

Chapter IV

Analytical Study on The Influence of Vipassanā Meditation Techniques By The Venerable Pā-Auk Sayādaw To Society

4.1. The Influence on Myanmar.

Pa-Auk Sayādaw was a great teacher to his monks and disciples, a great Dhamma preacher to large segments of the Burmese population, a founder and organizer of many Buddhist lay organizations, a famous teacher popularizing meditation practice, especially Vipassanā meditation, and a classics scholar and author of classical works.

The influence of his meditation technique can be seen in the establishment of the many well-known monasteries throughout Myanmar that follow his method of meditation. Some can be found in Yangon; Mandalay, indeed all over the country.

He set up three kinds of monasteries: education centers, meditation centers, and secluded teaching of Vinaya pitaka. The Sayādaw also organized many associations throughout Myanmar, in villages, towns, and cities e.g. Saṅkhitta Associations, Abhidhamma Association, Vipassanā Association, Association for refraining from eating beef, the Pa-Auk Translation Association, and the World Buddhist Missionary Association.

4.1.1. Evaluation of Impact on Social Life

In their daily life mature meditators have peace of mind after they have practiced vipassanā meditation. They have a capability to negotiate with people around them; they become more interested in sharing, more sympathetic, have more empathy, patience and forgiveness, and they had humble manners. These are basic elements of a layman code of discipline

and components of the Noble Life and prerequisites to achieve wisdom (pañña). There are systematic social relationships among the devotees and venerable Pa-Auk Sayādaw. There are many devotees who pay respect to the Venerable Sayādaw and other Nāyaka Sayādaw. There are many celebrations for a variety of occasions. In Myanmar, New Year (April 18) is on Full-moon day of Kason Buddha's Day and at that time the venerable invited about one hundred monks from other monasteries for alms foods and necessary items. In July a robe offering ceremony is performed. The Kathina ceremony is also celebrated and one hundred monks are invited and contribute yellow robes. Thus old mediators and new meditator devotees become kalyāṇamitta. They are always interested to contemplate as much as possible when they have time and as their hobby.

4.1.2. The Main Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Center

The main Pa-Auk Toya Monastery is a Buddhist monastery in the *Theravāda* tradition with emphasis on teaching and practice of both *Samatha* (tranquility) and *Vipassanā* (insight) meditation. Situated in a forest along the Taung Nyo Mountain range in Mon State, Myanmar, the monastery provides an advantageous setting for the practice of long-term intensive meditation. Presently there are over 100 foreign meditators residing in the monastery originating from over 20 countries.

Pa-Auk Tawya comprises three monasteries, namely, the Upper Monastery, the Middle Monastery and the Lower Monastery. The main monastery is the Upper Monastery. This is of relatively recent origin, dating back to the early 1980.

It covers a range of hills along the Taung Nyo mountain range. This is where there are large two storey meditation halls and *sīma*, alms-

giving hall (*Piṇḍapātasala*), refectory, a clinic, sick-bay, *Pāli* School, a library building which houses the *Saṅgha* Office, a computer room, dormitory, the Foreigners' Registration Office, a reception hall and the dwelling of the Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw (collectively referred to as the Sayadaw *kuṭi*). There are over 220 *kuṭis* (single meditator huts) and only men reside in this monastery.¹

The Middle Monastery is situated on flat land and is relatively small. It has a modest meditation hall and *sīma*, a *cetiya* (pagoda), and a small number of *kuṭis*. Only *bhikkhus* reside in this monastery. The Lower Monastery is the original monastery of Pa-Auk Tawya. Situated here is a small two-storey meditation hall and *sīma*, a Dhamma hall, 3 *cetiyas*, the office of lay administration (commonly known as the Lower Monastery Office), clinic, kitchens and *kuṭis* for *bhikkhus* and male lay yogis. Quarters for *silashins/bhikshunis* and female lay yogis are located only in the monastery.

A large meditation hall for women, *Mettavihari*, has recently been completed. Since the 1990's Pa-Auk Tawya has expanded greatly with improvements in the number and quality of facilities. Presently there are a total of over 280 *kuṭis* and other single lodgings in addition to multiple lodgings and dormitories. *Kuṭis* are continually being built to keep pace with the increasing number of residents. There is an electricity supply in every *kuṭi* throughout the Monastery (Voltage is 220V AC). The quality and dependability of the water supply has also improved. The main road leading from the highway through the Lower Monastery to the Upper Monastery has been upgraded to tar road.

