

How To Meditate:

A Beginner's Guide to Peace

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Dedicated to my teacher, Ajaan Tong Sirimangalo, who is to me a living reminder that the Buddha once walked this Earth.

Preface

This book is taken from a compilation of six teachings originally given in video format with which many people will be familiar from my YouTube channel¹ on the Internet. It may seem odd that I bothered to take the trouble of putting down in writing something that is ostensibly so much better demonstrated visually. The truth is, there is always something missing from and only so much editing one can do to a video whereas with a book much more information can be added, mistakes can be easily corrected, and further, there is no requirement for external technology in order to obtain the teachings therein.

I would like to thank those people who have helped to make this book possible, my parents who were my first teachers, my teacher and preceptor, Ajaan Tong Sirimangalo, and those kind souls who were the original transcribers of this material for the purpose of making subtitles to my videos.

My only intention in completing this task is that people may benefit from the teachings herein; it seems to me proper that if one wishes to live in peace and happiness, it behooves one to work to spread peace and happiness in the world in which one lives.

May all beings be happy.

Yuttadhammo
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1 <http://www.youtube.com/yuttadhammo>

Chapter One: What is Meditation?

This book is meant to serve as an introductory discourse on how to meditate for those with little or no experience in the practice of meditation, or perhaps who are experienced in other types of meditation but wish to learn a new meditation technique. In this first chapter, I will explain what meditation is, and how one should go about practicing it.

First, it is important to understand that the word “meditation” means different things to different people. For some, meditation simply means the calming of the mind, the creating of a peaceful or pleasurable state of being for a time; sort of like a vacation or escape from mundane reality. For others, “meditation” implies extraordinary experiences of alternate states of reality, or the creation of mystical, even magical, states of awareness.

In this book I'd like to define the word “meditation” by taking it back to its etymological root and explaining it based on the meaning of the word itself. When we do this, we can see that the word “meditation” comes from the same linguistic base as the word “medication”². This is useful in understanding the meaning of the word “meditation” since “medication” refers to something that is used to cure sickness that exists in the body. We can likewise understand meditation as something that is used to cure sickness in the mind.

Additionally, we understand that medication, as opposed to a drug, is not meant simply to create a temporary state of pleasure or happiness and then fade away, leaving the patient in the same state as before. Medication is meant to effect a lasting change in the body, bringing the body back to its natural state of health and well-being.

2 According to etymonline.com, both words come “from PIE base *med- 'to measure, limit, consider, advise”.

In the same way, we should understand meditation as something that does not simply bring about a temporary state of peace or calm. It's something that is meant to return the mind - which is quite often in an unnatural state of suffering due to worries, stresses and artificial conditioning - back to a more natural state of genuine and lasting peace and well-being.

So when practicing meditation according to the techniques outlined in this book, it's important to understand that the meditation practice might not always feel either peaceful or pleasant. This is because the purpose of the meditation is to help us to come to understand and work through our deep-rooted states of stress, worry, anger, addiction, and so on. This can be quite an unpleasant process, especially given that we spend most of our time avoiding or repressing these negative aspects of our being.

Sometimes during the practice it might seem that meditation doesn't bring about any peace or happiness at all; this is why it must be stressed that meditation isn't a drug. It isn't a means of feeling pleasure for a short time and then returning to one's misery. On the contrary, meditation is something that is meant to effect a real change in the way we look at the world, bringing our minds and our hearts back to their natural state of clarity, allowing us to attain true and lasting peace and happiness. When we reflect on the state of our mind after we have struggled in meditation to come to terms with the stress and suffering inside of ourselves, we should be able to verify that we have changed for the better, and that the difficulty was well-justified given the positive change it has effected on our being.

So how do we come to effect this change, this cure for unhealthy states of mind like anger, greed, addiction, delusion, conceit, arrogance, worry, stress, fear and so on; how can we come to rid ourselves of these things? The fundamental

principle in the meditation practice taught in this book is what I would call a “clear thought”.

When we meditate, we're trying to create a clear awareness of every experience as it occurs, becoming clearly aware of reality at every moment. Normally when we experience any given object, we immediately begin to judge and examine and categorize the object as “good”, “bad”, “me”, “mine”, etc. This is what gives rise to stress and suffering and poor mental health in general.

In creating a clear thought, we replace any sort of biased compartmentalization of reality in our minds with a non-judgemental recognition of the object for what it is. How we do this is by using an ancient meditation tool that should be familiar to most people already, something called a “mantra”.

A mantra is a word that has been used for thousands of years in many religious traditions to focus the mind on some object, most often the divine or the supernatural. In the practice of meditation as outlined in this book, however, instead of using a mantra to focus on an object unrelated to our ordinary experience of reality, we will use it to actually focus our attention back on the ordinary reality around us as we experience it. We use the mantra as a clear recognition of our experience, focusing the mind on reality, allowing us to experience the phenomena around and inside of us for what they are, not extrapolating on or judging them in any way. By using a mantra in this way, we will be able to understand the objects of our experience clearly and not become addicted or attached, upset or averse to them. The mantra allows us to simply know and experience every object in its essential form without judgement of any kind.

So when we move the body, for instance, or when we feel a sensation or think of something in the mind, our practice is to create a clear thought about that experience using a mantra that captures its essence, as in, “moving”, “feeling”, “thinking”,

etc. When we feel angry, we say to ourselves in the mind "angry". When we feel pain, we likewise remind ourselves silently, "pain". We pick a word that describes the experience accurately and use that word to acknowledge the experience for what it is, not allowing the arising of a judgement of the object as good, bad, and so on.

It is important to understand that the mantra is not something we say at the mouth or in the head, but simply a clear awareness of the object for what it is. The word, therefore, should arise in the mind at the same location as the object itself. Which word we choose is not so important, as long as it explains the objective nature of the experience for what it is.

To simplify the process of recognizing the manifold objects of experience, we traditionally separate them into four categories.³ Everything we experience will fit into one of these four and so if we can remember them, it will allow us to develop a comprehensive and systematic meditative interaction with the world around us. For this reason, it is customary to memorize the four categories before proceeding with the meditation practice. They are:

1. Body – the movements and postures of the body;
2. Feelings – the sensations that exists in the body and in the mind – pain, happiness, calm, etc.;
3. Mind – the thoughts that arise in the mind; thoughts of the past or future, wholesome or unwholesome thoughts;
4. Dhammas – groups of mental and physical phenomena that are of specific interest to the meditator, including the mental states that cloud one's awareness, the six senses by which one experiences reality, and many

³ These four categories are called the "four foundations of mindfulness" in Buddhism, and are explained in greater detail in Buddhist texts. For the purpose of this introductory treatise, however, a simple understanding of the outline is enough.

others⁴.

These four, the body, the feelings, the thoughts, and the dhammas are the four foundations of the meditation practice. This set of objects is what we use to create clear awareness of the present moment.

So in regards to the body, we can note every physical movement - when we stretch our arm for example, we can say to ourselves silently in the mind, "stretching". When we flex it, "flexing". Or, in noting the postures of the body, when we are sitting still we can say to ourselves, "sitting". When we walk, we can say to ourselves, "walking". Whatever position the body is in, we simply recognize that posture for what it is, and whatever movement we make, we simply recognize its essential nature as well, using the mantra to remind ourselves of the state of the body as it is. The body is thus one part of reality that we can use to create a clear awareness of reality.

Next are the feelings that exist in the body and the mind. When we feel pain in the body, we can say to ourselves, "pain". In this case, we can actually repeat it again and again to ourselves, as "pain ... pain ... pain". In this way, instead of allowing anger or aversion to arise in relation to the pain, we are able to remind ourselves that it is merely a sensation that has arisen in the body, coming to see that the pain itself is one thing and our dislike of the pain is another. We learn to see that there is really nothing intrinsically "bad" about the pain itself.

