūlaṃ”. Then the learning sign

³⁷ A III 436.

appears awful and terrifying, as it should be understood in order to destroy passion, but the counterpart sign is a stout man lying down. With the appearance of the counterpart sign, the sense-desire subsides. Ill-will and other hindrances are gradually eliminated.

2) The Livid Corpse (vinīlaka)

The livid (vinīlaka) is a discoloured corpse or a corpse, brownish black or purplish-blue with decay. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, “what has patchy discoloration is called livid (vinīla). The livid vinīlaka is a term for a corpse that is reddish-coloured in places where collected, but mostly blue-black (nīla), as if draped with blue black cloth in the blue-black place.”³⁸

The livid corpse counteracts delight in beauty of skin and complexion. It illustrates the fact that when being dead, that skin of a beautiful body is not really beautiful. In general, after passing away, several changes occur in the body. The parts where the flesh is abundant turn red and the parts where matter gathers turn white. In general, the corpse turns blue-green, blood and matter mixing, and looks as if it were covered by a blue sheet. The one who meditates on such a corpse must realize that a material body, be it that of the past, present, or future, naturally undergoes changes similar to those of this livid corpse.

The one who uses the livid corpse as a meditation object should sit comfortably and fix his attention on the foulness of the livid corpse. The words to be repeated are “Repulsiveness of the livid, repulsiveness of the livid,” or “Vinīlaka-paṭikkūlaṃ, Vinīlaka-paṭikkūlaṃ”. Then the learning sign appears in blotchy-colours but the counterpart sign’s appearance has the colour which is most prevalent.

³⁸ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 185.

3) The Festering Corpse (vipubbaka)

The festering or suppurated corpse with a stench issuing from sores on the body is suitable for anyone who lusts after a sweet smelling body, produced by such artificial means as flowers, perfumes and unguents.³⁹ It demonstrates that perfumes or any cosmetics covering skin are worthless because, make-up or any perfumes cannot avoid foul things inside the body. For developing this type of Asubha meditation, the festering should be brought to mind as “repulsiveness of the festering, repulsiveness of the festering” or “vipubbaka paṭikkūlaṃ, vipubbaka paṭikkūlaṃ”. The learning sign appears as though trickling; but the counterpart sign appears motionless and quiet.⁴⁰

4) The Cut up Corpse (vicchiddaka)

The cut up (vicchiddaka) corpse is one that is splattered in half, or fissured from decay, or a corpse split in two in the middle, or one that is cut in the middle.⁴¹ It shows that the body is not a solid lump. The body actually is hollow and full of disgusting things. It is suitable for one who lusts after the apparent firmness and solidity of the body.

The cut-up corpse is found on the battle field or in the robbers forest or on a charnel ground where kings have robbers cut up or in the jungle in a place where men are torn up by lions and tigers. However, nowadays, we might find the cut-up corpse in the hospital, temple, or the jungle. When seeing the corpse, one who wants to practice this type of meditation should find its various parts scattered here and there, and he should have someone collect them together in one place. If nobody can help, he should put the corpse together, using a stick. He should not touch it with his

³⁹ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.168.

⁴⁰ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 197.

⁴¹ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.178.

own hand because he will get familiar with it. After that, he should bring the corpse to mind as ‘repulsiveness of the cut up, repulsiveness of the cut up’ or ‘vicchiddaka paṭikkūlaṃ, vvicchiddaka paṭikkūlaṃ’. The learning sign appears as though cut in the middle but the counterpart sign appears whole.⁴²

5) The Gnawed Corpse (vikkhāyittaka)

The gnawed corpse is a corpse gnawed by animals such as wild dogs and foxes, jackals, etc. It is suitable for the one who lusts after fullness of the flesh body. It illustrates the fact that some part of the body that some people like, such as breasts, will be probably taken away by animals such as dogs, rats, etc. soon.

Meditating on the fact that this material body is liable to the same fate, with a feeling of disgust, the disciple should dwell upon the gnawed corpse, and mentally repeat the words “repulsiveness of the gnawed, repulsiveness of the gnawed” or “vikkhāyittaka paṭikkūlaṃ, vikkhāyittaka paṭikkūlaṃ”. The learning sign appears as though gnawed here and there but the counterpart sign appears whole.⁴³

6) The Scattered Corpse (vikkhitaka)

The scattered corpse (vikkhitaka) is a corpse scattered in parts, hands, legs, head and body being dispersed. It is suitable for the one who lusts after the graceful movement of the body. This asubha is for people who are consumed with passion from watching dancing, movement of the body, hands, bending arms, legs, stretching arms or legs of the opposite sex but, at last, finally, those parts will be scattered in different directions as the pictures.

⁴² Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 197.

⁴³ Op.cit.

For meditation, one should see the corpses, and arrange them each in this place, leaving a space of one inch⁴⁴ between the parts; then it should be brought to mind as ‘repulsiveness of the scatter, repulsiveness of the scatter’ or ‘vikkhitaka paṭikkūlaṃ, vikkhitaka paṭikkūlaṃ’. The learning sign appears with the gaps evident but the counterpart sign appears whole.⁴⁵

7) The Hacked and Scattered Corpse (hatavikkhittaka)

The hacked and scattered corpse (hatavikkhittaka) is a corpse cut in small and large pieces and thrown away in parts after killing. It is suitable for the one who lusts after the perfection of the joints of the body. It also demonstrates that all connections of parts of the body are not permanent. Finally, they will be separated soon.

To practice meditation one should go to see the hacked and scattered corpse, then put it together. Leave space of one inch between the parts, then it should be brought in mind as “repulsiveness of the hacked scatter, repulsiveness of the hacked scatter” or “hatavikkhittaka paṭikkūlaṃ, hatavikkhittaka paṭikkūlaṃ.” The learning sign appears like a wound but the counterpart sign appears whole.

8) The Bleeding Corpse (lohitaka)

The bleeding corpse is a corpse with red blood oozing out. It shows the repulsiveness of a body besmeared with blood. It is suitable for one who lusts after beauty produced by adornments. This meditation exercise demonstrates that

⁴⁴ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.179.

⁴⁵Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 197.

ornaments and jewellery cannot hide disgusting things in the body. Finally, they will come out, flow out.

A bleeding corpse is to be found in such places as a battle-field, bleeding from many wounds and the limbs severed from trunk, or covered with boils and abscesses from which matter is being discharged. On seeing such a bleeding corpse, one repeats the words “repulsiveness of the bleeding, repulsiveness of the bleeding” or “lohitaka paṭikkūlaṃ, lohitaka paṭikkūlaṃ”. The learning sign appears like a red flag waving in the wind but the counterpart sign appears still.⁴⁶

9) The Worm- Infested (puḷuvaka)

The worm-infested corpse (puḷuvaka) is a corpse infested with and eaten by worms. It illustrates the state of a body swarming with various kinds of worms and it is suitable for one who lusts after the idea that the body is “I” and “mine.”⁴⁷ It also demonstrates the fact that our body really is not ours. It is home to those worms. If our body really is ours, we would not let those worms eat the body.

The worm-infested corpse can be found in a corpse several days old, when masses of worms issue forth from the body. This kind of corpse is the dead body of a man, dog, jackal, buffalo, horse, elephant, and so on. For meditation, one should bring the worm-infested corpse to mind and repeat the words “repulsiveness of the worm-infested, repulsiveness of the worm-infested”, “puḷuvaka paṭikkūlaṃ, puḷuvaka paṭikkūlaṃ.” The learning sign appears to be moving but the counterpart sign appears like a ball of boiled rice.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.198.

⁴⁷ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.168.

⁴⁸ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 198.

10) A Skeleton (atthika)

A skeleton (atthika) is the body of framework of the body as foul object of meditation. It is suitable for the one who lusts after perfection of teeth and nails. For meditation, the one should go see the skeleton then remind himself of the words “repulsiveness of the skeleton, repulsiveness of the skeleton” or “atthika paṭikkūlaṃ, atthika paṭikkūlaṃ.” The learning sign appears on the whole frame. It shows the apertures but the counterpart sign appears as an unbroken whole.⁴⁹

2.1.1.3 Ten Kinds of Recollections (anussati)

The ten recollections will be listed next after the different kinds of foulness. In general, mindfulness (sati) is recollection (anusati) because it arises again and again; or alternatively, the mindfulness (sati) that is proper (anurūpa) for a clansman gone forth out of faith, since it occurs only in those instance where it should occur is “recollection (anussati)”.⁵⁰ There are ten types of recollection are shown in the following items:

1) Recollection of Buddha (Buddhānussati)

The one who wants to practice recollection of Buddha should practice it in a secluded dwelling, then fix the mind with attentiveness and reflect repeatedly on the glorious virtues and attributes of Buddha. The reason for contemplating the supreme qualities of Buddha is found in the following formula.

By this (reason), he the Lord is Arahāt, perfectly enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, the happy one, knower of the worlds, the Peerless

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.198.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.204.

charioteer of men to be tamed, Teacher of gods and men, the Buddha, the Blessed One⁵¹

When practicing recollection of Buddha, he is respectful and deferential towards the master. He attains fullness of faith, mindfulness, understanding and merit. He has much happiness and gladness. He conquers fear and dread. He is able to endure pain. He comes to feel as if he were living in master's presence. And his body, when the recollection of the Buddha's special qualities dwells in it, becomes as worthy of veneration as a shrine room.⁵² His mind is directed towards Buddhahood; and when the possibility of sinful action arises, he abstains there from, feeling shame and fear of blame, as though he were in the presence of the Buddha himself.⁵³

2) Recollection of Dhamma (Dhammānussati)

The one who wants to practice recollection of Dhamma should go in to a solitary retreat and recollect the special qualities of both the Dhamma (Law) of scriptures and the nine fold supramundane Dhamma (state) as follow:

The Dhamma is well proclaimed by the Blessed One, visible here and now, not delayed (timeless), inviting of inspection, onward-leading, and directly experienceable by the wise⁵⁴

The one who develops recollection of Dhamma can attain the state of access concentration and his mind becomes free from all hindrances. However, practicing recollection of Dhamma will not lead anyone to attain the Appanā stage because the virtue of the Dhamma is so profound as to be difficult to comprehend, and the

⁵¹ DI 49.

⁵² Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 230.

⁵³ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.196.

⁵⁴ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 230.

recollection of its various qualities requires such intentness. But as his mind is free from all hindrances, it can attain full concentration which render it apt and can develop insight that will finally lead him to the happiness of Nibbanā.

3) Recollection of Saṅgha (Saṅghānussati)

The one who wants to practice recollection of Saṅgha should perform it in a quiet dwelling, then, fix the mind strongly and repeatedly upon the rare attributes and sanctity of the Saṅgha as follow:

Of good conduct is the community (Saṅgha) of the Blessed One's disciples, of upright conduct, living on the right path, performing their duties such as the Four Pairs of Men or Eight Persons (ariya puggala). This Community of the Blessed One's disciples is worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, worthy of reverence, with raised hands, the unsurpassed field for doing meritorious deeds.⁵⁵

The one who develop the recollection of saṅgha who constantly practices will come to respect and have faith in it, and is not overcome by fear and dread. He is able to bear pain, can form the idea that he is living with saṅgha, and his mind aims at attaining the virtues of saṅgha. If he cannot attain arahantship in the present life, he is assured of a happy destiny.

4) Recollection of Virtue (sīlānussati)

The one who wishes to develop the recollection of Virtue should retire into seclusion and reflect upon his own moral purity. Then, the one further recollects his own morality (sīla) which is unbroken, without any breach, undefiled, untarnished,

⁵⁵ A III 286.

conducive to liberation, praised by the wise, not dependent (on craving or opinions), leading to concentration.

When one reflects upon the virtue of his own *sīla*, his mind is not then invaded by lust, or by hate, or by delusion, but is joyful and upright because of recollection of virtue. One who practices this meditation becomes ardent in his moral training, leads a pure faithful life, free from fear of blame, and sees danger in the minutest fault. If he cannot attain the complete perfection in the present life, he is bound to enjoy a blissful destiny.

5) Recollection of Generosity (*cāgānussati*)

One who wants to practice recollection of generosity should be a person who is constantly giving alms and distributing gifts to others. Otherwise, at the commencement of his meditation he should make the resolve “From now onwards, so long as there is anyone to receive, I shall not eat without making an offering, even though it may be just a handful.” On the day that he makes this resolution he should make some gift, as far as his circumstances permit, to a person who is worthy and distinguished for virtue, and taking this as the object of his thought he should meditate in seclusion, reflecting upon the virtue of liberality as follows;

It is gain for me, it is great gain for me, that in a generation obsessed by the stain of avarice I abide with my heart free from stain by avarice, and am freely generous and open-handed, that I delight in relinquishing, expect to be asked, and rejoice in giving and sharing⁵⁶

Consequently, when he recollects on generosity, his mind is not invaded by lust, or by hate, or by delusion, but is upright and strengthened with the mindfulness of his generosity. And when his mind is freed from hindrances and concentrated on this subject, then the *jhāna* factors arise at one and the same moment in the state of

⁵⁶ A III 287.

upacāra samādhi. This is called caganussati since it arises through recollection of qualities of liberality. One who practices this recollection is all the more intent on generosity, and becomes free from covetousness. He lives with constant regard for friendliness; and being endowed with confidence and cheerfulness, he is assured of happy progress.⁵⁷

6) Recollection of Deities (devatānussati)

One who wants to develop the recollection of deities (devatanussati) should be endowed with such qualities as faith, energy and mindfulness, which are associated with the Noble Path, and should then recollect his own virtue, taking the devas as examples;

There are the devas who are the Four Great Kings, there are devas in the realm of Tāvātimsa, Yāma, Tusita, Nimmānarati, Paranimmitavasavatii. There are devas of the Brahma-group; there are devas higher than those. With whatever faith these devas, on pass (sic!) away hence, were reborn there, in me also there is such faith. With whatever virtue, learning, liberality and wisdom these devas on passing away hence, were reborn there, in me also there is such virtue...wisdom.⁵⁸

When one who practices this meditation and recollects his own virtues (saddhā) comparing them with those of devas, at that moment his mind becomes freed from lust, hate and delusion.

One who practice the recollection of deities (devatānussati) should contemplate the devas's virtues of saddhā, (absolute faith), sīla, (morality), suta; (knowledge), cāga, (liberality) and paññā, (wisdom or knowledge) and afterwards the virtues that exist in himself. When he meditates on this his mind becomes freed from

⁵⁷ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.196.

⁵⁸ A I 210.

hindrances, and the jhāna factors arise in state of access concentration. In addition, one who practice this meditation is dear to the devas, beloved of them, and attains higher states of virtue. If he makes no further progress in his present life, he is bound to enjoy a happy destiny.

7) Recollection of Death (maraṇānussati)

The recollection arisen inspired by the death is the recollection of death (marananussati). This is the term for mindfulness with the termination of the life faculty as its object. There are two kinds of death: timely death and untimely death. Timely death comes about with the exhaustion of merit or with the exhaustion of a life span or with both. Untimely death comes about through kamma that interrupts (other, life-producing,) kamma.⁵⁹

One who wants to develop the recollection of death (maraṇānussati) should retire into seclusion and focus his attention by thinking “maraṇaṃ bhavissati, jīvitindriyaṃ upacchijjissati”, or “death will take place, the life-faculty will be cut off”, or more simply “maraṇaṃ, maraṇaṃ,” “death, death.” The repetition of any of these terms is from the preliminary exercise. If this is not available, he should contemplate death in the following:

1) As having the appearance of a murderer, for instance, assume as a murderer with sword in hand might come upon one and say that they will kill you so death approaches and threatens living beings. Thus it should be borne in mind.

2) As the ruin of success, it should be recalled as all prosperity and achievement in this world come to an end, so a prosperous life inevitably ends in death; as been said:

⁵⁹ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 230.

Old age and death come rolling over the living, Nobles, Brahmins, traders, serfs and outcasts, nothing can escape, all is crushed; no place for elephants, is there, nor for chariots, nor for infantry. Nor can one be victorious in fighting, by means of charms or wealth.⁶⁰

3) It should be recalled by interring one's own death from that of others or comparison oneself with the other. For example, all those in the past who had the greatness of pomp, merit, might, power and learning, have passed away in death; those who attained the summit of spiritual progress, such as the Buddhas and the Pacceka Buddhas, all have passed away in death; like those great ones, I myself have to die. Thus it should be recollected by way of inference.

4) At all events death is evitable because this body is subject to all the causes of death such as the many hundreds of diseases, as well as other external dangers. At any moment any of these may beset the body and cause it to perish.

5) The life of being is bound up with inhalation and exhalation, with postures with heat and cold, with the four elements and with food. Without these, life ceases.

6) Life is uncertain because it cannot be determined in regards to time, cause, place or destiny.

7) Human life is so short; he who is long lived, lives only a hundred years or little more.

8) Life is exceedingly short indeed, lasting merely for one conscious moment. Life is limited by one mental instant (cittakhaṇa): for life is experienced only during the instants of thought: arising (uppāda), existing (ṭhiti), and ceasing (bhaṅga): life endures only for an existing instant.

One who practices the recollection of death always vigilant, and takes no delight in phenomenal existence. He gives up hankering after life; he censures evil

⁶⁰ S I 102.

doing. He is free from craving as regards to the requisites of life; his perception of impermanence becomes established. In consequence of these things, he realizes the painful and soulless nature of existence. At the time of death he is devoid of fear, and remains mindful and self possessed. If in this present life he fails to attain to deathlessness (nibbāna), upon the dissolution of the body he is bound for a happy destiny.⁶¹

8) Mindfulness Occupied with the Body (kāyagatā-sati)

Practicing of mindfulness occupied with the body had never been practiced before the advent of the Buddha, nor does it come within the scope of any of the other religious systems. The mindfulness occupied with the body (kāyagatā-sati) is reflecting earnestly and repeatedly on the impurity of the body which is composed of the detestable 32 constituents such as hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, and so on. The objective of this meditation is to awaken to the true nature of the body thus prevent infatuation or delusion in regard to it.⁶²

One who wants to develop this meditation should go to a good friend and learn it. Then the teacher who explains it to him should tell him, the sevenfold skill in learning and the tenfold skill in giving attention. The Sevenfold skill in learning are verbal recitation, mental recitation, colour, shape, direction, location and delimitation.

1) Verbal Recitation

The teacher should instruct the student to recite the formula in six divisions, and to recite them both in the direct and reverse order. The first division he should recite is kesā (head hairs), lomā (body hairs), nakhā (nails), dantā (teeth), taco (skins)”

⁶¹ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.262.

⁶² P.A. Payutto, **Buddhadhamma Expanded and Revised (abridged)**, p. 509.

in direct order; then as “tao, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā” in reverse order. This called “Taca- pañcaka,” the five ending in the skin.

The second division (vakka-pañcaka) should be recited as: “maṃsaṃ (flesh), nahāru (sinews), aṭṭhi (bones), aṭṭhimiñjaṃ (bone marrow), vakkam (kidney)” in direct order; in the reverse order it should be recited together with the first division as : “vakkam, aṭṭhimiñṃ aṭṭhi nahāru, maṃsaṃ, taco, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā.” Then again from “kesā” to “vakkam.”

The third division (papphāsa- pañcaka) is to be recited as: “hadayaṃ (heart), yakanam (liver), kilomakam (midriff), pihakam (spleen), papphāsam (lights)”; in direct order; the reverse, beginning with “papphāsam ending in kesā” then from “kesā to papphāsam”

The fourth division (matthaluṅga-pañcaka) is to be recited as: “antaṃ (bowels), antaguṇam (entrail), udariyaṃ (gorge), karisaṃ (dung) matthaluṅgaṃ (brain);” in direct order; in the reverse from “matthaluṅgaṃ” ending in kesā” then from “kesā to “matthaluṅgaṃ”.

The fifth division (meda-chakka, the six ending in meda) should be recited in direct order as: “pittaṃ (bile), semhaṃ (phlegm), pubbo (pus), lohitaṃ (blood), sedo (sweat), medo (fat);” the reverse “medo to kesā”. Then “kesā to medo.”

The sixth division (mutta-chakha) should be recited in direct order as; “assu (tears), vasā (grease), khelo (spittle), siṅghānikā (snot), lasikā (oil of the joints), muttaṃ (urine);” the reverse, from “muttaṃ” to “kesā”. Then “kesā to “muttaṃ”.

One who practices this meditation should repeat this recitation until he gets familiar with the object and his mind does not wander. The parts of the body become clear, held in hand. Mental recitation: as he recites it verbally, he should also recite it mentally; the verbal recitation assists penetration into their characteristics such as colour, shape, direction, location, function and so forth. Then the teacher should next explain the tenfold aptitude in practice as following items.

1) Attending in succession means that the one who practice this meditation should from the time of verbal recitation contemplate the thirty-two parts, one after the other, not sporadically.

2) One who practices this meditation should not recite too quickly because the subject is not clear, and consequently success is not achieved.

3) Contemplation of the subject that is too slow has the same result as that which is too hurried.

4) Warding-off distraction: he must ward-off (temptation) to drop the meditation subject and to let his mind get distracted among the variety of external objects. If the mind is distracted by anything the subject of meditation dwindles and disappears. He should, therefore, attend while avoiding distraction.

5) When the meditation is developed, and each part of the body becomes clear and his loathsome nature is perceived, he should not regard them as concepts, such as hair, nails, and so on but should steadfastly retain the thought that they are mere abominations. The repetition of the words as kesā, lomā is only useful until the state of abomination becomes manifest in the mind; after that it should be abandoned, because even this is related to the notion of individuality. The notion of individuality obscures the fact of existence as it is, and is the origin of hate or dislike. Therefore passing beyond all consideration of concepts, he should establish mindfulness upon the abstract thought that they are an abomination.

6) Successive leaving: in giving his attention he should eventually leave out any parts that do not appear to him. He should work on those that have appeared clear. He should arouse absorption by again and again giving attention to the one that has appeared.

7) Absorption part by part: the intention here is this: it should be understood that absorption is brought about in each one of the parts.

8)–10) The three suttantas: the intention here is this: it should be understood that the three suttantas, namely, “adhicitta”, the higher Consciousness, “sītībhāva”, on

coolness, and “bojjhaṅga–kosalla”, the enlightenment factors, have their purpose to link energy with concentration.

After studying the seven skills in learning, and knowing the tenfold skills of practice, the meditator should grasp the sign from each of the thirty-two parts then develop with the repetition of “paṭikkūlaṃ, paṭikkūlaṃ”, “abomination, abomination”,⁶³ not too fast and not too slow, but at a moderate pace. Later, transcending the concept of hair, nails, and so on, he should survey the whole body as a combination of all those states. Then all those states appear to him simultaneously, just as thirty-two beads of thirty-two shades of colour, strung on a single thread, appear a whole. When he applies this attention to external objects, the bodies of other people, animals and other moving creatures, all appear to him as so many heaps of the parts, not as men, or animals. Thus his mind becomes free from the notion of individuality. As he continues contemplating, in accordance with the instruction given by his teacher, the hindrances disappear, and the first jhāna factors arise. They can develop insight from first jhāna from kāyagatāsati to attain enlightenment.

9) Mindfulness of Breathing (ānāpānasati)

The mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati) is the mindfulness on “in and out breathing” which is one of the most important exercises for reaching mental concentration and the four absorptions (jhāna).⁶⁴ The practitioner who wishes to meditate mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati) should retire to a quiet place and seat himself cross-legged or in any convenient manner so as to enable him to sit for a long time with his body erect. There are sixteen stages of practices which can be separated into four groups as following:

⁶³ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p. 226.

⁶⁴ Nyanatiloka, **Buddhism Dictionary, Manual of Buddhist Term and Doctrines**, p. 31.

1) Breathing in long, he discerns, "I am breathing in long" or breathing out long, he discerns, "I am breathing out long".

2) Breathing in short, he discerns, "I am breathing in short"; or breathing out short, he discerns, "I am breathing out short".

3) He trains himself, "I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body." He trains himself, "I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body."

4) He trains himself, "I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication". "He trains himself", "I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication".

5) He trains himself, "I will breathe in sensitive to rapture." He trains himself, "I will breathe out sensitive to rapture."

6) He trains himself, "I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure." He trains himself, "I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure."

7) He trains himself, "I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication." He trains himself, "I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication."

8) He trains himself, "I will breathe in calming mental fabrication." He trains himself, "I will breathe out calming mental fabrication."

9) He trains himself, "I will breathe in sensitive to the mind." He trains himself, "I will breathe out sensitive to the mind."

10) He trains himself, "I will breathe in satisfying the mind." He trains himself, "I will breathe out satisfying the mind."

11) He trains himself, "I will breathe in steadying the mind." He trains himself, "I will breathe out steadying the mind."

12) He trains himself, "I will breathe in releasing the mind." He trains himself, "I will breathe out releasing the mind."

13) He trains himself, "I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy". He trains himself, "I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy."

14) He trains himself, "I will breathe in focusing on dispassion (literally, fading)." He trains himself, "I will breathe out focusing on dispassion."

15) He trains himself, “I will breathe in focusing on cessation.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out focusing on cessation.”

16) He trains himself, “I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment”.⁶⁵

The first three groups (1-12) apply to tranquillity and insight meditation, while the fourth refers to pure insight practice only. The second and the third group require the attainment of the absorptions.

Buddhaghosa said in the *Visuddhimagga* that in some cases the in-breathing and out-breathing appear like a shining brilliant star or a bead of red (ruby) precious stones or a thread of pearls; to some, it appears with a rough touch like that of a stalk of cotton plant or a peg (bolt) made of inner substance of hard wood; to other like a long braided chain (necklace), or a wreath of flowers, or a tip of a column of smoke; to other like a broad net-work of cobweb or a film of cloud or a wheel of a chariot or a round disc of moon or sun. It is also stated in the *Visuddhimagga* that the variety of forms and objects visualised is due to differences in “sañña”, perception, of the individuals concerned. These peculiar visionary objects are known as “atibhaganimitta.” Commencing from the time of this nimitta, the samadhi which is then developed is called “Upacāra-samadhi.” On continuing the contemplation with the aid of “Upacāra-samadhi,” the stage of “Appanā-samadhi” of four Rupa-jhānas can be reached.

10) The Recollection of Peace (upasamānussati)

One who wants to develop the recollection of peace (Upasamānussati) should do so in solitary retreat and recollect the special qualities of nibbāna (the stilling of all suffering) as follow:

⁶⁵ MN 118.

Monks, of all states compounded or uncompounded, liberation is the best, namely: expulsion of pride, relief of thirst, uprooting of attachment, cutting off the round of birth and death, extinction of craving, liberation, cessation, going out worldly desire.⁶⁶

One who practices the recollection of peace can access jhāna (upasamā) but does not reach absorption (appanā). However, one who practices this meditation will be calm, sleeps, happily, awakes happily; he is calm in the senses, calm in mind; endowed with strong faith, noble in intention, he is revered by his fellow-beings. If he fails to attain Nibbanā in the present life, he is bound for happiness in the future.⁶⁷

2.1.1.4 The Four Divine Abidings (brahmavihāras)

The Four Divine Abidings (Brahmavihāras) also called the four Boundless States (appamañña) are lovingkindness (mettā), compassion (karuṇā), gladness or sympathetic joy (muditā), and equanimity (upekkhā).

1) Lovingkindness (mettā) is loving kindness and goodwill or universal benevolence towards all sentient beings, praying “may all beings be happy”.

2) Compassion (karuṇā) is to sympathize with those who are suffering, praying in mind that “may all beings be free from misery and suffering.”

3) Gladness (muditā) is to have a feeling joy at another’s happiness or prosperity praying in mind that they “may continue to be happy and prosperous as at present without diminution”.

4) Equanimity (upekkhā) is to remain indifferent with a feeling of equanimity to the state of condition of all beings, bearing an impartial attitude that things happen according to one's own kamma that has been committed. In practice people should select

⁶⁶ A II 34.

