



Just Practice

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

Published for free distribution

Just Practice: The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

Transcribed and edited by: Upāsaka Chaan

Cover photo: Wat Umong Suan Phutthatham, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Cover photo by: Upāsaka Chaan

Copyright © 2020 CHAIYA MEDITATION MONASTERY

Chaiya Meditation Monastery
7925 Virtue Ct., Las Vegas, NV 89113
Tel.: 702-456-3838 Cell: 702-219-0377
www.ChaiyaCMM.org
Email: Chaiya@ChaiyaCMM.org

This book may be copied or reprinted *for free distribution*
without permission from the publisher.
Otherwise, all rights reserved.

ISBN 9798697523186

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa

Editor's Note

These talks given by Luang Por Chaiya have been edited to engender readability and increase clarity while also striving to preserve his manner of delivering Dhamma. On occasion, I've used my own words to articulate a point when I felt the original words failed to reflect the statement's original intention when put on paper; that is, when something felt lost upon transforming spoken words into written words. In some instances, the source audio was garbled or otherwise unintelligible. In those cases, I've tried to fill in the blanks using context clues supported by my knowledge and practice of the Dhamma as taught by Luang Por Chaiya. I've also taken the liberty of omitting certain matters not specifically related to the talk's primary theme, though I've left others so that the unfamiliar reader may get a sense of daily life at Chaiya Meditation Monastery. Any misinterpretations, misrepresentations, mistakes, or errant omissions are my fault. I apologize in advance.

I'd like to take a moment to express my gratitude for the exceptional works of published Dhamma that are the books *Stillness Flowing: The Life and Teachings of Ajahn Chah* by Ajahn Jayasaro and *In This Very Life: The Liberation Teachings of the Buddha* by Sayādaw U Paṇḍitā. Much of the language used in the definitions in the glossary of this book was either taken directly from, or was inspired by, these works. I'd like to thank Panyaprateep Foundation for their gracious permission for me to use some of their material here.

I would also like to state my appreciation for my spiritual friends David and Mary Kerrigan. Their suggestions and editorial input for this book were invaluable. *Sādhu!*

Contents

Foreword	11
Biography of Luang Por Chaiya	13
Talks	
<i>The Art of Living</i>	15
<i>Mental Culture</i>	18
<i>The Benefits of Saṅghadāna</i>	20
<i>No One Creates Suffering for You</i>	21
<i>What is the Cause of Kamma?</i>	23
<i>The Tendency of the Mind</i>	24
<i>Why a Good Person May Die Young</i>	26
<i>The Noble Eightfold Path</i>	27
<i>A Q&A with Luang Por</i>	35
<i>The 40 Kammaṭṭhāna</i>	49
<i>Mettā Meditation</i>	61
<i>Six Kinds of Temperament</i>	76
<i>Mental Culture and Images</i>	91
<i>The Eight Rules for Serious Meditators</i>	104
<i>Sitting Meditation</i>	117
<i>Mindfulness in Every Activity</i>	130
<i>Intro to the Seven Purifications and the Insight Knowledges</i>	148
<i>Discerning Causes</i>	161
<i>Knowledge of Rising and Falling</i>	176
<i>The 16 Insight Knowledges</i>	190
<i>The Requirements for Happiness</i>	210
<i>Vipassanā</i>	218
<i>The Right Effort</i>	220
<i>Four Kinds of Kamma</i>	224
<i>Āsāḷhā Pūjā</i>	226
<i>A Sharing of Merit</i>	230
<i>World Peace Lucky Happy Pagoda</i>	231
<i>Good News for All of You</i>	233
<i>Mental Factors, Part I</i>	235
<i>Mental Factors, Part II</i>	248
<i>Funeral Dhamma</i>	259
<i>Two Friends</i>	262
<i>New Year Offering Ceremony</i>	264
<i>Three Levels</i>	267