When we feel happy, we can acknowledge it in the same way, reminding ourselves of the true nature of the experience, as "happy, happy, happy". In this way, we are not pushing away the pleasurable sensation, but we are not attaching to it either, and therefore are not creating states of addiction,

4 The word "dhamma" is best translated in this context as "teachings", since it encompasses many groups of teachings or "dhammas" of the Buddha. In this short treatise, however, the focus is on the basics of meditation, and so I will limit the discussion to the first set, the mental hindrances.

attachment, or craving for happiness. As with the pain, we come to see that the happiness and our liking of it are two different things, and there is nothing intrinsically “good” about the happiness. We see that clinging to the happiness does not make it last longer, but leads rather to dissatisfaction and suffering when it is gone.

Likewise, when we feel calm, we can say "calm, calm, calm" and so on, to avoid attachment to peaceful feelings when they arise. Through the practice, we begin to see that the less attachment we have towards peaceful feelings, the more peaceful we actually become.

The third foundation is our thoughts. When we remember events in the past, whether they be events that bring pleasure or suffering, we can say to ourselves, "thinking, thinking". Instead of letting them becoming something good or something bad, giving rise to attachment or aversion, we simply know them for what they are: thoughts. When we plan or speculate about the future, we likewise simply come to be aware of the fact that we are thinking, instead of liking or disliking or becoming attached to the thoughts, and we thus do not allow fear, worry, or stress to arise.

The fourth foundation, the “Dhammas”, contains many groupings of mental and physical phenomena that could be included in the first three foundations, but are better discussed in their respective groups for ease of acknowledgement. The first group of dhammas is comprised of the five hindrances to mental clarity. These are the states that will obstruct our practice – desire, aversion, laziness, distraction, and doubt. They are not only a hindrance to attaining clarity of mind, but are also a cause for suffering and stress in our daily lives. It is thus in our best interests to work intently on understanding and discarding from our minds these obstructions to peace and happiness, as this is the true purpose of meditation after all.

So when we feel greed, when we want something we don't have, or are attached to something we do, we simply acknowledge the wanting or the liking for what it is, rather than erroneously translating desire into need, reminding ourselves of the emotion for what it is, "wanting, wanting", or "liking, liking". We come to see that both desire and attachment are stressful and a cause for future disappointment when we cannot obtain the things we want or lose the things we love.

When we feel angry, upset by a mental or physical phenomena that has arisen, or disappointed by one that has not; when we are sad, frustrated, bored, scared, depressed, etc., we simply know the emotion for what it is, "angry, angry", "sad, sad", etc., and see that we are only causing suffering and stress for ourselves by encouraging these negative emotional states.

When we feel lazy, we can say to ourselves, "lazy, lazy", and we will find that we suddenly have our natural energy back. When we are distracted, worried or stressed, we can say, "distracted, distracted", "worried, worried", or "stressed, stressed" and we will find that we are more focused. When we feel doubt, unsure if we can do things we need to do, or are not sure what to do, or are confused, we can say to ourselves "doubting, doubting" or "confused, confused", and likewise we will find that we are more sure of ourselves as a result.

The clear awareness of these four foundations constitutes the basic technique of meditation practice as I will be explaining it in the following chapters. It is therefore important to understand this framework theoretically before beginning to undertake the practice of meditation. Understanding and appreciating the importance of creating a clear understanding about the objects of our awareness as a replacement to our judgemental thoughts is thus the first step in learning how to meditate.

Chapter Two: Sitting Meditation

In this chapter, I will explain a formal method of practice according to the framework discussed in the first chapter, using the practice of meditation in the sitting position as an example. Sitting meditation is the most basic of meditation practices. It is a technique that is easy for anyone to perform; if you are able, you can sit cross-legged for greatest stability and concentration, but if you are not you can also practice on a chair or bench. You can even apply the same technique to a lying position if you are not able to sit up straight.

The practice of sitting meditation is based on watching the movements of the body while sitting still. When we sit very still, the whole body is tranquil and there is almost no movement, except at the moment when the breath comes into the body and then when the breath goes out of the body. At each of these moments, there should be a movement of the abdomen - if you place your hand on your abdomen you should be able to feel the rising and falling motion in sync with the breath.

For those who have never practiced meditation, this might be difficult to perceive, it being an unfamiliar phenomenon. If you place your hand on your abdomen, though, you should be able to experience for yourself that when the breath goes into the body, the abdomen rises - maybe just slightly, but it does rise naturally. When the breath goes out of the body, the abdomen will naturally fall.

If it is still difficult to perceive this motion even with your hand on your abdomen, you can try lying down on your back until you are able to perceive the motion. Most often, difficulty in finding the motion of the rising and falling of the abdomen arises for those who lead especially stressful lives; if you are

such a person, you should not be discouraged by your inability to experience the motion. You will find that after some time practicing meditation your mind and body will begin to relax until you are able to breathe as naturally sitting up as when you are lying down.

The most important point is that we must observe the breath in its natural state, not forcing or controlling it in any way. In the beginning this may lead to somewhat shallow and uncomfortable breathing but once you practice for some time and your mind begins to let go and stop trying to control the breathing, the rise and fall of the abdomen will become more clear and allow you to practice more comfortably.

It is this rising and falling motion that we will use as our first object of meditation. Once we become proficient at watching the motion of the abdomen, it will be a familiar default object of meditation for us to return to at any time.

The formal method for sitting meditation is as follows:⁵

1. We sit with the legs crossed if possible, with one leg in front of the other, or in any position which is comfortable as necessary.
2. Traditionally, we sit with one hand on top of the other, palms up on our lap.
3. We sit with our backs straight, although it is not necessary to have the back perfectly straight if this is uncomfortable; just as long as one is not bending over to the point where one is not able to experience the movements of the abdomen.
4. We practice with the eyes closed. Since our focus is on the stomach, having the eyes open will only distract us away from our object of attention.
5. Once we are in a suitable position, we simply send our

5 Please see illustration 41 in the appendix for two traditional sitting postures.

mind out to the abdomen; when the abdomen rises, we simply say to ourselves, silently, in the mind, "rising". When the stomach falls, we say to ourselves, "falling". "Rising", "falling" "rising", "falling".

Again we do not speak these words at the mouth. It's important to understand that we're creating this clear thought in the mind, and the mind should be with the abdomen. So, in a way, it is as though we are speaking into the abdomen, saying to ourselves in the mind, "rising" when the abdomen rises, and "falling" when the abdomen falls. This may be carried out for many minutes; five minutes, ten minutes, or for as long as is able to sit still.

Once one has developed an ability to acknowledge the movements of the abdomen, the next step is to incorporate into the practice all of the four foundations outlined in the last chapter: the body, the feelings, the mind, and the mental states.

Regarding the body, here we are already aware of the body in watching the rising and the falling; that should be enough for a beginner. At times when this motion is not clear, one can also acknowledge the position of the body as "sitting, sitting", or "lying, lying" as the case may be.

As for feelings, when a sensation arises in the body, carrying our mind away from the abdomen, for example a feeling of pain, instead of getting upset and letting the pain be a cause for mental suffering as well, we take the pain itself as our meditation object.

This is because any one these four foundations may serve as a meditation object. All four are part of reality. We don't have to stay with the rising and falling of the abdomen at all times. Instead, when pain arises, we can observe this new object, the pain. We look at it and try to see it clearly, rather than judging or identifying with it. As explained earlier, we simply focus on

the pain and say to ourselves, "pain, pain, pain, pain" until it goes away. We do this to avoid getting upset about the pain; instead, we simply see it for what it is and let it go.

