

# Instructions from a German monk

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The information printed in this document comes from conversations in which I received instructions from a German monk. Either he just told me or he told me after I asked a question. After each conversation I wrote it all down in my diary and later on I computerized it.

Hopefully these instructions and tips can be of use to others as well even though the text is not very structured.

## ***First occasion***

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- ◆ Most important is *Sati*.
  - Not dosing off in "nice" states.
- ◆ Practice is up and down over the years. In a 5 year period this can be seen (a cycle). The Buddha recommended staying in one place for this time.
- ◆ Endurance is very important.
  - When it gets tough.
  - When defilements come strong.
- ◆ Build momentum and don't lose it.
- ◆ 5 year crisis.
- ◆ Being a monk is the most difficult job in the world.
- ◆ Do what the Kruba Ajahns say, even if you don't always understand the reason.
- ◆ It's just a conditioning process.
- ◆ Yes, we tend to forget things. It's just the memory, we don't have control over it.
- ◆ In the beginning, try to do a lot of samatha. If you reflect to soon it's easy to get lost in thoughts (especially for westerners).
- ◆ It's not so difficult to stay as a monk, but it is very difficult to stay as a GOOD monk!
- ◆ Spiritual friends are very important.
- ◆ Whatever practice you have done before – it is now gone. Only now exists, what you are doing now.
- ◆ 1:st year: "Now I know the practice". 2:nd year: "The first year I didn't know anything". 3:rd year: "The second year I didn't understand the practice at all!"
- ◆ To stay distant/detached from the thoughts. This is freedom!

## Second occasion

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- ◆ *Sati* is key.
- ◆ Have a center point so you can see the mind's movement: breath, body etc.
- ◆ The more you know when you get lost, the better. It indicates *Sati* is getting stronger. It seems like you are getting lost more but it's actually progress.
- ◆ When tired – observe movement e.g. hand (for example tapping ones finger on the leg and focusing on that). Very good, getting more common in Thailand.
- ◆ 70-80% of foreigners disrobe sooner or later. Cause they are not happy with their results. Don't reach goal.
- ◆ If you practice correctly from the start you will get results and then satisfaction. Leading to more energy.
- ◆ In the beginning, fresh energy from *saddha*, use it well.
- ◆ 1. Develop *Sati*.  
2. See characteristics etc.
- ◆ Know "thinking" when there are thoughts. The content of thoughts unimportant.
- ◆ Know body movement when doing chores etc.
- ◆ Key: know what's going on in body and mind.
- ◆ The freedom you will get is not what you thought it would be.
- ◆ Wat Pah Nanachat lacks an enlightened leader. That's a big thing. Ajahn Anan is a well practiced monk. You are very lucky to have come here. Not many westerners get's a chance like this. Good kamma.
- ◆ Don't sit looking around wishing the meditation to be over. Bad habit, hard to break.
- ◆ Do the chores and help, but don't try to impress others and don't mind if they do them or not.
- ◆ "I wish somebody told me this from the beginning."
- ◆ Ask others about finding the way, for signs along the way. Not only when it goes well but also when having problems.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to go out and do walking meditation. Can be very good.
- ◆ When in *kuti*, can say out loud "thinking", "pleasant feeling" etc. Getting more and more detailed.
- ◆ If cannot focus on breath, try switching object. Have a toolbox of objects for *Sati*.
- ◆ Ones body posture and how you conduct yourself is like a mirror of the mind.
- ◆ Even if our thoughts can understand the 3 characteristics the mind cannot. Cause it's so lost. Need to build *Sati* so the mind can see.
- ◆ In meditation: don't be too tense or too loose. Neither works. Find the right way.
- ◆ You must test this to see if it is true for yourself.
- ◆ The mind is very, very quick (to get lost).

- ◆ After a while you can practice anywhere, under any conditions, all the time.
- ◆ If an answer you get really gets to you and feels right, then that's the right answer.