<i>Walking Meditation</i>	270
<i>Do Good and Receive Good Results</i>	273
<i>Noble Treasures</i>	276
<i>Energy</i>	279
<i>Vihāra Donations</i>	281
<i>Make Use of Life</i>	283
<i>The Twelve Bases</i>	285
<i>Noble Living</i>	288
<i>Three Worlds</i>	290
<i>Why Meditate?</i>	292
<i>Two Kinds of Treasure</i>	294
<i>Three Kinds of Energy</i>	296
<i>Internal Spheres</i>	298
<i>The Best Merit</i>	300
<i>Act Like the Full Moon</i>	301
<i>Vesak Day</i>	302
<i>As We Know, We Practice. As We Practice, We Know.</i>	305
<i>Basic Meditation Instruction</i>	307
<i>Life is Choice</i>	312
<i>Act Like a Dumb Person</i>	313
<i>A Very Profound Teaching</i>	316
<i>Christmas Day</i>	321
<i>Have Confidence</i>	328
<i>Effort</i>	333
<i>A Wonderful Vacation</i>	335
<i>The Monkey Mind</i>	339
<i>Nothing Lasts</i>	345
<i>Three Essences</i>	349
<i>Māgha Pūjā</i>	350
<i>Doing Good Things</i>	352
<i>Three Kinds of Merit</i>	354
<i>Inner Treasure</i>	357
<i>Life is Time, Time is Life</i>	359
<i>A Bit of Abhidhamma</i>	362

Appendix

<i>Paṭṭhāna Chanting</i>	369
--------------------------	-----

Glossary	401
----------	-----

Index	429
-------	-----

Foreword

I first came to meet the venerable meditation master Ajahn Chaiya after an unexpected chain of events found me talking one day with the abbot of a Thai Buddhist temple in Tucson, Arizona. Although I'd identified as being a Buddhist—a Zen Buddhist, that is—for nearly 20 years at the time and found myself to be relatively mature in scholarship, I was still rather adolescent in the ways of practice. I was lacking in precisely what made one a Buddhist, which is *putting into practice* what the Buddha taught.

While living in Alaska one summer I'd hit a minor version of "rock bottom." With little provocation, I erupted one day in an outburst that left me disenchanted with my whims and ashamed of my angst. I suddenly realized that I'd spent the last 15 years of my life ceaselessly chasing my selfish desires and running from whatever made me uncomfortable. This was not the behavior of a Buddhist.

It was time for a change.

I happened one day into a Thai Forest Tradition monastery in Anchorage. The Thai Forest Tradition—an austere tradition primarily found within the *Dhammayut nikāya* order of Thai *Theravāda* Buddhism—is a tradition grounded in intensive meditative effort, strict adherence to the monastic code of conduct, a lifestyle of simplicity, and an attitude of renunciation. The aim of monks in this tradition is the attainment in this lifetime of the cessation of suffering, or *nibbāna*. The forest monks I met there in the snowy North were devoted and simple, kind and welcoming. Their warmth and the apparent sincerity of their practice spoke to me. I spent much of the next six weeks at that monastery. My heart never left.

But at the end of that summer I returned to the Lower 48 and my home in Las Vegas, Nevada, where I'd lived for some 14 years. It was time to find a nearby Thai temple to be my new spiritual home.

I had no idea at the time that Thai *Theravāda* Buddhism had another order—the *Mahā nikāya*, which is a vibrant and necessary order whose monastics outnumber *Dhammayut nikāya* monastics by perhaps 10-to-1. To a significant degree, *Mahā nikāya* is an order that tends to emphasize scholarship and service to the community over wholehearted individual commitment to a way of life intended to lead to the realization of *nibbāna* in this lifetime. (The Ajahn Chah lineage is a notable exception to this, I would later learn.)

I remembered an unremarkable experience some years earlier at the only Thai temple I'd known of in Las Vegas—a *Mahā nikāya* temple, as

it turned out—and it just hadn't touched my heart the way that Wat Alaska Yanna Vararam eventually would. And so I felt my hometown didn't have what I was looking for. (I'd much later learn that there were about ten Thai temples scattered across the sprawling city, including a single, lonely *Dhammayut nikāya* temple out in the desert on the edge of the city. I wouldn't hear of that temple until after I moved away to California in 2019.)

Each winter my wife and I travel to the east coast of the United States to visit our parents. Typically, we take the northern highways through Flagstaff, Dallas, and the like, on our way to Florida in late November, and the southern highways through Houston, El Paso, and Tucson on our return to Las Vegas (and eventually, California) in mid-January.

It was on the return trip the winter after my fateful experience in Alaska that I decided to pop into a Thai Buddhist temple in Tucson. I was greeted by an especially friendly elderly American layman (who would later ordain as a *sāmanera*—or novice monk—under his teacher, Ajahn Sarayut Arnanta, who was the Tucson temple's abbot). I expressed to the layman that I was in search of someone who could teach me the ways of practice. He put me in touch with Ajahn Sarayut, who asked me where I lived. I told him Las Vegas. And that's when he recommended to me a great and venerated, highly qualified meditation master. His name was Ajahn Chaiya. He was a Burmese monk, a disciple of Mahāsi Sayādaw, and the abbot of a meditation monastery—that is, an intensive practice center—only 30 minutes from my home in the northwest of Las Vegas.