If we feel happy, we can say to ourselves, "happy." If we feel peaceful or calm, we can say to ourselves, "peaceful," or "calm" until that feeling goes away, as explained in the first chapter. In this case we are trying to avoid clinging to the feeling as positive, so that we don't require pleasant sensations to make us happy, and when they are gone we are not dissatisfied. When the sensation disappears, we come back again to the rising and falling of the abdomen and continue acknowledgement as "rising", "falling".

As for the third foundation, the mind, if while watching the rising and falling one's mind starts to wander, thinking about the past or future; whether they be good thoughts or bad thoughts, instead of letting our mind wander and drift away and lose track of reality, we bring the mind back to the reality of the thought and say to ourselves, "thinking", as explained in the first chapter. We can say to ourselves, "thinking, thinking" a few times and it will go away by itself. Then we can come back to the rising and falling and continue our practice as normal.

As for dhammas, when one's mind gives rise to liking, when we are pleased by a certain experience, we can say to ourselves, "liking, liking". When we don't like something, or become angry, bored, or frustrated, we can say to ourselves "disliking, disliking", "angry, angry", "bored, bored", or "frustrated, frustrated". When we feel lazy or tired or drowsy, we can say to ourselves "lazy, lazy", "tired, tired" or "drowsy, drowsy". When we feel distracted or worried, we can say, "distracted, distracted" or "worried, worried". When doubt or confusion arises in our mind, we can say to ourselves "doubting, doubting" or "confused, confused" and so on.

This set of dhammas, called the "mental hindrances", are

particularly things that create difficulty in the meditation. Without these states, our meditation would proceed quite smoothly; we would be able to watch the rising and falling or the pain, or so on, without break. Because these states exist in our minds, however, we find ourselves becoming incessantly sidetracked by them rather than training our minds to see clearly, and our meditation is unable to progress. So these dhammas are especially important to remember and understand clearly as they arise. When any one of these states arise, we must catch it immediately, remind ourselves of its nature, see it clearly for what it is, and thus bring the mind back again to a clear awareness of the present moment.

Formal meditation practice in this way has many benefits,⁶ the first benefit being that our mind begins to calm down become more peaceful. You should see that if you persevere in clear awareness of reality, your mind becomes happier, lighter and freer from the things that bind it to the endless cycle of suffering. Many meditators, even in the beginning stages, when they strive diligently in the practice, not allowing their minds to wander, are able to experience great states of bliss and happiness, such that they have never experienced before, even in a few days of intensive practice with a teacher. It is important, of course, to recognize these experiences as simply a fruit of the practice rather than mistaking the enjoyment of them for proper practice. We must therefore acknowledging them as we would any other object, as in “happy, happy”, “calm, calm”, and so on. Nonetheless, it is clear that these feelings are a true benefit of the practice that one can see for oneself in no long time.

The second benefit is that we begin to realize things about ourselves and the world around us that we did not realize before. We come to understand that inside ourselves we have many things that we would better do without. We come to see

6 The following four benefits are taken from the Saṅgītisutta, Dīgha Nikāya (DN 33).

why suffering arises in our minds and in our hearts; why we fall into suffering, even though we wish only for happiness. We come to see that those objects of our desire that we thought would bring us true happiness are all merely ephemeral phenomena of the physical and mental aspects of our existence, arising and ceasing incessantly, and are not worth clinging to or striving for in any way.

In the same way, we come to understand other people as well; before when other people became angry at us, we would immediately think poorly of them, giving rise to dislike or even hatred towards them for their actions and speech. Once we practice meditation, we come to understand that we have these same emotions inside of ourselves, and so we come to understand why people do and say and think the things that they do, and so are more inclined to forgive others for their shortcomings.

The third benefit of the practice that we should be able to see is that we become more aware and mindful of the world around us as a result of our practice. We become more aware of our experience of reality, the people and objects of the senses around us and the bodily and mental states inside of us that come and go incessantly. So when difficult situations arise, instead of being caught off guard, falling prey to likes and dislikes, fear, anxiety, confusion, and so on, we are able to respond to situations far better than before we started meditating, and to accept situations and experiences for what they are in a way we were never able before. For example, we are able to bear sickness much better than before; we are able to take difficulty much better than before; even death we are able to take much better than we would have otherwise, through the practice of meditation.

The fourth benefit, what we're really aiming for in the meditation practice, is that through the meditation practice we are able to rid ourselves of the evils in our mind, the

unwholesome states that exist in our hearts and cause suffering for ourselves and for those around us; states of anger, greed, delusion, anxiety, worry, stress, fear, arrogance, conceit – all sorts of mental states that are useless, of no benefit to us or to other people and in fact create unhappiness and stress for us and for those close to us.

So, this is an explanation of a basic, formal meditation practice. At this point, I would suggest that you practice according to this method at least once before going on to the next chapter or back to your daily life. Try practicing now, for five or ten minutes or however long is convenient; practice sitting meditation for the first time, right now, before you forget what you have read in this chapter. In this way, rather than being just like a person reading a menu, you will be able to taste the fruit of the meditation practice for yourself. Thank you for your interest, and I sincerely hope that this meditation will bring to you peace, happiness and freedom from suffering in your life.

Chapter Three: Walking Meditation

In this chapter, I will explain the technique of walking meditation. Just as in the sitting meditation, when we walk we try to keep the mind in the present moment and aware of phenomena as they arise, in order to create clear awareness of the reality around us.

So the question is, why then do we have to switch to walking meditation? Why is sitting meditation not enough? The answer is that walking meditation has several benefits that are not to be gained through the practice of sitting meditation.⁷

First of all, through the practice of walking meditation, we are better able to endure long-distance travel by foot. In ancient times, this was a very important ability, as people would often walk 20 to 30 kilometres in a day. If we sit still all the time, our bodies will become weak and incapable of such exertion. In modern times, especially, our physical inertia has made it so that even a walk down the street is seen as a bothersome task. Walking meditation keeps our bodies in a state of basic fitness, giving us the energy and endurance necessary to travel by foot.

The second benefit from walking meditation is that it gives us patience and endurance to carry out menial tasks. Since walking meditation is a repetitive action carried out at a relatively slow pace, it helps us greatly to develop patience. If we practice it on a daily basis it will increase our physical and mental endurance in carrying out necessary but potentially bothersome tasks. Once we practice walking meditation we will easily overcome any aversion to such tasks and find ourselves more productive and successful in our work, study and lives in general.

7 These five benefits are taken from the Anguttara Nikāya, Caṅkamasutta (5.1.3.9).

The third benefit is that walking meditation helps to overcome sickness in the body. For people who are afflicted by sickness or disease, even diseases that are otherwise incurable, it is said that through the practice of walking meditation many of these diseases may be cured, or at the least reduced in severity. Meditators are said to have overcome many kinds of sickness in the body such as a heart disease, arthritis, etc., simply through the practice of walking meditation. The reason for this is that at the moment of walking meditation one's mind is focused and one's body is calm and, through the slow, methodical movements, one is able to work out the tension and stress acquired throughout one's daily life. Since this stress is an important factor in one's physical well-being, one may therefore be able to heal certain sicknesses in the body through walking meditation.

The fourth benefit is the effect that walking meditation has on the digestive system. If we sit all day, never stretching or exercising the body, we will find that the body's ability to digest food is quite limited, and that much discomfort and disease may be created by our inactivity. When we practice walking meditation as well, especially because it is slow and repetitive, the body is encouraged to work through the food in the stomach and digest it completely, for the greatest physical benefit.

The fifth benefit, that which is most important in regards to the meditation practice and the real reason why meditators are always encouraged to perform walking meditation before sitting meditation, is that the concentration gained by walking, because it is dynamic, lasts into the sitting meditation. If one only practices sitting meditation, it will be difficult for one to begin immediately focusing on the present moment, as one's concentration will be weak and will lead either to distraction or lethargy. Because walking meditation is dynamic, it is easier for both body and mind to settle into the practice naturally and comfortably, so that by the time we begin sitting meditation,

our concentration will be well balanced with our mental energy and we will be able to focus the mind immediately on the phenomena as they arise.