¹ Pā- Auk Sayādaw, **The Buddha As The Same As The Lotus**, Pā-Auk Forest Monastery, Mawlamyaing, Myanmar, 2007.P.293.

4.2. Impact of Vipassanā Meditation Technique at the Pa-Auk Meditation Centre

In an organization there are many individuals who have relationships among colleagues, students, meditators, and soldiers. These individuals have their own concept, ideas, and views on the respective organization. The Pa-Auk Vipassanā meditation center is composed of many people, young and old of a variety of status who come to practice vipassanā meditation long and short term, and for some length of time.

They have their thoughts on the centers regarding the venerable's discourses, meditation procedure, working staff and the environment of the centers. In the research paper by Morgan (2001) he studied the vipassanā meditators' views of progress. This researcher is also interested to find out the influence of the vipassanā meditation technique of Pa-Auk meditation centre on new meditators and the older, mature meditators. Sterling (2005) focused on the potential benefits and found out that after a 30-day retreat the meditators are less anxious and more content.

The researcher of this paper would like to evaluate the meditators' experience after meditation practice at the Pa-Auk meditation centres. For this purpose the researcher prepared open-ended question sets for the new meditators and returning meditators. The random survey was conducted at the six branches of Pa-Auk meditation centres and the numbers of sampling units are as follows:

	New			Old			Grand Total
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
Main Centre	2	4	6	2	9	11	17
International Buddhasāsana Meditation Centre	3	4	7	3	5	8	15
Hmawbi Vipassana Meditation Centre	-	4	4	1	3	4	8
Pyin Oo Lwin Pa-Auk meditation center	5	4	9	3	4	7	16
Pāgu Pa-Auk meditation center	2	8	10	2	6	8	18
Dhamma Dāyada	-	6	6	-	9	9	15
	12	30	42	11	38	49	91

The first three centers are located in the city, Mawlamyintown Township, Myanmar and the last three centers are situated in the countryside of Myanmar.

4.2.1. Impact on the new meditators regarding theoretical and practical concepts

In the open-ended questions for new meditators the meditators are encouraged to express their feelings and experiences. The results provide abundant ideas regarding their opinions.

4.2.2. Literature on Theravada Buddhism

The meditators of the Pa-Auk Vipassanā meditation centre state their comprehension of the theoretical ideas of Theravada Buddhism has improved. They express seven benefits of practicing vipassanā meditation: elimination of purity of mind, overcoming sorrow and lamentation, cessation of physical and mental suffering, achievement of noble magga and realization of Nibbāna.

They also can differentiate between Paññatti and Paramattha and became aware of *Paramattha* (ultimate realities) as mind, mental concomitants, corporealities and Nibbāna. There is evidence that the meditators have an ability to identify mind and body. Moreover, meditators achieved Nāma Rūpa Pariccheda Ñāṇa and practiced a series of Vipassanā Ñāṇa throughout the meditation process.

They realized four types of satipatthāna and practised daily movement and activities as the Lord Buddha preached. They have a stronger sense of rising greed, anger, and anxiety and are able to control them so they cannot flare up in force. They accepted the importance of *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Pañña*. They found the occurrences of *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and Anatta throughout the process inside their body, physically and mentally. Some meditators are fresher and they have to catch up on the basic concepts of literature of Theravada Buddhism.

4.2.3. Opinion on procedures of discourses, follow up strategies and mottos

In the Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre there are mottos regarding characters, manners, and meditation practice. Reminders of these and procedures are written on posters and placed all over the campus. The meditators are interested in the content of the mottos. They accept the mottos as a supporting factor for their vipassanā meditation practice process. For example, “Help the meditation centre by speaking softly”. And the motto “Although you have sharp eye sight, behaves yourself as if blind and cannot see”. “Although you are good in hearing, behave yourself as deaf”.

The meditators note that the signs help them to understand, and apply in the meditation practice procedure. They also trust that the mottos

are short, honest and the contents are applicable in their daily life. The motto “Although you are energetic, act as a disabled person” impacts deep in their memory so they can realize a high level of wisdom easily and rapidly. The meditators are pleased and satisfied by the motto;

“Donation, Pleasant conversation, Apply effort for benefit, regarding others as yourself, By these four achieve appreciation”

Practitioners apply according to this motto while practicing at the meditation centre and in their real life as a noble person.