I went to see the great master as soon as I arrived home.

On our first meeting Ajahn Chaiya explained to me the basics of insight meditation practice—that is, training the mind to stay with the rising and falling of the abdomen while softly noting these movements—and I responded by asking him what I could do to help out at the monastery. His reply was direct: just practice. And thus was the start of a beautiful student-teacher relationship between myself and Ajahn (or *Luang Por*—a Thai honorific meaning 'venerable father') Chaiya.

This simple directive—*just practice*—might be an excellent way to characterize the overall teachings of Luang Por Chaiya. His instructions are to the point, often brief, and always direct one to what's necessary—*putting into practice* what the Lord Buddha taught.

Upāsaka Chaan
Santa Barbara, October 2020

Biography of Luang Por Chaiya

Venerable Ajahn Chaiya (or Sayādaw U Zeya), formerly known as U Zeyathuta, was born on Tuesday, March 25, 1947 in the devoted Buddhist family of U Myat and Daw Moon. He was the second son of five children. He originally came from Si Paw Township, Shan State in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma.

In 1965, Venerable Ajahn Chaiya embraced the monastic life as a novice (*sāmanera*). He became fully ordained as a monk on May 1, 1967. He graduated from Samgha University in 1977 and received the Master of Dharma degree (*Dhammacariyā*). During his academic years, he sojourned at various meditation centers during his summer breaks. Under the tutelage of prominent teachers (*sayādaws*) from Yangon and Mandalay, he had the deepest spiritual experience of his life.

Honored as an outstanding student, Venerable Ajahn Chaiya began teaching Dhamma one year before graduation from Samgha University. He also served as a teacher and lecturer at Lanmadaw Thayet-taw Kyaung Taik for 13 years (1976-1988), where he was inspired by the monks, novices, and lay persons.

In 1988, Venerable Ajahn Chaiya was invited to Thailand by Phra Kru Vachirakitsophon at Wat Kow Takrow, Ban Lame Province, Phetchaburi, Thailand. Five months after studying the Thai language, he started teaching *Abhidhamma* (Buddhist philosophy) in Thai to the monks and nuns at the temple.

The following year, in 1989, he moved to Sri Lanka to continue his study of Buddhism. In late 1990, Venerable Ajahn Chaiya accepted an invitation by Venerable Ajahn Panyavaro, chief monk of Wat Buddhabhavana in North Las Vegas, Nevada, to travel to the United States for Buddhist missionary work.

After Ajahn Panyavaro passed away in 1992, Venerable Ajahn Chaiya served as abbot of Wat Buddhabhavana at the request of the Thai community. He taught meditation, Buddhist philosophy, and Buddhist practice at Wat Buddhabhavana from 1993-1995.

In 1995, Venerable Ajahn Chaiya discontinued serving as abbot of Wat Buddhabhavana so that he could undertake an intensive silent meditation retreat. However, members of the Las Vegas Buddhist community requested that he stay in Las Vegas, and they provided him a place for his silent meditation.

After several straight months of his intensive silent meditation, members of the Las Vegas Buddhist community requested Venerable Ajahn Chaiya resume teaching Dhamma classes. With the help of the Las Vegas Buddhist community, he established Chaiya Meditation Monastery in 1995.

As part of his practice of meditation, Venerable Ajahn Chaiya continues to seclude himself for intensive meditation from July to October each year during the period referred to as Buddhist Lent. Buddhist Lent is a tradition going back to the time of the Buddha, during which monastics limit their travel, seek seclusion, and intensify their meditation practice.

Today, Chaiya Meditation Monastery is home to a thriving Buddhist community. Located near the southwestern edge of Las Vegas, the monastery sits on about three acres of land. There are several residential buildings intended for use by monastic and lay practitioners who wish to come for short- or long-term meditation retreats.