So, how do we practice walking meditation? The method, in brief, is as follows:

1. The feet should be close together, almost touching, and should stay side-by-side throughout the walking, neither one foot in front of the other, nor with space between the paths of the feet.
2. The hands should be clasped, right hand holding left hand, either in front or behind the body.⁸
3. The eyes should be open throughout the walking and one is instructed to look at the path ahead about two metres or six feet in front of the body.
4. The whole of the walking path, a straight line upon which one will walk back and forth, should be at least three to four metres, or ten to fifteen feet, long.
5. One begins by moving the right foot out one foot length, with the heel coming down in line with the toes of the left foot. One then moves the left foot out, passing the right foot to come down with the heel in line with the toes of the right foot, and so on, one foot length for each step.
6. The movement of each foot should be fluid and natural, a single arcing motion from beginning to end, with no breaks or abrupt change in direction of any kind.

Most importantly, as you move each foot, make a mental note to yourself just as in the sitting meditation, using a mantra that captures the essence of the movement as it occurs. The mental note in this case is "stepping right" when moving the right foot, and "stepping left" when moving the left foot. One

8 Please see illustration 40 in the appendix for an example of proper walking posture.

should make the acknowledgement at the exact moment of each movement from beginning to walk until reaching the end of the walking path.

The most important factor in the meditation is the acknowledgement of the present moment. If you make the mental note "stepping right" first and then move your foot, you are acknowledging something that has not yet occurred. If you move your foot first and then note "stepping right", you are acknowledging something in the past. Either way, it cannot be considered meditation, since you are not focused on the action as it occurs.

To make a proper acknowledgement of the experience and develop true clarity of mind, you should say to yourself "step-" at the beginning of the movement, just as you take the foot off the floor; "-ping" as the foot moves forward; and "right" as you finish moving the right foot, at the moment when the foot touches the floor again. The same method should be employed when moving the left foot, and you should try to keep your awareness with the movement of each foot from one end of the path to the other.

Once you reach the end of the walking path, you must turn around to walk back in the other direction. First, you must stop, bringing whichever foot is behind to stand next to the foot that is in front. As you do this, you say to yourself "stopping, stopping, stopping", being clearly aware of the fact that you are stopping the walking process. Once you are standing still, you say to yourself "standing, standing, standing". Then you begin to turn around, as follows.

1. Lift the right foot completely off the floor and turn it 90° to place it again on the floor, saying to yourself one time "turning". Here it is important to extend the word to cover the whole of the movement, so that the "turn-" is at the beginning of the movement and the "-ing" is at the very end of the movement.

2. Lift the left foot off the floor and turn it 90° to stand by the right foot, noting just the same "turning".
3. Repeat the movements of both feet one more time "turning" (right foot), "turning" (left foot), and now you are facing the opposite direction.

Once you are standing still again, you start the walking meditation again, first saying to yourself "standing, standing, standing", and then "stepping right", "stepping left", as before.

As you are walking, if a distraction occurs – a thought, a feeling, or an emotion, you may choose to ignore it, simply bringing your mind back to the feet, in order to maintain focus and continuity. If, however, the object is persistent or overwhelming, instead of continuing to walk and meanwhile allow the mind follow after the distraction, you can also stop in the middle of the walking path in order to take the new distraction as a meditation object and train the mind to see it clearly for what it is. Simply bring the back foot up to stand with the foot in front, saying to yourself "stopping, stopping, stopping" and then "standing, standing, standing", and then focus on the new experience, noting to yourself as before, "thinking, thinking, thinking", "pain, pain, pain", or "angry", "sad", "bored", "happy", etc., according to the experience. Once the object of attention disappears, you can continue with the walking as before, "stepping right", "stepping left".

In this way, you simply walk back and forth, walking in one direction until you come to the end of the designated path, then turning around as explained above to walk in the other direction.

Generally, we try to balance the amount of time spent in walking meditation with the amount spent in sitting meditation, since both have their benefit, and to avoid partiality to one or the other posture. So, if you were to practice ten minutes of walking meditation, we would expect you to practice ten

minutes of sitting meditation immediately thereafter. If you were to practice fifteen minutes of walking meditation then you would also practice fifteen minutes of sitting meditation, and so on.

This concludes the explanation of how to practice walking meditation. Again, I would urge you not to be content with simply reading this book; please, try the meditation techniques for yourself and see what benefits they bring. Thank you for your interest in the meditation practice and again I wish you peace and happiness in your life.

Chapter Four: Fundamentals

In this chapter, I will explain the fundamental principles that one needs to keep in mind during the meditation practice.⁹ It is important for a beginner meditator to understand that one cannot expect to gain benefit simply from walking back and forth or sitting very still without proper meditative awareness. What benefit we gain from the practice depends on the quality of mind at every moment, not the quantity of practice we undertake.

The first important principle to be aware of is that meditation must be practiced in the present moment. When we practice meditation, our mind should always be focused on the experience occurring here and now. We cannot let our mind fall into the past or skip ahead to the future. We should not think about how many more minutes are left in our practice or how many minutes we have been practicing, and so on. Our mind should always be noting the objects as they arise, not one moment into the past or future.

If we are out of touch with the present moment, we are out of touch with reality. This is why it is important to make the acknowledgement at the moment we become aware of the objects of experience, recognizing their arising, persisting and ceasing, using the mantra to create a clear awareness of each object at the moment it occurs. Only in this way can we come to understand the nature of reality in an ultimate sense.

The second important principle is that we must meditate continuously. If we practice meditation diligently for a certain period of time and then stop meditating entirely, we will slowly lose the concentration and clarity of mind that we have gained and have to work to gain it back again from the beginning.

⁹ The four important qualities of meditation herein have been passed on by my teacher, Ajaan Tong Sirimangalo.

This is often a cause for frustration and disillusionment in new meditators, and so it is important to understand that meditation must be continuous to be of any benefit to one's state of mind.

We must try our best to practice continuously from one moment to the next. During our meditation, we should try to keep our mind in the present moment through the whole of the practice, using the mantra to create a clear thought from one moment to the next. When we walk, we must try our best to transfer our attention from one foot to the next without break. When we sit, we must try to keep our mind on the rising and the falling, noting each movement one after the other continuously.

Moreover, once we finish the walking meditation, we should try to maintain our awareness and acknowledgement of the present moment until we are in a sitting position, as in “bending”, “touching”, “sitting”, etc., according to the movements required to change position. Once we are sitting down, we should begin immediately contemplation of the rising and the falling of the stomach for the duration of the sitting meditation. Once we finish the sitting meditation, we should try our best to continue meditating on the present moment in our daily life, carrying on with the acknowledgement as best we can until our next meditation session.

It is said that meditation practice is like falling rain. Every moment in which we are clearly aware of reality is like one drop of rain. Though it may seem insignificant, if we are mindful from one moment to the next, clearly aware one moment after another, we can create very strong concentration and comprehensive understanding of reality, just as minuscule drops of falling rain can fill a lake or flood an entire village.