Furthermore, the meditators are content with the motto;

“While eating pay attention on Wisdom”

The meditators understood the idea that eating with Sīla means eating food is not for pride strength and beauty but to serve an extension of Sāsanā and for the benefit of others and to practise noble Dhamma. They realize that eating with samatha means transmission of loving kindness (Metta) to those who prepare food and the donors of the food. The last, eating with vipassanā means while eating the stages of the movement of eyes, hands, and body are acknowledged with sati. Thus the meditators practice this concept of eating and attain merit. Finally, the meditators absorb the following motto as a guideline and instruction of vipassanā meditation practice;

Sharp eye-sight person performs as blind, Good in hearing person performs as deaf, Fluent speaker acts dumb, Energetic one behaves as a cripple, Be in this manner, one is able to achieve Dhamma.

Thus the new meditators are attracted by mottos and apply them in their meditation practice and for the manner of their daily life.

4.2.4. The Development in significance of mind

The meditators who is government officer, he practiced as a new

practitioner in Five Pa-Auk Vipassanā meditation centres provided feedback regarding their state of mind as follows:

They feel peace of mind in the meditation centers because the centers are clean and quiet due to a lack of noise and thus they enjoy practicing. Their peace of mind improves too. The meditators do not speak loudly and are self-controlled, understand the four noble truths, and practice full time. One gentleman stated that he did not attend the discourses but physically carried out meditation and found that within a few days he improved but it was not possible for him to describe in detail because his knowledge is still weak.²

The meditation technique is very systematic. A lady 54 years old, who worked in bank as bank manager, she outlined that in the first two or three days her mind was wandering but later after the meditation Master instructed how to practice sitting and walking meditation precisely she improved and feels peace of mind. The meditators have to practice by the method of the Great Pa-Auk Sayādaw and trust that they are achieving great noble kusala.

Moreover, the meditators agree that the Dhamma instructions are clear and accurate, and the service staff has full *Cetana* (perfect good performance). During the training time the meditators are free from *akusala* (immoral acts) resulting in more kusala and enhanced peace of mind. The meditators state that the meditation Masters teach meditation procedures in detail, concerning how to lead a good life, how to lead a way of death and they use examples. The meditators feel pleased and

² **Mr. Myo Min**, government officer, Yangon, (new meditator), 20-3-2016. 9am

satisfied.³ An assistant lecturer at the geography department of Pegu College explains that she has chance to comprehend the Lord Buddha's instructions and the mottos, the perfect techniques, and the discourses of the Lord Buddha that she has not perceived yet, and she feels peace of mind.⁴

An assistant lecturer of the chemistry department at Pegu College describes that she became more patient, more aware of rising and falling, and achieved samādhi to a certain extent and that the meditation centre is quiet and peaceful making it suitable for meditation practice.⁵ One of the new meditators defines that she is able to accept wordly conditions and makes an attempt to control her lobha, dosa, and moha as much as possible.

A new meditator, who worked marketing manager, declares that she has to practice precisely by observing the stages of mind and that she had improved control of her anger. Even when she sees someone acting in a wrong way she can accept it as a lesson and she sympathizes with people who are out of control of their anger. Now she realizes that if she is able to curb her mind, her peace of mind will be improved daily. The meditators realize that they have to keep the nine precepts, that meals are at regular times, and they will be healthy while residing at the meditation center.⁶

³ **Miss. Khin Mya Aye**, Bank Manager, Maw La Myen,(new meditator) 20-3-2016

⁴ **Miss. Tin Zar win**, Assistant Lecturer, Pego Collage, (new meditator), 20-3-2016,10am.

⁵ **Miss Win Sandar**, Assistant Lecturer, Pego Collage,(new meditator)20-3-2016. 1pm.

⁶ **Miss Than Dar Aye**, marketing manager, yangon, (new meditator) 20-3-2016.p 1:30.

A young man notes that the mature meditators at the meditation Centre assist others and he has peace of mind. A temporary monk reveals that at first he did not realize paramattha (ultimate realities) now he can accept and his state of mind is getting better. One more, a temporary monk, specifies that only based on the meditation practice his mind is at peace, and also by attending the discourses of Pa-Auk many times and practicing meditation his mind became calmer.

A meditator, who is a teacher in Than Lyin township, clarifies that when she enters the meditation centre her mind becomes stable and she is earnest to contemplate, attend discourses and her mind is purified. The meditators identify that their lobha (greed), dosa (hate), *moha* (ignorance) and pride are weakened and Anicca, Dukkha, and Anatta are observed.⁷

A foreign meditator (monk)⁸ declares that at first his mind was wandering but now it is stable and he has ability to practice sitting meditation for longer. Lastly, the meditators who attempted to control *kusala* due to *kāya* (body) and *vacī* (speech) realized the desires they are suffering and perceived the nature of mind (*Nāma*) and body (*Rūpa*).