From the talk "The Art of Living"

Today is the new moon—a Buddhist holiday. So all of you came to Chaiya Meditation Monastery to perform meritorious deeds—*dāna* (generosity) or *sīla* (morality). As we are Buddhists, we believe in the Triple Gem—the attributes of the Buddha, the Buddha’s doctrine, the Buddha’s holy disciples—and we believe in the law of *kamma*, or action and reaction. As such, we should try to perform these meritorious deeds every day. As we are moral beings, we can use our eyes, ears, and so on, to be beneficial. And we can try to refrain from unwholesome actions. Just do what is wholesome in deed, speech, and thought.

The Buddha’s teaching is the art of living—how to live peacefully, happily, wisely, and blamelessly. We can use our physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions to benefit ourselves and others.

So, especially, we should practice meditation every day. It’s a great opportunity for all of us to have a chance to understand the practice, how to gain peace, to be liberated from suffering. That’s why we need to practice meditation. This meditation is mental culture. We need to cultivate our minds—purify our minds from greed, anger, delusion, and so on.

It’s not like generosity. With generosity, you need to have something to share, to give, to offer. With meditation, you don’t need anything. You can do it any time, in any posture, and anywhere. As long as you engage in meditation practice, there’s no greed, no anger, no delusion, and no worry that arises. So we need to practice meditation every day. Meditation is wonderful.

So who needs peace of mind?

The goal of Buddhism is to be liberated from suffering. To be liberated from suffering, we need to get rid of the cause of suffering—attachment, craving. To be able to remove or reduce this attachment, this craving, we need to practice meditation.

When we practice meditation, we see the intrinsic nature of this mind and body—what they really are. To see the truth, to see this nature of mind and matter, we need to practice meditation. Without practicing meditation, just reading books or listening to Dhamma talks, you will not be able to remove attachment. You can maybe reduce it a little bit. But meditation practice is very wonderful, very useful. It can remove your suffering completely.

As you practice meditation, you see the impermanence and uncontrollability of this mind and body. You are not attached to it, so

there's no suffering. We practice meditation to see the true nature of mind and body.

Now, about meditation technique: we should have a primary object of meditation. For instance, some of us focus the mind on the breath—in and out. Others choose to focus on abdominal movement—rising and falling—as the primary object of meditation. Either one is fine. Choose one, and practice.

So we need to have this primary object to focus our minds. The primary object should be obvious. Otherwise, you will not gain the concentration necessary to tame this monkey mind. When you focus your mind on your breath, for example, you will see and you will know that you are breathing in and breathing out. You will *know* this. Try to concentrate your mind on the nostrils. You will feel the air touching the tip of your nose—in and out. So to be able to feel it, see it, and know it, you have to concentrate your mind on the nostrils. Just make a mental note: “breathing in...breathing out.” You know you are breathing in, and you know you are breathing out. So at that moment, as you know you are breathing in and breathing out, no greed, no anger, no delusion, and no worries arise.

In the same way, you can focus your mind on the abdominal movement. Just focus on your abdomen. When your abdomen rises and falls, you say in your mind “rising” and “falling.” So, “rising, falling”—try to follow the movement. From the very beginning until the end, follow the movement. And then you will begin to gain concentration.

After you gain concentration you will begin to know the nature of the mind. In every moment the object of the meditation and the noting mind arise together and disappear together—mind and matter, arising and disappearing, one after another. And then you see the impermanence of this mind and body. In this way you start to gain insight knowledge.

Practice this every day. Know the nature of mind and matter as just arising and disappearing, as impermanent. Seeing in this way, you will not attach to anything or anyone, including your own life. The purpose of practicing meditation is to see the nature of this mind and body as impermanent, as uncontrollable.

So, all of you, try the best you can. Use your time, use your life, to be beneficial. Sometimes, perform generosity—the art of giving. Sometimes—as today, a Buddhist holiday—you are not only observing five precepts, but also observing eight precepts. Practice loving kindness meditation too. Wish everyone to be happy. And practice *vipassanā* meditation.

JUST PRACTICE

If you do these things every day, you will gain merit every day. And the good things you have done will protect you. They will follow you, like a shadow. Wherever you go, it follows you.

In believing in the law of nature—the law of cause and effect—we try to refrain from unwholesome actions and try to perform moral actions. So by the power of your generosity, morality and meditation, and by the power of your loving kindness and compassion, may all of you be healthy, wealthy, happy, and peaceful.

From the talk “Mental Culture”

All of you came to the temple today to offer lunch to the monks, the nuns, and the lay meditators. Our minds become pure and happy about what we are doing. We do morning chanting and sitting meditation, and so we gain a lot of merit for these deeds.