The third important principle of practice is in regards to the clear thought itself. It is not enough simply to know what we are doing, as this sort of knowing is present in non-meditators,

and even animals, already. To create a truly clear awareness of the present reality, there are three qualities that we have to include in the acknowledgement.¹⁰

1. Effort - in order to make a proper acknowledgement of a phenomenon as it occurs, we must be energetic in our practice. We cannot merely say “rising” and “falling” and let the mind drift as it will. We have to actively send the mind to the object and keep the mind with the object as it arises, while it persists, and until it ceases, whatever object it may be. In the case of the rising and falling of the abdomen, for example, we must observe the abdomen itself, sending the mind out to each moment of rising or falling. Instead of keeping the mind in the head or at the mouth, we must send the mind out to the object, keeping our mind focused on the reality of the experience.
2. Knowledge - once we send the mind out to the object, only then will we become aware of the object, and this is the second important quality of the clear thought, that we are actually aware of the object for what it is. Rather than simply saying “rising” and “falling” while forcing our minds to focus blindly on the object, we must actually recognize the motion for what it is, from the beginning to the end. If the object is pain, then we must strive to recognize it as simply pain, seeing it for what it is; if the object is a thought, then we recognize it as a thought, and so on.
3. Acknowledgement - once we recognize the object for what it is, only then can we make a proper acknowledgement. This of course is the most important aspect of our practice, since it will allow us to train the mind in clear and accurate understanding of the object

¹⁰ These three qualities are taken from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (MN 10)

as it is. The mantra is a replacement for those distracted thoughts that lead us to extrapolate upon the object, seeing it as “good”, “bad”, “me”, “mine”, etc., giving rise to speculation or judgement about the object. By using the mantra, we remind ourselves of the true nature of the object simply for what it is, as explained in the first chapter.

The final important fundamental quality of practice is the balancing of the mental faculties. It is understood in the meditation tradition that all beings have five important faculties in their minds to a greater or lesser degree, which are beneficial for spiritual development. These are:

1. Confidence
2. Effort
3. Mindfulness
4. Concentration
5. Wisdom

These five faculties are, generally speaking, of benefit to those who possess them. In order to be of greatest benefit, however, they must be properly balanced with each other. If they are not properly balanced, they can actually lead to one's detriment in certain ways. For example, one might have strong confidence but little wisdom. This can cause problems, since one will tend towards blind faith, believing things simply out of faith or a desire to believe and not because of any empirical realization of the truth. As a result, one will not bother to examine the true nature of reality, living instead according to blind faith in beliefs that may or may not be true.

Such people as this must examine their beliefs carefully in contrast with reality, in order to adjust their faith according to the wisdom that they gain from meditation, rather than compartmentalizing reality according to their beliefs. Even

should one's belief be in line with reality, it will still be weak and unsteady if not augmented by true realization of the truth for oneself.

On the other hand, one might have strong wisdom but little faith, and so doubt one's path without giving it an honest chance. Such a person may refuse to suspend their disbelief long enough to make an adequate inquiry, even when a theory is explained by a respected authority, choosing to doubt and argue about lack of proof, rather than investigating for themselves.

This sort of attitude will make progress in the meditation practice difficult, due to lack of any conviction by the meditator, and thus inability to focus the mind. Such a person must make effort to see their doubt as a hindrance to honest investigation and try to give the meditation a fair chance before passing judgement.

Likewise, one might have strong effort but weak concentration, leading one's mind to become distracted often and rendering one unable to focus on anything for any length of time. Some people truly enjoy thinking or philosophizing about their lives and their problems, not realizing the terrible state of distraction and turmoil that comes from over-analyzing. Such people are unable to sit still in meditation for any length of time because their minds are too chaotic, caught up in their own mental fomentation. Such people should recognize this unpleasant state as resulting from habitual over-analyzing, not from the meditation itself, and should patiently train themselves out of this bad habit in favour of simply seeing things for what they are. Though some mental activity is unavoidable in our daily lives, we should be selective of what thoughts we give importance to, rather than turning every thought that arises into a cause for distraction.

Finally, one may have strong concentration but weak effort, which conversely makes one lazy or drowsy all the time. This

state of mind will keep a meditator from observing reality, inhibiting the mind from staying with the present moment, since they find themselves lethargic, falling asleep or drifting off most of the time. Such people should practice standing or walking meditation when they are tired so as to stimulate their body and mind into a more alert state.

The fifth faculty, mindfulness, is another word for the acknowledgement or simple remembrance of an object for what it is. It is the manifestation of a balanced mind, and so it is both the means of balancing the other faculties and the outcome of balancing them at the same time. The more mindfulness we have, the better our practice will become, so we must strive both to balance the other four faculties and recognize reality for what it is at all times.

Once we have balanced the four other faculties using the faculty of mindfulness, they will work together to create a very powerful state of mind, able to see every phenomenon as simply arising and ceasing without passing any judgement on any object of awareness. At that time, the mind will be able to let go of all attachment and overcome all suffering without difficulty. Just as a strong man is easily able to bend an iron bar, when our minds are strong we will be able to bend and mould and ultimately straighten our minds. We will be able to bring our minds back to a natural state of peace and happiness, overcoming all kinds of stress and suffering.

So, this is a basic explanation of some of the fundamental qualities of meditation we need to keep in mind. To summarize:

1. We must practice in the present moment.
2. We must practice continuously.
3. We must create a clear thought, using effort, knowledge, and acknowledgement.

4. We must balance our mental faculties.

This lesson is an important addition to the actual technique of meditation. These guidelines are meant to bring greater quality to our practice and thus allow us to gain greater benefit there-from. So I sincerely hope that you are able to put these teachings to use in your own practice, and that through this you are able to find greater peace, happiness and freedom from suffering. Thank you again for your interest in learning how to meditate.

Chapter Five: Mindful Prostration

In this chapter, I will explain a third technique of meditation, one that is used as a preparatory exercise before the walking and sitting meditation. This technique is called mindful prostration.

Prostration is something with which practitioners of various religious traditions around the world are quite familiar. In Thailand, for instance, prostration is used as a means of paying respect to one's parents, teachers or figures of religious reverence. In other religious traditions prostration may be used as a form of worship towards an object of worship – a god, an angel, or some saintly figure, for example.

In this meditation tradition, the prostration is in one sense a means of paying respect to the meditation practice itself. So, besides serving as a preparatory exercise, it can also be thought of as a means of creating humble and sincere appreciation of the meditation we are about to practice, reminding us that meditation is not just a hobby or pastime, but rather an important training, worthy of sincere appreciation. Since we intend to incorporate the practice into our lives and make it a part of who we are, it is helpful to remind ourselves of this fact by taking the meditation practice as an object of reverence.

So when we prostrate, we are not worshipping a deity or bowing down to an individual entity of any sort. Prostration is simply a way of paying respect to the practice itself and developing humility and sincerity at the outset. Also, as mentioned, it is a useful preparatory exercise, since it forces us to pay very close attention to the movements of the body as we perform the prostrations.

The technique of mindful prostration is performed as follows:

1. One begins by sitting on the knees, traditionally on the toes (A)¹¹, but if this is uncomfortable you can also sit down on the tops of your feet (B), or as is most comfortable for you.
2. The hands are placed palm down on the thighs (1), the back is straight, and the eyes are open.

Start by turning the right hand ninety degrees on the thigh until that the thumb is on top, with the mind focused on the movement of the hand. As the hand begins to turn, say to yourself, in the mind, 'turning'. When the hand is halfway through the turning motion, say again 'turning', and when the hand completes the movement, say a third time 'turning' (2). We repeat the word three times, in order to remain fully aware of the motion throughout all three periods - the beginning, middle and end.

Next, raise the right hand to the chest, stopping right before the thumb touches the chest, saying 'raising, raising, raising' (3). Then touch the edge thumb to the chest, saying 'touching, touching, touching' (4), three times with the thumb touching the chest. Then repeat this sequence with the left hand, 'turning, turning, turning' (5), 'raising, raising, raising' (6), 'touching, touching, touching' (7). The left hand should touch not only the chest, but also the right hand, palm to palm.

Next, bring both hands up to the forehead, saying 'raising, raising, raising' as you the hands (8), and 'touching, touching, touching' when the edges of the thumb touch the forehead (9). Then bring the hands back down to the chest, repeating to yourself 'lowering, lowering, lowering' (10), 'touching, touching, touching' (11).

