

# **Passadhi - the Tranquility**

**By Bhante Anuttara**

In this article, I would like to discuss Passadhi, the 5th factor among the 7 factors of Awakening.

Passadhi, translated as calm or tranquility, follows joy and precedes samadhi—the deepest state of meditateness. Unlike Samadhi, which tends to lead us beyond, Passadhi holds pragmatic applicability in our daily lives. In our modern society - characterised by agitation - Passadhi offers the relevant antidote. Modern life is often overwhelmed by restlessness, prompting desperate measures like the consumption of unwholesome intoxicants for relaxation. Despite the wish for happiness, the negative side effects of such artificial means make the situation worse. However, the seed of calm and tranquility lies within us and can be cultivated through systematic practice, as demonstrated by many senior practitioners throughout history.

Correct cultivation of Passadhi through the preceding stages of awakening factors (investigation, energy, and joy) becomes a supportive condition for a life of ease and comfort. Sometimes you feel calm but with a sleepiness and dullness like the silence of the cemetery. This type of calm is not the Passadhi which we are talking about. This Passadhi, when cultivated correctly, serves as an intermediary state between Joy and deep Stillness (Samadhi), resonating with qualities of both awakening factors. That's why in the Mahayana tradition of China and Korea, Passadhi is translated as "lightness and ease."

When Passadhi is present, a sense of comfort and contentedness arises, leading to tranquil happiness—a preliminary condition for Samadhi. Therefore, before endeavouring to enter the state of Samadhi, it is essential to develop Passadhi.

Now, let's explore practical ways to cultivate Passadhi.

The most common Buddhist practice to cultivate calm is through mindfulness of breathing, as outlined in the Anapanasati sutta(MN118). The principal endeavour here is to be ever mindful of your breath. Mindfulness of breathing initially calms the bodily formation, leading to joy and happiness, and eventually calming the mental formations—this is the procedure to obtain a state of Passadhi. Following this sequential process of breath meditation fulfils the seven awakening factors as elucidated by Buddha.

Additionally, for some people who have a lack of body movement due to their lifestyle, I would like to recommend some meditations with body movement to cultivate calm. For example, walking meditation or any type of bodily activity in conjunction with mindfulness. Buddha taught not only still types of meditation, but also showed many ways of cultivating mindfulness in action. So, you should try and find suitable methods which fit with your nature and condition.

While genuine Passadhi is imperturbable, some supportive conditions are needed especially at the beginning phase. Outer conditions like a suitable place, relationships, food and etc have been recommended since ancient times, but achieving such conditions in modern life requires careful arrangement fuelled by wholesome aspiration and resolution. Monastery structure and routines are considered as an exemplary condition for cultivating Passadhi effectively, providing a break from the excessive stimulations of life in conventional society. Regardless, all of us should try our best to create our own suitable condition which is conducive to our well-being and spiritual growth.

With metta,

Bhante Anuttara