It can be concluded that new meditators have a foundation in Buddhist literature and knowledge and realize the elements of the Noble Dhamma. This is reinforced by strategies, discourses, and meditation procedures, follow up interviews and personal support.

⁷ **Miss. Nyin way phyo**, Teacher, Than Lyin Township, (new meditator) 20-3-2016. 1:30pm.

⁸ **Vāsava, Ashin, Monk**, USA, International Buddhasāsana Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre, Yangon, 20-3-2016. 2pm.

4.3. Influences on the old meditators related to the Dhamma level and personal judgment

The mature meditators practicing at the main Pa-Auk express the effects related to the Lord Buddha and the Dhamma after they have practiced at the centre. They feel more respect and faith in the Lord Buddha. Moreover they can understand more clearly when they read Dhamma textbooks. When attending the discourses of the saṅghas they have accepted there are plenty of examples. Also they come to believe that the saṅghas are the real sons of the Lord Buddha and have a strong desire to pay respect. They feel pleased and content to be a Buddhist.

They have unshakeable confidence in the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Ven. Pa-Auk. The discourses of the Venerable regarding guidance give them pleasure and are remembered after they have practiced in Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centres.

They accepted the triple gems are the only dependable, respectable subjects and the Dhamma is the unique source of peace of mind and is required to terminate the cycles of rebirth by performing good deeds throughout their lives. It is also understood that the Lord Buddha's method, the *Majjhima paṭipadā* (the middle way) is the exclusive path of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, which should be done habitually and is able to lead to peaceful Nibbāna. They also respect the Viriya and wisdom of the Lord Buddha.

The mature meditators at the Main Pa-Auk Vipassanā Centres wrote that they pay more respect to the triple gems after they have participated in the retreat, and would prefer to spend more time during leisure time on reading and studying religious books. They also trust that

it will be beneficial to carry out the activities of the Lord Buddha and the Dhamma in daily life.

The meditator who is marketing manager, at the International Buddhasāsana Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centres confirms that they have stronger faith in the triple gems. Moreover, the meditators expresses that he has a strong desire that other Buddhists will have belief in Dāna Sīla, and bhāvanā and carry out as much as possible like he does.⁹ A retired deputy rector describes that sometimes he encountered marvelous experiences and feelings while she is practising vipassanā meditation.¹⁰ A seventy three year old medical doctor indicated that she has hundred percent faiths in religion throughout her life.

The meditators at Hmawbi Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre state that they became more religious after participation at the retreat in this centre. A young man declares that his habit is to pray at bedtime and remember the Triple Gems while performing activities in daily life. The participants specify that without doubt they have trust in the Lord Buddha as the great leader who has enormous metta (loving kindness) for people and guides the people in diversity for the Dhamma and a noble layman life.¹¹ A lady wrote that she has realized that her kilesas are declining without knowing the exact reason. Lastly, a gentleman revealed that he concentrates on sati, meditation, and praying. The meditators at Pāgu Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre declare they have a strong

⁹ **Mr. Mg Tin Mg San**, Marketing Manager, Yangon, (old meditator) 3-5-2016.9am.

¹⁰ **Mr. San Shwe Aung**, deputy rector, Yatan Bon University, Mandalay, (old meditator) 3-5-2016, 9:30am.

¹¹ **Mr, Soe Naing Tun**, Student, Dagon University, (old meditator) 3-5-2016. 10am.

determination to carry on vipassanā meditation until they achieve the goal of Nibbāna.

One of the meditators at the Dhamma dāyada Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre verifies that she has faith, not only in the Triple Gems, but also in reflection of Kamma. This is the same as the other meditators who confess they have the greatest respect for the Triple Gems.

4.3.1. Modifications in the Level of Peace of Mind

The researcher ascertained the declarations of the meditators regarding their level of Peace of Mind after they followed the course of training at the Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centres.

4.3.1.1 Main Pa-Auk Meditation Centre

They say they feel more peaceful, enjoy more pleasure just being alive and have increased peace of mind. Also they noted that they have more patience and realize that they have become less greedy, and have less anger and have an increased ability to become aware of changes in their mind and body. They have a stronger belief that it is vital to eradicate the source of *Dukkha* as *Samudaya* (attachment, lobha, taṇhā) to experience absolute peace by oneself. Also that it is essential to be mindful forever then *Akusala* (immoral acts and unwholesome deed) will be removed.