Next, comes the actual prostration. First bend the back to a forty-five degree angle, saying 'bending, bending, bending' (12) as you do so. Then lower the right hand to the floor in

11 Parenthesis indicates a corresponding illustration in the appendix.

front, saying 'lowering, lowering, lowering' (13), 'touching, touching, touching', still keeping it at a ninety degree angle to the floor (14), this time with the edge of the little finger touching the floor. Finally, turn the hand palm down to cover the floor, saying in your mind 'covering, covering, covering' (15). Then do the same with the left hand – 'lowering, lowering, lowering' (16), 'touching, touching, touching' (17), 'covering, covering, covering' (18). The hands should now be side by side with the thumbs touching; the hands should not be too close together, approximately four inches between index fingers.

Next, lower the head to touch the thumbs, saying 'bending, bending, bending' as you bend the back (19) and 'touching, touching, touching' when the forehead actually touches the thumbs (20). Then raise the back again until the arms are straight, saying 'raising, raising, raising' (21). This is the first prostration.

Once the arms are straight, we start all over a second time, this time with the hands on the floor, saying as we turn the right hand, 'turning, turning, turning' (22), then 'raising, raising, raising' (23), 'touching, touching, touching' (24). Then the left hand, 'turning, turning, turning' (25), 'raising, raising, raising' (26), 'touching, touching, touching' (27). As we raise the left hand this time, though, we must also raise the back from a forty-five degree angle to a straight upright position. We need not acknowledge this movement separately; simply straighten the back as you lift the right hand to the chest (see 26).

Then raise both hands up to the forehead again, saying in the mind, 'raising, raising, raising' (28), 'touching, touching, touching' (29), and down to the chest again, 'lowering, lowering, lowering' (30), 'touching, touching, touching' (31). Then bend the back again, 'bending, bending, bending'.¹² Then lower the hands again one by one, 'lowering, lowering,

12 From here, the technique is the same as illustrations 12 to 31, repeated twice more.

lowering', 'touching, touching, touching', 'covering, covering, covering', 'lowering, lowering, lowering', 'touching, touching, touching', 'covering, covering, covering'. Then touching the thumbs with the forehead, 'bending, bending, bending', 'touching, touching, touching', and back up again, 'raising, raising, raising'. This is the second prostration, after which a third prostration should be performed exactly the same way, repeating the above one more time from (22).

After the third prostration we come up from the floor with the right hand as usual, 'turning, turning, turning', 'raising, raising, raising', 'touching, touching, touching', and the left hand, 'turning, turning, turning', 'raising, raising, raising', 'touching, touching, touching'. Then we bring the hands up to the forehead again as before, 'raising, raising, raising'. 'touching, touching, touching', and back down to the chest, 'lowering, lowering, lowering', 'touching, touching, touching'. This time, however, instead of bending to do a fourth prostration, we bring the hands down one at a time to rest on the thighs, returning them to their original position. So, starting with the right hand, we say in the mind, 'lowering, lowering, lowering' (32), 'touching, touching, touching' (33), 'covering, covering, covering' (34), and then the left hand, 'lowering, lowering, lowering' (35), 'touching, touching, touching' (36), 'covering, covering, covering' (37).

Once we finish the prostrations, we continue on with the walking meditation and then finally the sitting meditation. Again, it is important that once you finish the prostrations you maintain mindfulness into the walking meditation, not standing up hastily or unmindfully. Before you begin to stand, you should acknowledge to yourself 'sitting, sitting' (38), and then 'standing, standing' as you go to stand up (39). Once you are standing, continue immediately with the walking meditation so that your clear awareness of the present moment is constant. In this way, the mindful prostration will act as a support for the walking meditation just as the walking meditation acts as a

support for the sitting meditation.

Once one has completed all three meditation techniques, the meditator is instructed to rest for a short time and then, in the case of an intensive meditation course, continue with another round, practicing round after round for the duration of the lesson, normally one twenty-four hour period. Once this period is over, one should seek out one's teacher to be given the next lesson, at which point more detailed walking and sitting practice may be given. Since this book is aimed towards giving the basics of meditation, advanced lessons will not be discussed herein. One should seek such guidance from a qualified instructor after undertaking these basic practices in the manner proscribed for a suitable period of time. If one is unable to enter a meditation course, one may begin by practicing these techniques once or twice a day and contacting a teacher on a weekly or monthly basis to obtain new lessons at a more gradual pace, according to a regimen agreed upon between teacher and student.

This concludes my explanation of the formal meditation practice; in the next and final chapter I will discuss how to incorporate the concepts learned in this book into one's daily life. Thank you again for your interest, and again I wish you peace, happiness and clarity of mind.

Chapter Six: Daily Life

At this point, the basic technique of formal meditation practice is complete. The theory in the previous chapters is enough to allow a new-comer to at least begin on the path towards understanding reality as it is. In this final chapter, I will discuss some of the ways in which we can incorporate the meditation practice into our daily lives, so that even during the time when one is not formally meditating one can still maintain a basic level of mindfulness and clear awareness.

Before discussing meditation techniques for use in daily life, however, it is necessary to talk point out those activities one must abstain from in order for one's meditation practice to be effective in bringing sustained positive results into one's life.

As I explained in the first chapter, “meditation” is the mental equivalent to “medication”. It is well-known that with various medications there are certain substances one must avoid taking in conjunction with the medication itself; certain things, when taken together with the medication, will either nullify the positive effects of the medication or, worse, are contraindicative to and will actually turn the healing power of the medication into poison. Likewise, with meditation there are certain activities that, due to their tendency to cloud the mind, will nullify the effects of the meditation or, worse, turn the meditation into a poison, leading the meditator down the wrong path.

Meditation is meant to bring a state of clarity, of natural purity to the mind; to bring our minds back to a state of sobriety that is free from addiction, aversion, and delusion, and therefore free from suffering. Since certain behaviours by way of body or speech are inevitably bound up in addiction, aversion, and delusion, such behaviours are invariably contraindicative to our meditation practice. These behaviours have the opposite

effect to the meditative practice, encouraging delusion and defilement in the mind. Meditators who insist on continuing with such behaviours will invariably develop meditation habits that are detrimental to their own well-being based on the misunderstanding of reality caused by these unwholesome actions.

So, to ensure our minds are perfectly clear and capable of understanding reality, we will have to take certain behaviour out of our “diet”, so to speak, that our meditation will be truly effective and beneficial. First, there are five kinds of action from which we must refrain completely, as they are inherently unwholesome.¹³

1. We must refrain from killing living beings. We have to make a promise to ourselves not to kill any living being – not an ant or a mosquito or any sort of animal whatsoever.
2. We must refrain from theft. If our meditation is to be effective we have to be able to control our desires at least to the extent of respecting the possessions of other people and not taking things without permission.
3. We must abstain from committing adultery or sexual misconduct - romantic relationships that are emotionally or spiritually damaging to other people, due to existing commitments of the parties involved.
4. We must refrain from telling lies, deceiving other people, or leading other people away from reality in any way.
5. We must refrain from taking drugs or alcohol, those substances that will intoxicate our minds, taking it away from a natural, clear state of being.

It's very important that we make a commitment to abstain from

¹³ These five behaviours correspond with the five Buddhist moral precepts.

these actions completely if our meditation practice is to be successful, due to their inherently unwholesome nature and the invariably negative effect they have on our minds.