⁶⁷ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 320.

for the exercise of the feeling of equanimity to see a neutral one and then friend, and enemy.⁶⁸

2.1.1.5 Perception of Repulsiveness in Nutriment (*āhāre paṭikūlasañña*)

Perception of repulsiveness in nutriment (*āhāre paṭikūlasañña*) means the consciousness or perception of the impurity of material food derived from fixing the mind intently on the food and eatables as being detestable. The main object of this meditation is to eliminate the greed and sensual excitement which may be caused by food, and to free the mind from physical attachment. In addition, there is no special formula designed for the exercise, and one who wishes to develop the idea of this meditation should contemplate the futile and lower activities to which this body is prone on account of its demands to be nourished with material food which in many ways is loathsome.⁶⁹

The practitioner who wants to develop this meditation should learn the meditation subject then go to a solitary retreat and review repulsiveness in ten aspects in the physical nutriment classified as what is eaten, drunk, chewed, and tasted, that is to say, as going, seeking, using, secretion, receptacle, what is uncooked (undigested), what is cooked (digested), fruit, outflow, and smearing.⁷⁰

1) As going: one who practices this meditation starts from going to find the food around by contemplating the dirtiness of the pavement which might be contaminated.

2) As seeking: in order to seek for the food, when entering the village and departing departure from it, which is repulsive owing to water, mud, etc., that has to be

⁶⁸ Vyanjana, **Theravāda Buddhist Ethics with Special Reference to Visuddhimagga**, (Calcutta: Banaras Hindu university, 1990), p.174.

⁶⁹ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.314.

⁷⁰ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 374.

trodden in and seen and endured. For the sake of nutriment; “Oh nutriment is indeed a repulsive thing!”⁷¹ Therefore, the repulsiveness should be reviewed as seeking.

3) As using: when the food passes through the throat, it is mixed with phlegm and saliva. The food becomes dirty but people cannot see what they eat. However, if we consider this process, repulsiveness should be viewed as useful.

4) As secretion: when food is swallowed into the stomach and mixed with bile, phlegm, lymph and blood, it becomes multi-coloured and ugly.

5) As receptacle: swallowed food goes into the stomach and is contaminated because the inside of the stomach is already contaminated like a container filled with dirty things which has never been washed out. The new is always mixed with the old, causing a bad odour.

6) As undigested: food in the stomach is covered by phlegm and burned by the fire element. It makes bubbles and various kinds of loathsomeness such as in the bloated body of a dead dog in a trash pit.

7) As to what is cooked: food heated by fire element bubbles as if boiled, it is contaminated by excrement. It could be seen by the eyes, it would be so repulsive that one could not stand it.

8) As to fruit: when food is already digested, it will be absorbed by the body so the hair can grow. If the food is not digested, it will cause disease and mental or physical suffering.

9) As to outflow: when the food is swallowed, it comes out in nine different ways such as ear wax, urine and feces that all are loathsome as the ancient said that sumptuous food, sweet drink, sundry other delicacies, taken in by one door, go out by nine. One eats them in company, throws out alone; one eats them in joy, but throws out in disgust.⁷²

⁷¹ Ibid., p.376.

⁷² Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, p.316.

10) As smearing: consuming food contaminates the hands and mouth. They become repulsive, just as when saliva, feces or urine touch anything, that object becomes dirty.

The one who develops this meditation should consider repulsiveness in nutriment, repeating the word “paṭikkūlaṃ, paṭikkūlaṃ”, (perception of repulsiveness in nutriment) as the sign or mental object of meditation. Then, the hindrances disappear. One who develops this meditation will turn away from greed and craving for taste. If he cannot attain nibbāna in the present life, he will be bound for a happy destiny as the result of this practice.

2.1.1.6 Defining of the Four Elements (catudhātuvavaṭṭhānaṃ)

Defining of the elements (catudhātuvavaṭṭhānaṃ) means contemplation on the existence or composition of the main four elements of dhātu in the body, namely: fire, wind, earth and water. According to the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta:

Even so, monks, a monk reflects upon this body, as it is place, as it is disposed, with respect to its elements: there is in this body the element of earth, the element of water, the element of fire, the element of air.⁷³

The main object of this meditation is to free the mind from conception of individuality in regard to the physical body and to realize its elemental nature with no thought of personal distinction. The defining of the elements (catudhātuvavaṭṭhānaṃ) complies as follows:

1) The Earth Element (paṭhavī dhātu)

The earth element is solidity categorized as earth element. It can be something which is inherent in earth, the state of being of the earth, or the “quality of

⁷³ D II 290.

stiffness, hardness or softness” which are the characteristics of the earth element.⁷⁴ For example, many parts of human body (twenty if brain marrow is included), are categorized as earth elements. These start with head hair, body hair, and continue to excrement, as detailed earlier.

2) The Water Element (āpo dhātu)

The water element means its characteristic fluidity or cohesion or tricking. They indicate the presence of the water element. For instance, the twelve parts of human body are categorized as water elements. These range from bile to urine.

3) The Fire Element (tejo dhātu)

The fire element is state being of the fire or the temperature or the quality of the fire. For example, the four parts of the human organism are fire element. It can make the body warm. It causes the body to degenerate. It also makes the body uneasy and the fire helps to digest food.

4) The Wind Element (vayo dhātu)

The wind element or the air element is the characteristic of “extension, expanding or distending” such as motion blowing through the body. It is categorized in six parts: as the wind which rises, the wind which goes down, the wind in the stomach, in the intestines plus, the wind which goes to all the organs and the breath going in and out.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Phra Assajita Dhammajito (Awale), **An Analytical Study on Concept of Citta and its Significance in Theravada Buddhist Philosophy**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press, 2000), p.104.

⁷⁵ D II 294.

2.1.1.7 The Immaterial States (arūpa)

When the meditators reach the fourth Jhāna then they realize that it is still suffering. According to the Visuddhimagga:

They see in gross physical matter danger through the wielding of sticks, etc., because of the words: it is in virtue of matter that wielding of sticks, wielding of knives, quarrels, brawls and disputes take place; but that does not exist at all in the immaterial state, and in this expectation he enters upon the way to dispassion for only material things, for the fading and cessation of only those.⁷⁶

They can develop the immaterial states (arūppa) as below:

1) The base consisting of boundless space (akasañāyatanam) is meditation or fixing the mind intently on the realm of infinity of space, sky panna.

2) The base consisting of boundless consciousness (viññānañāyatanam) is meditation or fixing the mind intently on the realm of infinity of consciousness, pathama ruppavinnana.

3) The base consisting of nothingness (akincannāyatanam) is meditation or dwelling the mind intently on nothingness, i.e. nothingness, that remains or exists from pathamaruppavinnana.

4) The base consisting of neither perception nor non-perception (nevasaññānañāyatanam) is meditation on the realm of neither-perception nor non-perception, i.e. semi-conscious state jhāna's perception tatiya (third) ruppavinnana so calm, tranquil and gentle.

These four formless absorptions are merely resting places for the mind, because they are states that the mind enters, stays in, and leaves. They are by nature unstable and inconstant.

⁷⁶ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.320.

2.1.2 Insight Meditation

Insight meditation (vipassanā) is the intuitive insight into the impermanence, misery and impersonality (tilakkhana) (anicca, dukkha, anattā) of all bodily and mental phenomena of existence, included in the five groups of existence (khandha), namely, corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. In addition, Nyanatiloka gave further explanation that vipassanā is the intuitive light flashing forth and exposing the truth of the impermanency, the suffering and the impersonal and unsubstantial nature of all corporeal and mental phenomena of existence. It is insight-wisdom (vipassanā-paññā) that is the decisive liberating factor in Buddhism, though it has to be developed along with the two other trainings in morality and concentration. The culmination of insight practice leads directly to the stages of holiness. Insight is not the result of a mere intellectual understanding, but is won through direct meditative observation of one's own bodily and mental processes. The sequence in developing insight-meditation is given such as: discernment of the corporeal (rūpa), of the mental (nāma), contemplation of both (nāmarūpa), both viewed as conditioned (paticcasamuppāda), application of the three characteristics (impermanency).⁷⁷ To clarify more about Insight meditation (vipassanā), the ground of vipassanā and its objects (ārammaṇas), its roots, and its practice will be clarified.

2.1.2.1 The Ground and Objects (ārammaṇas) of Vipassanā

The practitioner should understand the real nature of ground or soil (bhūmi) of vipassanā as: the aggregates (khandhas), the bases (āyatanas), the elements (dhātus), the faculties (indriyas), the four noble truths (ariya-sacca), and the dependent origination (pañiccasamuppāda).

⁷⁷ Nyanatiloka, **Buddhist Dictionary, Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines**, p.197.

1) The five groups or aggregates of elements (khandhas) or groups of clinging (upādānakkhandha) has summed up all the physical and mental phenomena of existence comprised of the corporeality group (rūpa-kkhandha), the feeling group (vedanā-kkhandha), the perception group (saññā-kkhandha), the mental-formation group (sankhāra-kkhandha), and the consciousness-group (viññāna-kkhandha).

2) The “bases” (āyatana) is the term for a “sense base” or “sense sphere.” There are six internal sense bases (ajjhātikāni āyatanāni) also known as, “organs”, “gates”, “doors”, “powers” or “roots” and six external sense bases (bāhirāni āyatanāni) or “sense objects”, also known as vishaya or “domains”. Thus, there are twelve sense “bases” or “sources” which depend on the mental processes, consisting of five physical sense-organs and consciousness, these being the six personal (ajjhātika) bases, and the six objects, the so-called external (bāhira) bases-namely: eye, or visual organ, visible object; ear, or auditory organ sound, or audible object; nose, or olfactory organ odour, or olfactory object; tongue, or gustatory organ taste, or gustatory object; body, or tactile organ body-impression, or tactile object; mind-base or consciousness mind-object (manāyatana) (dhammāyatana).⁷⁸

3) The elements (dhātus) or the 18 physical and mental elements that are the foundation of the process of perception are: visual organ (eye), auditory organ (ear), olfactory organ (nose), gustatory organ (tongue), tactile organ (body) , visible object, sound or audible object, odour or olfactory object, gustatory object, body-impression, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-element, mind-object (mano-dhātu) (dhamma-dhātu), mind-consciousness-element (mano-viññāna-dhātu).

4) The faculties (indriyas) consist of the 22 phenomena, some physical and some mental. They are: six bases (āyatana); eye (cakkhu), ear (sota), nose (ghāna), tongue (jivhā), body (kāya), mind (citta). There are three sexes (bhava): femininity (itthi),

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.28.

masculinity (purisa), and vitality (jīvita). There are five feelings (vedanā): bodily pleasant feeling (sukha), bodily pain (dukkha), gladness (somanassa), sadness (domanassa), indifference (upekkhā). There are five spiritual faculties (bala): faith (saddhā), energy (virīya), mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi), wisdom (paññā). There are three supermundane faculties: aññātañ-ñassāmīt' indriya (I shall know what I did not yet know!'), aññindriya (the faculty of highest knowledge) and aññātāvindriya (the faculty of him who knows).⁷⁹

5) The Four Noble Truths (ariya-sacca) are the fundamental teachings of Buddhism. The first truth is the truth of suffering (dukkha ariya-sacca) meaning all problems such as birth, death, pain, sickness, sorrow, sadness and so on. The second truth is the cause of suffering (samudaya) or the origin of suffering, meaning the cause of any problems. Craving (tanhā) is cause of suffering. There are three kinds of Craving: craving for sensual pleasures (kama-tanhā), craving for existence (bhava - tanhā), and craving for non-existence (vibbava-tanhā). The third truth is the extinction of suffering (nirodha) meaning the end of craving (tanhā) which is the cause of suffering or problems. When craving (tanhā) is ended, there will be no more suffering or problems. The last truth is the truth of the eightfold path leading to the extinction of suffering (magga), meaning the right way to solve suffering.⁸⁰ The eightfold path consists of: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.⁸¹

6) Dependent origination (paticca-samuppāda) is the doctrine of the conditionality of all physical and psychical phenomena, a doctrine which, together with that of impersonality (anattā), forms the indispensable condition for the real understanding and realization of the teaching of the Buddha. It shows the conditionality

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.66.

⁸⁰ Paṭhamakyaw Ashin Thittīla (Seṭṭhila) Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (tr.), **Vibhaṅga: The Book of Analysis**, (Oxford: PTS., 1995), p.130-137.

⁸¹ Ibid., 138-139.

and dependent nature of that uninterrupted flux of manifold physical and psychical phenomena of existence conventionally called the ego, or man, or animal, etc. The formula of dependent origination runs as follows;

Avijā-paccayā sankhārā: “Through ignorance are conditioned the sankhāras,” i.e. the rebirth-producing volitions (cetanā), or 'karma-formations'. Sankhāra-paccayā viññānam: “Through the karma-formations (in the past life) is conditioned consciousness (in the present life).” Viññāna-paccayā nāma-rūpam: “Through consciousness are conditioned the mental and physical phenomena (nāma-rūpa),” i.e. that which makes up our so-called individual existence.

Nāma-rūpa-paccayā salāyatanam: “Through the mental and physical phenomena are conditioned the six bases,” i.e. the five physical sense-organs, and consciousness as the sixth. Salāyatana-paccayā phasso: “Through the six bases is conditioned the (sensorial mental) impression.” Phassa-paccayā vedanā: “Through the impression is conditioned feeling.” Vedanā-paccayā tanhā: “Through feeling is conditioned craving.” Tanhā-paccayā upādānam: “Through craving is conditioned clinging.” Upādāna-paccayā bhavo: “Through clinging is conditioned the process of becoming,” consisting in the active and the passive life process, i.e. the rebirth-producing karma-process (kamma-bhava) and, as its result, the rebirth-process (upapatti-bhava). Bhava-paccayā jāti: “Through the (rebirth-producing karma-) process of becoming is conditioned rebirth.” Jāti-paccayā jarāmaranam, etc.: “Through rebirth are conditioned old age and death (sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair). Thus arises this whole mass of suffering again in the future.” Jarā-marana: old age and death.⁸²

The ones who practice vipassanā meditation have to understand the above six groups before attempting to cultivate vipassanā meditation with a view to obtaining wisdom (paññā).

⁸² Ibid., pp.128-129.

2.1.2.2 The Roots (Mūla) of Insight Meditation (Vipassanā)

The roots (mūla) of insight meditation (vipassanā) or the path of practice leading to the attainment of nibbāna consist of seven stages of purification. The first the practitioner mind must have both moral qualities and concentration (samādhi). The training in morality (sīla) is necessary to further progress in all matters of Buddhist practice and development. The purification of morality (sīlavisuddhi) and the purification of mind (cittavisuddhi) are the ground pre-requisite for the practice of insight meditation (vipassanā).

In addition, the purification of morality and the purification of mind form the roots of full knowledge and should be acquired by the practitioner possessing a thorough understanding of the fundamental items. The seven stages of purification (sattavisuddhi) are: the purification of virtue (sīlavisuddhi); the purification of mind (cittavisuddhi); the purification of view (diññhivisuddhi); the purification by overcoming doubt (kankhāvitaraḍavisuddhi); the purification by knowledge and vision of what is path and not-path (maggāmaggañāḍadassanavisuddhi); the purification by knowledge and vision (pañipadāñāḍadassana visuddhi) and then further purification by knowledge and vision (ñāḍdassanavisuddhi).

The last five of the seven stages of purification are regarded as the "body" of vipassanā. They are attainable by understanding the true nature of phenomenal existence, and they also lead to nibbāna.

2.1.2.3 Practice of Insight Meditation

In order to practice insight meditation (Vipassanā), the practitioner should understand satipatthāna or the four foundations of mindfulness are: mindfulness of body, feeling, mind and mind-objects.

1) Mindfulness of the body (kāyanupassanā) consists of mindfulness with regard to in-and-out breathing (ānāpānasati), minding the four postures (iriyāpatha), mindfulness and clarity of consciousness (satisampajañña), reflection on the 32 parts of the body (kāyagatāsati and asubha), analysis of the four physical elements (dhātuvavattāna), and cemetery meditations (sīvathikā).

2) Mindfulness of feelings (vedanānupassanā) means considering and perceiving all feelings arising in mind, namely: agreeable and disagreeable feeling of body and mind, sensual and super-sensual feeling, indifferent feeling.

3) Mindfulness of mind (cittānupassanā) means clearly perceiving and understanding any state of consciousness or mind, whether it is greedy or not, hateful or not, deluded or not, cramped or distracted, developed or undeveloped, surpassable or unsurpassable, concentrated or unconcentrated, liberated or unliberated.

4) Mindfulness of the mind-objects (dhammānupassanā) means understanding or knowing the arising of the five hindrances (nīvarana), the nature of each of the five groups (khandhas), the 12 bases of all mental activity (āyatana), the fetters (samyojana), the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhanga), Each of the four noble truths (saccas) according to reality.⁸³

In summary, the differences between the tranquillity meditation and insight meditation are as follows. The goal of tranquillity meditation is to one-pointedness (ekaggatā) of mind in order to suppress the five hindrances (nīvaraṇa). The true object of insight meditation (vipassanā) is paññā (wisdom), to destroy ignorance (avijjā) and the goal is enlightenment (nibbāna).

The passages occurs in the Anguttaranikāya that “Radiant is the mind, monks, but sometimes it is defiled by defilements that come from without. The ordinary man without understanding does not know it as it truly is”.⁸⁴ The mind is fundamentally clear and pure, but it has become blemished through the influx

⁸³ Ibid., 166.

⁸⁴ A I 10.

of defilements (kilesa). The goal of Buddhist practice is to eradicate all defilements. The techniques of samathabhāvanā are designed to return the mind to its original state of clarity. The immediate defilements that disturb the mind are suppressed, after which the practice of vipassanā can be engaged which will eventually lead to one's seeing things as they really are.

2.2 Factors Supporting Practice

The factors supporting meditation practices are important. The first step is to sever the ten impediments (Palibodhas). Next, the practitioner should find a good friend (kalyānamitta), who is experienced in meditation, to teach them how to meditate. Then the teacher assigns the practitioner a meditation subject suitable to their temperament. Next, the practitioner should look for things suitable favourable to mental development.

2.2.1 Cutting off Worries (palibodhas)

In general before practicing meditation, meditators should sever any of the ten impediments or worries (Palibodhas) or the obstructions by caused a worrying nature. There are ten worries are explained below.

1) Dwelling (āvāsa) or place can cause an impediment to meditators. It can be a single room or a single hut or a whole monastery for the community. This is not an impediment for everyone but it is an impediment for someone whose mind is concerned about the building, what goes on there, who has belongings stored there or someone whose mind is caught up by some business connected within. For any other it is not an impediment.

2) Family (kūlam) means a group of people consisting of relatives or of Supporters. Family can affect those who care more for the welfare of their relatives or of the families of their lay-devotees than for their own spiritual development.

3) Gain (lābha) or the four requisites. When people give them a large supply of requisites, they have to give blessings to them and teach them the Dhamma so the monks will get no chance to do the ascetic's duties. In the same way, for the lay people who practice meditation, the four requisites or the money sometime becomes a source of distraction to the meditators.

4) Class (gaṇa), Buddhaghosa explains that "Class is a class (group) of students of Suttas or students of Abhidhamma. If because of the group's instruction and questioning, he gets no opportunity for the ascetic's duties, then that group is an impediment for him."⁸⁵ For the meditators who are not monks or nuns, the "Class" can be members of the congregation. These are some meditators whose time is taken up in not only teaching the texts of the Suttanta, Abhidhamma Pīṭaka or the other work with the group and who can hardly find time to be alone to practice meditation. The class can be an impediment for them, but if the meditators don't worry about it, the class is not an impediment.

5) Building (kamma) is new building work(nava-kamma) or construction or repair of buildings. These building-related activities can take much of the time of meditators, who manage the building.

6) Travel (addhāna) is going on a journey. There are occasions when meditators have to go to a place to transact business. By leaving it undone, it is difficult to concentrate the mind so they should practice meditation or do the ascetic's duty after completing the journey and clearing up all business.

7) Kin (nāti) in case of the monastery means teacher, preceptor, co-resident, pupil, those with the same preceptor as oneself, and those with the same teacher as oneself; and in the case of house it means mother, father, brother, and so on. When

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.95.

they are sick they are an impediment for the meditators. Therefore that impediment should be overcome by curing them with nurses.⁸⁶

8) Affliction (abādha) is any kind of illness or one's own sickness, which requires medicine to be cured. It is an impediment when it is actually afflicting; therefore, it should be overcome by treatment with medicine.

9) Scriptures (gantha) means responsibility for scriptures or book. For Some are so absorbed in studying the scriptures that they do not find time or feel inclined to practice meditation. That is an impediment only for one who is always busy with recitation but not for the others.

10) Supernormal power (iddhi) is the miraculous power of the ordinary man. This factor is an impediment only for insight meditation (Vipassanā), not for concentration.

From the ten impediments that have been explained above, only supernormal Power (Iddhi) is an obstacle for those who practice insight meditation. The other impediments are obstacles for those who practice concentration.

2.2.2 Having Good Friends (kalyānamitta)

The term “Good friend” (kalyānamitta) means good company that can be a senior monk, who is the mentor and friend of his pupil, and is concerned welfare and his progress. The friend who may be called kalyānamitta is to be recognized by the following qualities: “Lovable, reverent and adorable, a counsellor, a patient listener, a speaker of deep discourses and one who would not lead to a useless end.”⁸⁷

According to Kalyānamittadhamma,⁸⁸ the good friend should also be characterized by the following qualities;

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.96.

⁸⁷ A IV 32.

⁸⁸ P.A. Payutto, **Buddhadhamma Expanded and Revised (abridged)**, (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1996), p. 320.

1) Endearing (piyo); he should be friendly and approachable.

2) Worthy of respect (garu); he should behave in a way that befits his Position and instills confidence in others.

3) Inspiring (bhāvanīyo): he is learned and wise and trains himself constantly: He is worthy of praise and sets a good example; he can be thought of with respect, confidence and inspiration.

4) Speaking effectively (vattā); he speaks effectively: he knows how to Explain things in a way that is easily understood. He gives guidance and is available for advice.

5) Patient (vacanakkhamo); he is patient. He is always ready to listen to other's opinions or questions, even when they are petty or offensive. He is neither offended nor depressed by criticism but readily listens to it with patience.

6) He can explain higher teachings that are subtle and profound (gambhīrañca kathañ kattā).

7) He leads not in things that are inappropriate: he does not lead his follower in things that are unworthy or harmful (no caṭṭāne niyojaye).

Having good friends is the most important of attainments, according to the Buddha's saying that, "One should not cultivate the friendship of evildoers; one should cultivate not fellows of the baser sort. Cultivate the friendship of men that are good; cultivate the best of men."⁸⁹

The Buddha Supreme himself was a good friend, among the eight disciples, an Arahant, who returns no more to the world of men (Anāgāmī) one who returns to the world only one more (Sakadāgāmī), one who has entered the stream (Sotāpanna), one who has attained to the jhāna, one who among average men knows the three Piṭaka. In the absence of knowing of one Piṭaka, one should get it from him who is a

⁸⁹ V I 166.

receptor of one (Nikāya) with the commentary, and who is himself a respectable person.⁹⁰

When the meditators find the teacher or (kalyānamitta), they should pass several days in the monastery or the meditation place where they found such a teacher, and having fulfilled the duties expected of a pupil, they should ask for a subject of meditation most befitting their character.

2.2.3 Finding Objects Suitable for One's Own Intrinsic Behaviour

After approaching the Good Friend (kalyānamitta), the meditators should practice the meditation subject that suits their temperaments. In general, different people are inclined towards different things and emotions which dominate their mental structure. These are called Carita meaning characteristic behaviour. Thus, each of the 40 subjects of meditation is suitable to a specific inclination of each individual.

There are six kinds of temperament: greedy temperament (Rāga-carita), hating temperament (dosa-carita), deluded temperament (moha-carita), faithful temperament (saddhā-carita), intelligent temperament (Buddhi-carita), and speculative temperament (vitakka-carita). These can be classified into three pairs as following items.

The first pair is greedy temperament (rāga-carita) and faithful temperament (saddhā-carita) those bent on lust are also inclined to have faith pre-dominant in character. The Visuddhimagga said that in one of faithful temperament (saddhā-carita) is parallel to one of greedy temperament (rāga-carita) because faith is strong when profitable (kamma) occurs in one of greedy temperament, owing to its special qualities being near those of greed. For, in an unprofitable way, greed is affectionate and not over-austere, and so, in a profitable way, is faith. Greed seeks out sense

⁹⁰ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.100.

desires as object, while faith seeks out the special qualities of virtue and so on. Greed does not give up what is harmful, while faith does not give up what is beneficial.⁹¹

The second pair is the intelligent temperament (buddhi-carita) parallels hating temperament (dosa-carita) because understanding is strong when profitable (kamma) occurs in one of hating temperament, owing to its special qualities being near to those of hate. In the other hand, in an unprofitable way, hate is disaffected and does not hold to its object, and so, in a profitable way, is understanding. Hate seeks out only unreal faults, while understanding seeks out only real faults. Hate occurs in the mode of condemning living beings, while understanding occurs in the mode of condemning formations.

The third pair is the speculative temperament and the deluded temperament because obstructive thoughts arise often in one of deluded temperament who is striving to arouse unarisen profitable states, owing to their special qualities being near to those of delusion. For, just as delusion is restless owing to perplexity, so are applied thoughts that are due to thinking over various aspects. And, just as delusion vacillates owing to superficiality, so do applied thoughts that are due to facile conjecturing.

The purpose of character-dividing is to find out a subject of meditation most suitable to each individual aspirant. Buddhaghosa gives full directions how to attain full concentration and the absorption by means of following 40 subjects of meditation (kammaṭṭhāna). The greedy temperament (rāga-carita) should practice 11 subjects, including the ten kinds of foulness and mindfulness occupied with the body. The hating temperament (dosa-carita) should follow the 4 colour (kasiṇa) and 4 Divine Abiding (brahmavihāra). The deluded temperament (moha-carita) and the speculative temperament (vitakka-carita) should develop Mindfulness of Breathing. The faithful temperament (saddhā-carita) should practice the first six Recollections. The intelligent

⁹¹ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p103.

temperament (buddhi-carita) or intellectual should follow these subjects, such as mindfulness of death, the recollection in peace, the defining of the four elements, and the perception of repulsiveness in nutriment. The remaining kasiṇa and the immaterial states are suitable for all kinds of temperament. A kasiṇa should be limited for one of speculative temperament and measureless for one of deluded temperament.

2.2.4 Beneficial Factors for Mental Development

The factors favourable to meditation are referred to as “sappāya” which means beneficial or advantageous conditions; suitable or agreeable things favourable to mental development.”⁹² Buddhaghosa explains that factors favourable to mental development (sappāya) are: suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya), suitable resort (gocara-sappāya), suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya), suitable person (puggala sappāya), suitable foods (bhojana-sappāya), suitable climate (utu-sappāya), and suitable posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya).⁹³

2.2.4.1 Suitable Abode (āvāsa-sappāya)

The suitable abode means suitable dwelling to practice meditation, so the practitioners’ mind can concentrate easily. For example, a quiet place in a forest, at the foot of a tree, or some other place of solitude is most conducive to the achievement of self-conquest and the attainment of perfection. The Buddha himself, while seeking the path of self enlightenment, lived aloof from the world and spent his life meditating in the forest, in caves and under trees.⁹⁴ It was natural; therefore, he

⁹² Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A Payutto), **Dictionary of Buddhism**, (Bangkok: Printing Mass Product Ltd, 1995), p. 209.

⁹³ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.126.