One lady who is teacher, she explains that at first she had a short temper but now after receiving the guidance of the Venerable Sayādaw on Satipaṭṭhāna she is able to avoid loba, anger and mohā (*ignorance*).¹² One meditator who is business women, she declares that she can control her mind, has less kilesa, and is capable of determining right and wrong.

¹² Miss. Thin Zar, Teacher, (old meditator) live in Maw La Myen. 10-5-2016.1:20pm.

At her work she encounters stress and dissatisfaction but after practicing vipassana meditation she has competence to control her mind and accepts that these are *Dukkha* (suffering) and with her subsequent thought she immediately becomes at peace.¹³

The practitioners are more proficient at realizing feelings (*Vedanā*) and thus are patient and receiving. One medical doctor acknowledges that he has become less forgetful and not so quick tempered. The meditators encounter problems and without despair they can solve the problems. There is a very positive change: he has proficiency to pick positive (good) points of view. They become less anxious and have very supportive ideas when dealing with individuals.¹⁴

4.3.1.2 Experiences of meditations from International Buddhasāsanā Pa-Auk meditation center

The Meditators explain that their pride has diminished and they have greater belief in the Triple Gems. A teacher from Yangon University states emphatically that after the meditation practice she prefers to avoid noise and to be solitary and in peace. He feels like he is not occupying his body anymore.

When he suffers from headaches he tries to meditate as much as possible without taking medicine and keeps in mind that the headache or disease is impermanent, rising and falling always and finally, he resolved to practice meditation continuously until his last breath.¹⁵ In general the practitioners clarify that they have peace of mind and that if they come

¹³ **Miss. Zin Mar Myint**, business women,(old meditator) live in Mon state. 10-5-2016,2:0pm.

¹⁴ **Mr. Than Zin Tun**, Dr, (old meditator), live in Yangon, 10-5-2016.2:20.

¹⁵ **Mr. Tin Lwin Oo**, Teacher, Yangon University, (old meditator), 7-6-2016. 9pm.

across a worldly state of affairs they are able to adapt by their awareness and wisdom.

4.3.1.3 Hmawbi Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre

Many declare that they have become less attached to their relatives and property and become more generous. They have peace of mind. One of the meditators who worked transport company, he confirms that thanks to practicing vipassanā meditation his heart disease is nearly cured. He confessed that the anxieties he suffers have reduced and she feels better. The meditators who have carried out vipassanā meditation for more than 100 days explain that they are flexible in dealing with others, as they have become aware of the reality that every person, rich or poor, is made up of Nāma and Rūpa.¹⁶

They are constantly changing; have more patience, forgiveness, understanding, sympathy, politeness, calmness, and better relationships with others.

A lady who worked as director of government office, she practiced vipassanā meditation for many days reveals that now she has the ability to reduce her *ego* (selfishness) and that she has better knowledge of others and accepts that everyone has at least one thing in common with her. She tries to find out at least one similarity between herself and others and makes an attempt to be on good terms. A lady who contemplates vipassanā meditation for more than 100 days asserts that at first she thought the remarks about her by people were very important. Now she is

¹⁶ **Mr. Aung Soe Tun**, Director, Transport Company, (old meditator), 7-6-2016. 9:20 am

not affected by the comments about her by others but she emphasizes doing right things (performance) as much as possible.¹⁷

The mature meditators practicing at Hmawbi Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre write that they have become more civilized, humble, patient with better understanding and loving kindness and sympathy for others. And that after training at the Centre they live with a more positive point of view and keep in mind that everything is occurring and vanishing so they are more competent in mindfulness when hearing and seeing things

One of the meditators at this centre refers to the motto: *Domination and pleasant conversation, Apply effort for benefits and regarding others as yourself, By these four, achieve appreciation*. She made up her mind to behave as the above motto throughout her life. A doctor writes that she is trying to forgive the person who she suspects is not paying attention to her.¹⁸ A young man who is still practicing at the meditation centre identifies that he is more patient, sympathetic, and understanding of others and tries to assist as much as possible.¹⁹

The mature meditators at the Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centre have a variety of situations concerning their state of mind. One meditator explains that she remembers she has to face death also that although she was abused she is able to stand the situation.²⁰ One meditator states that she became less jealous about others and had more loving kindness to

¹⁷ **Miss. Nan That Zin Thin**, Director of government office, Yangon, (new meditator) 7-6-2016.10am.

¹⁸ **Miss. Su Su Tun**, employee, Yangon, (old meditator) 7-6-2016. 1:30pm.