Especially, though, we need to purify our minds. This monkey mind—thinking about the past, thinking about the future, worrying about the business, worrying about the family, worrying about ourselves, and so on—becomes impure. So we especially need to practice meditation.

When you sit in meditation, focus your mind on your home object of meditation. Breathing in, breathing out, or the rising and falling of your abdomen, or “*Buddho*”—or whatever you want to focus on—is fine. When you’re able to focus your mind on your primary object of meditation for one minute, this means you purify your mind for one minute. This is because you don’t want anything—there is no greed, no anger, and no worry.

So we need to purify our mind. When our mind becomes pure and strong, our body does also.

This is not just for when you come to the temple. When you stay at home, try to find time to sit in meditation for five minutes, ten minutes, 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, or whatever time is available. You need to do it every day. The moment you practice meditation, you are restrained in body and mind—you don’t do anything, you don’t say any words, and you don’t think about anything. This means your *sīla*—your morality—is pure.

Focus your mind on one object, on the *same* object. This one-pointedness leads to concentration. And then you will see just mind and matter. When you focus your mind on your breath coming in and out—or on “*Buddho*,” or whatever—there’s just breathing in and breathing out, in and out, in and out, in and out, from the time we were born and until we die, the body arising and disappearing all the time. You come to know the nature of this body as just coming and going, coming and going.

How about the noting mind?

Breathing in one time, you know you’re breathing in. In that moment, one moment of consciousness arises and disappears. This body and this mind—your object of meditation and the noting mind—arise together and disappear together. When you practice meditation in this way, you gain concentration, you gain wisdom, and your *sīla*—morality—is pure.

JUST PRACTICE

Meditation is very, very beneficial for our mind. No one can fix it for us, so we ourselves have to culture our own minds. That's why we call it mental culture. Little by little, step by step, you will gradually know for yourself. You will gain mindfulness, concentration, and *vipassanā* knowledge.

I'd like all of you to keep doing this, keep practicing, and then your life becomes meaningful. Every day, practice generosity, try to restrain your physical and verbal actions, and practice some meditation.

So today you came to the temple to do good things—offering lunch, taking the five precepts, doing morning chanting, sitting in meditation, and listening to this Dhamma talk. By the power of this merit, may all of you be healthy and happy, and may you gain peace and happiness every day.

From the Talk “The Benefits of Saṅghadāna”

Today a lady asked me what the benefits of offering *saṅghadāna* are. *Saṅgha* means the monks’ communities, and *dāna* means offerings, or giving—so, *saṅghadāna* is giving or offering material things to the *saṅgha* communities.

When we talk about the *saṅgha* communities here, we’re not just talking about the monks who are sitting in this main hall. We are referring to all of the monks in this world. And we’re not just talking about the monks either. Your offering of *saṅghadāna* is to the Buddha *and* all of the *saṅgha* communities.

When you offer something to a single monk who has good morality, concentration and wisdom, you will gain the benefit of that offering completely. When you offer *saṅghadāna*, this means you’re offering to the Buddha *and* the *Saṅgha* of this world. Some of those monks have attained the first stage of enlightenment and became a stream-enterer; some of them have attained the second stage of enlightenment and became a once-returner; some of them have attained the third stage of enlightenment and became a non-returner; and some of them have attained the fourth stage of enlightenment and became an *arahant*.

So by offering *saṅghadāna*, you are offering to stream-enterers, once-returners, non-returners, and *arahants*—not just the monks in this temple.

You don’t offer *saṅghadāna* to *individual* monks just because they have higher virtues or higher powers. Instead, you offer to the Buddha, the *arahants*, and so on, and those receivers possess morality, concentration *and* wisdom. If they have already attained full enlightenment, there is no greed, no anger, and no delusion at all. They have *no* defilements.

This is why *saṅghadāna* is very important: You will gain the benefit more than offering to an individual. Even in the time of the Buddha, he advised people to make *saṅghadāna*. He said, “Whoever does, it’s like you’re offering to me too.”

So, all of you should offer *saṅghadāna*, not just to the monks in this temple, but to all the monks in this world, including the noble persons, and including the Buddha.

By the power of your *saṅghadāna*, may all of you be healthy, wealthy and successful in your life.