⁹⁴ Paravahera Vajirañāna Mahāthera, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, 3rd edition. (Jaya: P.K.S., 1987), p.83.

recommended the monks to go meditate where there is solitude and peace such as a remote lodging, to a forest, to the root of a tree, a mountain slope, a wild place, a hill cave, a cemetery, a woodland and the open air.⁹⁵

However, for the benefit of the others, he also recommended shelter and formulated rules as a guide to conduct therein. There are dangers which may sometimes befall the disciple who lives in an open yard, or under a tree, or in some other exposed location, there being no door to protect him from molestation or from the sight of unsuitable objects. He is therefore allowed to accept a suitable dwelling, and, while using the dwelling, he should know and reflect upon its true purpose, realising that such dangers can cause him no trouble nor hinder his meditation. In addition, Buddhaghosa explained about the suitable and unsuitable abode that:

Herein, an abode is unsuitable if, while he lives in it, the un-arisen sign does not arise in him or is lost when it arises, and where un-established mindfulness fails to become established and the un-concentrated mind fails to become concentrated. That is suitable in which the sign arises and becomes confirmed, in which mindfulness becomes established and the mind becomes concentrated.⁹⁶

For instance, the five-hundred bhikkhus reached Arahantship while still dwelling in the Lesser Naga Cave (Cula-nāga-lena) in Tambapanni Island (Ceylon) after apprehending their meditation subject there. But there is no counting the stream-enterers who have reached Arahantship there after reaching the noble plane elsewhere and it was so too in the monastery of Cittalapabbata, and others.⁹⁷

The Aṅguttara-Nikāya, also describes suitable abodes as showed in the following items;

⁹⁵ Horner, I.B. (tr.), **Majjhima-Nikāya (Majjhimaṇṇāsa): The Middle Length Sayings (The Middle Fifty Discourses)**, vol 2, Oxford: PTS., 1997, p.112.

⁹⁶ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.133.

⁹⁷ Op.cit.

1) A lodging place should not be too far and not be too near to a village but suitable for coming and going; but not frequented; by night quite and undisturbed by noise; not plagued with contact of flies, mosquitoes, wind, rain and creeping things.

2) For one dwelling in such a place, the supply of robes and alms-food, of bed and lodging, comforts in sickness and medicines comes about with little trouble.

3) Further in that lodging-place dwell elder bhikkhus who have heard much, who are versed in the sayings, who know the teaching thoroughly, who know the discipline and summaries by heart.

4) Consorting with them, he inquires of them and questions them.

5) Those worthies then open up to him what was sealed make clear what was obscure, and on divers doubtful points of doctrine they resolve his doubts.”⁹⁸

Buddhaghosa also lists the eighteen faults of an unsuitable monastery. It is unsuitable if it too large, new, dilapidated, dependent on a road, having a pool, close a plantation of herbs, close to a plantation of flowers, close to a plantation of fruits, desirable, dependent on a town, dependent on a wood, dependent on fields, has the presence of persons of dissimilar views, dependent on a port, dependent on a border-town, dependent on the boundaries of a kingdom. Dependence is unsuitableness. Dependence is want of access to good friends.⁹⁹

Nowadays, the suitable place for meditation can be a plentiful supply of cleaning water, good infrastructure, electricity supply, a good road system, sufficient space, good ventilation, enough trees and about to give shade, nearby open area or park and no disturbance from noise. Especially the temple or the meditation retreat grounds is sufficiently spacious for the number of the practitioners, with enough shade to allow them to meditate in comfort.

⁹⁸ AV 11-12.

⁹⁹ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.138.

2.2.4.2 Suitable Resort (gocara-sappāya)

The suitable resort is the village visited or the alms-resort village which are appropriate for Buddhist monks or the meditators to reside near or visit; and people with whom it is appropriate for Buddhist monks to associate. Additionally, the suitable resort (gocara) defines any person or place that a person should visit. It also means people with whom Buddhist monks should not get involved or places Buddhist monks should not visit, such as places encouraging vices.

According to the Visuddhimagga, “an alms-resort village should be lying to the north or south of the lodging, not too far, within one kosa and a half, and where alms food is easily obtained, is suitable. The opposite kind is unsuitable.”¹⁰⁰ In addition, the Vibhaṅga explains about the improper resort and proper resort that,

What is improper resort (i.e. company to associate with not a ‘holiday resort’? Here someone has prostitutes as resort, or he has widows, old maids, eunuchs, bhikkhunis, or taverns as resort; or he dwells associated with kings, kings’ ministers, sectarians, sectarians’ disciples, in unbecoming association with laymen; or he cultivates, frequents, honours, such families as are faithless, untrusting, abusive and rude, who wish harm, wish ill, wish woe, wish no surcease of bondage, for bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, for male and female devotees. This is called improper resort.

Herein, what is (a proper) resort? Here someone does not have prostitutes as resort or taverns as resort; he does not dwell associated with kings, sectarians’ disciples, in unbecoming association with laymen; he cultivates, frequents, honours, such families as are faithful and trusting, who are a solace, where the yellow cloth glows, where the breeze of sages blows, who wish good, wish well, wish joy, wish surcease of bondage, for bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, for male and

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.126.

female devotees-this is called (proper) resort. Thus he is furnished with, fully furnished with, provided with, fully provided with, supplied with, possessed of and endowed with, this (proper) conduct and this proper resort. Hence it is said "Possessed of (the proper) conduct and resort." ¹⁰¹

Besides, the proper resort (gocara) can be divided into three categories¹⁰² as follows:

1) The proper resort as support or gocara refers to kalayanamitta who only engages in the 10 instances of talk (ten kathavatthu).

2) The proper resort as guarding or gocara refers to the propriety of Buddhist monks. It includes walking politely with the eye-sight downcast, not turning the face from side to side, not looking at people or objects without controlling one's sense, and others.

3) The proper resort as anchoring or gocara of which we should be mindful refers to how we should occupy our mental energies, the following four foundations of mindfulness (the four Satipaṭṭhāna).

Agocara can be divided into six types as prostitutes or places with prostitution, widows, spinsters, Bhikkhuni, eunuchs and liquor shops. In the modern world, agocara are associated with many locations such as theatres, entertainment venues, shopping markets, and so forth. Buddhist monks and the meditators should not enter such locations because the agocara cause mental distraction. Some areas produce or strengthen the inner defilement, causing the mind to wander and lack concentration.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.18.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp.19-20.

¹⁰³ Dhammakaya Open University, Suitable and Unsuitable Diet, (on-line).
source: http://www.en.dou.us/view_content.php?s_id=60&page=4. (1 Nov 2010).

From the above information, the practitioners should visit suitable places and have relations with suitable persons, particularly when these facilitate the study of Dhamma or the celibate life of monastic practice.

2.2.4.3 Suitable Speech (bhassa-sappāya)

Suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya) means talking only about necessary things or talking about Dhamma which helps the mind become concentrated. The Buddha taught that there are the ten Kathavatthu or the ten types of conversation which are forms of suitable speech (bhassasappaya) are;

- 1) One who wants little and talks of wanting little (appiccha);
- 2) One who is contented and talks of contentment (santutthi);
- 3) One who is loves seclusion and talk of seclusion (paviveka)
- 4) One who loves solitude and talks of solitude (asaṃsagga);
- 5) One who strives energetically and talks of energetic striving (viriyā);
- 6) One who is self-disciplined and talks of self-discipline (sīla);
- 7) One who has attained concentration and talks of concentration (samādhi);
- 8) One who has attained wisdom and talks of wisdom (paññā);
- 9) One who is has attained liberation and talks of liberation (vimutti), and;
- 10) One who is has attained seeing and knowing of liberation and talks of seeing and knowing of liberation (vimuttiñāṇadassana).¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, unsuitable speech can disturb meditation practice for example, the 32 Tiracchānakathā which are as below:

Tales of kings, of robbers, of minister of state: tales of wars, of terrors, of battles; talk about foods and drinks clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes; talks about relationships, equipages, villages, towns, cities, and countries; tales about

¹⁰⁴ A V 129.

women, and about heroes; gossip at street corners, or places whence water is fetched, ghost stories; desultory talk, speculations about the creation of the land or sea, or about existence and not–existence.¹⁰⁵

The example story about the suitable speech is that of Kāli Kuraragharikā who was the mother of Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇā Thera. On one occasion, Soṇa passed through his home town. On his return from the Jetavana monastery, his mother met him and organized a grand charity in his honour. Having heard that her son could expound the Dhamma very well, she requested him to give a discourse. Soṇa complied with her request and so she built a pavilion for the purpose. A large crowd, including his mother, turned up to listen to the Dhamma expounded by Soṇa. While she was at the pavilion, some thieves broke into her house. However the leader of the thieves went to the pavilion to keep an eye on her. His intention was to kill her should she return home early on learning about the theft at her house. Her maid, left behind to guard the house, went to the pavilion to inform her about the theft, but the lady only said, let the thieves take all her money, she didn't care but did not want to be disturbed while she was listening to the Dhamma. Then she sent the maid home.

The leader of the thieves, who was sitting close by, overheard everything. Her words also made him think, if he took away the property of this wise and noble lady, he will surely be punished so he got alarmed, hurried back her house and ordered his thieves to return all the things they had taken. The gang of thieves then went to the pavilion to listen to the Dhamma.

Soṇa finished his exposition of the Dhamma at the crack of dawn. Then, the elder and all the thieves admitted their mistakes and requested her forgiveness. Being a kind and devout lady, she pardoned them all. Realising the evil of their ways, all the thieves joined the Holy Order. After receiving instruction from Soṇa, the new bhikkhus went into the forest to practice meditation. The Buddha knowing their

¹⁰⁵ D I13.

mental attitudes sent forth his radiance and exhorted them on the way to gain Purity.¹⁰⁶ This story shows that the suitable speech or the Dhamma listening can help people to purify their minds, and it can lead them to attainment.

2.2.4.4 Suitable Persons (puggala sappāya)

Suitable person (puggala sappāya) means one not given to aimless talk, who has the special qualities of virtue, etc., by acquaintanceship with whom the unconcentrate mind becomes concentrated, or more concentrated. Buddhaghosa explained about suitable person as below,

Person: one not given to aimless talk, who has the special qualities of virtue, etc., by acquaintanceship with whom the un-concentrated mind becomes concentrated, or the concentrated mind becomes more so, is suitable. Or one who is much concerned with his body, one who is addicted to aimless talk, is unsuitable; for he only creates disturbances, like muddy water added to clear water. And it was owing to one such as this that the attainments of the young bhikkhu who lived at Kotapabbata vanished, not to mention the sign.¹⁰⁷

In addition, the suitable person (puggala sappāya) should be a “Good friend” (kalyānamitta) which means good company, for example, a senior monk who is the mentor and friend of his pupil, and is concerned for his welfare and his progress. The friend, who may be called kalyānamitta, is to be recognized by the following qualities: “Lovable, reverent and adorable, a counsellor, a patient listener, a speaker of deep discourses and one who would not lead to a useless end.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Daw Mya Tin, (tr.), **The Dhammapada Verses and Stories**, vol.4, (Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1990), p.103.

¹⁰⁷ Bhadntācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, pp.126-127.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 98

Furthermore, suitable persons and having good friends is the most important of attainments. This is in accordance with the Buddha's saying that, "One should not cultivate the friendship of evildoers; one should cultivate not fellows of the baser sort. Cultivate the friendship of men that are good; cultivate the best of men."¹⁰⁹

Additionally, the Psalms of Early Buddhist tell about Kisā Gotamī, who when she bore her son, the son passed away so she was heartbroken and distraught with grief. After that, she went to meet the Buddha and asked for medicine for her son. The Buddha recommended her to enter the town, at any house where yet no man had died, then bring a little mustard-seed to him. After that she went to many houses, until, by the might of Buddha, her frenzy left her, her natural mind was restored. Then she left the town and laid her child in the charnel-field, and went to meet the Buddha. He said: "Gotamī hast thou gotten the little mustard" And she said: "Wrought is the work, of the mustard. Give thou me confirmation! The Buddha taught her. When he had spoken, she was confirmed in the fruition of the First Path, and asked for ordination. He consented, and she, thrice saluting by the right, went to the Bhikkunīs, and was ordained. And not long afterwards she caused her insight to grow. The Buddha said a glory-verse: "The man who, living for an hundred years. Beholdeth never the Ambrosial Path, had better live no longer than one day, so he behold within that day the Path!" When the Buddha had finished, she attained Arahantship. She was praised in among wearing coarse (Lūkhacīvarā).¹¹⁰ So this story shows that the Buddha is the suitable person (puggala sappāya) and good friend (kalyānamitta) to her so he could bring her unconcentrated mind and frenzy to become concentrated and teach her until she attained Arahantship.

¹⁰⁹ Daw Mya Tin, (tr.), **The Dhammapada Verses and Stories**, p.166.

¹¹⁰ Rhys David, C.A. F., (tr.), **Psalms of the Early Buddhist**, (London PTS., 1964), p.108.

2.2.4.5 Suitable Food (bhojana-sappāya)

Suitable foods (bhojana-sappāya) means food suitable for the meditators because people like different types of food and different tastes, and so the suitable food can be some sweet food, some sour or spicy foods. They should get the food suitable for themselves. When they find the food that makes them comfortable and which can help them concentrate, that food is suitable. For example, sixty monks who had received from the teacher a subject of meditation leading to arahantship, came to a village name Mātika and entered it for alms. They were supported by a lay-disciple called Mātika's mother. She provided them various kinds of rice-porridge and with all manner of hard food and soft flavoured with various choice flavours. And seating the monks in her house, she offered them water and presented the food to them. As a result of the wholesome food they received, their minds became tranquil; and as result of the tranquillity of mind, they developed spiritual insight and attained arahantship.¹¹¹

However, practitioners who want to gain progress in meditation practice, meditation practitioners or monks should acquire physical fitness by moderation in eating as is explained in Majjhima-Nikāya:

Monk be thou moderate in taking food; reflecting wisely with conscious purpose accept food, not for personal charm, not for beautifying the person, but only for the maintenance of the body, for the sustenance of life, for allaying the pangs of hunger, for aiding the religious practice; thinking thus, "by this I shall subdue the old feelings of hunger, and shall feel no new pangs due to immoderate eating, and I shall be blameless and happy."¹¹²

Consequently, the amount and the quality of the food a person eats both have an influence on meditation so practitioners should be moderate of food. If they eat

¹¹¹ Daw Mya Tin, (tr.), **The Dhammapada Verses and Stories**, vol.4, p.4.

¹¹² M III 134.

too much they will get sleepy easily; if they do not have enough food their health will be poor, and they will feel continuously tired and weak. In addition, for the meditation practice, the practitioners eat only two meals and avoiding dinner will make them healthy. According to the *Kassapagirisutta* the Buddha said to the monks in Kasi that:

I, monks, do not eat a meal at night. Not eating a meal at night, I, monks, am aware of good health and of being without illness and of buoyancy and strength and living in comfort. Come, do you too, monks, not eat a meal at night. Not eating a meal at night, you too, monks, will be aware of good health and of being without illness and of buoyancy and strength and living in comfort.¹¹³

It shows that when not eating a meal at night can cause good health and comfort for meditation. Also, the quality of the food can also have effects due to substances like alcohol and drugs which are addictive, disturbing the awareness and destroying the ability to meditate. Moreover, spicy food may sometimes disturb a person by irritating the digestive system, making them feel unwell and unfit for meditation.¹¹⁴

Therefore, the practitioners should have suitable food with a balanced-diet which contains every type of nutrient. Furthermore, the purpose of accepting food should be for the maintenance of the body for practicing meditation. In these ways, they can maintain a healthy body and a healthy life in order to attain the full potential of meditation.

¹¹³ Horner, I.B., (tr.), *Majjhima-Nikāya (Majjhimapaññāsa): The Middle Length Sayings (The Middle Fifty Discourses)*, pp.146-147.

¹¹⁴ Dhammakaya Open University. *Suitable and Unsuitable Diet*. (on-line). source: http://www.en.dou.us/view_content.php?s_id=60&page=7 (1 Nov 2010).

2.2.4.6 Suitable Climate (utu-sappāya)

Suitable climate (utu-sappāya) means the certain climate that makes the meditators comfortable and able to concentrate. In general, a cool climate suits one, a warm one another. So when the meditator finds that living in a certain climate he is comfortable, or his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, or his concentrated mind becomes more so, then that climate is suitable. Any other climate is unsuitable.¹¹⁵

Additionally, the climate – air temperature, humidity, and air circulation can impact meditation. Some practitioners may feel uncomfortable and irritated in hot weather, resulting in mental agitation which interferes with the maintenance of concentration. Other practitioners may feel restless and depressed in a cold climate, bringing about the same difficulties with maintaining concentration. It is important to know what climate contributes most to a bright, peaceful, and stable mind.

2.2.4.7 Suitable Postures (iriyāpatha-sappāya)

A suitable posture means the postures that make the practitioners feel comfortable and easy for practicing meditation. Buddhaghosa explains that:

Postures: walking suits one; standing or sitting or lying down will suit another. So he should try them, like the abode, for three days each, and that posture is suitable in which his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated or his concentrated mind becomes more so. Any other should be understood as unsuitable.¹¹⁶

There are four basic postures: sitting, lying down, standing and walking. When some practitioners lie down, they feel sleepy and do not receive good

¹¹⁵ Bhadntācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.127.

¹¹⁶ Op.cit.

meditation results. If they practice using other postures, they feel physically and mentally comfortable, receiving good meditation results without any hindrances (nivarana) arising.

When the practitioners have been sitting crossed-legged for a period of time and feel stiff, they can change to a comfortable posture using a polite sideways position in which both legs are flexed backwards one on top of the other. In addition, some practitioners feel uncomfortable while performing walking meditation but feel comfortable when they meditate while seated. These experiences determine what postures are suitable for practitioners. When practicing meditation, the practitioners should constantly maintain the posture selected. If they are in their chosen posture and feel comfortable for meditation, they should remain in that posture for longer time periods and lessen the time devoted to other postures. For example, venerable Ananda attained attainment when he inclined his body as shown in Vinaya Cullavagga that:

The venerable Ananda, thinking: “Tomorrow is the assembly. Now it is not suitable in me that I, being a learner, should go to the assembly,” and having passed much of that night in mindfulness as to body, when the night was nearly spent thinking : “I will lie down,” he inclined his body, but (before) his head had touched the mattress and while his feet were free from the ground, in that interval, his mind was freed from the cankers with no residuum (for rebirth) remaining. Then the venerable Ananda, being a perfected one, went to the assembly.¹¹⁷

From this case shows that venerable Ananda attain enlightenment, while he reclined, so the practitioners can proceed in meditation practices in many postures. Therefore the meditators should find a posture suitable to make their minds concentrated. As indicated by the above information, the factors favourable to mental

¹¹⁷ V IV 395-396.

development are very important for all practitioners. Even in the present time, these factors can help participants reach peace and concentration.

2.3 Conclusion to Chapter 2

In summary, the study of Buddhist meditation in Theravada Buddhism shows that the preparation stage for practicing tranquillity meditation are: cutting off worries (ten palibodhas); having good friends (kalyānamitta); finding objects suitable for one's own intrinsic behaviour. In addition, as Buddhaghosa said in the *Visuddhimagga*, factors favourable to mental development (sappāya) are: suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya), suitable resort (gocara-sappāya), suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya), suitable person (puggala sappāya), suitable foods (bhojana-sappāya), suitable climate (utu-sappāya), and suitable posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya).¹¹⁸ Additionally, there is the nature of ground or soil (bhūmi) of vipassanā as: the aggregates (khandhas), the bases (āyatanas), the elements (dhātus), the faculties (indriyas), the four noble truths (ariya-sacca), and the dependent origination (pañiccasamuppāda).

In the practicing stage, there are 40 subjects of meditation for tranquillity meditation which are the ten meditation devices (kasiṇa), the ten kinds of foulness (asubha), the ten kinds of recollections (anussati), the four divine abidings (brahmavihāras), the perception of repulsiveness in nutriment (āhāre paṭikūlasañña), Defining of the four elements (catudhātuvavaṭṭhānam), and the immaterial states (arūpa). In addition, for vipassanā level, an understanding of: the Aggregates (khandhas), the Bases (āyatanas), the elements (dhātus), the faculties (indriyas), the Four Noble Truths (Ariya-sacca), and the Dependent

¹¹⁸ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.132.

Origination (pañiccasamuppāda) are necessary. Furthermore, there are four types of meditation practice: first, the contemplation of Samatha and Vipassanā afterwards. Second, contemplation of vipassanā and lead to samatha later. Third, contemplation of samatha and vipassanā together and, then, finally dhammutdajjavikkhitamanus (trial and error).¹¹⁹Therefore, practitioners can practice the form of meditation which is suitable for them.

In addition, the goal of tranquillity meditation is to attain one-pointedness (ekaggatā) of mind in order to suppress the five hindrances (nīvaraṅga). The true object of insight meditation (vipassanā) is paññā (wisdom), to destroy ignorance (avijjā) and the goal is enlightenment (nibbāna).

¹¹⁹ Phra Bhavanavisithikhun (Sermchai Polpatanaritdhi), **Handbook for Tri-Sikkha Practice**, (Rajchaburi: Sahiti Karn Pim Press, B.E. 2547), pp.71-73.

Chapter III

Buddhist Meditation Retreats for Foreigners

After explaining Buddhist meditation and factors supporting meditation practice in the previous chapter, this chapter presents collected information on meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand. It focuses on (i) Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), (ii) the Middle Way Meditation Retreat, (iii) International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), and (iv) Wat Pah Nanachat.

3.1 Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Meditation Centre

This section presents the background of Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), meditation teaching, the meditation retreat schedule and factors supporting the meditation retreat. An analysis concerning this centre is then presented.

3.1.1 Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Meditation Centre Background

Wat Mahādhātu Yuvaratransarit Ratchaworamahawihan is widely known by its shorter name “Wat Mahādhātu”. It is one of the six royal temples, of the highest class, built during the Ayutthaya period¹. Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Meditation Centre is one of Thailand’s most popular meditation retreats. It is located in the centre of Bangkok. Both Thais and non-Thais practice meditation here. Moreover, the centre is famous as a meditation centre, providing vipassanā meditation classes for English-speaking people and called “The Insight Meditation Practice Program for a Good Life.”

¹Office of Vipassana Meditation Centre. **How About Wat Mahathat Yuvaratransarit.** (on-line).source: http://www.Centremeditation.Org/English_News.Html (1 September 2009).

The objectives of the program are:

- leading life correctly, according to the Buddha's teachings.
- cultivating the mind
- being a device for solving problems in daily life
- showing the role played Buddhist monks in society
- leading to the cessation of suffering (Nibbāna)²

Phra Ratsithimuni, the vice abbot of Wat Mahādhātu said that the main purpose of the meditation retreat was to teach insight meditation to people, and this program was started by Phra Dhamatirarat Mahamuni (Chodok) about 50 year ago.³ This centre offers a meditation classes for English speakers every day. Group retreats can be arranged by giving information at least a few weeks prior the event.⁴ Many foreign visitors take courses each year at Wat Mahādhātu for meditation studies, and the number continues to grow. The following table presents the number of participants each year from 1998 to 2009.

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1998	242	206	448
1999	249	273	522
2000	293	337	630
2001	384	430	814
2002	407	464	871

² Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), **The Insight Meditation Practice Program for a Good Life**, (Bangkok: Wat Mahādhātu, 2009), p.2.

³ Phra Ratsithimuni, The vice abbot of Wat Mahādhātu of Wat Mahādhātu (meditation Centre) Interview, 4 July 2009.

⁴ Pataraporn Sirikanchana, **A Guide to Buddhist Monasteries Meditation Centres in Thailand**, (Bangkok: Printing House of Thammasat University, 2004), p.21.

2003	260	262	522
2004	396	425	821
2005	407	472	879
2006	535	580	1,115
2007	506	591	1,097
2008	258	285	543
2009	396	412	808

Table 1: Number of Participant's from 1998 to 2009.

Source: Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5)

According to table 1, the number of participants has increased since 1998. In 2009, about 808 participants attended the retreat, from different countries such as Canada, Germany, UK, US, Australia, French, Belgium, Norway, Russia, Korea, Japan, and so on⁵.

3.1.1.1 Meditation Teaching

Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Meditation Centre teaches techniques similar to those taught by Mahasi Sayadaw and is based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness described in the Mahā Satipatthana Sutta. Here, concentration is developed on the rise and fall of the abdomen, then, awareness is directed to physical and mental sensations.⁶

The meditation teaching-for-beginners starts from sitting in a cross-legged position in which the right leg placed over the left leg and right hand placed on the left hand. The practitioners should adjust the body into an erect position. The sitting position should be comfortable and relaxed.

⁵ Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), **Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Meditation Retreat Report**, (Bangkok: Wat Mahādhātu. 2008), p.1.

⁶ World Fellowship of Buddhists Wat Mahā That. (on-line). source: http://www.kammatthana.com/a_guide_to_buddhist_monasteries_.htm (1 September 2009).

They should, then, breathe normally and naturally; they should not, however, be paying attention to the breathing, but, rather, should be paying focused attention only to the movement of the abdomen. When the abdomen moves out, make a mental note of “rising”. When the abdomen moves in, make a mental note of “falling”. Go on making a mental note of “rising and falling” continuously. While in sitting meditation, if any thought arises in mind, just mentally note “thinking”, “imaging”, “worried”, “anxious”, “depressed” or “angry”.⁷ When the thought diminishes or disappears, return to the original mental noting of “rising and falling”. While in sitting meditation, if any sound comes, just make a mental note “hearing”. If the eyes open and see something, make a mental note “seeing” is recommended.

Another kind of teaching at this temple is on a walking meditation method which is composed of the following six stages: right goes thus, left goes thus; lifting, treading; lifting, moving, treading; heel up, lifting, moving, treading; heel up, lifting, moving, lowering, touching; heel up, lifting, moving, lowering, touching, pressing. Another kind of meditation practice is focused on standing noting: standing, standing, standing, standing (3 times).⁸ However, for teaching walking meditation for beginners or foreigners who only come to learn meditation for a few hours, the teacher usually teaches only the first step, as “Right goes thus, Left goes thus”.

Practicing walking meditation starts by lifting the foot and meditate “Wishing” or “Intending to walk” three times. The practitioners, then, should lift the foot (right or left, depending on option) above the floor about the width of the meditator’s vertical palm, about two or three inches. The practitioners should be simultaneously affected with the steps, not in one action prior to the other, that is, meditation before or after stepping the process of mindfulness. Mindfulness must be started when lifting the left foot, together with the words “right goes thus” the last

⁷ Wat Mahādhātu Section 5, **Ordination Procedure and Chanting**, (Bangkok: Wat Mahadhatu Section 5, 2009), p.56.

⁸ Ibid, p.57.

word “thus” ending while the foot is being placed on the floor. When the left foot is being lifted, and until being set on the floor, the words “left goes thus” must be noted. The same applies to each step and every step. After walking to the end of the room or space, while standing, meditate “Standing” repeatedly. Before turning, meditate “wishing to turn” repeatedly. Then slowly turn and simultaneously meditate “turning” repeatedly. Having turned, and upon the commencement of walking meditate “Right goes thus, left goes thus.” The practitioners are advised to walk to the end of the designated path and then meditate “Standing” repeatedly, as before. This method is “One stage walking meditation.”⁹

3.1.1.2 Meditation Retreat Schedule

This meditation centre offers structured periods of meditation with the monks giving instruction on meditation for beginners and basic Buddhist principles. In general, the instructors teach basic Dhamma before the meditation practice. The practitioners can attend the meditation classes for English speakers every day. Group retreats can be arranged by giving information at least 2-3 weeks prior to the event. The meditation retreat schedule at section 5 is as below;

- 1) Morning Section starts from 7.00-10.00 am
Meditation instruction and practice
- 2) Afternoon Section starts from 1.00-4.00 pm.
Meditation instruction and practice
- 3) Evening section starts from 6.00-8.00 pm.
Meditation instruction and practice
- 4) Dhamma talk from 8.00-9.00 pm.

⁹ Op.cit.