Next, there are certain other modes of behaviour that we may partake of but must do so in moderation if our meditation is to be of real benefit. These are actions that are not necessarily unwholesome in and of themselves but, when undertaken in excess, will nonetheless inhibit clarity of mind and lessen the benefit of the meditation practice.¹⁴

One such occupation is eating; if we wish to truly progress in our meditation practice, we must be careful not to eat too much or too little. If we are constantly obsessed with food, it can be a great barrier to our progress in meditation since not only does the obsession cloud the mind, over- and under-eating can create debilitating states of drowsiness and fatigue, both in the body and mind. We should always remind ourselves that we have to eat to stay alive but we are not alive simply to eat.

Another occupation that will interfere with the meditation is entertainment; watching entertaining shows, listening to music and so on. These occupations are not inherently unwholesome but when undertaken in excess they can easily create states of addiction, states of insobriety in a sense, taking the mind out of its natural state of clarity. We should therefore remind ourselves that the pleasure that comes from such entertainment is fleeting at best, addictive at worst, and that we should make the best use of our short time in this life, rather than wasting it on meaningless entertainment that doesn't lead to our long term happiness and peace. If we are to find true peace and contentment, we must moderate such activities. Use of the Internet to socialize, watch videos, etc., should be undertaken in moderation as well.

¹⁴ The following is in accordance with the eight meditator precepts normally taken by Buddhist meditators on holidays or during intensive meditation courses, adding the three precepts below to the five above and undertaking total celibacy.

The third occupation we must moderate is that of sleeping. Sleeping is one addiction that is often overlooked. We generally do not realize that most of us are quite attached to sleep as a means of escape from the problems of the reality around us. In the same way, many people become insomniac, obsessed with sleep to the point that they think they are not getting “enough” sleep, which in turn leads to increased stress levels and even more difficulty in falling asleep.

Upon undertaking the meditation practice in earnest, you will find that you need less sleep than was previously required. Lack of sleep for a meditator is not a problem since at the time that one is meditating one's mind is calm and clear. When you cannot fall asleep, you can simply practice lying meditation instead, watching the stomach rise and fall, reminding yourself “rising”, “falling”, all night if necessary. You will find that when morning comes you are as rested as if you had slept soundly all night.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that to truly gain results in the meditation practice, a meditator should set aside at least a period of time to remain entirely celibate, not just avoiding immoral sexual activity, since all sexual activity is invariably intoxicating and will be an inevitable hindrance in one's attainment of mental clarity and peace.

These are the activities we will have to take out of our lives entirely, in the case of the first five, or moderate, in the case of the rest, if the meditation practice is to become a fruitful part of our daily lives.

We can now turn to the question of how to actually incorporate the meditation into daily life. There are two basic ways of approaching our everyday experience in a meditative way, and we should practice them together.

The first method is to focus our attention on the body, since it is by far the most obvious meditation object of all, and will thus

serve as a convenient means of bringing the mind back to a clear awareness of reality in our daily lives. The body is generally in one or another of four postures at all times – walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. We can use any one of these four postures as a meditation object to bring about clarity of mind at any time.

So when we walk, instead of simply walking and letting our mind wander, we say to ourselves either “walking, walking, walking, walking” or “left, right, left, right” as we move each foot. When we stand still, we can focus on the standing position and say “standing, standing”; when we sit, “sitting, sitting” and when we lie down “lying, lying”.

So, even when we’re not practicing formal meditation, we can still develop clarity of mind at any time. This is a basic method of keeping the mind focussed on reality, using the body as a meditation object.

Additionally, we can apply the same technique to any small movement of the body – for instance when we bend or stretch our limbs, we can say “bending” and “stretching”. When we move our hand, “moving”. When we brush our teeth, “brushing”. When we chew or swallow food, “chewing, chewing”, “swallowing, swallowing” and so on.

Any movement whatsoever that we make with the body during the day can become an object of meditation in this way. When we go to the toilet, when we shower, when we change or wash our clothes, whatever we do during the day we can be mindful of the movements of the body involved, creating clear awareness of our reality at all times.

This is the first method by which we can incorporate the meditation practice directly into our daily lives.

The second method is the acknowledgement of the senses – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling. Normally when we see something we either like or dislike it and it therefore

becomes a cause for addiction or aversion and ultimately suffering when our experience is not in line with our desires. In order to keep the mind clear and impartial, we try to create a clear awareness at the moment of seeing, rather than allowing the mind to create judgements according to its habitual tendencies. When we see something, we simply know that we're seeing, reminding ourselves using the mantra, "seeing, seeing, seeing".

When we hear something, instead of judging it as good or bad, we simply say to ourselves "hearing, hearing". When we smell pleasant or unpleasant odours, we say "smelling, smelling". When we taste, instead of becoming addicted to or repulsed by the taste, we can simply remind ourselves "tasting, tasting" and keep our mind clear when tasting as well. When we feel something on the body, hot or cold, hard or soft, and so on, we say to ourselves "feeling, feeling" or "hot", "cold", and so on.

In this way, we are able to receive the full spectrum of experience without compartmentalizing reality into categories of "good", "bad", "me", "mine", "us", "them", etc., and can thus realize true peace, happiness and freedom from suffering at all times, in any situation. Once we have come to understand the actual nature of reality and accept it for what it is, our minds will cease to react to the objects of the sense as other than what they truly are, and we will be free from all addiction and aversion, just as a bird, when it flies, is free from any need for a perch on which to cling.

These two methods are a basic guide to practice meditation in daily life, incorporating the meditation practice directly into our lives even when we are not meditating. Of course we can also be aware of all of the objects discussed in earlier chapters – pain or the emotions, for instance, but the techniques discussed in this chapter are particularly useful as an additional means of making the meditation practice a continuous experience whereby we are learning about

ourselves and the reality around us at all times.

So, this is an explanation of meditation practice in daily life. This also concludes the discussion of how to meditate. Remember that no book, no matter how long or in-depth it may be, can substitute sincere and ardent practice of the teachings by oneself. One may learn by heart all of the wise books ever written and still be no better off than a cowherd guarding the cattle of others, should one not practice accordingly.

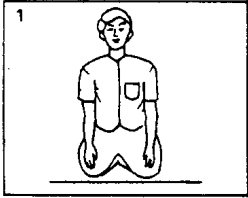
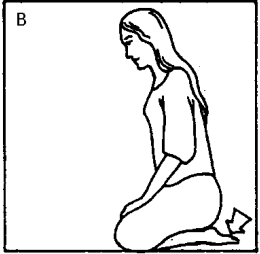
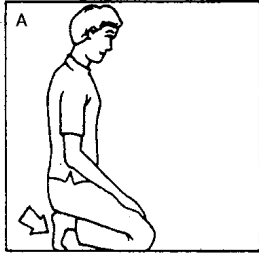
If, on the other hand, one accepts the basic tenets included in a book such as this as sufficient theoretical knowledge and practices accordingly in a sincere manner, one is surely guaranteed of attaining the same results as countless others have likewise attained – peace, happiness and true freedom from suffering.

I would like to thank you one last time for taking the time to read this short introduction to meditation, and I once more sincerely hope that this instruction brings peace, happiness and freedom from suffering to you and by extension to all of the people with whom you come in contact.