### ***Third occasion***

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- ◆ Aging, sickness and death are in themselves not suffering. All suffering comes from craving.
- ◆ When you see the distracted mind. Don't do anything! We always want to do, shape, change things. Stop with that habit. Just observe.
- ◆ When you talk with someone who has gone before you and they can confirm your experiences as sign posts, then you gain confidence and energy.
- ◆ If you spend time with awake people you tend to become awake. When you spend time with dull people you tend to become dull. Just conditioning.
- ◆ Just observing, just knowing. This can be your highway to results.
- ◆ Some people can be monks for 20 years and still attain nothing. Because they make the practice too complicated.
- ◆ Keep it simple!
- ◆ Don't let time go to waste for free!
- ◆ Before going to sleep. Count the breaths until you fall asleep: 10, 20, 100?  
I had my first deep meditation like this (and I had practiced all day before that).
- ◆ When the body is relaxed the mind gets more relaxed.
- ◆ Teaching Dhamma to sleepy people is like throwing diamonds to pigs (I was really tired).
- ◆ They say that it is the middle way between two extremes. Like there are only two wrong ways. In reality there are a million ways to go wrong.
- ◆ Always stay with you anchor (meditation object) to see the minds movements.
- ◆ Be diligent in the beginning before you get too many duties.
- ◆ Yes, you will notice more bodily feelings: itching – like ants crawling on your body. Many strange things.
- ◆ See that thoughts and mind objects are always changing, coming and going. How can they be you?  
But the awareness is always there. This is more you. However this is not totally true since there is sometimes delusion. So there is something else beyond that. But I don't want to fry your brain!  
Should take it step by step.
- ◆ The speed of your progress depends on earlier *Parami* (qualities and the past training one have done).
- ◆ This observing will take you a very long way.
- ◆ The teacher is like a mother only adjusting the way the child is going when it's going the

wrong way. Balancing ones way.

- ◆ The mind is already peaceful in itself but it has been stirred up, confused. So it creates suffering.
- ◆ The mind is like a window or glasses that has become dirty. The glass is clear all the time but it is covered with dirt.  
And it's not enough to clean our glasses one single day, right? We must clean them every day!
- ◆ "You already look more awake, after only 2 days. I have observed you. You can see this on how you move etc".
  - "It's easy to see others, not so easy to see yourself."
- ◆ It's all about letting go.
- ◆ When there is fear of letting go, it's a sign that you are going in the right direction. Have conviction and let go!
- ◆ "Buddha" means one who is awake, not one who thinks or analyzes!

## ***Fourth occasion***

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Talked to the monk again yesterday, will try to remember what he said:

- ◆ You want to uphold this image to others of the "Golden you", "The golden Buddha". This is attachment and will create suffering for you.
- ◆ When you said "I don't know" about if aging, sickness and death are suffering, the energy changed instantly (I became protective). This is because of attachment.
- ◆ How to handle criticism?  
It's just vibrations in the air, coming in through the ears and reaching consciousness. It's just a process, conditions. Why get upset?  
Look if there is truth to the criticism, then think "ok, I will change." and there's not more to it.  
If there's not it might be a misunderstanding and the person saying it is suffering. It's not a good feeling criticizing someone and they will feel remorse (if it's a good person).  
And remember that there is no person criticizing and no person getting criticized. There are just processes, conditions.
- ◆ If facing problems: getting more duties, experiencing anger etc. Think: "Welcome to my practice".  
Handle boredom the same way and observe it as usual.
- ◆ *Sati* and persistence (continuity, build momentum) are the most important things.
- ◆ A simile for how to practice is that of how men & women like sex differently. Men like it hard & fast, this is the wrong way to practice. Women like it soft & long, this is the right way to practice.
- ◆ You have this golden opportunity now to practice. You have all the support: from lay people providing the requisites to the teachers providing the Dhamma. Make use of it!

- ◆ "I'm just giving the information to the next generation. Later on it might be your turn."
- ◆ Just observe and use wisdom to counter if needed. If you fail to see how something came up it's because your *Sati-Pañña* isn't quick enough yet.
- ◆ It's just consciousness arising. Can you control it? Can you say: "Be conscious when I'm asleep" and it is? NO!
- ◆ "The country of Sweden". Does it really exist? No, it's just an idea.
- ◆ Not knowing the Thai language makes it really hard for us westerners to understand the teachers BUT we also don't get involved in the gossip and talk of the Thai monks. Which is actually a big thing. "You are lucky you don't understand" one Thai monk said.
- ◆ If thinking about criticism you suffer maybe 100 or 1000 times for something said 1 time!
- ◆ New movement for *Sati*: "rolling thumbs".
- ◆ If you put in the conditions the results will come.
- ◆ "I'm trying to get a network across Europe" (of monks, including me).
- ◆ The gate keeper is mindfulness: the *kilesas* don't want to go in to the city when they see the gate keeper and gate keeper can not let them in.
- ◆ Contemplate death at least 5 minutes/day.
- ◆ "You think people will only say things you like? And never things you don't like? NO!"
- ◆ It's not really attainment, it's realization.
- ◆ As long as you do your best (in the practice) you can die content knowing that.
- ◆ It's like a character in a computer game. You get more and more experience (and level up) and get better and better tools.
- ◆ Right now you are level 1, so you cannot take on level 30 people! (*kilesas*, practices).
- ◆ If you die it's like someone pulled the plug of the computer and you have to start again.
- ◆ It's all just made up, ideas thoughts.
- ◆ "I haven't seen my parents since I ordained 5 years ago."
- ◆ It's not about getting something (more about getting rid of something).
- ◆ Don't look at your teachers behavior as an example. They are on a different level. They are done.
- ◆ "And then your mother can be the proudest mother." (if I get enlightened).
- ◆ There is only now, everything else is just ideas - planning and memories.
  - There isn't really night and day. It's just what we call it. The sun is always there, just that the planet turns.
- ◆ So you can see the attachments that are still left (to the sense of "I").
- ◆ The puzzle (of the Dhamma) begin to come together.