For the preparation stage, the practitioners who want to practice meditation and stay in this centre have to follow these rules:

- 1) Those who want to use the section 5 facilities for meditation purposes must first have the approval of the section's officials.
- 2) Practitioners must adhere to the five precepts or the eight precepts of the Lord Buddha and pray homage to the Triple Gem daily and white clothes are required.
- 3) Photocopies of passport and visa are required. Prior to admission the number of days of intended training must be specified and approved by the section's officials.
- 4) Those with transferable diseases, or who are mentally or physically handicapped are not allowed to enter training.
- 5) Trainees conduct must always be sober and respectable.
- 6) Practitioners are not allowed to leave the section unless absolutely necessary. When such occasions arise; an official of the section must be informed.
- 7) The centre stresses the importance of cleanliness. Practitioners are required to help clean the rooms and bathrooms.
- 8) Conversations are to be kept to a minimum, as they are distraction. As questions arise practitioners should only ask the teacher and no one else.
- 9) If necessary, practitioners may talk however, communication should be kept brief.
- 10) If a long conversation is necessary, practitioners must leave the meditation room in order not to disturb others.
- 11) Practitioners do not ask others about meditation or give suggestions concerning meditation to other practitioners. During the training period, the practitioners do not read books, write or study, listen to the radio or watch TV.
- 12) There is no smoking. All intoxicating drinks or drugs are prohibited.

13) Practitioners do not sleep during the day. If a rest is required, they may assume the lying-down position or sit down quietly.

14) All practitioners must practice meditation at the following times:
7.00-10.00 a.m.; 1.00-4.00.p.m.; 6.00-9.00 p.m.

15) Practitioners should be reminded that they are here for “Meditation Training” and not to seek an easy life so, they should be patient and spend most of the available time in meditation.

16) Regarding food, practitioners are provided free food inside the section; trainees should not go outside for meals, as they will be much distracted.

17) If the approved training period is to be shortened for some unforeseen reason, an official of the section must be informed.

18) In case of the practitioners breaking the above mentioned regulations, they will be warned or asked to leave, depending on the circumstances.¹⁰

3.1.1.3 Factors Supporting Meditation Retreat

The surroundings in Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) regarding abode, location, speech, people, food and refreshment, climate, and posture are explained below.

1) Abode

The centre provides the meditation room for foreigners. It is located in the basement which accommodates about 20 people. The participants can meditate and do walking meditation. However, if there are many foreigners, they can practice walking meditation in the main hall with the Thai participants.

¹⁰ Phrakru Vimoldhammarangsi, **Regulations for Meditation Trainees**, (Bangkok: Vipassana Meditation Centre, Wat Mahadhatu Section 5, 2010), p.1.



Figure 2: The meditation room at Section 5 Wat Mahādhātu

The centre offers accommodation for laypeople that usually stay in dormitories, separated, for men and women. Women can stay in the meditation room in the evening. Monks, novices, and some laymen have individual rooms. The centre has electricity and running water. However, it tends to be crowded. Sometimes, many participants, both Thai and non-Thai, stay in the same area, which makes the centre noisy.

2) Location

Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) is located in the centre of Bangkok, north of the Grand Palace compound, between the fine arts section of Silpakorn University and the University of Thammasat's law and sciences departments. The area has many shops and restaurants close to the centre. In addition, it is located not far from the market and a hospital.

3) Speech

The centre does not force people to do the retreat in silence but if some participants want to do so, the organizers will arrange it for them; however, they can talk to or ask questions of the instructors or the mentors when they need to.

4) Team work

There are a few teaching monks and one mentor at section 5. Phra Suputh Kosalo, a teaching monk at this centre said that he has been teaching since 1998 in section 5. He started the programme of consulting at the meditation retreat.¹¹ He is a good instructor with experience teaching both in Thailand and foreign countries.

5) Food and Refreshment

Food at this centre is of good quality and variety. It comes from the monks who go on alms rounds in the morning and from laypeople that come to the centre to offer and prepare food for the monks and the meditators. Breakfast is offered from 6.30 -7.00 am. Lunch is served at 11.30 am. Drinks are served in the afternoon.



Figure 3: Food served at the canteen of Wat Mahādhātu (Section5)

6) Climate

The weather at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) is usually warm in summer (March–April), with heavy rain in the rainy season, so international visitors do not usually come to practice meditation in those seasons. In general, the participants come in winter (December to February) when there is cool weather.

¹¹ Phra Suputh Kosalo, the teaching monk of Wat Mahādhātu Interview, 1 July, 2009.

7) Posture

The meditation instructor teaches both sitting and walking meditation, so the participants do both. They also encourage the participants to be mindful when they eat by noting “eating”, and when they sleep by noting “sleeping” and to be mindful of every activity. The following picture shows walking meditation at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5).



Figure 4: Walking Meditation at Wat Mahādhātu (section 5)

3.1.2 Analysis of Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Based on Theravada Buddhism

3.1.2.1 Analysis of Meditation Teaching

This section analyzes Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) meditation teaching and factors supporting the retreat based on Theravada Buddhism. Initially, this centre used the method of Satipatthāna which is the Four Foundations of Mindfulness: the

mindfulness of body, feeling, mind and mind-objects. However, the teaching for foreigners mostly focuses on basic concept of mindfulness of body (kāyanupassanā) by concentrating on mindfulness with regard to rising and falling of the abdomen during in-and-out breathing (ānāpānasati). To reiterate, the instructor recommended that the practitioners should breathe normally and naturally; however, they should not pay attention to the breathing but instead pay attention only to the movement of the abdomen. When the abdomen moves out make a mental note of “rising”. When the abdomen moves in, make a mental note of “falling”. Continue on making a mental note “rising, falling”.

The meditation teaching also focuses on mindfulness of feelings (vedanānupassanā) which considers and perceives the beginnings and the process of feelings arising in mind. For instance, while in sitting meditation if any thought arises in mind, the practitioners should only mentally note “thinking”, “imaging”, “worried”, “anxious”, “depressed” or “angry”.¹² If thought diminishes or disappears, return to the original mental note, “rising, falling”. While in sitting meditation, if any sound comes in, just make a mental note “hearing”. If the eyes open and see something, make a mental note “seeing” will be recommended.

Further the centre teaches the mindfulness of mind (cittānupassanā) and mindfulness of the mind-objects (dhammānupassanā) which is understanding or knowing the arising and process of development of, for example, the five hindrances (nīvarana); the nature of each of the five groups (khandha); the 12 bases of all mental activity (āyatana); the fetters (samyojana); the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhanga); each of the Four Noble Truths (sacca) according to reality. These are usually too complicated for non-Thais or non-Buddhists. However, if the practitioners understand Satipathāna or have had experience before, the instructors will give an explanation to

¹² Wat Mahādhātu Section 5, **Ordination Procedure and Chanting**, (Bangkok: Wat Mahadhatu Section 5, 2009), p.56.

them. After practicing meditation some practitioners had meditation experience in which, for example, they felt calm and relaxed.

3.1.2.2 Analysis of Beneficial Factors for the Meditation Retreat

The analysis of factors supporting meditation retreat such as the suitable abode, resort, speech, person, food and refreshments, climate and posture will be analysed as follows:

1) Analysis of a Suitable Abode (āvāsa-sappāya)

A suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya) is important for the meditation practice as mentioned in the *Anguttara-Nikāya* stating that it should not be too far and not be too near to a village but suitable for coming and going; but not frequented; by night quiet and undisturbed by noise; not plagued by contact with flies, mosquitoes, wind, rain and creeping things.¹³ In the case of Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), it is located in the centre of Bangkok, so it is too near to crowded areas. Furthermore, there are some disturbances caused by tourists and telephone ringing and merchants hawking and talking.

In addition, the centre has electricity and running water. It also provides a meditation room for foreigners which is located in the basement and which can accommodate about 20 people. The participants can meditate and practice walking meditation. However, if there are many foreigners, the practitioner can practice walking meditation in the main hall with the Thai participants.

Additionally, the centre offers accommodation for the practitioners, which is separated for men and women. If there are many foreign practitioners attending a

¹³ Woodward, F.L. (tr.), *Anguttara-Nikāya: The Book of Gradual Sayings*, vol 5. Oxford: PTS., 1996. pp.11-12.

meditation retreat, they have to share the dormitories with the Thai group. Sometimes the accommodation is not enough for all of the practitioners; therefore, many participants, both Thai and non-Thai, stay in the same area which makes the centre noisy.

2) Analysis of Suitable Resort (gocara-sappāya)

The analysis of the suitable resort (gocara-sappāya) shows that this centre is located in the centre of Bangkok, north of the Grand Palace compound, between the fine arts section of Silpakorn University and the University of Thammasat's law and sciences departments. It is located not far from the market and the hospital. However, sometimes, there are some protests around the area or some celebrations which make a noise and disturb meditation practice. Therefore, at such times the location of the centre is not appropriate for meditation practice. In addition, this centre is located in a main tourist area, so there are some tourists who also visit the centre at times when practitioners are practicing meditation which disturbs practitioners. Furthermore, there is no separated area for the information centre so the tourists or the guests sometimes ask for information from the instructors, while practitioners meditate.

3) Analysis of Suitable Speech (bhassa-sappāya)

In respect to analysis of suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya), it shows that the instructors usually teach meditation and Dhamma to the practitioners. During this time the practitioners can also talk or ask questions about Dhamma and meditation from the instructors or the mentors when they need to.

The Buddha taught that there are the ten kathavatthu or the ten types of conversation which are forms of suitable speech (bhassasappaya): one who wants little and talks of wanting little (appiccha); one who is contented and talks about contentment (santuṭṭhi); one who loves seclusion and talk about seclusion (paviveka); one who loves solitude and talks about solitude (asaṃsagga); one who strives energetically and talks on energetic striving (viriyā); one who is self-disciplined and talks about self discipline (sīla); one who has attained concentration

and talks about concentration (samādhi); one who has attained wisdom and talks about wisdom (paññā); one who has attained liberation and talks about liberation (vimutti), and; one who has attained seeing and knowing of liberation and talks about seeing and knowing of liberation (vimuttiñāṇadassana).¹⁴

Despite the rules, in the accommodation, some practitioners still talk to each other and disturb other practitioners who are seriously practicing meditation and are trying not to talk aimless speech, such as the 32 Tiracchānakathā which are listed below: Tales of kings, of robbers, of ministers of state: tales of war, of terrors, of battles; talk about foods and drinks clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes; talks about relationships, equipages, villages, towns, cities, and countries; tales about women, and about heroes; gossip at street corners, or places whence water is fetched, ghost stories, desultory talk, speculations about the creation of the land or sea, or about existence and non-existence.¹⁵ Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) does not force people to do the retreat in total silence but if some participants want to do it, the organizers will arrange it for them.

4) Analysis of Suitable Persons (puggala sappāya)

According to the kalyānamittadhamma, the “good friend” should also be characterized by the following appealing qualities (piyo): he should be friendly and approachable; worthy of respect (garu); he should behave in a way that befits his position and instil confidence in others; inspiring (bhāvanīyo), he should be learned and wise and training himself constantly. He is worthy of praise and sets a good example; he can be thought of with respect, confidence and inspiration; speaking effectively (vattā); he knows how to explain things in a way that is easily understood. He gives guidance and is available for advice (vacanakkhamo); he is patient. He is always ready to listen to other’s opinions or questions, even when they are petty or offensive. He is neither offended nor depressed by criticism but readily listens to it with patience; he can

¹⁴ AV129.

¹⁵ D I13.

explain higher teachings that are subtle and profound (*gambhīrañca katham kattā*); he leads not in things that are inappropriate; he does not lead his follower in things that are unworthy or harmful (*no caṭṭāne niyojaye*). Finally, having good friend is the most important attainment.¹⁶

The analysis of suitable person (*puggala sappāya*) shows that the meditation instructor at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) is a suitable person who understands Dhamma and meditation practice very well. He usually gives explanations on basic Dhamma teaching, meditation practice, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and so forth. He teaches the practitioners to concentrate their minds and answers their questions clearly. He has a lot of experience teaching meditation to foreigners both in Thailand and abroad. He also understands the practitioners so he can give good advice to them. However, there is only one teaching monk and one mentor at this centre who can teach meditation in English.

5) Analysis of Suitable Food (*bhojana-sappāya*)

The Lord Buddha explained in *Majjhima-Nikāya* that;

Monk be thou moderate in taking food; reflecting wisely with conscious purpose accept food, not for personal charm, not for beautifying the person, but only for the maintenance of the body, for the sustenance of life, for allaying the pangs of hunger, for aiding the religious practice; thinking thus, “by this I shall subdue the old feelings of hunger, and shall feel no new pangs due to immoderate eating, and I shall be blameless and happy.”¹⁷

In addition, food and refreshments at this centre are of good quality and variety which comes from the monks who go on alms walks in the morning. Sometimes, the laypeople come to the centre to prepare food for the monks and the practitioners. A simple breakfast is offered in early morning, then the main meal in

¹⁶P.A. Payutto, *Buddhadhamma Expanded and Revised (abridged)*, (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1996), p. 320.

¹⁷ M III 134.

late morning. Refreshments and drinks are served in the afternoon. Both vegetarian food and non-vegetarian food are served. Therefore, the food here is suitable food (bhojana-sappāya).

6) Analysis of a Suitable Climate (utu-sappāya)

In general, different people like different climates; for example, a cool climate suits one, a warm one another. So when the meditator finds that living in a certain climate he is comfortable, or his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, or his concentrated mind becomes more so, then that climate is suitable. Any other climate is unsuitable.¹⁸ In case of, Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), which is located in the centre of Thailand, it usually has warm weather in summer and heavy rain in the rainy season. Therefore, international visitors do not usually come to practice meditation during these seasons. In general, they always attend the meditation retreat in winter (December to February) when there is cool weather. Therefore, the most suitable climate for the foreign practitioners here is in the winter.

7) Analysis of a Suitable Posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya)

Regarding suitable posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya) analysis of Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) shows that the meditation instructor of this centre teaches both sitting and walking meditation and also encourages the participants to keep mindfulness when eating by noting “eating” and when they sleep by noting “sleeping” and maintaining mindfulness of every activity. When the practitioners practice, using other postures, they feel physically and mentally comfortable, receiving good meditation results without any hindrances (nivarana) arising. Buddhaghosa explained in the Visuddhimagga as follows:

Postures: walking suits one; standing or sitting or lying down suits another. So he should try them, like the abode, for three days each, and that posture is suitable in which his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated or his

¹⁸ Bhadntācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.127.

concentrated mind becomes more so. Any other should be understood as unsuitable.¹⁹

Therefore, Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) has suitable posture supporting meditation practice, so the participants can proceed in meditation.

3.1.3 Analysis of Results of Interview

3.1.3.1 Analysis of the Reason why Practitioners Practice Meditation at This Centre

There are many reasons people are interested in this meditation centre as shown by the following factors:

1) Wat Mahādhātu (section 5) retreat centre is located in a good location that is easy to find, and it is located near the grand palace which the foreigners usually visit. Therefore, they can also come to observe or attend a meditation retreat here easily. Moreover, not only tourists come to attend the practice here, but foreigners who work in Bangkok come here sometimes to practice meditation before or after work because the centre offers a warm welcome to the visitors who walk in and join the meditation class there.

2) The centre is well-known and also advertised in the guide book called “Lonely Planet”. Many foreigners search for information from the guide book before coming to Thailand. The guide book says that the meditation centre here is a good place for a retreat. Most of the meditators who come to practice here learn of the centre through guide books.

¹⁹ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.132.

3) Many participants have problems or suffering in their lives, so they want to find the right way to help them get rid of such suffering and change it to happiness.

3.1.3.2 Analysis of Results of Meditation

This section focuses on impressive things about the retreat, benefits or changes after the retreat and meditation experiences during practice at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5).

3.1.3.2.1 Analysis of Impressive Factors about the Retreat

The factors of the centre that leave an impression on the participants are as follows:

1) The openness of the centre and acceptance of the participants from every country and every religious background without any booking or any charge for the retreat always makes the meditators feel grateful. Sometimes, the foreigners first want to observe the meditation retreat, and then make a decision about attending. The centre accepts this practice.

2) The sanctuary is peaceful.

3) The environment including the staff makes the participants feel comfortable without pressure.

4) Warm welcome by the staff and the instructors.

5) The instructors explain the meditation practice clearly and easily for foreigners to understand. The instructors are also very friendly, kind and helpful.

6) The food here is delicious.

7) The centre is very well run with everyone co-operating.

3.1.3.2.2 Analysis of the Benefits or Changes after Attending the Retreat

1) The participants had better morality after attending the retreat. They have a better feeling and change to become better morally. Some participants believe that their lives are better than before they attended this retreat. In addition, some practitioners felt much more in control, physically and emotionally, clearer and stronger psychologically and said that they were treating themselves and others with more respect and kindness.

2) The participants learned about meditation, Buddhism, and they gained benefits from it. Many also wanted to practice meditation, more for a new experience or tried it for relaxation purposes.

3) They learn to concentrate and become calmer without depression. Some practitioners are able to purify their minds, relax, rest from crowded cities and make their lives better. In addition, they concentrated more on the present moment and did ordinary things, such as eating or washing dishes with more awareness. Some practitioners felt that they had made good progress in meditation practice.

3.1.3.2.3. Analysis of Meditation Experience

The participants have some meditation experiences; for example, some felt that they could not feel their bodies or some parts of their bodies. Some participants feel difficulty in mediating in the beginning but that it is easier later so, they are able to practice sitting meditation longer. Some practitioners feel peaceful, relaxed, and calm.

The interview result shows that the meditators underwent some changes and had some meditation experiences after attending the retreat. The participants who practiced for a longer period usually made progress in meditation.

In summary; although, there are some problems of factors favourable for meditation practice; the practitioners still received benefits and were changed after the retreat as follows. The participants learned about meditation, Buddhism, and they gained benefits from it. They also wanted to continue practicing meditation. The participants had better morality after attending the retreat. They had a better feeling and changed to become better morally. They also learned to concentrate and were able to purify their minds and relax, make their lives better.

3.2 The Middle Way Meditation Retreat

What follows is an explanation of background of the Middle Way Meditation Retreat, the meditation teaching, the meditation retreat schedule, factors supporting the meditation retreat, and analysis of this centres.

Now, we come to talk about the second meditation centre in this study.

3.2.1 The Middle Way Meditation Retreat Background

The Middle Way Meditation Retreat at “Suan Pa Himmawan” Retreat Centre is located near the Phu Ruea National Park in the Northeastern province of Loei, Thailand. It is placed near a forest environment, a sanctuary for meditators, surrounded by rolling hills and mountainous scenery. The retreat centre was founded in 2006. The name of the centre refers to the path that leads to enlightenment. Its objectives are to develop individual meditation skills and to learn about meditation and self development. The retreat centre has spread to 71 different nationalities from 5 continents: Asia, America, Africa, Oceania, and Europe.²⁰

²⁰ The Middle Way Meditation Retreat. **The Middle Way Meditation Retreat**. (on-line). source: <http://www.meditationthai.org/docs/en/index.html>, (1 February 2010).

The following graph shows the percentage of people who joined the Middle Way Retreat from 5 continents, 49% from Asia, 19% from Europe, 14% from Oceania, 9% from America and also 9% from Africa.

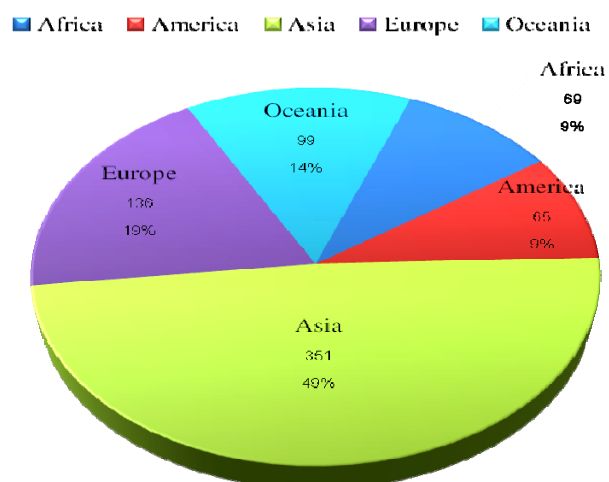


Figure 5: Percentage of the participants of the Middle Way Meditation Retreat²¹

In addition, the following table shows the number of people who joined the retreat from 2006 to 2009.²²

MWR	Thailand	Abroad	Total
Africa	4	65	69
America	65	-	65
Asia	288	63	351
Europe	125	11	136
Oceania	24	75	99
Total	506	214	720

Table 2: Number of Participants at the Middle Way Retreat

²¹ Op.cit.

²² The Middle Way Meditation Retreat, **MDW Record 2009**, (Pathumthani: The Middle Way Meditation Retreat, 2009), p.1.

The aim of this retreat is to offer an opportunity for the practitioners to learn techniques that are simple and easy to practice. For the preparation stage, the practitioners are informed that they are required to follow eight precepts during the retreat. In addition, they are not allowed to use cell phones or computers. Also, practitioners are not allowed to go out of the centre during the meditation period.

3.2.1.1 Meditation Teaching

The Middle Way Meditation Retreat teaches a basic meditation technique which is developed for foreigners so that both Buddhists and non-Buddhists can understand the practice more easily. The meditation instruction starts by teaching the sitting position. The main idea is to sit comfortably because the right sitting position can help practitioners to meditate longer in comfort. The recommended posture is to sit cross-legged with the right leg over the left leg and the right hand on the left hand. If this position is uncomfortable, the practitioners can sit on a cushion or a chair. Nevertheless, the right index finger should touch the left thumb. The practitioners then learn to close the eyes, very gently, because if they try too hard, they might feel stressed. Afterwards, they try to empty the mind of all kinds of thoughts. The practitioners can also try breathing in deeply and gently exhaling a few times and relaxing every muscle in the body because mind and body are connected. When the body relaxes, they can practice meditation more easily.

Subsequently, the practitioners should imagine that the inside of the body is hollow, as well, with no internal organs; then, rest the mind at the centre of the body, which is located inside, at a level of two fingers' breadth above the navel, as shown in the following picture.

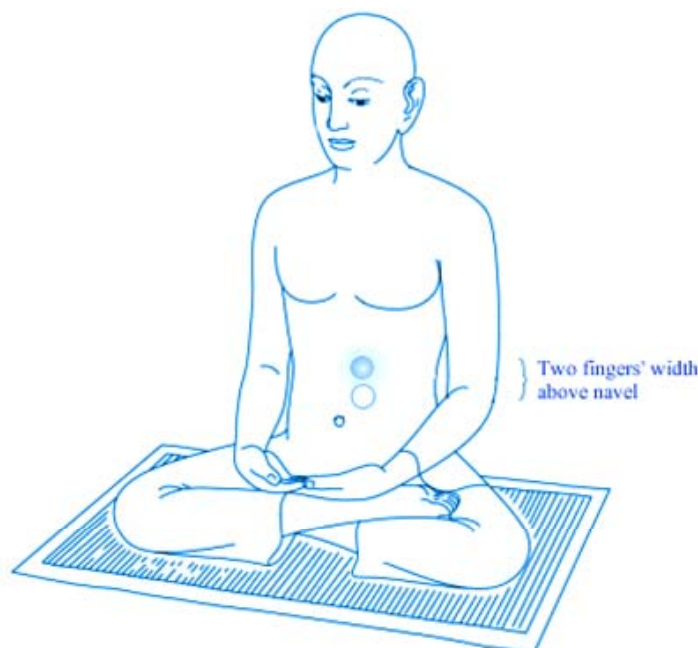


Figure 6: The Centre of the Body

Source: The Middle Way Meditation Retreat

If the practitioners feel it is difficult to bring their attention to the centre of the body, they can rest the mind elsewhere inside the body wherever they feel most comfortable. The practitioners should not strain the eyes. If their minds wander, they can imagine the visual mental object (*parikamma nimitta*) in order to stop the mind from wandering. To help keep the mind still, they can imagine that a crystal ball is floating in the middle of the stomach or using other neutral objects such as an orange, a football or the moon.²³

The practitioners should then imagine that the visual mental object is bright and clear at the centre of the body and stop their minds at the centre of that visual object and the practitioners should not think of anything. They should still the mind and gently think of clearness with a sense of continuous ease. If one cannot stop thinking of other matters, one can use *parikamma bhāvanā* or concentration of words

²³ The Middle Way Meditation Retreat. **The Middle Way Meditation Retreat**. (on-line). source: http://www.meditationthai.org/docs/en/meditation.html#Meditation_for_Beginners (14 February 2010).

“Sammā Arahaṃ” or “Bright and Clear” with the sense that the sound of the mantra comes from the spherical point at the centre of the mental object.

Afterwards, the practitioners should repeat the mantra “Sammā Arahaṃ” or “Bright and Clear” continuously until the mind comes to a standstill. If they find it difficult to imagine the mental object, they can repeat the mantra silently and continuously in the mind. If they are not sure about the location of the centre of the body, anywhere in the area of stomach will do.²⁴

For the one who is used to practicing the seven bases of the body, or for one who feels it is difficult to use the visual mental object or mantra, they can bring the mind back to the body and allow the mind to come to a standstill.

After teaching meditation is over, the retreat centre also recommends the practitioners to do “Meditation Homework for Daily Life” to practice as a way to help tame the mind in preparation for meditation: The reason that mental development can be secured by practicing meditation regularly according to the proper technique. Practicing the ten items of homework furthers this development allowing the practitioners to experience progress more quickly. The Meditation Homework for Daily Life includes:

1) The practitioners should make the effort to see the virtues in themselves and others. They should congratulate others on their virtues thereby giving them an opportunity to congratulate theirs.

2) The practitioners should keep daily notes of their meditation experience in a diary.

3) Before going to sleep, they should recollect the good deeds they have done throughout the day.

4) The practitioners should centre their minds before falling asleep.

²⁴ Phrapaladsudham Sudhammo, **Visudhivācā**, (Bangkok: Sirivatana Interprint Public, 2006), p.202.

5) Upon waking, they should immediately reconnect the attention with the centre of the body.

6) Before getting up, they should take a minute to re-unite the mind with mental object at the centre of the body and recollect that the practitioners are lucky still to be alive, thereby reminding themselves that one day in the future the practitioners must die for sure, thereby causing them to spread loving-kindness to all living beings in the world.

7) The practitioners should create the feeling that they are united with the mental object at the centre of the body: creating the feeling that they are inside the mental object, the mental object is inside them, they are united with the mental object and the mental object is united with them.

8) The practitioners should take one minute of every hour to still their minds and think of the mental object or stilling the mind at the centre of the body.

9) The practitioners should recollect the mental object at the centre of the body, while conducting other activities throughout the day.

10) The practitioners should make the world a nicer place to live in, by smiling and speaking in an endearing way.

If the practitioners can perform these items of homework, they will be able to experience progress in their meditation. This form of homework is easy to practice and relevant to practitioners of every gender, age, race, creed and religious persuasion.²⁵

3.2.1.2 Meditation Retreat Schedule

The retreat centre provides the meditation retreat schedule as below:

05.00	Wake up
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²⁵ Dhammakaya Open University. "Meditation Homework for Daily Life". (on-line). source: http://en.dou.us/view_content.php?s_id=79 (1 July 2010).

05.30	Meditation session & spreading loving-kindness
06.15	Morning exercise
07.00	Breakfast
09.00	Meditation instruction
09.30	Meditation session
11.00	Lunch
12.30	Personal time
13.45	Stretching exercise (yoga)
14.00	Meditation session
15.00	Meditation and self-development' lecture
16.00	Personal time / Group sharing
17.30	Refreshment
19.00	Meditation session
21.00	Personal time
21.30	Sleep in peace ²⁶

The retreat centre offers structured periods of meditation throughout the day with the monks giving instruction on meditation for beginners and basic Buddhist principles for self-development. In general, the instructors always teach the Dhamma before or after the meditation practice.

It also organizes a “Group sharing activity” which is an activity where the participants separate in to small groups in order to share meditation experiences and ask questions of the group mentors and the teaching monk. They usually hold group sharing twice for each retreat in the afternoon after the meditation section.

²⁶ The Middle Way Meditation Retreat. **Meditation for Beginners Course Daily Schedule.** (on-line). source: http://www.meditationthai.org/docs/en/beginner_meditation_course.html, (1 March 2010).

In addition, the retreat centre provides the morning exercise and an afternoon stretching program in order to make the practitioners relax and stretch their bodies after performing sitting meditation or walking meditation.

3.2.1.3 Factors Supporting the Meditation Retreat

The environment supported at the Middle Way Meditation retreat by providing proper abode, location, speech, people, food and refreshment, climate, and posture are explain below.