¹⁹ **Mr. Tun Tun Aung**. Student, Yangon University,(new meditator) 7-6-2016. 2pm

²⁰ **Miss. Khin Wint Myint**, Student, Yangon University,(new meditator) 7-6-2016. 2:30pm.

others. Likewise one expresses that she has become more mild and humble and makes larger donations for better kusala.

A gentleman realizes that all normal people are disturbed by greed, anger, and ignorance and now has an ability to apply the concept of *Yonisomanisikāra* (wise consideration). Furthermore a meditator remarks that people have a variety of beliefs, concepts and manners and their activities are diversified and now she accepts that whatever they have done will be with them and it does not concern her.

One meditator found out that when she feels pain it is not so serious for her and she honors “who does is a new one, who is done is the old thing. ”One gentleman who is practicing at the Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation affirms that he feels pity for individuals who comment that practicing vipassanā meditation cannot lead to nibhāna, but he is pleased by individuals who are interested in vipassanā meditation practice after his explanation.²¹

Thus the vipassanā meditation technique of Pa-Auk Sayādaw has an ability to transform a sick mind and negativity such as greed, anger, ignorance, pride, selfishness, jealousy and strong emotions to a noble mind able and wanting to share, has patience, a positive attitude to others, empathy and sympathy.

4.3.2. Estimation of the effectiveness of the Vipassanā meditation technique at Pa-Auk Meditation Centre

The researcher scrutinized the effects of the vipassanā meditation technique of Pa-Auk on the meditators including new and mature meditators concerning pariyatti sāsana (learning the scriptures), paṭipati

²¹ **Mr. Tun Myint**, taxi driver, Yangon, (new meditator), 7-6-2016, 3pm.

sāsana (religious meditation), paṭiveda sāsana (penetrative insight into the Four Noble Truths), social life, and social relationships.

4.3.3. Analysis Of Interview Results

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

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

There are many reasons why people come to meditate at the Pa-Auk meditation retreat, as presented in the following discussion.

- 1) Many participants search for information by Internet such as “Google “ where they can see the Pa-Auk Meditation Retreat website at [www. http://paauktawyausa.org/](http://paauktawyausa.org/), then they can apply from that website.
- 2) Some participants come to this retreat center because their families or their friends used to meditate here and they were very appreciative of the meditation practice so they recommended other participants to attend the retreat here.
- 3) Regarding appropriate days for a retreat some participants choose this retreat center because a seven-day retreat is an appropriate time for them. It is not too short and not too long for them.
- 4) The participants want to learn meditation and concentrate in order to improve their work, to reduce stress and have a happy life.
- 5) The retreat centers are set in good locations for meditation such as mountainous regions, therefore the participants can enjoy the environment allowing them to take a break from their usual daily

routine and to spend some peaceful time in a mountainous area for them because work-life may have been very hectic.

4.3.3.2 Analysis of Result of Meditation

This section focuses on impressive things about the retreat, benefits, or changes after the retreat and meditation experiences during practice at the Pa-Auk Meditation center.

4.3.3.3 Analysis of Impressive Things about the Retreat

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

- 1) The participants appreciated a peaceful sanctuary such as mountainous serenity; the cleanliness of the retreat centre; the privacy that the retreat centre provides; the hospitality of the people; the inspiring dhamma talks by the monks.
- 2) The instructors have a lot of experience so they can explain the meditation practice very well.
- 3) The monks and staff are friendly and give a warm welcome.
- 4) The practitioners are impressed with a simple meditation technique to reduce thought; to make them forget the body and make them relax.
- 5) The food and refreshment at this retreat are appropriate for practitioners who come from different countries because they serve various types of food, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Also they provide refreshment such as fruit juice and tea in the afternoon and evening.

4.3.3.4 The Analysis of Benefits or Changes after meditation Retreat

The participants gained benefits and felt some changes after

the retreat e.g. they could understand meditation practice and basic Buddhism. They get benefit for their lives and minds that they can then apply in their everyday lives. They can also be a “Good Friend” (kalyānamitta) to their friends and some practitioners come back to ordain as a monk.