From the talk "No One Creates Suffering for You"

All week I've been talking about the law of dependent origination. Because ignorance is not knowing the truth, there was the formation of merit and demerit in past lives. Dependent on the formation of merit and demerit, relinking consciousness arises. This means, birth takes place. Because of previous demerit, or unwholesome deeds, rebirth may take place in a state of misery—hell, or the animal kingdom—then we have to suffer mentally and physically. Because of previous merit, or wholesome deeds, rebirth may take place in the human realm. As humans, if we try to practice tranquility meditation then rebirth may take place in the *Brahmā* world.

The Buddha said that birth is suffering, decay is suffering, and death is suffering. Everyone has to die but no one wants to die. You have to depart from this human world, and even in a celestial world or *Brahmā* world you cannot escape from suffering.

Please remember: because of the merit or demerit of our past actions, rebirth consciousness arises and we are reborn into a corresponding realm of existence.

Why have we been born as human beings? Because we used to perform both meritorious and de-meritorious—wholesome and unwholesome—deeds in a past life. If we have performed many unwholesome deeds, we are to be reborn in a state of misery. We are human beings because we have also performed wholesome deeds.

Sometimes we see things we don't want to see. This is suffering. This is the result of de-meritorious deeds in a previous life.

Sometimes we don't want to hear something, like all the bad news about circumstances in the world. This is a result of the unwholesomeness of deeds in previous lives—we have to listen to undesirable words, sounds, and perspectives.

Sometimes we have to smell an undesirable smell. This is the result of de-meritorious deeds in previous lives.

Sometimes we have to eat or drink something with an undesirable taste.

The body—this undesirable tangible object—gives us painful physical feelings. Someone hit us, someone bit us, we feel pain every day. These painful feelings are the results of our unwholesome deeds in previous lives.

So according to the Buddha's teaching, no one creates suffering for us. What we have done in previous lives—our previous *kamma*—has

forced us to receive these undesirable results. We don't need to blame others—just ourselves: “I have done a bad thing, and that's why I have received a bad consequence.”

Try to be a good person, try to avoid unwholesome deeds, and try to perform meritorious deeds as much as you can. We can learn from our daily experiences, our environments, and improve our lives.

So, according to the law of dependent origination, because of ignorance—not knowing the truth—we do good and bad deeds. Our future births take place in either a good or a bad realm of existence dependent upon our *kamma*. Learn from your experiences, learn from your lives, and try to improve yourselves. Then you will gain happiness.

I want all of you to gain happiness and be liberated from physical suffering as well as mental suffering in this life.

From the talk “What is the Cause of Kamma?”

This lady asked me—“What is the cause of *kamma*, or action?” The cause of action depends on attention: wise attention, or unwise attention.

Some people do unwholesome things, say unwholesome things and think unwholesome things. This is because of unwise attention. So the cause of de-merit is unwise or improper attention.

When we do good things, what is the cause? It’s proper and wise attention. Today all of you came to the temple because of your wise and proper attention. You know how to use your time, your life, and your belongings to be beneficial. This is the cause of meritorious deeds.

In our previous lives—many, many lives—we used to do good and bad deeds. Previous lives we don’t remember, so don’t think about it. Just think of this life.

From the time we were young until now, we’ve done some unwholesome things, committed unwholesome speech, and even had unwholesome thoughts too. These unwholesome deeds, words, and thoughts have the potential to cause us to be reborn in an unhappy state in a future life. But if you practice meditation and gain the first stage of enlightenment and become a *sotāpanna*, or a stream-enterer, unwholesome deeds from this and previous lives will not lead to rebirth in a state of misery.

You need to practice meditation until you gain enlightenment. So all of you: try the best you can to gain enlightenment and overcome physical and mental suffering in this life.

From the talk “The Tendency of the Mind”

The nuns asked me about the tendency of the mind—how the mind is working. Mind is so wonderful. If you develop your mind up to the highest level, you can become a Buddha or one of the highest saints—*arahants*. If you cannot control your mind, and then, you just tend toward unwholesome deeds, you have suffering in this human world—or, after you’re reborn, in a state of misery.

We need to culture our mind, to purify it from greed, anger, delusion, and so on. To culture our mind, we need to practice tranquility meditation and insight (*vipassanā*) meditation. For those who practice tranquility meditation, the mind becomes calm, tranquil, and peaceful. They find temporary relief from greed, anger, and delusion. But we especially need to practice *vipassanā* meditation. When you practice this type of meditation, you come to know the nature of this mind.

Whenever we say mind, it’s not only consciousness we’re talking about. Please remember that mind means consciousness and mental associations. Both of them are working together. These aren’t the same objects—they arise together.