1) Abode

The Middle Way Meditation Retreat centre at Suan Pa Himmawan (Phurea) has an abode which supports factors favourable to meditation practice such as the meditation room, the accommodation and the relaxation area. The retreat centre has three sizes of meditation rooms. The smallest room accommodates 20 people. The medium size room can accommodate 40 people. The biggest room can accommodate 200 people. Each meditation room has glazed windows and doors, curtains, and insects mesh to keep mosquitoes and insects from the forest. The following pictures show the inside of the meditation room.



Figure 7: The Meditation Room

Every participant is accommodated in a compact cottage. Each cottage is designed with ample ventilation to ensure that all participants feel comfortable, meditating in the privacy of their individual cottages. The organizers have felt mosquito mesh and the room has an electric fan to ensure the practitioners feel comfortable and safe from the insects. Additionally, the retreat centre is secure, so participants can take a walk or have a rest in the cottage without any worry. The men and women are accommodated in separate quarters. The area for toilets and showers is provided in an area separate from the accommodation in order to make the accommodations hygienic and have less noise which might disturb the other practitioners who are meditating in their cottages. Each toilet block has six cubicles for the 10-15 practitioners. In addition, there is an artificial waterfall and a pond in front of the meditation room, so the practitioners can have the feeling of being close to nature with the waterfall sound splashing. The proximity of a nearby waterfall and a pond also make the meditation room more peaceful. It brings a sense of “refreshed-ness” and peace and a restful atmosphere to the area. The sound of running water in the background is soothing to the ear.



Figure 8: Artificial Waterfall

Figure 8 shows the artificial waterfall in front of the meditation room. It creates a good environment and facilitates the practitioner's meditation. The practitioners can enjoy being in this area and feel refreshed and in touch with the nature around them. In addition, it also has a garden in front of the meditation room which makes the practitioners feel relaxed.

2) Location

The Suan Pa Himmawan centre is located in the midst of the hills and mountains near Phu Ruea National Park. It is about 13 km. from the city. The centre is not too close and not too far from the village, so it is a very suitable place for a meditation retreat. In addition, food is easily obtained through the use of vans and cars to buy food from the market for cooking and serving for all practitioners. Additionally, there are pickups trucks, cars, motorbikes, and bicycles on standby at the retreat centre for transferring food or transporting any sick practitioners to the hospital downtown, and so on. For the transportation from Pathumthani to Suan Pa Himmawan site, the retreat centre rents an air conditioned coach for the practitioners. The coach is used for transferring the practitioners to the retreat centre. While all are on board, the staff members explain the retreat's program and hand out the introductory package to the practitioners on the way to the Suan Pa Himmawan centre. On the way back, the staff shows a video presentation of the summary of the retreat's activities serving to remind them about the meditation retreat and to continue doing it after returning home.

3) Speech

The retreat, here, is not a silent retreat; however, it encourages people to talk less and maintain consciousness while talking and speaking only about Dhamma or meditation which keeps their minds concentrated.

4) Team work

The meditation instructors have had a lot of experience. Phra Pawithai Vajiravijjo, the meditation instructor explained that the retreat centre had experience

from setting-up meditation retreats for Thais for more than 30 years. The centre applies sappāya seven for the retreat for example nice residence, good food, good teamwork.²⁷ There are four teaching monks in residence. In addition, they have several monks teaching permanently and some volunteer teaching monks. In addition, there are five staff members who are lay people who support the centre as part time volunteers.

In addition, the staff develops a website called <www.meditationthai.org> to provide general information about the meditation program. For example, information about the meditation retreats for beginners, intermediate and advanced meditation in Thailand. Besides this, the website provides information about programs abroad, such as a four-day meditation retreat in England, a three-day meditation retreat in Australia, a ten-day meditation retreat in Switzerland and a four-day meditation retreat in South Africa and one month meditation retreat in Thailand.

After finishing the retreat, the practitioners can continue to practice meditation by website <www.dmc.tv> or watch “DMC TV” which is a Buddhist satellite television and peace ethics channel. It broadcasts media programs based on Buddhist teachings and meditation teaching, 24 hours-a-day. DMC programs are suitable for all viewers regardless of age, gender, religion, race, nationality, or sexual orientation. DMC’s various shows include: Dhamma music, meditation teaching, motion pictures, and documentaries both in Thai and English.

Consequently, these websites show how the Middle Way Meditation Retreat centre tries to support practitioners in practicing meditation and provides related-information to support factors favourable to the meditation practice, such as suitable

²⁷ Phra Pawithai Vajiravijjo, the Middle Way Meditation Retreat instructor. There are a few teaching monks, 14 May, 2009.

speech (bhassa-sappāya) and suitable person (puggala sappāya) before and after the meditation retreat.

5) Food and Refreshments

The retreat centre serves traditional, healthy, and nutritious food. There is also a fresh fruit buffet at breakfast and lunch. The canteen can accommodate 200 people, with a beautiful view of the mountains. In the evening, balanced light refreshments such as milk, hot chocolate and juice are provided. The food is mostly non-vegetarian. If the participants are vegetarians or have special dietary requirements related to their health, they must inform the organizers at least 10 days in advance of their arrival.

6) Climate

The climate at Suan Pa Himmawan Retreat Centre at Phu Ruea, Loei province, the northeast of Thailand: The centre is placed at the top of a mountain so the weather there is usually cool and in the winter, from November to February always cold. In the summer, it does not get as hot as Bangkok, but it is cool in evening and warm in the day. However, in the rainy season, it always rains which makes insects come. In general, the participants like to attend meditation retreat between December and February.

7) Posture

The meditation instructors teach sitting meditation in class and encourage the participants to have awareness by practicing meditation in every activity whether walking, eating, or talking. After meditation sessions, the retreat centre organizes an exercise program and yoga for practitioners in the morning and afternoon. Yoga and exercise makes them able to relax and stretch their bodies. It can also support the meditation practice and make the body and mind relax thereby facilitating concentration.

3.2.2 Analysis of the Middle Way Meditation Retreat Based on Theravada Buddhism

3.2.2.1 Analysis of Meditation Teaching

The analysis of the Middle Way Meditation teaching found that it uses the “Meditation Devices” called the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa). In addition, this light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa) is suitable for all kinds of temperaments. According to Buddhaghosa:

Anyone who wants to practice the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa) should use the sign (the mental object) in light in a hole, in a wall, in a keyhole, or in a window opening, the circle thrown on a wall or a floor by sunlight or moonlight entering through a hole in a wall or a circle thrown on the ground by sunlight or moonlight coming through a gap in the branches of a densely-leaved tree or through a gap in a hut made of closely-packed branches. Then they should bring the mind or use the mantra (parikamma bhāvanā) as “luminosity, luminosity”, or “obhāso, obhāso”, “light, light” or “āloko, āloko”.²⁸

The retreat centre uses the technique of the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa). However, a sign (the mental object) such as a crystal sphere is used instead of using the light in a hole and the mantra used is “Sammā Arahaṃ” or “Bright and Clear” for non-Buddhists. The purpose of this approach is to bring all of the mind’s components in the crystal sphere to become more perfectly concentrated at the centre of the body. This concentration helps to remove all the hindrances such as inactivity or sloth, sleepiness and doubtfulness. When the practitioners stop the mind at the centre of the light object (paṭibhāga nimitta), they will feel delight in this state of mind and ill-will will be removed. The practitioners can cultivate jhāna. According to the Aṅguttara

²⁸ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, pp. 180-183.

Nikāya, the cultivation of jhāna through one or more of the ten kasiṇa is mentioned as an attribute of the faithful follower of the Buddha:

O monks, a monk who practises the (jhāna of) paṭhavi kasiṇa even for a moment, for the duration of a snap of the fingers, is said to be the monk who lives not empty of jhāna, who follows the master's teaching, who acts upon his advice, and who (rightly) partakes of the alms offered by the country folk or the pious. How much more they who practise it more?²⁹

The same statement is repeated for each kasiṇa as well as the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa). In addition, practicing the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa) is suitable for all kinds of temperament.³⁰ Therefore, the practitioners can proceed in meditation practice and can cultivate jhāna after attending the retreat. On the vipassanā level, the practitioners can practice vipassanā when they can get rid of the Five Hindrances and attain the jhānas. When the mind is soft and wieldy enough, vipassanā meditation can develop. However, for meditation retreat for foreigners and beginners, the focus is on tranquillity meditation first.

3.2.2.2 Analysis of Beneficial Factors for the Meditation Retreat

This section presents an analysis of factors favourable for mental development which are a suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya), a suitable resort (gocara-sappāya), a suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya), a suitable person (puggala sappāya), a suitable food (bhojana-sappāya), a suitable climate (utu-sappāya), and a suitable posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya).

1) Analysis of a Suitable Abode (āvāsa-sappāya)

The Middle Way Meditation Retreat at Suan Pa Himmawan centre is located in the midst of the hills and mountain near the Phu Ruea National Park. Therefore, the

²⁹ A.I.41.

³⁰ Ibid., p.117.

environment is close to nature. In addition, the centre has made an artificial waterfall and a small pond in front of the meditation room so the practitioners can have the feeling of being close to nature with the waterfall sound splashing. It brings a sense of peace and a restful atmosphere to the area. The sound of running water in the background is soothing to the ear. The artificial waterfall in front of the meditation room creates a good environment and facilitates the practitioner's meditation. The practitioners can enjoy being in this area and feel refreshed and in touch with the nature around them. This environment makes them release stress, feel fresh and comfortable, and ready to listen to the Dhamma and practice meditation.

In addition, this centre is usually quiet in evening; however, in the morning, sometimes, there is some noise from the village community's radio broadcast, disturbing the meditation practice. Furthermore, the retreat centre has some flies, because it located near mountains. For this reason, the centre designs the meditation rooms to make the meditators feel comfortable and protect them from noise and insects. For example, the glazed windows and doors, curtains, and insect mesh in the meditation room provides protection from wind, rain and noise but the practitioners still can see the beautiful view of the mountains from the room.

For accommodation, the private cottages allow the practitioners to stay individually so they can practise meditation and relax in privacy. In addition, the design of the cottage is well-ventilated for the practitioners' comfort. Additionally, the insect mesh in the cottage can protect against mosquitoes and insects from the forest, while the practitioners meditate or relax inside. The toilets and shower facilities are located in a separate area making the accommodation hygienic and less noisy, so it will not disturb the other practitioners who are meditating in their cottages. Nonetheless, in the rainy season, there are many insects and ants which come from the forest to this area, especially in the evening when the lights are turned on. To reduce this trouble, the staff members encourage the practitioners to turn off the lights after using them so the number of insects will be reduced.

In addition, the centre also provides appropriate accommodation. Every participant is accommodated in a compact cottage. Each cottage is designed with ample ventilation to ensure that all participants feel comfortable meditating in the privacy of the cottage. Additionally, the retreat centre is secure, so the participants can take a walk or rest in the cottage without worry. The men and women are accommodated in separate quarters. The centre also provides the medicines for sick practitioners. It has a shop for practitioners to buy some clothes, shampoo, and so forth. For these reasons, the retreat centre makes it easy for the practitioners to obtain clothes, food, plus accommodations and medicines.

However, as the Middle Way Meditation Retreat at Suan Pa Himmawan centre, it is located in the midst of the hills and mountains near the Phu Rueda National Park. It is also close to fruit and rice farms; nevertheless, the centre is located in a private area and is not disturbed by them. Moreover, only the practitioners and staff are allowed to come into the area. Consequently, the meditation practice is not disturbed.

2) Analysis of a Suitable Resort (gocara-sappāya)

A suitable resort is a factor favourable for the mental development. The proper resort as guarding or gocara refers to the propriety of Buddhist monks or the meditators. According to Buddhaghosa, “an alms-resort village should be lying to the north or south of the lodging, not too far, within one kosa and a half, and where alms food is easily obtained, is suitable. The opposite kind is unsuitable.”³¹ In case of this centre, the analysis of suitable resort (gocara-sappāya) shows that the retreat centre is located in the hills and mountains near the Phu Rueda National Park, Loei province. It is located 13 kilometres from the market and the hospital in the city. The centre provides food and refreshment for the practitioners and monks have no need to go for alms. In addition, this centre has pickup trucks and cars for transferring food from the

³¹ Ibid., p.126.

market for cooking, which serve all practitioners, to ensure that they can eat fresh and healthy food on time. If anyone is sick the staff can take them to the hospital which helps the practitioners feel secure. Therefore, it is said that the centre is a suitable resort.

3) Analysis of Suitable Speech (bhassa-sappāya)

The Dhamma teaching at this centre is about the Buddha's life and his teaching, the precepts, meditation, the Eightfold Path, meditation teaching and so forth, including suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya) in accordance with the ten types of conversation which are considered forms of suitable speech (bhassasappaya). These are talk on wanting little (appiccha); contentment (santutṭhi); seclusion (paviveka); solitude (asaṃsagga); energetic striving (viriyā); self discipline (sīla); concentration (samādhi); wisdom (paññā); liberation (vimutti), and seeing and knowing of liberation (vimuttiñāṇadassana).³²

In addition, retreat centre also encourages the participants to talk less or talk only on suitable topics that keep their minds concentrated. The teaching monks have meditation teaching experience and explain the Dhamma very well. The centre also organizes a "group sharing activity" which is an activity where the participants separate in to small groups in order to share meditation experiences and ask questions of the group mentors and the teaching monk. They usually hold group sharing twice for each retreat in the afternoon after the meditation section. This activity can help the practitioners make progress in meditation practice.

In the mean time, the meditation instructors do not talk unsuitable speech or aimless talk (tiracchānakathā) which disturbs the meditation practice, and they encourage the practitioners not to speak using aimless talk.

4) Analysis of Suitable Persons (puggala sappāya)

³² Woodward, F.L., (tr.), **Anguttara-Nikāya: The Book of Gradual Sayings**, p.87.

The analysis of the suitable speech shows that there are three teaching monks at the Middle Way Meditation Retreat, those are good friends (kalyānamit).

The teaching monks are friendly and have good explanations that make the practitioners understand easily. They give guidance and are available for advice. They also are patient and always ready to listen to others' opinions or questions. The teaching monks can also explain on higher levels and do not lead in things which are inappropriate, nor do they lead the practitioners in things which are unworthy or harmful (no cattāne niyojaye).

5) Analysis of Suitable Food (bhojana-sappāya)

The analysis of suitable food shows that the centre provides two meals for the practitioners in order to do the eight precepts and to be moderate in eating. In addition, the practitioners who want to achieve progress in meditation practice or monks should acquire physical fitness through moderation in eating.

To this end, the retreat provides many types of healthy and nutritious food and also fresh fruit buffet at breakfast and lunch. In the evening, balanced light refreshments such as milk, hot chocolate and fruit juice will be provided. Food served is both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Because some people like different types of food and different tastes so the suitable food can mean some like sweet food, some like sour or spicy foods. They should get the food suitable for themselves. They find the food that makes them comfortable and can help them concentrate. Therefore, the practitioners can choose the suitable food for them. Therefore, it is considered that the centre provides suitable food for supporting meditation practice.

6) Analysis of a Suitable Climate (utu-sappāya)

The centre is placed at the top of a mountain so the weather there is usually cool and in the winter, from November to February always cold. In the summer, it is not as hot as in Bangkok but it is cool in evening and warm in the day. The centre also provides air conditioned rooms for the practitioners to set the appropriate temperature. However, in the rainy season, it sometimes rains which makes insects come. For this

reason, participants like to attend meditation retreats around December to February. In sum, the climate here is not too hot and not too cold so, it is suitable for meditation practice.

7) Analysis of a Suitable Posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya)

The Middle Way Meditation Retreat instructors teach sitting meditation and encourage the participants to have awareness by practicing meditation in every activity whether walking, eating, or talking. Therefore, in the break time, the practitioners can walk with mindfulness in the walking area or the garden and feel relaxed during the retreat. However, it is suggested that this centre should provide a schedule for the teaching of walking meditation and standing meditation, because people are different, so different types of postures are suitable for different people.

3.2.3 Analysis of Result of Interviews

3.2.3.1 Analysis of the Reason why Practitioners Practice Meditation at This Centre

There are many reasons that people come to meditate at the Middle Way Retreat, as shown in the following topics.

1) Many participants search for information by Internet such as on “Google” so they can see the Middle Way Meditation Retreat website at www.meditationthai.org, then, they can apply from that website.

2) Some participants come to this retreat centre because their families or their friends used to meditate here and they were very appreciative about the meditation practice, so they also recommended other participants to attend the retreat here.

3) Regarding the appropriate day for the retreat, some participants choose this retreat centre because they have a seven days retreat that is an appropriate time for them. It is not too short and not too long a time for them.

4) The participants want to learn meditation and concentrate in order to control their work to reduce stress and have happy life.

5) The retreat centre sets the meditation in a good location such as a mountainous region, so the participants can enjoy the environment allowing them to take a break from their usual daily routines and to spend some peaceful time away in a mountainous area for themselves, as work-life may have been very hectic.

3.2.3.2 Analysis of Result of Meditation

This section focuses on impressive things about the retreat, benefits or changes after the retreat and meditation experiences during practice at the Middle Way Meditation Retreat.

3.2.3.2.1 Analysis of Impressive Things about the Retreat

The things that impress the participants of this centre are as follows:

1) The participants appreciated a peaceful sanctuary such as mountainous serenity; the cleanliness of the retreat centre; the privacy that the retreat centre provides; the hospitality of the people; the inspiring dhamma talks by the monks.

2) The instructors have a lot of experience so they can explain the meditation practice very well.

3) The monk and staff here are friendly and give a warm welcome.

4) The practitioners are impressed here with a simple meditation technique to reduce thought; how to make them forget the body, and make them relax.

5) The food and refreshment at this retreat are appropriated for the practitioners who come from different countries because they serve various types of food, both vegetarian and not vegetarian. Also they provide refreshment such as fruit juice, tea, in the afternoon and evening.

3.2.3.2.2 The Analysis of Benefits or Changes after the Retreat

The participants gained benefits and felt some changes after the retreat; for example, they could understand the meditation practice and basic Buddhism. They have benefits for their lives and minds which they can apply for their everyday lives. They can also be a “Good Friend” (kalyānamitta) to their friends and some practitioners come back to ordain to become a monk.

1) The practitioners understand the meditation practice and basic Buddhism. The lesson of this retreat includes the basic knowledge of Buddhism to help participants to understand more about meditation. They can find inner peace for themselves.

2) It provides a good opportunity for the participants to learn to have a better life and they are able to enjoy their lives more. They are able to learn how to concentrate and learn how to stay by themselves, being content.

3) The participants can apply meditation for everyday life and bring the Dhamma to use in their lives and improve their life styles. They also want to continue practicing meditation after finishing the retreat.

4) The meditation retreat has a moral impact on the participants' minds. It cleanses the mind so that regular meditators become gentler, kinder, and feel increasingly uncomfortable about harming anyone either by speech or action. Their bad habits will decline in degree or are even dropped altogether while their good habits grow in intensity. They can change some behaviour; some practitioners feel that they can see life in a different way; see everything in a happy way, and they do not become angry so easily.

5) They can share meditation experience and can be a “Good Friend” (kalyānamitta) to their friends. They found that they now had peacefulness, and they would like to share their experiences with their friends by thinking how they could also help them to understand meditation.

6) Some participants appreciated the meditation retreat, and they had some meditation experience, so they continued practicing meditation. Later, they ordained and became meditation instructors at the Middle Way Meditation Retreat.

3.2.3.2.3. Analysis of Meditation Experience

When the participants meditate for many days, they have some meditation experience. The participant can understand the meditation practice better. Some practitioners said that every day they have different experiences but they are glad that they can concentrate longer.

Some participants can clear their minds and see the “bright light” when they meditate. The practitioners are able to have their minds emptied and filled with a great light which they feel that will lead to greater things as they continue to practice meditation. They are also more joyous, have purpose in their life, and feel much more forgiving of themselves and others.

Some of them see “Orange Morning Sun” and “bright sphere”. In addition, some participants feel like they were on the top of a very high tree. The feeling was very short but it seemed to be real. However, most practitioners feel calm and they can concentrate more.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, when one is developing the light *kaṣiṇa*, (*āloka-kaṣiṇa*), the learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) will occur like a circle reflected on the wall or the ground and the counterpart sign (*patibhāga nimitta*) will appear like a compact bright cluster of light.³³ In a case of the meditation experience of practitioners who can do that, it shows that they can concentrate, and some of them experience the learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) or the counterpart sign (*patibhāga nimitta*).

³³ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.181.

In addition, the reason why many practitioners practice meditation here have good meditation experience is because most of them are visiting Thailand directly in order to practice meditation. They pay attention to meditation practice, and some of them fly right back their country after finishing the retreat. Now, we shall talk about the third meditation centre:

3.3 International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH)

This section presents background of the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) at Suan Mokkh: the Garden of Liberation in Surat Thani meditation centre which is one of the most popular centres in the south of Thailand. Then it goes on to explain the meditation teaching, which focuses on mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*).

After explaining the meditation retreat program, the factors supporting meditation in the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), and the analysis of this centre will be described.

3.3.1 International Dhamma Hermitage Background

The International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) was opened to retreat in 1989. It offers ten-day retreats for foreigners in English beginning on the first of every month. About 100 people attend each monthly retreat. There were about 1,000 foreigners who joined the course within one year. The following graph illustrates the number of participant's each month from 2005 to 2007. It shows that in the high season, December to February, the numbers of participants increases.

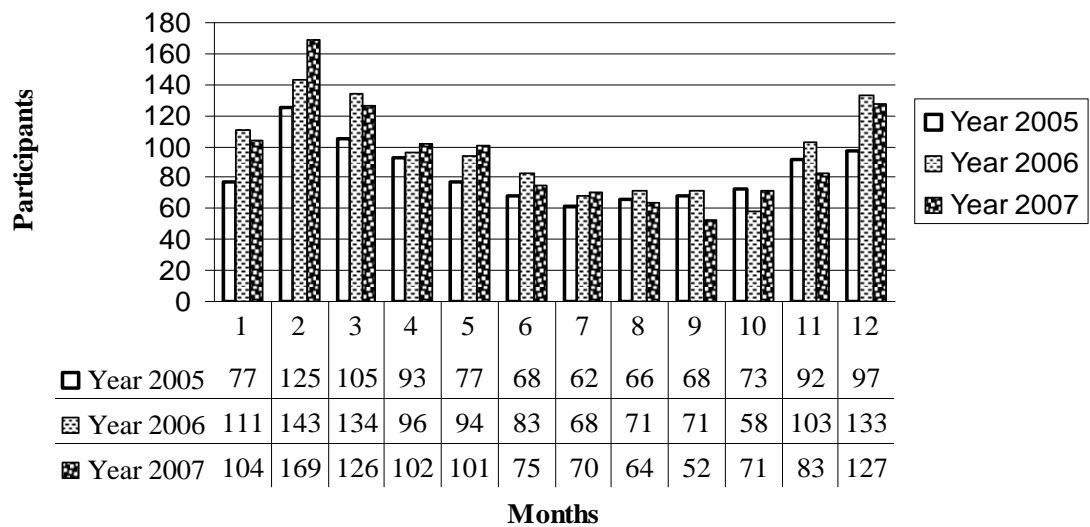


Figure 9: Participants Foreigner Retreat at IDH
Source: The International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH)

Mr. Reinhard Holscher, a coordinator of IDH foreigners retreat, said that nine percent of participants repeated the retreat at least two to three times. Some mediators attended the retreat about 20 times. About 54 percent of men repeated and 46 percent of women. However, 80 percent of the participants had never done a meditation retreat before and had never had knowledge of Buddhism before, so their purpose was to learn to meditate and learn the basic teachings of Buddhism which IDH provided.³⁴

The course offers two interrelated subjects: dhamma and meditation. The objective of the retreat is to further the Buddha's wishes and help humanity as: to spread the original teaching (Pariyati); to support Dhamma practice (Pattipatti); to call to realization (Pativedha). Besides, the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) Suan Mokkh also has the three resolutions following,

1) Have everyone get to the heart of his or her own religion, that it may be truly beneficial.

³⁴ Mr. Reinhard Holscher, coordinator of IDH foreigners retreat interview, 11 December 2008.

2) Build understanding and cooperation among all religion, denominations, and sects.

3) Liberate the world from wicked power of materialism.

In addition, the ten-day retreat is especially for beginners. The participants have to adjust their bodies and minds to the retreat settings. The practitioners have to get up early and adjust to less sleep.

- IDH has a schedule which all participants are asked to follow completely:

- The retreat provides two vegetarian meals a day.

- The practitioners have to deal with some bodily discomfort.³⁵

For the preparation stage, before attending the meditation retreat, the participants have to accept these rules: keep complete silence throughout the retreat (exceptions: personal interviews from Day 3 to Day 8 or emergencies); stay within the boundaries of the retreat centre; keep the Eight Precepts, which are:

- 1) Intending not to take away any life (abstain from killing).
- 2) Intending not to take away what is not given (abstain from stealing).
- 3) Intending to keep one's mind and one's body free from any sexual activity.
- 4) Intending not to harm others by speech.
- 5) Intending not to harm one's consciousness with substances that intoxicate and lead to carelessness or harm (no alcohol, no drugs, no smoking etc).
- 6) Intending not to eat between noon and before dawn.
- 7) Intending not to dance, sing, play or listen to music, watch shows, wear garlands, ornaments and beautify oneself with perfumes and cosmetics.
- 8) Intending not to sleep or sit on luxurious beds and seats.³⁶

³⁵ Khun Reinhard, "Meditation Retreat Information, International Dhamma Hermitage Wat Suan Mokkh - Chaiya - Thailand," (<http://www.suanmokkh-idh.org/idh-general.html>), 2 March, 2010.

³⁶ Op.cit.

This is the moral code for those who seek normalcy plus lightness and simplicity in living.

3.3.1.1 Meditation Teaching

The meditation teaching at this centre focuses on mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati). The meditation instructors brief the sixteen stages of mindfulness of breathing as follow:

1) Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.'

2) Breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.'

3) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.'

4) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

5) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.'

6) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.'

7) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.'

8) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.'

9) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.'

10) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in satisfying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out satisfying the mind.'

11) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.'

12) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.'

13) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.'

14) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion (literally, fading).' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.'

15) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.'

16) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'³⁷

It is mentioned that the IDH uses 16 stages, the same as in the Tipiṭaka. However, it will mainly train in concentration meditation by focusing attention on breathing as steps 1 to 4, then, steps 13-16 are explained. In addition, the centre teaches walking meditation, by concentration in breathing or walking such as “left”, “right” when they walk.

3.3.1.2 Meditation Schedule

The meditation retreat schedule is shown below. (The full schedule is shown in the Appendix)

04:00	Wake up
04.30	Morning Reading
04.45	Sitting Meditation

³⁷ MN 118.

05.15	Yoga / Exercise
07.00	Dhamma talk & Sitting meditation
08.00	Breakfast & Chores
10.00	Dhamma talk
11.00	Walking or Standing meditation
11.45	Sitting meditation
12.30	Lunch & Chores
14.30	Meditation Instruction and Sitting meditation
15.30	Walking or Standing meditation
16.15	Sitting meditation
17.00	Chanting & Loving kindness meditation
18.00	Tea & Hot spring
19.30	Sitting meditation
20.00	Group Walking meditation
20.30	Sitting meditation
21.30	Bedtime

IDH provides Dhamma talks about the meditation (*ānāpānasati*), the Dependent Origination, the Eight Fourth Path, plus some the other activities such as walking meditation, and so on. The practitioners will do chanting once a day on 5 pm. They chant short passages from the Buddhist scriptures. And the instructors will translate and explain for the participants. After chanting, the instructors lead the participants to do loving-kindness meditation to share true love to every human creature and sentient being.

Occasionally, in the retreat there may be optional group question and answer sessions held after the late-morning meal. These sessions allow participants to ask questions of a Dhamma friend on topics that come up in the course of the retreat. Additionally, the personal interview provides for the participants who have further

personal questions and wish to discuss individually with a Dhamma speaker. The interview questions are directly related to the meditation instruction and personal experiences during the retreat. Philosophy and argument can wait until after the retreat.