## **Fifth occasion – The goodbye speech (1h 20 min)**

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- ◆ *Sati, Samadhi, Pañña.*
- ◆ The unique thing about the Buddha was *Sati-Pañña*. The other things (morality, concentration) already existed.
- ◆ *Samadhi* is for getting energy and focus. To get efficiency.
  - But remember to see the *Sukha/Piti* as temporary objects in order not to get attached to them.
- ◆ The thing we need to see is the disadvantage of it, and then we will turn away, let go of them. (*My comment*: not completely true, one also need an alternative for enjoyment och happiness).
- ◆ Start out with *Sati*, to get to know the workings of the mind.
  - How it goes out to things.
  - Reactions.
  - Attachments.
  - Liking/disliking, thinking.
  - Wanting/not wanting.
  - Aware or lost.
- ◆ Empower it with *Samadhi*.
- ◆ And *Pañña* is like the foreman, who knows what to do: observing, 3 characteristics etc.
- ◆ The mind is still from the start, but it got confused and think that peace arises when craving is satisfied. It creates the problems for itself. We need to stop doing this.
- ◆ Attachment arises cause we get pleasant feeling and crave it. But it is impermanent and goes away. When we want it again we suffer.
- ◆ If sex were really good then we would have it once and be satisfied forever!
- ◆ When you reach second *Jhana* the mind get really focused and can go on with something for hours or days.
- ◆ When *Sati* is strong it is very hard to sleep. Even if we like to.
- ◆ Use post its: "Are you aware or lost?".
- ◆ We really need to actually see when the pleasant feeling goes away. Observe how it changes. See this again and again. The amount of times we need to see this before it really sinks into the mind is personal and depends on previous lives etc (on *Parami*). 1, 10, 100, 1000, 10000 times!
- ◆ See that we cannot control the thoughts from arising. Not under our control. We can put in conditions to change them but they go on by themselves.  
Changing, and uncontrollable!
- ◆ How can they give lasting happiness? They can't!

- ◆ "Write these things down, together with your own reflections and reactions about them. Cause we so easily forget."
- ◆ Do the right causes and get the right results.
- ◆ Just do it.
- ◆ The 4 *Brahma viharas* arises naturally from realization (of suffering).
- ◆ If you come to realization, don't forget the people back in Sweden. Remember how you felt being there with nobody to explain. Share!
- ◆ The 8 precepts are very important to follow, they really protect the practice and hinders you from getting lost in thoughts, dreams etc.
- ◆ Continuity, build momentum!
- ◆ But don't go back to Sweden too soon, after just a little bit of realization.
- ◆ "It took me many years of striving and pain to get to this information."
- ◆ We are continuing the process from the Buddha. He started it with explaining how to view things in a new way.
- ◆ If a teaching is understood also depends very much on the listener, on his heart.
- ◆ *Tudong* is a very good practice, to only keep what you really need, not get attached etc.
- ◆ Eat only what you need.
- ◆ Don't try to follow the really good, austere monks too soon. Will only cause frustration.
- ◆ Eckhart Tolle: "The power of now" is really good. Cause it points out things you didn't see before. That is Dhamma.
  - Then there is Tanha-Dhamma which only create craving for you (mind powers, heaven etc).
- ◆ If you really see the disadvantage of something (say anger) then you will stop with it. Whether somebody is watching you or not. Cause it only hurts you, creates suffering.
- ◆ After a while you lose interest in small talk etc.
- ◆ Sleeping not comfortably really helps.
- ◆ If you go around asking everybody and get different answers each time. You will be very confused (cause you don't see the big picture).
- ◆ Guard the 6 sense doors.
- ◆ (If enlightened) you can bring back really nice presents, the present of Dhamma. And if it's real, you don't have to tell them. They will ask. Cause they see the good it has brought you.
- ◆ If the tapping with the fingers gets too coarse, then switch to breath.
- ◆ A *sotapanna* has realized just this: "whatever arises must fall".
- ◆ It's just conditioning, just conditions, just processes. There is no self in there!
- ◆ "I have done over 1600 km of *Tudong*....and now I have arthritis (joint disorder)."
- ◆ *Sati & Samadhi*. One conditions the other.
- ◆ Apply the 3 characteristics to all the different bases of mindfulness. Body, feeling, mind

states, mind objects.

- ◆ "In our *Korwat* there is *Tudong* 3 months/year."
- ◆ Test things/practices and see what results they bring.

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Compiled by Tobias Heed, 2013.

Notes from Wat Marp Jan, 2011-2012.