Think about human nature:

Doing good deeds is very hard. Doing unwholesome deeds is very easy. You can try to gather your friends or family members to go to the temple to practice meditation. How many will follow you? They’d rather go to a casino or to a restaurant. In other words, following sensual objects is much easier to do. Go to the temple? “Oh, I’m not ready yet. Later.” This is the tendency of our minds—to enjoy sensual pleasures and sensual objects.

The ultimate reality here in this scenario is greed or desire. This greed or desire—this attachment—is the cause of suffering. When we don’t get what we want, we blame this person or that person: “Because of him (or her), I had to suffer,” and so on.

In reality, there is no one who has made us suffer. We suffer because of our desire, our greed, our attachment, our craving, and our clinging. As a result, we feel sorry or disappointed about something, etc.

When we practice meditation, we’re purifying our minds and trying to reduce this mental defilement. This means we’ll be able to reduce suffering. So little by little, step by step, gradually we’ll be able to remove this greed, anger and delusion, and we’ll be liberated from suffering.

JUST PRACTICE

So, all of you, try to culture your mind by practicing meditation, where you'll be able to purify your mind, be liberated from suffering, and experience eternal peace in this life.

From the talk “Why a Good Person May Die Young”

Someone asked me why a good person may die young. Maybe after this person dies, the next life is better than this life by many, many times. But it depends on the wholesome or unwholesome *kamma* that we have done in this and in previous lives. To have a long life, we must have enough good *kamma* to support us. When someone dies young, it’s because their wholesome *kamma*—what they have done in previous lives—is not too much. So they have to die.

But dying is not important. Everyone born will one day have to die. It’s not strange. The very important thing is, before we die, we need to do good things. We need to foster good *kamma*, or good actions. This will also extend our current life.

Life’s like a candle—every second, we become shorter, shorter, shorter. Finally, gone. When our good *kamma* expires, we die. So we need to do good deeds, like offer lunch or other requisites for the temple, do morning chanting, and practice tranquility and *vipassanā* meditation. This good *kamma* will protect us.

Some people have a short life even if they are a good person in this life, working to be of benefit to society, to the country, to the temple, etc. But how much unwholesome action was there in previous lives? If a good person has a short life in this lifetime, we know the cause is unwholesome action from past lives.

Kamma is very fair, very just. So according to our wholesome or unwholesome actions, we will receive either good or bad consequences.

So, as to the question of why a good person dies young, perhaps in previous lives they used to kill others. And someone who does bad things in this life may have a long life because of their wholesome actions in past lives.

We need to refrain from killing, stealing, and so on. In this life, even though a person may have a long life, just know that doing bad actions like killing or hurting others means that every day that person accumulates bad *kamma*, bigger and bigger, stronger and stronger. One day, that person will receive the bad consequences.

So, long life or short life, it doesn’t matter. What matters is whether we use our time, our lives, and our abilities, to be useful and to be of benefit to ourselves and others. This is very important. Whatever we do—moral and immoral—we have to take responsibility for that. That’s why we try to be good and do good, as much as we can. And then we will see the good consequences, in this life and in the life after.

From the talk “The Noble Eightfold Path”

Today I’ll be talking about the Noble Eightfold Path.

Our Buddha taught for 45 years. He taught *sīla*—morality; *samādhi*—concentration; and *paññā*—wisdom. Just these three—the Noble Eightfold Path. In *Pāli*, we call it *magga*. *Magga* means the way or the road. It’s the way to live a blissful existence. And it’s a way to get to the cessation of suffering. So *magga* is *the way*.

And also, *magga* has two syllables. *Ma* means killing, and *gga* means go. So what does morality, concentration and wisdom kill? They kill mental defilements—greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, doubt, sloth, restlessness, and shamelessness. And where do morality, concentration and wisdom go? To liberation—to *nibbāna*. So *magga*—the Noble Eightfold Path—kills mental defilements and goes to *nibbāna*.

Magga is 1) right understanding, 2) right thinking or right thought, 3) right speech, 4) right action, 5) right livelihood, 6) right effort, 7) right mindfulness, and 8) right concentration.

What does right understanding mean? It means understanding the Four Noble Truths, which asks: What is suffering? What is the cause of suffering? What is the cessation of suffering? What is the way leading to the cessation of suffering? If we know these Four Noble Truths, it’s called *sammā ditṭhi*—right understanding, right view.