The participants are asked to sign up to do a daily chore on registration day. The retreat centre believes that helping out develops a sense of communal responsibility - a respect for each other and for the monastery. The chores take no more than 50 minutes to do each day, and encourage the participants to be mindful when they do so.

3.3.1.3 Factors Supporting Meditation Retreat

Factors supporting IDH such as abode, location, speech, teamwork, food and refreshments, climate, and posture at the IDH retreat are explained below.

1) Abode

The retreat centre provides private rooms for the practitioners. It consists of a small room containing a hard bed with a simple, straw mat a blanket, a mosquito net and a wooden pillow. In addition, there are several meditation halls which can accommodate about 100 people. Additionally, there are few dormitories, separate for men and women, as shown in the following picture.



Figure 10: The IDH dormitory

In addition, there are several meditation halls which accommodate about 100 people. The following picture shows one of the main IDH meditation-hall.



Figure 11: The IDH Meditation Hall

The centre also has a hot spring, pond, and a garden for relaxing and practicing walking meditation. The pictures are shown in the appendix B.

2) Location

IDH is located about 600 km south of Bangkok and 50 km north of Surat Thani. It is not far from the city. Food and refreshments for the practitioners can be

easily obtained from the market and the monks can go for alms round (pindabat) at that area.

3) Speech

The meditation retreat at IDH is a silent retreat, so the practitioners cannot speak throughout the retreat (exceptions: personal interviews from day 3 to day 8 or emergencies).

4) Team work

There are three teaching monks. Two of them are Thais and one is from England. They also have some volunteer instructors such as a nun and a lay-woman. In addition, they have seven full time kitchen staff and seven volunteers to support the retreat.

5) Food and refreshment

The IDH prepares two Thai-style vegetarian meals with a drink in the evening. There is no meat in the food, only soybean products. Seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables are bought at the local market. The practitioners have the meal in silence together.



Figure 12: Food at IDH

6) Climate

The IDH centre is located at Suan Mokkh in Surat Thani province, southern Thailand, so the weather there is humid with rain between May and November. The weather is cooler between December and February and warm between March and April. The foreigners usually attend meditation retreats in January-February.

7) Posture

The IDH's instructors teach both sitting and walking meditation. They also invite the practitioners to work with mindfulness by helping the centres in doing domestic tasks or chores and keeping concentration on mindfulness of breathing.

3.3.2 Analysis of International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) Based on Theravada Buddhism

This section explains analysis of meditation teaching and analysis of factors favourable for mental developments at IDH centre.

3.3.1.2 Analysis of Meditation Teaching

The meditation retreat at IDH mainly trains the practitioners in concentration meditation by focusing attention on mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*). Firstly, the meditation instructors brief the sixteen stages of mindfulness with breathing. Then, they focus on step 1 to 4 which are:

- 1) Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' ; 2) Breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' ; 3) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' 4) He trains

himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication. 'He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'³⁸

Then the instructors teach step 13-16 are as;

13) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy. He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.'; 14) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion (literally, fading).' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.'; 15) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.'; 16) He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'³⁹

In addition, there are sixteen stages of ānāpānasati. These are divided into four steps. The first four steps involve focusing mindfulness of the body (kāyanupassanā). The second tetrad involves focusing on mindfulness of feelings (vedanāupassanā). The third step involves focusing on mindfulness of mind (cittāupassanā), and the fourth on Mindfulness of the mind-objects (dhammāupassanā) as is summary in the following table.

³⁸ M N 118.

³⁹ MN 118.

Satipaṭṭhāna	Ānāpānasati	Tetrads
1. Mindfulness of the body (kāyanupassanā)	1. Breathing long	First Step
	2. Breathing short	
	3. Experiencing the whole body	
	4. Tranquillising the bodily activities	
2. Mindfulness of feelings (vedanānupassanā)	5. Experiencing rapture	Second Step
	6. Experiencing bliss	
	7. Experiencing mental activities	
	8. Tranquillising mental activities	
3. Mindfulness of mind (cittānupassanā)	9. Experiencing the mind	Third Step
	10. Gladdening the mind	
	11. Centring the mind in samadhi	
4. Mindfulness of the mind-objects (dhammānupassanā)	12. Releasing the mind	Fourth Step
	13. Contemplating impermanence	
	14. Contemplating fading of lust	
	15. Contemplating cessation	
	16. Contemplating relinquishment	

Table 3: Comparative of ānāpānasati and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness

It is seen that the IDH instructors teach in accordance with the Tipiṭaka; however, they usually focus only on steps one to four. It is also assumed that the IDH instructors teach Mindfulness of the body (kāyanupassanā) by breathing long, short. In addition, in present day, some of meditation instructors teach walking meditation, with concentration while; making steps, “left”, “right”. It shows that the IDH instructor applies the basic concept of Mindfulness of feelings (vedanānupassanā).

In addition, it is noticed that the reason why the instructors could not teach the other steps of mindfulness of breathing and the Four Foundation of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) is the other steps are too complicated for the beginners and non-Buddhist to understand the concepts in such a short time. Furthermore, there is no meditation expertise to teach at a higher level. Furthermore, the teaching of ānāpānasati in the time in which Buddhadasa had taught at Suan Mokkh has been developed and simplified by the modern instructors such as in the teaching of walking meditation while; making steps, “left”, “right”.

3.3.2.2 Analysis of Beneficial Factors for the Meditation Retreat

This section presents an analysis of factors favourable for mental development which are a suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya), a suitable resort (gocara-sappāya), a suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya), a suitable person (puggala sappāya), a suitable food (bhojana-sappāya), a suitable climate (utu-sappāya), and a suitable posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya).

1) Analysis of a Suitable Abode (āvāsa-sappāya)

The suitable abode is important for the meditation practice. In addition, a suitable abode or resting place appropriate for practicing meditation can help the practitioner’s mind to concentrate more easily. Accordingly, a quiet place in a forest, at the foot of a tree, or some other place of solitude is most conducive to the achievement of self-conquest and the attainment of perfection. The Buddha thus recommended the monks to select the nine types of places for habitation to meditate from a remote lodging to a forest, to the root of a tree, a mountain, a hillside, a rock cave, a cemetery, the depth of a jungle, an open field, or a heap of straw.⁴⁰ In case of the IDH, it is located at the foot of a hill. Therefore, the environment is close to nature. In addition, the hot spring is very beautiful and makes the practitioners feel

⁴⁰ DI 71.

relaxed and so they can release their muscles after the meditation. The pond and the garden are good for relaxation and doing walking meditation, so the practitioners can have a feeling of being close to nature. It brings a sense of peace and a restful atmosphere to the area. The practitioners can enjoy being in this area, feel refreshed and be in touch with the nature around them. This environment makes them release stress, feel fresh and comfortable, and ready to listen to the Dhamma and practice meditation.

Additionally, the analysis of the five factors of the resting place or the suitable abodes for meditation of the IDH are shown in the following items. The IDH centre is not too close and not too far from the village, so it is not difficult for transportation. In addition, there are pickup trucks, cars and motorbikes on standby at the retreat centre for transferring food or transporting any sick practitioners to the hospital downtown. For this retreat centre, nowadays, the nearby communities are expanding too close to the centre, and they also make noise which can disturb the meditation retreat. Especially, the community radio broadcast, which usually makes announcements during the meditation practice. Furthermore, there is sometimes the bad smell of garbage burning over the meditation centre which can make the practitioners feel uncomfortable. Furthermore, the IDH retreat centre has many flies and mosquitoes because it is located near the forest and there are some ponds and streams in that area. For this reason, the insects and mosquitoes can sometimes disturb meditation practice.

Regarding the accommodation, the IDH provides a private room for the practitioners which is a small room containing a hard bed with a simple straw mat a blanket, a mosquito net and a wooden pillow. However, the wooden pillow is too hard for the foreigners to sleep on with mindfulness. As regards the meditation halls, there are several of them which can accommodate about 100 people. Nevertheless, in the rainy season, heavy rains make it difficult to meditate in the open meditation room, so people can move to the other rooms. Therefore, the meditation centre is suitable for

the meditation retreat. Additionally, a suitable abode should be free of the eighteen faults of a monastery that Buddhaghosa lists.⁴¹ In case of the IDH, it is located at the foot of a hill. It is also close to the main road; however, the centre is located in a private area. Therefore, only the practitioners and staff are allowed to stay in this area. Subsequently, it should not disturb the meditation practice.

In summary, IDH has many factors which support the meditation practice with a suitable abode. Only noises from the nearby community and mosquitoes and insects sometimes seem to disturb the meditation practice.

2) Analysis of a Suitable Resort (gocara-sappāya)

A suitable resort is a factor favourable for mental development. The proper resort as guarding or gocara refers to the propriety of Buddhist monks or the meditators. According to Buddhaghosa, “an alms-resort village should be lying to the north or south of the lodging, not too far, within one kosa and a half, and where alms food is easily obtained, is suitable. The opposite kind is unsuitable.”⁴² In the case of the IDH centre, it is not far from the city, the monks can go for alms-round (pindabat) in the nearby area. They walk politely with the eye-sight downcast, not turning the face from side to side, not looking at people or objects, without mindfulness.

However, for the foreign practitioners of the IDH, food and refreshments are prepared at the cafeteria which is not far for the meditation hall and the accommodations. In addition, the centres encourage them to do mindfulness with walking meditation on the way to the cafeteria and mindfulness in every activity they do. Therefore, it is said that the IDH is a suitable resort for meditation practice.

3) Analysis of Suitable Speech (bhassa-sappāya)

The analysis found that the IDH’s meditation instructors talk suitable speech as self discipline (sīla) related to the Eight Precepts as seen above. In addition, they

⁴¹ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. By Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p.133.

⁴² Ibid., p.126.

also perform suitable speech when they talk specifically on concentration such as the teaching of mindfulness with breathing. Besides, the centre teaches walking meditation, by concentration in breathing or walking “left” and “right” steps. According to this teaching, it is clear that the IDH meditation teachers talk on concentration. On the other hand, the meditation instructors do not talk unsuitable speech or aimless talk (*tiracchānakathā*) which would disturb the meditation practice.

As already stated above, the IDH is a silent retreat, so the practitioners have to keep silent throughout the retreat. For this reason, some practitioners feel too stressed to keep silent for many days; therefore, about 10 to 30 percent of the practitioners leave the retreat before it is finished. In addition, in the time of the Buddha, there was no silent retreat but he allowed only suitable talk and recommended avoiding aimless talking. In sum, it can be said that, in the case of the IDH, the silent retreat is not really appropriate for meditation practice.

4) Analysis of Suitable Persons (*puggala sappāya*)

In the case of the IDH centre, there are three teaching monks: two of them are Thais and one is from England. There are also one nun and one lay women instructor. Even the meditation masters do not attain enlightenment, but they have meditation teaching experience and so they can explain the Dhamma very well. The Dhamma teachings at this retreat are about the mindfulness of breathing, Dependent origination (*paticca-samuppāda*), the Eight Fold Path, and so forth.

In addition the instructors are so kind and helpful. They appreciate to answer the practitioner’s questions. They are friendly and also give good explanations and speak effectively. The teaching monks and “nun” (Mae Chee) know how to explain things in a way that is easily understood. They give guidance for advice and also show patience, and are always ready to listen to other’s opinions or questions. They are neither offended nor depressed by criticism but ready to listen to it with patience. In addition some of them can explain higher teachings that are subtle and profound. In

addition, all of them avoid leading the practitioners in things that are inappropriate, and they do not lead the practitioners in things that are unworthy or harmful.

Additionally, the practitioners were impressed by the volunteers at the IDH with their dedication, the kindness of the monks, a nun (Mae Chee), and staff. The teaching monk's and a nun's ability to meditate for long periods of time were very impressive and inspiring to the practitioners. Furthermore, the teachings of the meditation instructors also impressed the practitioners because they could learn meditation and the Buddha's teachings at the same time.

5) Analysis of Suitable Food (bhojana-sappāya)

The analysis of food at the IDH found that the centre serves only breakfast and lunch because they encourage the practitioners to follow the Eight Precepts and encourage them to be moderate in eating. In addition, avoiding dinner can reduce illness and make the practitioners feel healthy and comfortable. Also the practitioners or monks who want to progress in meditation should acquire physical fitness by the means of moderation in eating. Secondly, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, suitable food (bhojana-sappāya) is suitable for the meditators even though people like different types of food and different tastes, so suitable food can be different for different people. They should have the choice of food suitable for themselves. When they find the food that helps them feel comfortable, it can help them concentrate.

Conversely, the suitable food for a greedy and speculative temperament is the right kind of gruel and rice and hard food is poor, unsightly, made up of millet, broken rice, etc., stale buttermilk, sour gruel, curry of old vegetables, or anything at all that is merely for filling the stomach. The suitable food for the hating, the faithful, the deluded temperament should be gruel, rice, and hard food has colour, smell and taste, possesses nutritive essence, and is inviting, superior in every way, and enough for his wants.

In the case of the IDH centre, food is prepared as Thai-style vegetarian meals with a drink in the evening. There is no meat in the food, only soybean products. Seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables are bought at the local market. The meals are taken together and in silence. However, there are 100-150 practitioners who attend the retreat at this centre so it is difficult to prepare food suitable for all practitioners. For example, some practitioners have never eaten Thai food or spicy and vegetarian food before so, they could only eat rice and drink water. Although after a time, some other practitioners have adapted to enjoy the food there, still the IDH centre should have more choice of food suitable to the different kinds of practitioners. When they find the food that helps them feel comfortable, it can better help them to concentrate.

Thirdly, as the centre serves only vegetarian food, it may give the wrong impression to the practitioners that all Thai Buddhists have to be vegetarians. However, the IDH teamwork-staff has explained that the reason why they would rather provide vegetarian food is because it is easy to prepare. It is not related to religious precepts, so the centre should explain this reason to the practitioners because some of them may wrongly think that vegetarian food is part of Thai Buddhism.

6) Analysis of a Suitable Climate (utu-sappāya)

This analysis of the suitable climate shows that IDH is located at Surat Thani province in southern Thailand where the weather is not too hot and not too cold, is almost suitable for meditation practice. However, the weather there is humid and rainy from May–November. Sometimes there are very heavy rains in November; therefore, the practitioners do not usually attend the retreats at that time. On the other hand, the weather is cool between Decembers and February so many foreign practitioners prefer to attend the retreats during this season because it is the most suitable climate at that time.

7) Analysis of a Suitable Posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya)

This is the IDH meditation retreat schedule below:

04:00	Wake up
04.31	Morning Reading
04.46	Sitting Meditation
05.16	Yoga / Exercise
07.00	Dhamma talk & Sitting meditation
08.00	Breakfast & Chores
10.00	Dhamma talk
11.00	Walking or Standing meditation
11.45	Sitting meditation
12.31	Lunch & Chores
14.31	Meditation Instruction and Sitting meditation
15.31	Walking or Standing meditation
16.16	Sitting meditation
17.00	Chanting & Loving kindness meditation
18.00	Tea & Hot spring
19.31	Sitting meditation
20.00	Group Walking meditation
20.31	Sitting meditation

The meditation retreat schedule shows that the IDH teaches sitting, walking, and standing meditation. It provides group walking meditation in the evening near the pool or around the centre. The organisers also invite the practitioners to do working meditation by helping the temple in doing domestic tasks and keeping concentrated on breathing and mindfulness during such activity.

As stated above, the IDH centre encourages the practitioners to have many meditation postures as Buddhaghosa said regarding the suitable posture which can make the practitioners feel comfortable and ease to practice meditation.⁴³ In addition,

⁴³ Ibid., p.133.

the right kind of posture for a greedy and speculative temperament is either standing or walking. The right kind of posture for the hating temperament is lying down or sitting. A suitable posture for deluded temperament is walking. Therefore, the IDH meditation practice is suitable because it covers sitting, lying, standing and walking meditation which all support the meditation practice for the practitioners who have different temperaments.

3.3.3 Analysis of Result of Interviews

3.3.3.1 Analysis of the Reason why Practitioners Practice Meditation at This Centre

1) The participants want to meditate so they can have mental clarity and a more peaceful life. In addition they also want to get one pointed focus which is also important in their career.

2) Recommendation by friend and family; some practitioners come here because their families or their friends used to attend the retreats here before so they recommend them to attend the retreat here also.

3) Suan Mohhk is very famous and also recommended by the guide book called “Lonely Planet”. Many foreigners search the guide book before visiting Thailand. The guide book recommended that Suan Mohhk is a good place to visit and the IDH retreat is also interesting.

4 Some participants had attended the retreat before, so they wanted to practise here again.

5) The participants come here because they want to travel in Thailand. Most practitioners plan to visit islands in the southern of Thailand such as Phi Phi island, Similan islands, Phangan island and so on before or after the retreat. In addition, they also want to improve themselves and learn more about meditation and Buddhism.

3.3.3.2 Analysis of Result of Meditation

This next section focuses on impressive things about the retreat, benefits or changes after the retreat and meditation experiences during practice at the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH).

3.3.3.2.1 Analysis of Impressive Things about the Retreat

The things that impressed the participants of IDH centre are as follows:

1) The participants were impressed by the volunteers at IDH with their dedication and the kindness of the monks, nuns, and laypeople. The teaching monks and nun also had the ability to meditate for long periods of time which was very impressive and inspiring to the practitioners. They were also impressed about the generosity of the community in being hospitable to foreigners who wanted to learn about Buddhism and meditation.

2) The teachings of the meditation instructors impressed the practitioners because they were able to learn meditation and the Buddha teaching.

3) The nature of the place, the mountains, the animals and the hot spring bring peacefulness of mind.

4) Very good organization and all the teachers are genuine people who have had a lot of meditation experience.

3.3.3.2.2 The Benefits or Changes after the Retreat

The participants had benefits and changes after the retreat as explain below.

1) They were able to learn how to mediate and increased inner calm together with greater awareness of thought and some of them wanted to continue to practice meditation after finishing the retreat.

2) They were able to get out of the negative emotions; some of them felt better and more peaceful. They were very grateful to have learned this meditation technique and to have been able to practice at this centre.

3) The practitioner can apply Dhamma and meditation in everyday life. Meditation makes them calmer and more peaceful so they became able to solve their problems better.

4) They can improve themselves. Some of practitioners wanted to improve themselves with the teachings given at this centre and they later felt more calm, mindful of emotion and feeling.

3.3.3.2.1 Analysis of Meditation Experience

After a ten day retreat at IDH some participants have some meditation experience. Most practitioners feel calm and they can concentrate more. Some practitioners feel some physical change, such as their hair standing-up up or some practitioners cried during meditation when practicing loving kindness meditation. Some of them felt that they could settle their minds and follow the breathing and that this was very uplifting and motivating.

In addition, some practitioners felt two or three times that when they could attain good concentration, they felt very happy and could meditate longer without any move. Sometimes, some practitioners cried because of these new and good emotions.

According to the interview about the meditation experience, it is said that after the practitioners continue meditation until the class is finished, some of them had good progress in meditation practice. Many of them were able to learn how to be calm and they were able to concentrate more.

In summary, the analysis of a suitable environment that support meditation practice at IDH shows that the centre can help the practitioners to avoid the impediments by not allowing books, cell phones, and not allowing them to go out of the areas. In addition, this centre has many factors that support meditation practice which make it a suitable abode. Nevertheless, noises from the nearby community, mosquitoes and insects sometimes disturbed the meditation practice. The centre is also considered as a suitable resort and offers suitable speech by the meditation instructors. However, the silent retreat seems not really appropriate for meditation practice for this sort of group. As regards the analysis of suitable food, it shows that the IDH should have more variety of food for the practitioners. The IDH has suitable persons and offers a suitable climate, especially between January and February. Lastly, the centre proposes adopting suitable postures for the practice of meditation.

Even if there were some problems with factors favourable for meditation practice; the practitioners still received benefits and changed after the retreat as follows. They could learn how to meditate and increase inner calm, a greater awareness of thought and some of them said they would like to continue practice meditation after finishing the retreat. Additionally, they could get rid of negative emotions; some of them felt better and more peaceful. They also were very grateful to have learned this meditation technique and to have been able to come to this centre.

The practitioners can apply Dhamma and meditation lifestyle in everyday life. Meditation makes them calmer and more peaceful so they will know how to solve their problems better in the future. They are better able to improve themselves. Some practitioners wanted to improve themselves with the teachings given at the centre and they felt calmer and more mindful of emotions and feelings.

Next, we shall go on to discuss the final case study undertaken in this research:

3.4 Wat Pah Nanachat

This section explains the background of Wat Pah Nanachat and meditation teaching and, then, presents the factors supporting meditation practice in the analysis of this temple.

3.4.1 Wat Pah Nanachat Background

Wat Pah Nanachat (The International Forest Monastery) is located in Ubon Rachathani province, the Northeast of Thailand about fifteen kilometers from the city of Ubon. In 1975, Ajahn Chah established the monastery to provide a traditional monastic training community for non-Thais. Thaniyo Bhikkhu, a monk at Wat Pah Nanachat said that the purpose was to provide an environment for non Thai speakers to come and learn about monastic life and to develop their meditation and learn about being and becoming a monk.⁴⁴

The monastic community consists of monks, novices and the “pakows” (laymen committed to ordaining as monk) from many countries. English serves as the primary language of communication and instruction. Although Wat Pah Nanachat is not a meditation centre, there are facilities for the practitioners to stay at the monastery and practice with the resident monastic community. The practitioners are expected to follow the daily routine of the monastery and join in with all communal meetings and work activities. In accordance with the traditional monastic environment, emphasis in practice is placed on co-operation, self-sacrifice and communal harmony.

⁴⁴ Jivako Bhikkhu, the monk of Wat Pah Nanachat Interview, 17 May 2009.

The training aims to follow the Dhamma-Vinaya, the teachings and code of monastic discipline as laid-down by the Buddha, respecting both the letter and the spirit. The monastic life encourages development of simplicity, renunciation and quietude. It is a deliberate commitment to this way of life which creates a community environment where people of diverse backgrounds, personalities and temperaments can co-operate in the effort to practice and realize the Buddha's path to liberation.

3.4.1.1 Meditation Teaching

There is no formal meditation teaching at this temple as Thaniyo Bhikkhu, the guest monk at Wat Pah Nanachat said:

The temple does not provide meditation retreats. It is a training monastery for those who wish to live their lives as Buddhist monks. We train "pakows", novice monks and fully-ordained monks. We also provide a meditation environment for lay practitioners, but no unstructured retreats or instruction.

In general, there is no formal meditation teaching in the temple; however, if the practitioners have some question, they can ask the monk here. Furthermore, the practitioners should have attended a meditation retreat before.

3.4.1.2 Meditation Schedule

Wat Pah Nanachat has daily activity as meditation practice and the "pakows" can follow the monk to go out to surrounding villages on alms-round in the morning. The practitioner can sweep the monastery or help in the kitchen. The Dhamma instructions accord with the needs of the community. After the meal the abbot or a senior monk is available to receive visitors and resident guests and answer questions. In general, the practitioners have many hours a day for study and meditation practice on-their-own. The following is the daily schedule of the temple.

3:00 am	Morning Wake-Up Bell
3:30 am	Morning Meeting: Chanting and Meditation
Dawn	Monks go out to surrounding villages on alms-round. The practitioners can sweep the monastery or help in the kitchen.
8:00 am	The Meal
9:00 am	Chores Period
2:00 pm	Group Meditation, one hour (in Rain retreat)
4:30 pm	Afternoon Drink

On the Buddha day (Wan Phra), once a week the community observes a late night vigil, during which time there is the opportunity to discuss aspects of Dhamma practice with one of the senior monks. They have special meditation for the monks, lay people, and the practitioners. The community always goes to the temple and meditates from the evening until 3.00 am.

The following picture presents the meditation on the Wan Phra (Buddha day).



Figure 13: Activity on Wan Phra (Buddha day)

3.4.1.3 Factors Supporting Meditation Retreat

Factors supporting practice at Wat Pah Nanachat such as abode, location, speech, teamwork, food and refreshments, climate, and posture are explained below.

1) Abode

The meditation hall can accommodate about 200 people. However, there are not many practitioners; therefore, this hall is used for chanting and meditating and other religious activities. In addition, residents are separated between male and female. The “pakows” can stay next to the monks’ area, and the females stayed separately. The practitioners have their own room or “kuti.” The following picture presents the residence for the participants at Wat Pah Nanachat.



Figure 14: A residence of Wat Pah Nanachat meditators

This temple is located in the forest area, so it is a suitable place for relaxing and practicing walking meditation. The following picture shows the relaxation area of Wat Pah Nanachat.



Figure 15: Relaxation area

2) Location

This temple is placed in the Northeast of Thailand about fifteen kilometres from the city of Ubon Rachathani, and it is not difficult for monks to walk for alms in the morning.

3) Speech

The temple is not strict and has no silent retreat but the monks and the participants can ask questions of the monks when they need it.

4) Team work

According to Thaniyo Bhikkhu, a guest monk at Wat Pah Nanachat, usually there are about 15 monks in the monastery. Currently they also have three novices and 2 pakows.⁴⁵ However, the number of monks and the practitioners varies depending on the month. During the rains retreat, there are many monks who come to stay here. And in the high season (December to February) more practitioners come to practice here than in the rainy season.

5) Food and Refreshment

⁴⁵ Thaniyo Bhikkhu, the guest monk at Wat Pah Nanachat Interview, 17 May, 2009.

At Wat Pha Nanachat, they have only once meal a day at 8.30 -9.00 am they obtained food from “pindabat” (going out to surrounding villages on an alms-round). The monks usually go for alms beginning at 3.00 am, then, they share the food for all participants. In addition, some lay people visit temple early in the morning for preparing food. Especially on the Buddha holy days, the communities always come to prepare special food for the monks, the “pakows” and all the people who visit the temple. The following picture shows some food from Wat Pah Nanachat.



Figure 16: Food provided at Wat Pah Nanachat

The temple provides refreshment about 4.00 pm such as fruit juice, hot chocolate, or coffee. Sometimes, the community comes to prepare the refreshments for them in the afternoon.

6) Climate

Wat Pha Nanachat is located at Ubon Rachathani province, the Northeast of Thailand, so the weather here is cool in the winter (November to February). In the summer (March-April), it is warm. In the rainy season, it always rains, and a lot of insects come to the residences.

7) Posture

The participants who visit this temple have to have learned how to meditate before they come, and they should be able to do sitting meditation or walking meditation and concentrate on mindfulness of breathing in every activity they do.

3.4.2 Analysis of Wat Pah Nanachat Based on Theravada Buddhism

3.4.2.1 Analysis of Meditation Teaching

This temple has no meditation instructor for meditation practice. However, Wat Pah Nanachat follows the teaching of ānāpānasati (mindfulness of breathing), usually done in conjunction with the mantra “Buddho” according to the method taught by Luang Por Chah. In general there are sixteen stages of practice which can be separated into four groups as follows:

1) Breathing in long, he discerns, “I am breathing in long” or breathing out long, he discerns, “I am breathing out long”.

2) Breathing in short, he discerns, “I am breathing in short”; or breathing out short, he discerns, “I am breathing out short”.

3) He trains himself, “I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.”

4) He trains himself, “I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication”. “He trains himself”, “I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication”.

5) He trains himself, “I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.”

6) He trains himself, “I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.”

7) He trains himself, “I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.”

8) He trains himself, “I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.”

9) He trains himself, “I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.”

10) He trains himself, “I will breathe in satisfying the mind.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out satisfying the mind.”

11) He trains himself, “I will breathe in steadying the mind.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out steadying the mind.”

12) He trains himself, “I will breathe in releasing the mind.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out releasing the mind.”

13) He trains himself, “I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy”. He trains himself, “I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.”

14) He trains himself, “I will breathe in focusing on dispassion (literally, fading).” He trains himself, “I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.”

15) He trains himself, “I will breathe in focusing on cessation.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out focusing on cessation.”