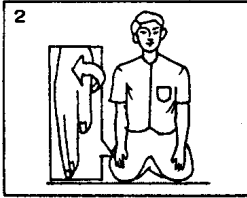
Should you find anything lacking or unclear in these pages, or if you would like more detailed or specific instructions in the practice of meditation, you are welcome to contact me through my weblog at:

<http://yuttadhammo.sirimangalo.org/>

Appendix: Illustrations



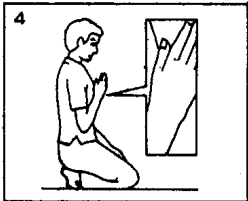
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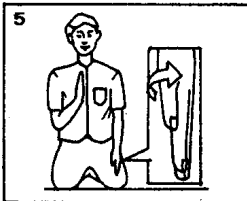
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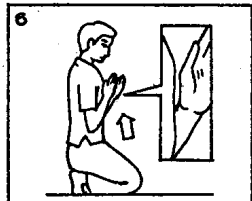
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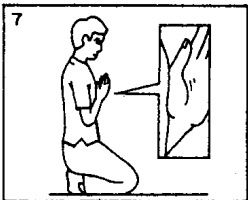
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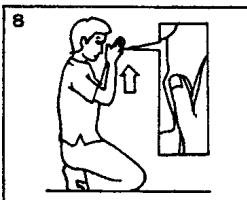
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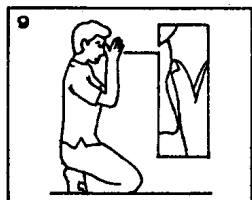
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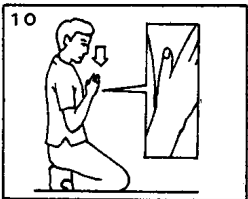
Touching



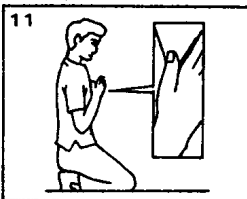
Raising



Touching



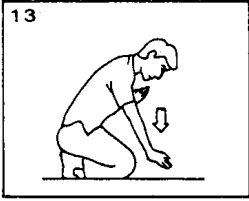
Lowering



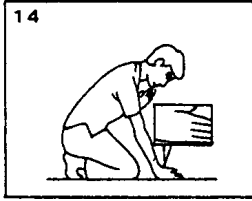
Touching



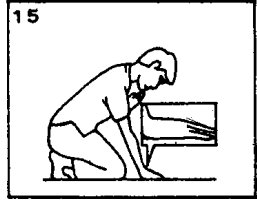
Bending



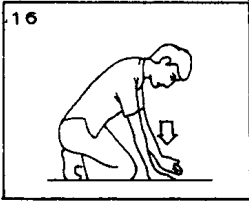
Lowering



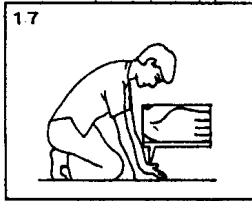
Touching



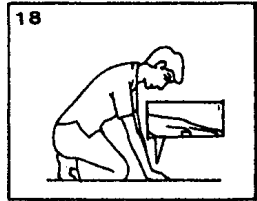
Covering



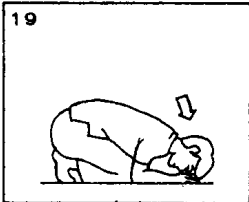
Lowering



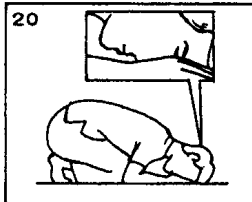
Touching



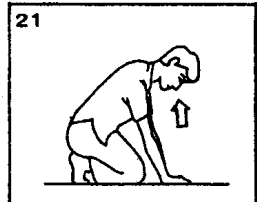
Covering



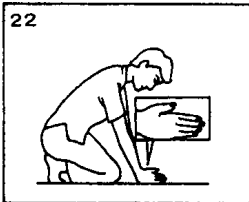
Bending



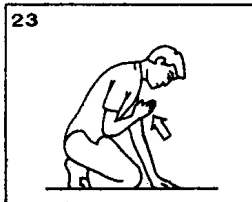
Touching



Raising



Turning



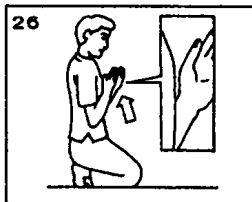
Raising



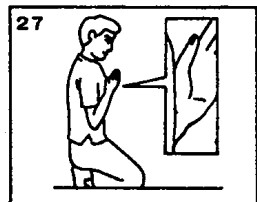
Touching



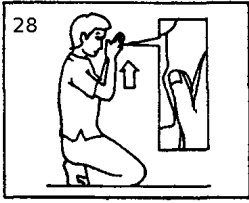
Turning



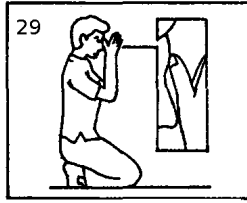
Raising



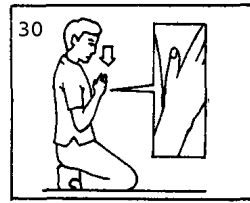
Touching



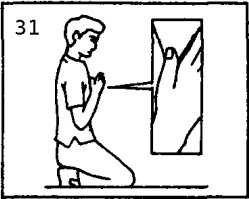
Raising



Touching

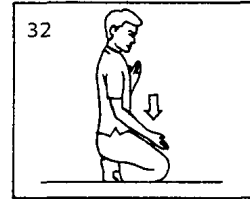


Lowering

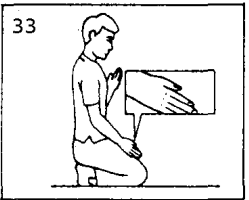


Touching

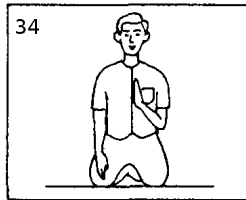
Repeat 12 to 31 two more times, then continue, starting with 32.



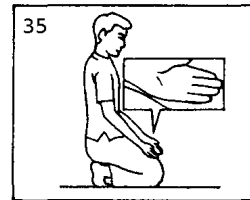
Lowering



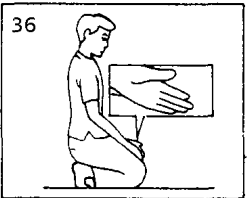
Touching



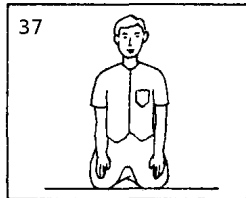
Covering



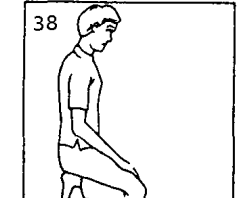
Lowering



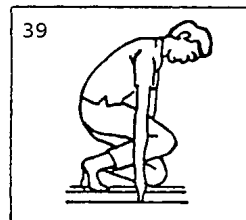
Touching



Covering



Sitting

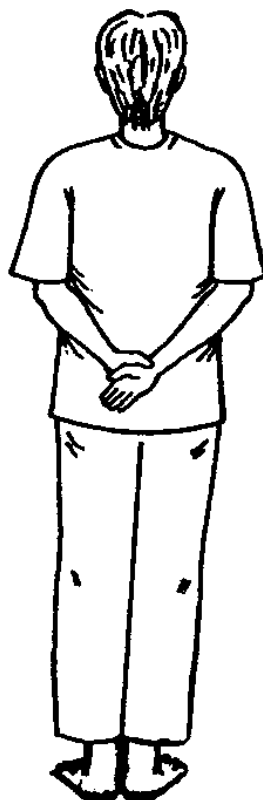
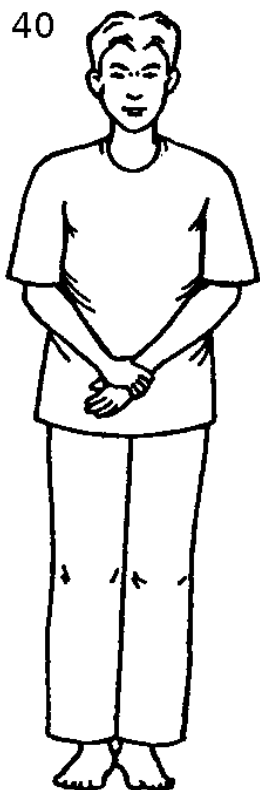


Standing

41



40



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