Below is a list of benefits or changes after the retreat:

- 6) The practitioners understand the meditation practice and basic Buddhism. The lessons of this retreat include basic knowledge of Buddhism to help participants to understand more about meditation. They can find inner peace for themselves.
- 7) It provides a good opportunity for participants to learn to live a better life and they are able to enjoy their lives more. They learn how to concentrate and learn how to stay content.
- 8) The participants can apply meditation for everyday life and take the Dhamma to use in their lives and improve their life style. They also want to continue practicing meditation after finishing the retreat.
- 9) The meditation retreat has a moral impact on the participants' minds. It cleanses the mind so that regular meditators become gentler, kinder, and feel increasingly uncomfortable about harming anyone, either by speech or action. Their bad habits will decline in degree or are even dropped altogether while their good habits grow in intensity. They can change some behavior and some practitioners feel that they see life in a different way; see everything in a happy way, and they do not become angry so easily.

- 10) They can share meditation experience and can be a “Good Friend” (*kalyānamitta*) to their friends. They found that they now have serenity and they would like to share their experience with their friends by thinking how they could also help them to understand and practice meditation. Some participants appreciated the meditation retreat and their meditation experience so they wanted to continue practicing meditation. Later some ordained and became meditation instructors at the Middle Way Meditation Retreat.

4.3.3.5 Analysis of Meditation Experience

When the participants meditate for many days they have some meditation experience. The participant can understand the meditation practice better. Some practitioners said that every day they have different experiences but they are glad that they can concentrate longer. Some participants can clear their minds and see the “bright light” when they meditate.

The practitioners are able to empty their minds and fill it with a great light which they feel will lead to greater things in time as they continue to practice meditation. They are also more joyous, have purpose in their life, and feel much more forgiving of themselves and others. Some of them see the “Orange Morning Sun” and “bright sphere”. Some participants felt like they were on top of a very high tree. The feeling was very short but it seemed to be real. However, most practitioners feel calm and can concentrate more.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, when one is developing the light *kasiṇa*, (*āloka-kasiṇa*), the learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) will occur like a circle reflected on the wall or the ground and the counterpart sign

(*patibhāga nimitta*) will appear like a compact bright cluster of light. When practitioners can do that it shows that they can really concentrate. Some of them experience the learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*) or the counterpart sign (*patibhāga nimitta*).

4.4. The Influence on Foreign Country

Since 1983, monks, and laity have been coming to Pa-Auk Tawya to learn and train in meditation under the Sayādaw. Foreign meditators began to arrive at the Monastery in the early 1990's. The Sayādaw speaks fluent English, and he has given *Dhamma* talks and led meditation retreats internationally. These include Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, and most recently the United States of America. In 2005 he is scheduled to lead retreats in the United States, Japan, UK, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. Please refer to International Retreats for details. In 1997, the Sayadaw published his magnum opus, a five-volume tome titled *Nibbānagāminipaṭipadā* (The Practice that Leads to *Nibbāna*) in Burmese. This has been translated into Sinhala. A number of smaller books by the Sayādaw have been published in Burmese. Also published are a number of books comprising re-edited translations of Burmese texts into English. For books in English and in Chinese and other foreign languages, please refer to Books.

4.5. Burmese Buddhist Association and Pā-Auk Meditation Center in the United States

In 2001 Burmese people in New York, U.S.A. who have faith in studying the Pa-Auk Meditation method requested a Vipassanā Meditation Master to reside there and teach the Pa-Auk meditation method in New York. They invited U. Sandāvarabivaṇṇa who is a meditation Master at the main Pa-Auk meditation vipassanā center to

teach meditation method and appointed U Sandāvarabivansa to assume the duty teaching Mogok Meditation in New York, U.S.A.

The meditation Masters had to reside temporarily at **Burma Buddhist Association Monastery** in New York, because there was no available residence for setting up a meditation center in New York. During the ten day retreat three times a year, Venerable U. Sandāvarabivaṅsa, sets up a meditation teaching program where the meditation Masters lead a meditation practice program. The teaching schedule is set at 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. daily. The additional session is on weekends at 3:00-5:00 p.m. Many Buddhists came for meditation practice. They were named ‘Meditation practice groups of the ‘Pa-Auk meditation (U.S.A) Group’.



