

## **Changing Behavior and Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health**

**Unuea Singkam**

Doctor of Philosophy (Integral Development Studies)  
Faculty of Management Science, Ubon Ratchathani University  
Thailand

### **Abstract**

*This research aims at finding a significant change in behavior as a result of practicing a life style according to the Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health (Food, Air, Exercise, Resting, Emotion, Excretion, Vocation and Iddhipada 4). Twenty-one men and women participated in a workshop applying the Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health in daily living at Srisa Asoke, Srisaket, Thailand, during March 15-19, 2009. The subjects listened to the presentation of the Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health, took Buddhist Five Precepts, ate vegetarian food, performed detoxification and practiced Samatha and Vipassana Meditation. The subjects then vowed to carry on what they learned. After a period of 6 months the subjects were questionnaire, observed in a personal interview and in a group discussion. The result indicates that balancing of life styles, according to the Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health, promotes all aspects of personal wholesomeness. Iddhipada 4, especially, enhances the growth of other facilities. A difference was found between the subjects whose behavior changed and those who did not change. The changed had prioritized their health first while others had not.*

**Key words:** Changing behavior, Eight Aw, 8 Aw, Health, Holistic Health

### **1. Introduction**

Good health is a basic requirement for living. Being healthy physically and mentally is a perfect quality of life. Buddha used to say, “Arokaya Parama Labha” – (Life without disease is highly fortunate). This is what every human being wants because when one is physically and mentally healthy he can live happily forever.

Health care of Thailand at the present time is in a critical condition. Many factors affecting health of the people such as under- control diseases, poisonous environment, traffic jams and air pollution, unsanitary housing, careless consumption of food and materials, over work, under rest, not enough exercise, stresses and the like are left without attention. Number of people suffered from diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obese and lack of immunity are increasing. This event coincides with a report of the World Health Organization, 2005, which indicates that uncontaminated diseases have a tendency to continuously increase and that in 2005 thirty million of worldwide people would die from uncontaminated diseases such as cancer, cardiac and blood vessel problems and diabetes.

Attempts have been made to indirectly reduce uncontaminated diseases. Some practices, such as fasting, not eating certain kinds of meat, no meal after lunch and meditation, have been used in many religions. However, those practices are mostly related to making personal merits and many people do not take them seriously. A new technique has been developed. Samana Bhothirak Rakpongsa, the leader of the Asoke Communities, Thailand, has incorporated Buddhism into health care practices and called the new development, “Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health.” This principle emphasizes Ar-han (Food), Ar-gard (Air), Aug Kamlang (Exercise), Ain Kaya (Resting), Arom (Emotion), Ar-jom (Excretion), Ar-cheep (Vocation) and Iddhipada 4 (Means to attain success).

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Sponsoring information: Srisa Asoke Community

Ar-han (food) refers to nutrients that are necessary for development of physical and mental capacities. It includes all materials consumed through one's mouth to maintain functions of physical and mental activities and not to harm the consumer. Therefore, food and medicines are included in this category. In addition, the consumer is aware of what he takes, why and how much he takes. Members of Srisa Asoke eat vegetarian food.

Ar-gard (air) means fresh and unpolluted air. One must choose to live in an environment that he can breathe freely without toxins or smokes from a cigarette smoker or from a factory.

Aug Kamlang (exercise) refers to vigorously physical activities such as walking, running, swimming and working with bodily or muscular movements. One must exercise at least 30 minutes daily.

Ain Kaya (Resting). Human beings as well as animals need rest after working or performing activities through the day. Physical growths of children and young people take place during their sleeping. The adults also need to sleep in order to rejuvenate their energies. Resting is essential for healthy human beings.

Arom refers to emotion. Among all creatures, man is emotional. When one is strongly emotional, he is unwholesome. To be healthy one must develop in his mind loving-kindness, kind-heartedness, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

Ajom refers to excretion of waste products. Naturally our body has systems to excrete waste materials out of our body. It is a requirement for a healthy body to keep its excretion systems to function properly.

Ar-cheep refers to vocation or occupation. Right vocation is a component of the Eight Fold Path, prescribed by Buddha. Everyone must choose a career and his career should be "right" for his physical, mental, social and spiritual growth.

Iddhipada-4 is an effective means to attain success. Buddha taught this strategy 2600 years ago and it is still practical. To accomplish any task one must follow the Iddhipada-4 strategy. He must (1) have an aspiration and positive attitudes toward what he is doing; (2) work diligently on his task; (3) put his mind on the task and (4) analyze, follow up and improve what he has done.