16) He trains himself, “I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.” He trains himself, “I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment”.⁴⁶

It is recommended that the teaching of this temple is developed by the first and second steps by breathing long and short. In addition, the teaching monks teach the mantra “Buddho” or breath-in used “Bud” and breath-out used “Dho”. In addition, it also uses the concept of Mindfulness of the body (kāyanupassanā), following the basic concepts of the Four Foundation of Mindfulness (satipatthāna).

3.4.2.1 Analysis of Beneficial Factors for the Meditation Retreat

1) Analysis of a Suitable Abode (āvāsa-sappāya)

The temple is suitable abode; for example the beautiful area and forest environment makes the practitioner feel fresh, relaxed, and calm. The meditation hall

⁴⁶ MN 118.

can accommodate about 100-200 people. It is also used for chanting and meditation and other religious activities. In addition, there are separate residences for males and females. The “pakow” stayed near the monks’ area and the females stayed separately. Practitioners usually stay privately. They have their own room or “kuti.” which is comfortable; nevertheless, at some of residences the area was seen to be messy and there were many insects and mosquitoes, snakes, other creatures and animals in the area. Some insects hurt the practitioners when they were staying in their residences.

2) Analysis of a Suitable Resort (gocara-sappāya)

The analysis of the suitable resort found that Wat Pah Nanachat is located fifteen kilometres from the city of Ubon Rachathani, so it is not difficult for monks to walk to villages nearby for alms in the morning and the temple had all necessary facilities. The temple used to be quiet and far from the community but now the rural community is expanding, close to the temple. There are many people who live around the temple and this gives the feeling that this forest temple could soon be changed into a city temple.

3) Analysis of Suitable Speech (bhassa-sappāya)

The analysis of the suitable speech shows the temple was not strict and did not require a silent retreat; the participants were able to ask questions of the monks, when they needed to, but talking only about the Dhamma and the meditation practice. In addition, the teaching monks talk in accordance with the ten types of conversation which are forms of suitable speech (bhassasappaya). On the other hand, the meditation monks do not talk using unsuitable speech or aimless talk (tiracchānakathā) which disturbs the meditation practice.

4) Analysis of Suitable Persons (puggala sappāya)

The analysis of suitable person found that the abbot, the guest monk, and other staff were very nice, and they are good friends or kalyānamit. They were very kind, generous and helpful. They appreciated helping people and taught Dhamma and meditation practice to those who were interested. They also gave many instructions in

the form of Dhamma books, CDs for the visitors and the practitioners without any charge.

5) Analysis of Suitable Food (bhojana-sappāya)

The analysis of food and refreshment at this temple shows that the monks and practitioners had only one meal a day about 8.30-9.00 am in order to be moderate in eating. They obtained food from walking an alms-round (pindabat). The monks always go for alms beginning at 3.00 am and then when they come back, they share food for all participants and laypeople. In addition, there were some laypeople who visited temples in the morning to prepare food for monks and the meditators and other people who visit there. The temple also provides refreshment, about 4.00 pm, in the afternoon, such as fruit juice or some hot chocolate or some coffee. Sometimes, the people from the community come to prepare the refreshments for them in the afternoon. The food and refreshments were of very good quality because the community provides the best food for the monks when they go on alms rounds. In addition, there was a variety of foods; therefore, the practitioners could select suitable food for themselves.

6) Analysis of a Suitable Climate (utu-sappāya)

The analysis of the suitable climate found that the temple is located in the Northeast of Thailand, so the weather here is cool in the winter (November to February). The summer (March-April) is warm. In the rainy season, it usually rains so, many insects come to the residences. In general, the practitioners usually come to practice meditation and monastic rules in winter. According to Thaniyo Bhikkhu, the guest monk at Wat Pah Nanachat said that, usually, there were about 15 monks in the monastery. At that time, there were also three novices and two pakows.⁴⁷ However,

⁴⁷ Thāniyo Bhikkhu, the guest monk at Wat Pah Nanachat Interview, 17 May, 2009.

the number of monks and the practitioners varied depending on the month. During the rains retreat, there are many monks who come to stay here. And in the high season (December to February) practitioners come to practice here more than in the rainy season. This information showed that the suitable climate for foreign practitioners is the winter. However, in general the climate at this temple is not too warm and not too hot, so it is suitable for practitioners.

7) Analysis of a Suitable Posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya)

The analysis of the suitable posture showed that the participants who visit this temple should have learned how to meditate before they come, so they could do sitting meditation and walking meditation and concentrate on mindfulness of breathing in every activity they do. In addition, they can practice meditation while working; for example, when they clean the temple and so forth.

3.4.3 Analysis of Results of Interviews

3.4.3.1 Analysis of the Reasons why the Practitioners Practise Meditation at this Centre

- 1) The temple provides the good monastic training and the discipline is tight.
- 2) Many practitioners come here because of recommendation from friends who used to practice at Wat Pah Nanachat.
- 3) There are many participants who visit the temple because of the guide book and due to information from the Internet.
- 4) They would like to free their minds, practice meditation and monastic training.
- 3) Many practitioners want to ordain as a Buddhist monks here.
- 4) They admire Venerable Lung Por Cha and his disciples who also inspire people to come to practice Wat Pah Nanachat.

3.4.3.2 Analysis of Result of Meditation

This section focuses on impressive things about the retreat, benefits or changes after the retreat and meditation experiences during practice at Wat Pha Nanachat.

3.4.3.2.1 Analysis of Impressive Things about the Retreat

- 1) The practitioners were impressed with the discipline and order of the temple.
- 2) The serious community that always supports the temple and a great environment which the pakows appreciated.
- 3) The quality of silence in the temple, in the forest and in the air make the practitioners calm and concentrated.
- 4) The practitioners are inspired by the monks and staff at Wat Pah Nanachat. They all have many admirable qualities and most are really striving for the goal. In addition, the practitioners also feel impressed with the monks because they practiced meditation hard and worked hard.
- 5) Those interviewed were all impressed with the food which was very delicious and also impressed with the community support that came here in the morning to help prepare the food.

3.4.3.2.2 Analysis of Benefits or Changes after the Retreat

1) They understand the way a monk lives, with virtue, mindfulness and wisdom. They also have better understanding of monastic life as taught by the Buddha and how Sila helps the development of Samadhi.

2) The practitioners learn the true peace that comes from learning to understand themselves and the entire world, in accordance with the true characteristics of nature.

3) They had peaceful minds and they also felt calm and peacefulness.

3.4.3.2.2 Analysis of Meditation Experiences

1) The participants can purify mind, some of them feel that that it was the most important experience in their lives. It made their lives easier and they found a realm in which to purify mind and body. Many were able to clarify their egos inside and realized that anything they did was wrong, and they wanted to change to make their behaviour better.

2) Some participants were able to meditate longer; some of them could do meditation for nearly two hours in lotus position without any movement.

3) Some participants had sensations in the chest - some kind of warm, nice feeling. After the mantra “Buddho” had gone, they felt concentration and warmth and happiness and clear in mind.

According to the information gathered, it is said that the practitioner can proceed in meditation practice; however, the practitioners practice meditation at this temple in difference period. In addition, there are not many practitioners who practice as “pakow”. It is possible that, the longer they practice meditation, the better the meditation proceeded.

3.5 Comparative Conclusion

We shall now, finally, compare the four meditation centers discussed in this study: first, the study of the Vipassanā Meditation Centre at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), Bangkok, shows that it uses techniques based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as described in the Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta. For the foreign participants, the centre focuses on mindfulness of body and feeling because the other teachings are too complicated for most visitors. However, if the practitioners do have meditation experience, the instructors can give them more in-depth explanations. In general, most practitioners visit this centre because of recommendations from guide books such as “Lonely Planet”.

Secondly, the Middle Way Meditation Retreat uses “Meditation Devices” called the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa) to teach the practitioners. Moreover, a sign (the mental object) such as a crystal sphere is used instead of using the light in a hole and the mantra used is “Sammā Arahaṃ” or “Bright and Clear” for non-Buddhists. Most practitioners find out about this meditation retreat by searching on the Internet at <www.meditationthai.org> and by word of mouth.

Thirdly, the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) focuses on mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati). For foreigners, IDH focuses on mindfulness of breathing steps one to four only, because they think that the other steps are too complicated for new visitors. Most practitioners hear about this centre through guide books such as “Lonely Planet” and through magazines such as “The National Geographic”.

Fourthly, Wat Pah Nanachat (WPN) is the International Forest Monastery in Warin Chamrap, Ubon Ratchathani province, in the Northeast of Thailand. At this temple, no single meditation technique predominates. However, mindfulness of breathing forms the basis for most formal meditation. This temple is primarily a training centre for foreigners who are preparing to take ordination. Most practitioners hear about this temple through guide books.

In addition, the comparative study of favourable factors at these retreats is shown in the following table.

Favourable Factors for Retreats	Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5)	MDW	IDH	WPN
Suitable Abode	×	1/2	×	1/2
Suitable Resort	×	✓	✓	✓
Suitable Speech	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suitable Person	✓	✓	✓	1/2
Suitable Food	✓	✓	×	✓
Suitable Climate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suitable Posture	✓	1/2	✓	✓
Summary	5/7	6/7	5/7	6/7

Table 3: Comparative study of favourable factors of the retreats

Table 3 presents the comparative study of favourable factors at these retreats.

First, the analysis of Vipassanā Meditation Centre at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) shows that the centre has a good instructor/suitable person (puggala sappāya) or kalyānamitta - and it provides suitable food (bhojana-sappāya). The centre also teaches walking and sitting meditation which are both suitable postures (iriyāpatha-sappāya). Nevertheless, this centre has some disadvantages such as unsuitable abode and unsuitable location because it has not enough space-area for all practitioners, and it is located too close to the city.

Second, the Middle Way Meditation Retreat has suitable abode (*āvāsa-sappāya*), suitable resort (*gocara-sappāya*), suitable speech (*bhassa-sappāya*), suitable person (*puggala sappāya*), suitable-food (*bhojana-sappāya*). The centre does not teach walking meditation but encourages the practitioners to keep their minds focussed at the centres of their bodies instead. In addition, sometimes there is some disturbing noise from the community in the mornings.

Third, the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) had a suitable abode (*āvāsa-sappāya*), and suitable instructors (*puggala sappāya*). However, there is some noise from the neighbouring area which makes it an unsuitable location. Furthermore, some rules are too strict such as its being a silent retreat and it provides only Thai and vegetarian food which sometimes is too spicy for foreigners. As a result, about 10 to 30 percent of the practitioners frequently quit the course before the end.

Fourth, the analysis of factors supporting practice at Wat Pah Nanachat (WPN) shows that this temple is a suitable abode and provides suitable food even if only one meal a day. However, many insects, in the rainy season, make it difficult to stay in the temple at that time. Furthermore, there is no formal meditation teaching. Practitioners have to ask the teaching monk questions if they do not understand the meditation practices.

In summary, the result of all meditation interviews shows that these centres have some problems but that the practitioners can proceed and gain benefits from these meditation practices. Furthermore, it is difficult to compare these retreats because they are located in different areas, the periods and the length of the retreats are different and so are the backgrounds of the practitioners.

Chapter IV

Suitable Models of Meditation Retreats for Foreigners

This chapter presents suitable models for meditation centres at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), the Middle Way Meditation Retreat, the International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), and Wat Pah Nanachat. The analyses of these meditation centres are based on the SWOT analysis, an important tool to evaluate the overall strategic position of an organization and its environment. Appropriate models for each centre are proposed. In addition, the guidelines of general models for meditation retreats in Thailand are explained.

4.1 Suitable Model for Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) Meditation Centre

4.1.1 SWOT Analysis of Wat Mahādhātu, (Section 5)

SWOT is an abbreviation for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths are characteristics of the meditation centre or team that give it an advantage over the others. Weaknesses are characteristics that place the retreat centre at a disadvantage relative to others. Opportunities are external opportunities to take advantage of the environment. Threats are external elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the meditation centres. The SWOT analysis of Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5) is shown in the following items.

4.1.1.1 Analysis of Strengths

1) The centre has a good meditation instructor as a suitable person (puggala sappāya) and a as good friend (kalyānamitta) who has a good knowledge of the Dhamma and has meditation teaching experience. Their teachings are clear and their lectures are very interesting and helpful. In addition, the teacher monks are very kind and generous. Therefore, many foreign practitioners are impressed with the instructor, so they always visit and practice meditation at this centre.

2) The section 5 of Wat Mahādhātu is located in the centre of Bangkok; therefore, it is easily accessible. The practitioners or the guests can come by boat or bus. It also located in tourist area, so it is easy for foreigners to visit the centre.

3) The centre has good accommodation and good facilities and a nice location which is suitable for the small group of practitioners.

4) The centre provides suitable food and refreshment.

5) The centre is a famous centre which has been teaching meditation for more than 50 years. The centre is very popular for both Thai and foreigners, so it can attract many practitioners to practice meditation at this centre.

6) The meditation retreat has a regular schedule. The centre opens every day and it is easy for visitors to participate in the program.

7) The programme is free of charge. Food and refreshments as well as accommodation are free. It also welcomes all practitioners who are interested in meditation practice.

4.1.1.2 Analysis of Weaknesses

1) There are many people who visit the centre, so there is some noise disturbance for the meditation practice. Furthermore, the centre has not enough space for many practitioners when both Thais and non-Thais practice meditation at the same

time. In addition, sometimes there is not enough accommodation for many practitioners.

- 2) There are not enough mentors or teacher assistants at the centre.
- 3) Not good management and no planning for the retreats.
- 4) The website of the centre is not updated.

4.1.1.3 Analysis of Opportunities

1) Wat Mahādhātu has been promoted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). It is also recommended in guide books such as “Lonely Planet” which attract many international visitors to the centre. They usually use the guide books to search for places to visit. “Lonely planet” is the most famous guide book and provides free advertising for the centre. For these reasons, of the many foreign practitioners, who attended the meditation retreats at this centre, almost all were recommended to come by the guide book.

2) The centre is located right in Wat Mahādhātu, and so it can offer other attractions such as Buddhist ceremonies, blessing, daily services and work details that some foreigners are interested in.

3) The teacher monk is often interviewed by foreign newspapers, so that makes many foreigners interested in visiting the centre.

4) There are many websites which recommend that Wat Mahādhātu (section5) as a good meditation retreat centre; therefore, many foreigners who usually search for information on the Internet find it attractive and want to visit the centre.

4.1.1.4 Analysis of Threats

1) The centre is located near Sanamluang, where there are sometimes demonstrations so it may scare away participants and make it difficult to manage the retreat during protests. Furthermore, because the centre is close to the tourist area and

the market that tempts some participants to want to go out during the retreat and so they lose concentration. It is difficult to find peace.

2) Respiratory infection such as the “Flu 2009” made some potential visitors avoid Bangkok which caused a decline in the number of meditators.

3) In the rainy season, sometimes, there is heavy rain which makes it inconvenient to visit the centre for meditation, so foreign practitioners do not usually visit the temple in the rainy season.

4) The limited number of volunteers restricts the centre’s expansion and growth.

4.1.2 Suggestion Model for Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5)

1) The centre should develop more suitable persons (*puggala sappāya*) or good friends (*kalyānamitta*) and should have many good meditation instructors who know both practice and theory in English. They should have a human resources development and training for monks, staff and volunteers. For example, the centre can start training the volunteer monks from the temple first. Then it should create a program to ordain foreigners who come meditate in the temple. It can start from a small group of foreigners who visit the temple first. Then, if they love the monkhood, they can ordain and become meditation instructors.

2) The centre is famous. There are many practitioners who come to visit and practice meditation here. For this reason, the centre has not enough space to for both Thai and non-Thai practitioners to practice at the same time, so it needs a new, larger building and better facilities. In addition, the centre should develop more accommodation for women because facilities are sometimes too crowded. The other suggestion is that the centre should manage the meditation retreat schedule by organizing different times for Thais and foreigners. The practitioners should book the course before they stay in the temple. In addition, if many practitioners come to

practice meditation, the centre should prohibit foreigners who only want to stay in the temple for free without practicing meditation or taking eight precepts.

3) They should have separate classes for practitioners who just want to sightsee, for beginners who want to learn about meditation and for experienced students who have practiced meditation before.

4) They should be stricter on the rules of the retreat such as keeping silence by and banning cell phones during meditation practice. In addition, the centre should emphasize correct dress, especially for women who should wear brassieres and should not wear short pants.

5) More publicity and donations are needed from people so that air conditioning, a new building and sleeping areas can be built. Therefore, the centre should explain to foreigners about donations for accommodation, food and the facilities or mention a minimum-donation for the retreats because some foreigners do not understand the concept of donations.

6) The centre should develop and update the website. It should have more advertising, especially on the Internet and a booking-facility so that people from around the world can book a retreat.

4.1.3 Evaluation and Feedback of Developed Model

Phra Rajsitthimuni, the vice abbot of Wat Mahādhātu, who is in charge of the meditation centre, agrees with the suggestions. Now the temple does not have many instructors who can speak English and such instructors are difficult to find. The temple has no training system for the teacher monks yet. He also explained that in the future, if the temple had no teacher monks who can speak English, it had to set-up training, which should starting from the monks in this temple, although this would be difficult because there were not many monks in the temple (about 50 monks). Furthermore, there were few monks interested in practicing English. However, the

temple's management team would find some volunteer monks, and, then, they would teach them English, together with meditation training. He planned to start the training about the end of that year. He would teach by himself starting with monks at this temple first. It is like "Dhammaduta" (Buddhist missionary). They trained for meditation practice and English. However, it still difficult to find persons who have both meditation skills and English proficiency. Nevertheless, he would set-up the training.¹

For accommodation, he said that the temple already had planned to built a big building for meditation and have a better facility with an air conditioned room, and he also set the booking system for the retreat. The problem of the noise from cell phones disturbing the retreat could easily be solved by t turning off cell phones during the meditation retreat.

He also agreed that the centre should go public in Internet, and it should train people who are in charge of this. However, it was difficult to find monks who can develop a website. For advertising, normally the temple would not do it; however, the practitioners still attend the retreat without advertising.

4.2 Analysis of the Middle Way Meditation Retreat

4.2.1 SWOT Analysis

4.2.1.1 Analysis of Strengths

1) The Middle Way Meditation Retreat is located in a suitable location in the midst of rolling hills and mountainous scenery of Phu Ruea, Loei province. It is not too large and not too crowded with few people. In addition, it has good facilities and

¹ Phra Rajsitthimuni, the vice abbot of Wat Mahādhātu interview. (19 July2010).

the accommodations are built for supporting group of practitioners in order to make them feel comfortable and protect them from noise and insects.

2) The centre has experience, through organizing meditation retreats for Thais for more than 30 years. It also applies the concept of “sappāya seven” to the retreat such as nice residence, good food, and good teamwork. Additionally, the centre’s professional team has a lot of experience. The team leader has an open mind to new ideas which makes the retreat appropriate for foreigners. In addition, most of the staff can speak English. The organizers understand everyone’s needs as well and the teamwork creates an atmosphere in which the participants become happy, joyous and free.

3) The meditation instructors teach simple meditation teaching which is very easy for the meditators to understand. The program includes some basic information about Buddhism to help participants understand meditation. Therefore, the practitioners can proceed in meditation.

4) The centre provides suitable food and refreshments with nutritious and tasty food; therefore, the practitioners can choose suitable food for them.

5) The meditation program is suitable for the participants. In addition, the course is free to people of all nationalities, religions and beliefs. The centre harmoniously brings together people of different ages, nationalities, backgrounds and beliefs

4.2.1.2 Analysis of Weaknesses

1) The “Suan Pa Himmawan” at Phu Ruea, Loei province can accommodate about 200 people. However, it is not suitable when both Thai groups and foreign groups come to meditate, at the same time. Therefore, it is too crowded and noisy when there are too many practitioners. Furthermore, some facilities such as rooms and

chairs and the toilet facilities should be improved. In addition, clearer instructions should be made available on how to find the centre.

2) There are too few human resources. The staff may not be numerous enough to support the program due to its being offered in English. In addition, there are no new trained personnel to replace the personnel that leave.

3) There is sometimes too much talking among the meditators during the retreats and sometimes telephones ring, disturbing meditation.

4) Taking pictures and video during the meditation retreat sometimes disturbs meditation.

4.2.1.3 Analysis of Opportunities

1) The centre main website, www.meditationthai.org and the support website such as www.dmc.tv are easy to understand and search-out information. Therefore the practitioners can book the course on-line.

2) There are many recommendations from friends and family who use to practice here, so they then invite their relatives and friends to practice meditation at this centre.

3) The Middle Way Meditation Retreat has been placed in the top three of all international retreats world-wide.² Therefore, many practitioners have learned about the retreat before they apply for the course.

4) This centre can set-up meditation practices in many countries which have Dhammakaya temple branches. As a result, the temple plans to expand to 208 counties in 2011, so the Middle Way Meditation Retreat can also set meditation programme in those countries.

² Travel+ Leisure. **10 Top Meditation Retreats**. (on-line). source: <http://www.travelandleisure.com>, (1 January 2010).

4.2.1.4 Analysis of Threats

1) Political and economical instability in Thailand affected the attitudes of practitioners. For example, visitors chose to attend retreats in other countries, because of political and economical instability in Thailand was creating a bad reputation for the country.

2) In the rainy season, there are many insects in the centre, and it annoys participants.

3) Sounds and noises from the surroundings and the community always disturb the retreat in the morning.

4.2.2 Suggested Model for the Middle Way Meditation Retreat

1) The centre should find a more appropriate location. It should have private meditation areas because sometimes the retreat centre has to share the meditation area with Thai groups. So the site is too crowded, and it is difficult to stay quietly. In addition, the retreat centre should separate the schedule for Thai and foreign programmes, so the centre would not be too crowded during meditation. Besides, the retreat should have clearer instructions on the exact location of the centre.

2) The centre should improve online technology and make it more public. Then, the centre can ask participants to recommend it to their friends to practice meditation at this centre.

3) In addition, advertising is needed to increase the number of participants and give access to all people. For example, they should give more pictures to the participants by using Facebook or emailing materials to them. People could then see meditation practice on Facebook.

4) The centre should increase supplementary programs such as health care with meditation. It should offer more languages, not only English at the retreat. In

addition, the centre should offer meditation retreats more often, and it should open retreats in the other countries.

5) The centre should offer consistent training for staff members as a career path. Both monks and lay people should receive more intensive meditation training.

6) More and better visual aids are needed to support presentations.

7) It should provide English – Pāli translation in the chanting book and give some basic guidelines of how to read Pāli

8) The centre should add a map of the meeting-point to help participants to go there easily.

4.2.3 Evaluation and Feedback of Developed Model

The team leader of the Middle Way Meditation Retreat explained that he agreed that the retreat centre should have an appropriate separate location for the foreigner retreats. He also explained that, according to the Middle Way Retreat year plan, when the centre gets more than 50 foreign practitioners for each retreat, it could use the area of “Suan Pa Himmawan” without sharing it with Thai groups. It would also be good if the centre could find another place for small groups. The organizers said they would research that further.

In addition, the facility at the retreat such as the meditation room was fixed already with new air-conditioning that had less noise and a new sound system to help the acoustics in the room. The centre totally agreed that it should upgrade toilet facilities and would work on that. Regarding the chanting book, there are some basic guidelines of how to read Pāli at the back but the section may be too short.

According to the suggestion that the retreat should have clearer instructions regarding the exact location, The Middle Way Meditation Retreat organizers explained that they had already added map in the website to help direct participants to go to the meeting point. However, , the retreat centre do not have a map of Phu Reua

or directions to Phu Ruea because the practitioners will go together by bus to Phu Ruea, anyway, and it was not recommended for people to go there by themselves because it was too far and the participants might get easily lost.

The organizers agreed with the recommendation that the retreat had not enough human resources and the centre had already planned to provide training to increase the number of volunteers to help them, full-time or part-time.

Regarding the comment that there are too many talking and chatting among the fellow meditators, the organizers explained that it was quite hard for the centre to use Noble Silence retreat. But the centre taught people about moderation in speaking and talks only for essential things. For promotion, the retreat centre is working more on both public relations and Internet and using new media such as Facebook, Hi5, and other social networks to help spread the words. In addition, the centre agreed that the retreat should have more and better visual aids to support the presentation and are now working towards the comments

The retreat centre also offers the Middle Way Retreat in Chinese and Japanese every year. However, it is not arranged like the English one. The retreat is working to increase more retreats, with different languages offered. At this time, the centre has Middle Way retreats in almost every continent; in South Africa, USA, Europe, Australia and also Japan. The retreat centre agrees that its people should receive more intensive meditation training, and is working towards these commitments. In addition, the retreat centre normally minimizes photo taking to only one session in one day for photos taken in the meditation room. They also respect the time to meditate.

Regarding the comment that the centre should bring monks closer to dialogue with participants, the centre normally has group sharing activities two times during the retreat with monks and mentors discussing with participants, and teaching monks and mentors also talked to participants outside the meditation room quite often.

4.3 Analysis of International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH)

4.3.1 SWOT Analysis

4.3.1.1 Analysis of Strengths

1) The centre has suitable persons such as good teaching monks and the staff are very kind.

2) It is well-organized and in a remote setting, which makes participants want to visit this centre. In addition, teaching and practicing are well-structured in regard to the methods and presentation of ideas.

3) The centre has a suitable area such as a hot springs, mountains, ponds and it has very nice open atmosphere suitable for meditation.

4) The retreat programme encourages the practitioners to be health mentally and physically and improve in meditation.

5) The yoga class is great for people who never sit on the floor.

4.3.1.2 Analysis of Weaknesses

1) There are many mosquitoes, insects, some snakes that disturb the practitioners.

2) The wooden pillow is too high for some practitioners.

3) There are strict rules; therefore, some practitioners cannot follow them. For instance, some of them do not keep silent and about 10-30 percent leave the retreat before the program finished

4) Because of the language, sometimes it is difficult to follow and to concentrate, and it is a silent retreat, the participants cannot ask if they do not understand. It makes some participants confused and some sleepy.

5) The food sometimes is too spicy for some participants, so they have only eaten rice without anything with it.

6) The pollution of water and air because of the burning of plastic in the place disturbed the practitioners.

4.3.1.3 Analysis of Opportunities

1) When Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) promotes tourism in Surat Thani province, people also come to attend the retreat here.

2) TV programs such as “The National Geographic” went to interview the monk at IDH which made people from around the world know about this retreat centre and attend it.

3) Guide books such as “Lonely Planet” also recommend Suan Mohkkh and the IDH meditation retreat, so many practitioners come because of recommendations.

4) The IDH centre located at Surat Thani province which has many famous islands; therefore, many tourists who want to go to the beach and driving come to visit the retreat before or after their travels in the islands.

4.3.1.4 Analysis of Threats

1) Political and economy, flooding, infectious flu, and threat of war cause practitioners to avoid Thailand.

2) Noise from the neighbours such as radio broadcasts in the villages, restaurants, and the train station make it difficult for practitioners to concentrate.

3) The rainy season with heavy rain makes the practitioners feel uncomfortable about meditating and flooding in the south of Thailand also made some foreigners change their plans and not attend the retreat.

4.3.2 Suggested Model for International Dhamma Hermitage

1) The retreat centre should develop the area around the centre in order to make the retreat a suitable location because there was too much noise and temptation to stray to town or go shopping. For example, the radio broadcast in the surrounding community and music from the restaurants could reduce the volume. Furthermore, the centre should develop a good relationship with the community in the nearby area and explain to them why the retreat needs silence. In the meantime, the IDH centre should set-up a meditation room which is sound-proof from the noise outside. Also, an air conditioned room with a curtain could also reduce the noise from the outside area.

2) To develop suitable persons to be good meditation instructors and good volunteers, the retreat centre should set-up a training program for them in order to have more effective resources to help manage the retreat.

3) The retreat can develop suitable speech and suitable Dhamma teaching by separating the Dhamma topics by the instructors because multiple speakers on one single topic can be confusing, especially for those new to this practice. Perhaps if there were only one speaker allocated to a specific area, then it might be easier for beginners to follow.