Figure 15. Burma Buddhist Association and Pa-Auk Meditation Center in the United States

4.6. Pa Auk Tawya Vipassanā Dhura Hermitage (Batam) in Indonesia

Pa Auk Tawya Vipassanā Dhura Hermitage Meditation Centre was

founded on the 6th of February 2002. The Venerable Pa-Auk Sayadaw opened it. This meditation centre was formed in Batam Indonesia because there was a need for elderly people to meditate anytime and also for working people to meditate on the weekends. The meditation center accepts any meditators worldwide and provides them with food and lodging free of charge in addition to lectures on Vipassana meditation. They warmly welcome any Dhamma friends, Buddhist, or non-Buddhist who wants to experience the Dhamma. The Buddha said, "Wisdom, indeed, is born of meditation; without meditation, wisdom is lost. Knowing this two-fold path of gain and loss, one should conduct oneself so that wisdom may increase". The centre's aim is to promote teaching of Theravāda Buddhism and particularly the practice of Pa-Auk Vipassanā



meditation method in the tradition of Myanmar. ²²

²² <http://www.diananda.com//pa-auk-tawya-vipassana-dhura-hermitage.html>,
10:32 am, 4-10-2016



Figure(16) Pa-Auk Tawya Vipassanā Dhura Hermitage center in Indonesia

4.7. Pa-Auk Nibbinda Forest Monastery Meditation Centre in Malaysia

Nibbinda Forest Monastery is a Theravada forest monastery situated at Mukim 5, Balik Pulau, Penang, Malaysia. The monastery is located on top of a hill in Balik Pulau. Surrounded by mountains and facing the sea, this beautiful yet serene place is an ideal spot for monks to cultivate antipathy with worldly life. A small town with simple folk living at the foot of the hill makes the monastery more suitable to establish as a pure land in this world.

In early 2009 Nibbinda Forest Monastery was officially offered to The Most Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw and thus the monastery is named after him. The meaning of “nibbinda” is “disgust with worldly life.” By leaving the hustle and bustle of worldly life the monks are able to learn

and practise Buddha's teachings such as pariyatti, patipatti and pativeda in a comfortable environment.²³

Their Mission Statement

1. To protect and provide continuous support for the spread of true Theravada Buddhism based on the Tipitaka Dhamma as expounded by Lord Buddha.
2. To protect and provide continuous support for the Pa Auk meditation method originating from Myanmar.
3. To practice precepts (Sila) as originally expounded by Lord Buddha.
4. To promote the practice of ancient Buddhism among lay followers.
5. To promote the practice of the Pa Auk meditation method through meditation retreats.
6. To provide a monastery for Sangha maintained on the Vissudhi principles of ancient Buddhism.

Note: Sangha will have the absolute and final decision making powers in the running of the Nibbinda Forest Monastery.

²³ <http://nibbinda.org/wpcontent/gallery/> 10:53 am, 4-10-2016.



Pa-Auk Nibbinda Forest Monastery Meditation Centre in Malaysia

4.8. Pa-Auk Meditation Centre in Singapore

Pa-Auk Meditation Centre in Singapore was established as a direct lineage of the Pa-Auk Forest Monastery ('Pa-Auk'), Mawlamyine, Myanmar. It received strong endorsement and support of The Most Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw Bhaddanta Āciṇṇa (the 'Sayadaw'), the Abbot of Pa-Auk. Pa-Auk meditation center. It is dedicated to the Saṅgha of Pa-Auk ('the Sangha') as led by the Sayadaw, and draws its spiritual direction from the Sayadaw.



The Pa-Auk meditation center was registered in Singapore on 20 August 2007, and its registration was noted in the Singapore Government Gazette Notification No. 2555 dated 22nd August 2007. The Pa-Auk meditation center serves to promote learning and practice of Samatha and Vipassanā meditation based on the teachings of Lord Gotama Buddha and as taught by the Sayadaw at Pa-Auk.

Pa-Auk meditation center's principal activities include the following: providing a conducive venue for learning and practice of meditation under the guidance of a resident teacher; organizing regular meditation retreats, courses and Dhamma talks (based on the Tipiṭaka, Pāli Texts and Commentaries) and taught by teachers authorized by the Sayadaw (and/or the Sangha) to publish Dhamma books and CDs of Dhamma talks approved by Pa-Auk.²⁴

²⁴ <http://www.pamc.org.sg/3>; 34pm,4-10-2016

4.9. Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher conducted a survey of meditators' experience at the six Pa-Auk Vipassanā Meditation Centers and identified new meditators, those with one first experience at the centres and mature meditators who have been to Pa-Auk Centres more than once. The researcher found that the meditators experienced theoretical, practical, and social improvements and benefits while they are performing vipassanā meditation and after they practiced at the centre. Through the support of the meditators, disciples and donors, Pa-Auk meditation has been extended to many centers and some centers in other countries are under construction in the style of the regular meditation centers in Myanmar. Similarly most of the meditators have a tendency to practice Vipassanā Meditation more times at the center. Thus there are many faithful disciples who are carrying out meditation for their lives and working as staff at the centers as noble people and nuns.