Members of the Asoke Communities have unofficially practiced the Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health for years even though no research has been done.

## ***2. Purpose of the studies***

It is the purpose of this studying to investigate if there is a change in behavior pertaining to development of wholesomeness of an individual who practices the Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health.

## ***3. Subjects***

Subjects of this studying are 21 volunteers; 6 are members of Srisa Asoke, 6 are churchgoers who often go to practice Buddhism at Srisa Asoke, and 9 are outsiders who heard about the program.

## ***4. Procedures***

The subjects were housed in the Srisa Asoke Community, Srisaket, Thailand; during the time they were taking intensive course in Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health. The lessons lasted for 5 days (March 15-19, 2009). The meeting then adjourned to personal practice at the subject's resident.

The lessons involve activities such as taking Buddhist Five Precepts, listening to presentations of Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health, group discussion, detoxification, eating health food, exercises, and resting and practicing meditation. Details of the activities are listed below.

**Table 1 : Activities of Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health course**

Day	Time	Activities
1	13.00-16.00	Registration, Fill out personal data, Weight/Blood pressure Check Housing
	16.00-17.00	Dinner (Vegetarian)
	17.00-18.00	Free Time
	18.00-19.00	Taking Buddhist Five Precepts, Orientation
2,3,4	04.30-05.00	Wake up
	05.00-06.00	Walking exercise, Coconut Oil Pulling, Colon Detoxification
	06.00-06.30	Drink 5 glasses of liquid of rice/wheat germs
	06.30-09.00	Feet soak in an herb solution for 30 minutes
	09.00-09.15	Drink a glass of herbal juice
	09.15-12.00	Listen to the presentation of Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health
	12.00-12.15	Drink a glass of herb juice to excrete toxins
	12.15-13.00	Break
	13.00-15.00	Video -Health related
Day	Time	Activities (Cont')
	15.00-15.15	Drink a glass of water/Fruit juice
	15.15-16.30	Discussion on the Health related Video
	16.30-18.00	Free Time /Colon detoxification
	18.00-20.00	Presentation of the Spiritual Health
	20.00	Meditation and Rest
5	04.30-9.15	Same activities as Days 2,3,4
	09.15-10.30	Break
	10.30-11.00	Colon detoxification with alkaline solution
	11.00-12.00	Lunch (Easy-to-digest food such as vegetable soup, fruits)
	12.00-13.00	Conclusion, Evaluation & Suggestion

### 5. Data and Data Analysis

The data used in this studying are from questionnaire, interview and direct observations in both personal and group discussions. Responses to each question of the questionnaire, and/or interview were tallied and then converted into percentages of the number of population. Direct observations in personal and group contacts were also used to evaluate changes in appearances, expressions and abilities to manage emotions as well as opened-end information.

### 6. Results

Results of the analysis of the data are shown only for categories with responses more than 4 of 21 ( 19 %) in the following tables.

**Table 2 : Changing Behavior**

Physical Changes	N=21	%
Excretory system improved	6	29
Healthy look on face	5	24
Muscle aches reduced	4	19
Mental, Emotional Changes	N=21	%
Confidence in taking care of own health	10	48
Made mind not to be sick	5	24
More aware of own feelings	6	29
Better concentrate on task at hand	6	29
Changes in Spiritual Capacities	N = 21	%
Better manage angers	5	24
Easier to let go what bothering	4	19
Easier to keep mind from desires, hates, elution	7	33
Want to help others	5	24
More positive	4	19

## 6. Discussion

The data show that the participants perceived greater shifts on mental, emotional and spiritual changes than the physical ones. This indicates that the participants gain knowledge, understand and have positive attitudes towards the “treatment” they received at Srisa Asoke during the intensive course. The Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health has an impact on behavior of the practitioner.

Some categories of the inquiry do not show high percentages of responses. This might be due to the time lapsed (6 months) between the “treatment” and the inquiry. Some participants might go back to do the ways they used to do instead of practicing according to what they have learned. In addition, there was no “update” or “check up” for some participants who might need helps during the lapsed period.

In addition, many participants admitted that they had a hard time to detoxify and manage emotions. However, when they thought about Iddipada-4, they were encouraged. The four components of the Iddipada-4, namely Chanta (Love), Viriya (Diligence), Jitta (Concentration) and Vimongsa (Evaluation), empowered them to success.

Prioritization plays an important role in time management. People who rearrange their jobs in order of a specific set of priority would get the jobs done well. This studying found that the participants who favored the Eight Aw Principle of Holistic Health are those who had set health their priority.

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