

## INTRODUCTION

**Satipaṭṭhānā** or the practice or mindfulness was recommended by the Buddha for all who seek to grow spiritually and eventually attain the realization of enlightenment. Buddhism itself is essentially a practical path, a system of physical and psychological techniques designed to bring about this realization. The method here described in this little book by the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw, Bhaddanta Sobhana Mahāthera, Agga mahā paṇḍita, the spiritual head of Sāsana Yeikthā Meditation Centre, Yangon, is the foundation of all Buddhists meditation practice. This form of meditation may be practised with benefit by all, Buddhist and non-Buddhists alike, because its aim is simply to expand the practiser's consciousness and bring him face to face with his mind.

Buddhist psychology or **Abhidhamma** teaches that you are not your mind. You already know that you are not your body. But you do not yet know that you are not your

mind, because normally you identify yourself with each thought, feeling, impulse, emotion or sensation that comes into your mind. Each takes you on a little trip. Through the practice of mindfulness, you come to observe the rise and fall, the appearance and disappearance of these various thoughts and feelings, and gradually develop a sense of distance and detachment from them. Then you will no longer become caught up by your hang-ups. This leads to a deep inner peaceful calm. Through further practice, you will develop insight and wisdom, which is the power of consciousness to pierce through the veils of illusion and ignorance to the reality that lies beyond.

At the insistence of the former Prime Minister of the Union of Burma and of the President of the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization of Yangon, the Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw came down from Shwebo to Yangon on the 10th November 1949. The Meditation Centre at the Sāsana Yeiktha Road, Yangon, was formally opened on

the 4th December 1949 when the Mahāsi Sayādaw began to give to twenty-five devotees a methodical training in the right system of **Satipaṭṭhānā Vipassanā** (Insight Meditation through Mindfulness).

From the first day of the opening of the Centre, a discourse on the exposition of the Satipaṭṭhānā Vipassanā its purpose, the method of practice, the benefits derived therefrom, etc., has been given daily to each batch of devotees arriving at the Centre almost every day to undertake the intensive course of training. The discourse lasts normally for one hour and thirty minutes, and the task of talking almost daily in this manner had inevitably caused a strain. Fortunately the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization came forward to relieve the situation with an offer of charity of a tape recorder machine with which the discourse given on the 27th July 1951 to a group of fifteen devotees undertaking the training was taken on tape. Thereafter this tape recorded discourse has been in constant use

daily, preceded by a few preliminary remarks spoken by the Mahāsi Sayādaw in person.

Then owing to the great demand of many branch Meditation Centres of the Mahāsi Satipaṭṭhānā Vipassanā as well as of the public, this discourse was published in book form in 1954. This book has now run to several editions. As there was also keen interest and eager demand among many devotees of other nationalities who are unacquainted with Myanmar, the discourse was translated into English by the late U Pe Tin, a lay disciple and practised Mahāsi yogī, who had acted as interpreter to British Rear Admiral Shattock who went through a course of Vipassanā meditation practice at the Centre in its early days.