In addition, the centre should set the topic for the course and set the Dhamma topic for each instructor. The instructors should schedule meetings and update what they already taught and make a record, so the teaching will be more effective and the practitioners can understand the teaching better.

4) The practitioners need more instruction on meditation because many of them have never done it before. The practitioners said that although it may be simple for the one who had experience before, it was all new to them. In addition, for non-native English speakers, sometimes, it was hard to understand the teaching of some monks. It would be good to provide some previous information in handouts.

5) The practitioners felt disappointing at seeing how people leave the place so soon. In every course about 10-30 person left the retreat before it finished. The retreat centre should strictly inform on guest's arriving. In addition, they should separate classes of the beginners, non-beginners and advanced practice. For example, they can set the introduction to meditation course for e tourists or backpackers who want to try the challenge and want to know how meditation is for three or five days. This course should not be too strict or too long. Next, the ten days retreat should be set-up for those who have already past the introduction course. For practitioners who usually practice at IDH for many times, they should set-up an advanced meditation retreat for them or set-up an ordination program. Furthermore, the centre should set-up the retreats in other provinces. In addition, it should have more testimonials about the retreat such as on the website.

4.3.3 Evaluation and Feedback of Developed Model

The team leader of the IDH centre explained that for the problem of noise and temptations in the surrounding, the retreat centre agreed that it should cultivate a good relationship with the surrounding community. The centre already had a plan to invite the leaders of the communities to meditate and made them understand what the retreat centre does.

As for the suggestion that the retreat centre should set-up a training program for the instructors and staff to have more resources to set the retreat, the centre agreed with this and already had asked visitors who used to attend the Dhammamata retreats to become staff members. However, the retreat did not want many staff members, but it wants quality resources.

In addition, for non-native English speakers it was sometimes difficult to understand the teaching of some monks. For this reason, the centre emphasizes that instructors should speak slowly and clearly. For the instruction on meditation, the

retreat centre had no policy to make a program such as PowerPoint presentation or use any paper. Nonetheless, the retreat centre has meditation guide books and some related documents in the office, which if the practitioners wanted to read they could ask for at the retreat office. In addition, sometimes the multiple speakers for a single topic can be confusing, especially for those new to this practice. For this reason, the retreat centre already told the instructors to manage the teaching.

As the practitioners felt disappointed to see how people left the place earlier so they had recommended that the retreat centre should inform retreatants on arriving on the first day orientation, that if the practitioners felt uncomfortable or they could not follow the rules, that they could leave the retreat. However, the centre had no policy to expand other branches for the meditation retreats: however, they said that if anyone or any meditation centre would like to do a retreat and follow this tradition, they could do it without any problem of copyright.

Regarding the suggestion that the retreats should set-up a meditation retreat for non-beginners and advanced practice, the centre had already done it although it had the problem of lacking enough the human resources and the centre was lacking enough qualified mediation instructors and staff.

For the testimonials about the retreat such as may be found on the website, the retreat agrees with this and already has the staff to develop such a website for the retreat.

4.4 Analysis of Wat Pah Nanachat

4.4.1 SWOT analysis

4.4.1.1 Analysis of Strengths

1) There is suitable place for meditation with a high quality of silence in the temple, in the forest, in the air, and it in isolation from society.

2) There are suitable persons such as an abbot and guest monks and other monks who are very nice and they can help and answer the Dhamma questions of the practitioners to concentrate their mind.

3) They have self-discipline; therefore, the practitioners would also like to practice the monastic rules and learn Thai culture, together with meditation and living a monastic life.

4) The schedule is not too timed-consuming, so the practitioners can have private time to practice meditation by themselves.

5) The temple is famous, so many foreigners want to visit and practice meditation and prepare for ordain there.

6) There was suitable food and refreshment which was delicious, healthy and various types of food suitable for each practitioners.

4.4.1.2 Analysis of Weakness

1) The lack of formal meditation instruction or guidance. .

2) Women residences are not conveniently located. Sometimes, in the rainy season, the accommodation area is messy with tree leaves and broken equipment, and they have no light on the way to go for morning chanting at 3.00 am.

3) No first aid for the practitioners who get sick.

4) The temple's website is not updated.

5) The temple has no formal meditation teachings or guidelines for the practitioners.

4.4.1.3 Analysis of Opportunities

1) More people come because of the recommendation from friends and by word-of-mouth.

2) Many books, such as "Lonely Planet", contain the life story of Luang Phor Cha and mention this temple making many visitors want to visit there.

3) The information from Internet makes many people come visits the temple and meditate there.

4.4.2.4 Analysis of Threat

1) Lack of instructors and staff.

2) Increasing contact with the materialistic and sensual culture of the modern world can distract young monastics from their aspiration to cultivate the path to overcome all suffering.

3) City and town coming closer to the temple.

4) In the rainy season, many insects in the temple that disturb for the practitioners.

4.4.3 Suggestion Model for Wat Pah Nanachat

1) The temple should develop more suitable persons such as more senior monks or meditation instructors in charge for many years. If there were a larger number of a very experienced, senior monks in residence, here, it would be of benefit.

2) The temple should have scheduled group meditation for lay people.

3) The temple should have more contacts between monks and lay people.

4) It should update and develop more websites.

5) The temple should do public relations to promote or advertise the temple's ordination information.

6) There are many people interested in practicing meditation here, it will be better if the temple set-up a schedule for the meditation retreats, such as meditation programs for beginners and for women.

7) Sometimes, in the rainy season, the accommodation area is messy with the tree leaves, and broken equipment. It will be good if the temple staff and volunteers can fix some broken equipment and clean and clear that area.

8) The temple should brief those interested about the meditation teaching or give a guide line for the practitioners on the first day that they get to the temple.

4.4.4 Evaluation and Feedback of Developed Model

1) The temple organizers agreed that they should have more senior monks or the meditation instructors or an abbot to stay for many years. However, it was difficult to find human resources, especially the abbot or the leader of all temple projects. Normally, in this temple, the abbot or the leader would change every five years, so it was not easy and take time to develop people who could speak in fluent Thai.

2) The temple had the scheduled for an ordination program but had no policy to set-up group meditation for the lay people.

3) The temple had already set the time for answering questions for the practitioners.

4) The temple agreed that it should update and develop the website. However, they lacked the human resources who could update information regularly.

5) The temple had no policy to do public relations to promote or advertise the temple's ordination information. The temple wanted people come here for ordination and not just come for travelling.

6) It was good idea to provide the meditation program for women but the temple had no human resources or nuns who can be in charge of this.

7) The temple had not many monks and they were busy with Dhamma study and helping with the temple work, so they could not fix or clean all of the accommodation area. The temple needed volunteers to do this and in the rainy season

there were rarely volunteers or practitioners, so some areas were not suitable for staying during meditation.

8) The temple had no policy to teach meditation but it prepared for ordination. There was no formal meditation teaching here. However, the teaching monks could give advice for practitioners. For practitioners who had never meditated before, the temple recommend them to go visit Suan Mohhk or others meditation retreat to learn basic meditation before coming here.

4.5 Guideline Models for Meditation Retreats for Foreigner in Thailand

According to the result of interview and SWOT analysis, it is recommended that the guideline models for meditation retreats should be divided into different levels: visitor centre, beginners, intermediates, and model for advanced level.

4.5.1 Guideline Model for Visitor Centre

Model for visitor centre is suitable for the temples or meditation retreats that usually have many tourists visiting and who want to observe the meditation practice but are not ready to attend a meditation retreat, such as in Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), Bangkok, Suan Mokkh, Wat Pah Nanachat, Wat Kow Tham International Centre, Wat Phradhatu Doi Suthep, and so forth.

The visitor centres should separate the area between the visitors and the practitioners who attend the meditation retreat, so, they will not disturb each other. In addition, the centres should set a time schedule for meditation guide line. For example:

9.00 -10.00	Introduction to meditation
10.00- 10.30	Meditation Practice
10.30-11.00	Questions - Answers

The centres should set the specific time separately from the general meditation practice, so it will not disturb the other practitioners.

During this introductory session, the centres can also give information about the other meditation programs and some brief information for practitioners who want to attend the other meditation retreats for beginners or intermediates.

4.5.2 Guideline Model for Beginners

The model for beginners' or new students is suitable for non-Thais and non-Buddhists or those who have never practiced meditation before and want to learn the basic meditation practice. The duration of the course should be three to seven days. The course should offer structured periods of meditation throughout the day with the meditation master or the teaching monks giving instructions on meditation for new students.

4.5.2.1 Meditation Retreat Schedule

This course should set a schedule for basic meditation teaching. It should set a personal guide for meditation, including exercises for stretching their body of the practitioners, and so on. An example meditation schedule for the new students is below:

4.30 - 05.00	Wake up
05.30	Meditation practice
06.15	Morning Exercise
07.00	Breakfast
09.00	Meditation Instruction
09.30	Meditation Practice
11.00	Lunch

12.30	Personal time
14.00	Basic Dhamma Teaching
15.00	Meditation Practice or Walking Meditation (Up to the retreat)
16.00	Personal Time / Private meditation interview
17.30	Refreshments
19.00	Basic Dhamma Teaching
20.00	Meditation practice
21.00	Personal Time

4.5.2.2 Factor Favourable for Beginners

The most appropriate location for beginner course should have a forest environment or be near a natural environment with little noise. However, if the centres or the temples are located in the city, the air conditioning room can help to reduce noise from the neighbouring area and set the appropriate temperature for foreigners. In addition, the accommodation should be appropriate to the number of practitioners. If there are too many candidates whom the centres cannot accommodate, they should separate groups for meditation retreats in the other sites (if they have any); otherwise, let the practitioners apply for the next retreat.

The retreat centres do not need to force the practitioners to do silent retreat; however, it should inform them to talk on suitable subjects such as on the Dhamma or meditation. They should be allowed to ask Dhamma questions or share the meditation practice experience with a mentor or a meditation master personally.

The meditation instructors should be suitable persons who understand Dhamma and meditation practice very well. They usually give good explanations on basic Dhamma teachings, meditation practices, and so forth. They should also teach the practitioners to concentrate their minds and answer their questions clearly. The

basic Dhamma teaching should be related to basic concepts of meditation such as, loving kindness meditation, benefits of meditation, obstacles of meditation practice or the Five Hindrances, and application of meditation in everyday life. For this level, the retreat centres should set the basic rules based on the eight precepts or offer a light meal dinner. This course should focus on basic meditation practices and should not make the practitioners feel like they are forced to convert to Buddhism. For example, the practitioners should not be forced to bow or pay respect for the Triple Gems if they do not want to do so. Furthermore, morning chanting and evening chanting should be avoided at this level.

Regarding suitable food and refreshments, the retreat should provide many types of healthy and nutritious food for breakfast and lunch. Food served can be both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, so the practitioners can choose food suitable for them. In the evening, light refreshments such as fruit juices, milk, tea or hot chocolate, coffee, and so forth, should be provided. In addition, if some practitioners request dinner, a light meal such as salad or yoghurt could be provided.

To provide a suitable climate for foreign practitioners, a closed room which can protect them from the rain and which has an air conditioner create the right temperature is needed. Regarding suitable posture, the centre should teach both sitting meditation and practicing in the other postures such as walking meditation.

4.5.3 Guideline Model for Intermediate

The model for the intermediate level is suitable for non-Thais and even non-Buddhists or those who have practiced meditation before and want to continue practicing and studying Buddha Dhamma. The course can be offered for seven day to ten day meditation retreats. At this level, the meditation master or the teaching monks should give instructions on meditation and Buddha Dhamma teachings such as

understanding the Triple Gems (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha). In addition, the meditation practice could be a bit longer than at the beginner level.

4.5.3.2 Meditation Retreat Schedule

The intermediate course should set a schedule for meditation, teaching both theory and practice, morning and evening chanting, basic Buddhist teachings, personal guidance for meditation, exercise for stretching the body, and so on. An example of such a meditation schedule is as below:

04.30	Wake up
05.00	Meditation practice & Spreading Loving-kindness
05.30	Morning Chanting
06.30	Exercises
07.00	Breakfast
09.00	Meditation Instruction
09.30	Meditation Practice
11.00	Lunch
12.30	Personal time
14.00	Dhamma Teaching
15.00	Meditation Practice or Walking Meditation (Up to the retreat)
16.00	Personal Time / Private meditation interview
17.30	Refreshments
18.30	Evening Chanting
19.00	Dhamma Teaching
20.00	Meditation practice
21.00	Personal Time

4.5.3.2 Factor Favourable for the Intermediate

The suitable place for an intermediate course is similar to that for the beginners' course. However, the forest or a natural environment will be more appropriate. In addition, the retreat centres can inform the practitioners to talk less or have suitable talks also being allowed to ask about Dhamma questions or meditation practice experiences with a mentor or a meditation master.

The meditation instructors should be suitable persons who understand Buddha Dhamma and meditation practices very well. They should give good explanations on Dhamma teachings, meditation practices, and so forth. They should also teach the practitioners to concentrate their minds and answer their questions clearly. The Dhamma teachings should be related to meditation theory, loving kindness meditation, obstacles of meditation practice, the Five Hindrances, the importance of the five or eight precepts, the concept of donation, the fourth noble truth, and so on. For this level, the retreat centres should set the basic rules based on the eight precepts with no dinner allowed. This course should focus on longer meditation practice.

Regarding suitable food and refreshments, the retreat should provide many types of healthy and nutritious food for breakfast and lunch, and light refreshment such as fruit juices, milk, should be provided in the evening. As for suitable climate and suitable posture, it could be the same as for the beginners' course.

4.5.4 Guideline Model for Advanced Level

The model for the advanced level is suitable for practitioners who have practiced an intermediate level course before and want to proceed in meditation

practice and study more Buddha Dhamma. The course should offer a minimum of two weeks for meditation retreat. At this level, the meditation master or the teaching monks should be experts and have excellent meditation experiences and good teachings. In addition, the practitioners should understand Buddhist teaching in theory and practice, and should spend longer times for meditation practice.

4.5.4.2 Meditation Retreat Schedule

The advanced course should have a scheduled for meditation teachings both in theory and practice, morning and evening chanting, Buddhist teachings, personal guidance for meditation, chore, and exercise for stretching their body. In addition, at this course, the practitioners should practice working meditation such as kitchen work, cleaning the temple and so on. An example for the meditation schedule is as below:

04.00-4.30	Wake up
05.00	Morning Chanting, Meditation practice, and spreading loving-kindness
06.15	Exercise
06.30	Chores
07.00	Breakfast
09.00	Meditation Session and Dhamma Talk
11.00	Lunch
12.30	Chores (Dish washing, and kitchen work)
13.00	Personal time
14.00	Dhamma Teachings
15.00	Meditation Practice,
16.00	Walking Meditation (Up to the retreat)

17.00	Refreshments
18.30	Evening Chanting
19.00	Meditation Session and Dhamma Talk
21.00	Personal Time

4.5.4.2 Factor Favourable for Advanced Level

The suitable place for an advanced course is similar as for an intermediate course. Nonetheless, a natural environment can better support meditation practice. In addition, the retreat centres can inform the practitioners to have only suitable talks and also allow them to ask Dhamma questions or share their questions about meditation practice experience with a mentor or a meditation master personally. In addition, the meditation instructors should be experts and have good meditation experience; they can give explanation in depth on Dhamma teachings and meditation practices. They should also teach suitable meditation subjects to the practitioners upon the participant's temperaments. The Dhamma teachings should focus on meditation theory and practice such as the three-fold training (tisikkhā) which are training in higher morality (adhisīla-sikkhā), training in higher mentality (adhicitta-sikkhā) and training in higher wisdom (adhipaññā-sikkhā), the four noble truths (ariya-sacca), the dependent origination, and so forth.

Regarding suitable food and refreshments, the retreat should provide many types of healthy and nutritious food, and light refreshment such as fruit juice should be provided in the evening. At this level, the retreat centres should set the basic role based on the eight precepts with no dinner allowed. As for the suitable climate and the suitable postures, it could be the same as for the beginner & intermediate courses.

In summary, meditation retreats and temples with meditation practices for foreigners should separate classes in different levels: for visitors who are interested in meditation and wish to learn about it but are not yet ready to practice it; the

meditation retreat for beginners, intermediates, advanced meditation practitioners, and set an ordination programme. In addition, they should also apply the concept of sappāya or the factors favourable to mental development to support the retreat. Additionally, the retreat centres or temples could estimate the cost for the class and set the minimum donation for the practitioners because some foreigners have no idea about “donations”; therefore, the centres can set a budget for the next retreat.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusion

This research has been conducted to study the Buddhist meditation retreats suitable for foreigners in Thailand. It includes four case studies: Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5); the Middle Way Meditation Retreat; International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH), and Wat Pah Nanachat. The purpose of this dissertation is threefold: to study Theravada Buddhist meditation, to study Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand, and to develop a suitable model of Buddhist meditation retreats.

The first objective of this dissertation was to study Theravada Buddhist meditation. There are two kinds of Buddhist meditation, tranquillity and insight meditation. In addition, factors that support the practice are severing the ten impediments (palibodhas), having good friends (kalyānamitta), finding a subject suitable to a temperament. Buddhaghosa explained in the Visuddhimagga that factors favourable to mental development (sappāya) are suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya), suitable resort (gocara-sappāya), suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya), suitable person (puggala sappāya), suitable foods (bhojana-sappāya), suitable climate (utu-sappāya), and suitable posture (iriyāpatha-sappāya).

The second objective is to study Buddhist meditation retreats for foreigners in Thailand using four case studies and to develop a suitable model. The study of the Vipassanā Meditation Centre at Wat Mahādhātu (Section 5), Bangkok, shows that it uses techniques based on the four foundations of mindfulness as described in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta. For the foreign participants, the centre focuses on mindfulness

of body and feeling because the other teachings are too complicated for them. However, if the practitioners have meditation experience, the instructors can give them more in-depth explanations. In general, most practitioners visit this centre because of recommendations from guide books such as “Lonely Planet”. The analysis of factors supporting the retreat shows that the centre has a good instructor/suitable person (puggala sappāya) or kalyānamitta - and it provides suitable food (bhojana-sappāya). The centre also teaches walking and sitting meditation which are both suitable postures (iriyāpatha-sappāya). Nevertheless, this centre has drawbacks as a suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya) and as a suitable location (gocara-sappāya) because of noise from the streets in the neighbouring area. The suggestions for this centre to achieve a good model are the following: It should train many good meditation instructors who have knowledge of both practice and theory in English; it should have a human resources development program; it should provide training for monks, staff and volunteers; it should provide a new, bigger building and better facilities; it should advertise more, especially on the Internet, and have a booking facility; it should hold separate classes for young students, old students and people on sightseeing tours; and it should be stricter on the rule of silence, banning cell phones during the retreat. The evaluation from the temple concluded that the centre should have a plan to develop human resource and a plan to develop a new facility but the main problem is lack of staff to implement the plans.

The Middle Way Meditation Retreat uses “Meditation Devices” called the light kasiṇa (āloka-kasiṇa) to teach the practitioners. However, a sign (the mental object) such as a crystal sphere is used instead of using the light in a hole and the mantra used is “Sammā Arahaṃ” or “Bright and Clear” for non-Buddhists. Most practitioners find out about this meditation retreat by searching on the Internet at www.meditationthai.org and by word of mouth. This meditation centre has suitable abode (āvāsa-sappāya), suitable resort (gocara-sappāya), suitable speech (bhassa-sappāya), suitable person (puggala sappāya), suitable food (bhojana-sappāya). The

centre does not teach walking meditation but does encourage the practitioners to keep their minds at the centre of their bodies instead. On the down side, there is some disturbing noise from the community in the mornings. The suggestions for this centre are to develop both teaching monks and the staff by providing more intensive meditation training. In addition, advertising is needed to increase the number of participants and provide access to all people. The centre should improve online technology. The centre should develop more meditation programs and increase supplementary programs such as maintaining good health using meditation. They also should offer the program in different languages, not only English, and open retreats in more countries. Furthermore, the centre should offer consistent training for staff members and career paths. The centre agrees with the suggestions and has already improved some facilities and has a plan to develop its human resources and a plan to establish meditation retreats in many countries.

The Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) meditation's instructors teach mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), which focuses on steps one to four out of sixteen because they think that the other steps are too complicated for them. Most practitioners hear about this centre through guide books such as "Lonely Planet" and through magazines such as "the National Geographic". The analysis of factors supporting practice shows that this centre had suitable instructors (*puggala sappāya*) and suitable speech of the instructors. As for the analysis of suitable food, it shows that the centre should have more variety of foods for the practitioners. It also has a suitable climate and it provides suitable postures for the meditation practice. In the other hand, there is some noise from the neighbouring area that makes it an unsuitable abode. Furthermore, the centre provides the silence retreat and serves only Thai-vegetarian food, and there are some rules are too strict. As a result, about 10-30 percent of the practitioners are frequently quitting the course before the end. The suggestions to achieve a good model for this centre are as follows: It should have more English speaking meditation instructors; it should design a meditation room that prevent noise from neighbours; it

should provide documents for non-native English speakers so that they can understand the teachings better; it should set up retreats in other provinces; and it should set up retreats for experienced practitioners as well. Moreover, the centre should provide training programs for the instructors and the staff. In the evaluation from the IDH, the centre agreed that it should have good relationship with the community to reduce the noise problem. The centre also wished to set up an advanced course but lacked the human resources to do so. In addition, the centre had no policy to advertise or set up branches in the other provinces. If anyone wants to set up a retreat and follow IDH concepts, they can do so with no legal problems. The program has not been copyrighted.

Wat Pah Nanachat (WPN), is the International Forest Monastery in Warin Chamrap, Ubon Ratchathani province, in the Northeast of Thailand. At this temple, no single meditation technique predominates. However, mindfulness with breathing forms the basis for most formal meditation. This temple is primarily a training centre for foreigners who are preparing to take ordination. Most practitioners hear about this temple through guide books. The analysis of factors supporting practice shows that this temple is a suitable abode and provides suitable food even if only one meal a day. Yet, many insects in the rainy season make it difficult to stay in the temple at that time. Furthermore, there is no formal meditation teaching. Practitioners have to ask the teaching monk questions if they do not understand the meditation practices. In addition, there is suitable posture and suitable climate at this temple. The suggestions to achieve a good model for this temple are as follows: It should have a scheduled group meditation for lay people; it should update and develop its website; it should promote and advertise the temple's ordination program; it should provide a meditation program for women. Many people are interested in meditating there. Therefore, the temple should establish a schedule for the meditation retreat. In addition, in the rainy season, the accommodation area is messy with tree leaves, and broken equipment. The temple's staff and volunteers should repair the broken equipment and clean that

area. The temple also should brief practitioners when they arrive about the meditation teaching or give them guide lines. The temple agreed with the suggestion to set up a meditation practice for women but there are no nuns there to implement the retreat. There are not enough people to repair the temple in the rainy season but temple officials said they would make repairs when they had more volunteers. Furthermore, the temple had no policy to set up more meditation retreats or conduct advertising. It said it would focus only on the ordination program.

In summary, meditation retreats and temples with meditation practices for foreigners should separate classes in different levels: for visitors who are interested in meditation and wish to learn about it but are not yet ready to practice it; the meditation retreat for beginners, intermediates, advanced meditation practitioners, and set an ordination programme. In addition, they should also apply the concept of sappāya or the factors favourable to mental development to support the retreat.

5.2 Suggestions

5.2.1 Suggestions for the Meditation Retreat

1) The meditation retreat or temple should find a more appropriate location separated from Thai and foreign group. It should have a private meditation area. Sometimes the retreat centre has to share the meditation area with Thai group, so the site is too crowded and difficult to keep quietly. The centre should separate the schedule for Thai and foreign programmes; thus, the centre will not be too crowded for meditation. In addition, the retreat centre should prevent insects from entering some sleeping area or even the meditation hall. The centre should also communicate with the nearby community in order to reduce noise from radio broadcast during meditation practice.

2) The government and Buddhist Universities should create a suitable model for suitable abode during meditation practice and send officers to support temples or meditation centre.

5.2.2 Suggestion for Further Research

It is recommended that it is difficult to make comparative of the meditation retreats because they are located in different areas, different period of retreat, different group of practitioners, different purpose, and so forth. Therefore, further research could be done on quantitative research on suitable model for Buddhist meditation retreat for Thai people and foreigners. It should survey and interview all practitioners at the centres. Furthermore, the guideline model could be test in order to make the suitable for national model.

In addition, there are many interesting studies that could be done on the following:

- 1) The factors favorable for Buddhist meditation retreats for Thai and non-Thai,
- 2) An analysis of Dhamma teaching at the meditation retreats,
- 3) An analysis of the environment used for Dhamma teaching,
- 4) A developed model for international meditation practice.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Interview Question for Participants

- 1) Why do you want to meditate and why have you chosen this centre (Wat Pah Nanachat, Suan Mohhk, Wat Phra Dhammakaya, Wat Mahādhātu)?
- 2) Are there anything that impressed you on the retreat?
- 3) What are the benefits or changes you experienced after the retreat?
- 4) Could you please share some of your meditation experience? What is your most profound memory from the retreat?

2) Interview Question for Meditation's Organizer

- 1) Could you please explain the meditation retreat background? (How long did the meditation retreats begin and how many people attended the retreat? What is the purpose of the meditation retreat?)
- 2) How many staff supports the retreat at present time? How many types of advertising do you have to promote the retreat?
- 3) What is the meditation system have practiced here?
- 4) What are the programs for the retreat?
- 5) What are the benefits or changes of the participants after the retreat?

Appendix B

International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH)

The International Dhamma Hermitage (IDH) Schedule

Registration day 31 Oct 2009 (last day of the month before the retreat)

7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration *** = BELL
08:00***

Breakfast at Dining Hall

12.30 p.m.***

Lunch

3:50 p.m.***

4:00 p.m.

Welcome to Suan Mokkh International
Ajahn Bodhi (Abbot)

5:00 p.m.

Boundary tour

6:00 p.m.

Tea, Video about Ajahn Buddhadasa
(Founder of Wat Suan Mokkh)

7:00 p.m.***

7:15 p.m.

Orientation Talk

9:30 p.m.

LIGHTS OUT

- After registration, you are allowed to go out to clear up all of your arrangements (e.g. booking for your trips or e-mail etc and you have to come back before 4:00 p.m. for Welcome talks).

Schedule Day 1 – Day 10

04:00***

Rise & shine

04:30***

Morning Reading

04:45

Sitting meditation

05:15

Yoga / Exercise

07:00***

Dhamma talk & Sitting meditation

08:00

Breakfast & Chores

10:00***

Dhamma talk

11:00

Walking or Standing meditation

11:45***	Sitting meditation
12:30 p.m.***	Lunch & Chores
2:30 p.m.***	Meditation Instruction and Sitting meditation
3:30 p.m.	Walking or Standing meditation
4:15 p.m. ***	Sitting meditation
5:00 p.m.***	Chanting & Loving kindness meditation
6:00 p.m.	Tea & Hot spring
7:30 p.m.***	Sitting meditation
8:00 p.m.	Group Walking meditation
8:30 p.m.	Sitting meditation
9:00 p.m.***	Bedtime Goodnight <i>(the gate will be closed at 9:15 p.m.)</i>
9:30 p.m.	LIGHTS OUT

Note on *Day 9* the IDH provide one meal on 8.00 pm and have no Dhamma talking.

Schedule Day 11

04:00***	Rise & shine	***	=
	BELL		
04:30	Morning Reading		
04:45	Sitting meditation		
05:15	Go to the dorms, pack, clean the rooms, return the blankets & nets		
05:45	Bring your pack, key, valuables receipt to the dining hall. Get the passport and valuables, drink tea, have a look at the books on display. END OF THE SILENCE.		
06:45***	Ajahn Poh's farewell talk and a short sitting meditation period. Take photos after sitting only.		
08:00	Breakfast at the monastery.		
09:30	Talk and tour at the 'Spiritual Theatre'. Meet at the 'information'.		

BIOGRAPHY

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