What is suffering? Birth—to be born again—is suffering; illness is suffering; and death is suffering. Association with things you don’t like is suffering. Separation from what you like is suffering. Not getting what you want is suffering. And every day we have to take care of our bodies—this is suffering.

Where does suffering come from? Everything has a cause. The cause of suffering is craving, or attachment. The more you have attachment, the more you have suffering. When we know that the cause of suffering is craving, attachment, and greed, it’s very clear.

And if we have suffering’s opposite, we have bliss, or happiness. If we understand the cessation of suffering, this is *sammā ditṭhi*—right understanding.

If we understand that the way leading to the cessation of suffering is *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, this is *sammā ditṭhi*, or right understanding. We practice insight *vipassanā* meditation to see the true nature of mind and body—arising and disappearing. If you understand the three characteristics of mind and body—impermanence, suffering, and

non-self—it's called right understanding. And if you understand the law of cause and effect, this is also *sammā ditṭhi*.

This is why we need to study, ask questions, and practice meditation—because it leads to right understanding.

What is right thinking? It means thinking about renunciation. This is not just thinking about becoming a nun or a monk. It's not only that. It's thinking, "I'd like to practice meditation for half an hour, for one hour, for a week, or for 10 days"—something like that. With meditation, we are practicing the renunciation of mental defilements. This is right thinking.

And also we should have thoughts of non-killing—you don't think about killing or destroying someone. And we should think of non-cruelty—you don't want to hurt or harm anyone; you don't want to make anyone suffer. This kind of thinking is called right thinking.

What is right speech? This means refraining from lying, slandering, harsh speech, and gossip. Try to talk the right way.

When you talk, there are five things I'd like all of you to remember: 1) it should be true; 2) it should be beneficial; 3) it should be at the proper time; 4) it should be polite; and 5) it should be spoken with loving kindness. Otherwise, if you use your tongue or your mouth the wrong way, it causes so many problems. If you don't know how to talk, your tongue can lead you to jail. And the bad consequences are not just in this life, but you might go to hell in a future existence too.

So, the Buddha taught that we have to study to know the way, and then we have to practice according to the teachings. We have to speak the right way.

What is right action? Right action means refraining from killing, stealing, and committing sexual misconduct. And also, whatever you do, you're not harming yourself or someone else. Whatever you do for the temple, the religion, or for the welfare of others, should be concerned with morality, tranquility, and wisdom. This is right action.

What is right livelihood? This is to refrain from killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, and harsh speech as part of how you earn income. And also, we're not supposed to sell weapons, poison, intoxicants, slaves, human beings, or animals, for our livelihood. This is what right livelihood means.

What is right effort? There are four kinds of effort we have to follow:

- 1) The effort to discard evil that has already arisen. For example, you used to kill living creatures but from now on: "I will

JUST PRACTICE

not kill living creatures.” This means that we will no longer do evil things we used to do. We will discard evil that has already arisen.

And also, don’t think about what you’ve done previously. Everyone, as ordinary worldlings, according to our greed, hatred, and delusion, has done evil things and has been verbally and mentally evil. But from now on: “I won’t do that anymore.” Use your effort;

- 2) The effort to prevent the arising of unarisen evil. This means that if you never drank alcohol or never used to kill anything before, you don’t allow yourself to get involved in these sorts of things. New evil is not allowed to come. Use your effort;
- 3) The effort to develop unarisen good. For example, maybe you’ve never practiced generosity before. Now: “I will do that as much as I can.” Or maybe you’ve practiced generosity, but you’ve never observed the precepts firmly and purely. From now on: “I will use my effort to observe the precepts firmly and purely.” And if you’ve practiced generosity and observed morality, but you’ve never practiced meditation, from now on: “I will start to do this good thing.”

If you’ve practiced generosity, observed morality, and practiced meditation, but you have not yet gained anything, you keep trying. Use your effort; and

- 4) The effort to promote the good you’ve already done. For example, if you practice generosity, observe precepts, and sit in meditation every day, from now on try to promote your morality, concentration and wisdom to be higher and higher—to increase, until you gain enlightenment.

This is *sammā vāyāma*—right effort.

What is right mindfulness, or *sammā sati*? It is to be mindful—to be aware all the time with regard to our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Whatever objects come to our eyes, for example, we should be aware of them.

If you’re not aware of phenomena arising, what happens? The eye-door, ear-door, nose-door, tongue-door, body-door, and mind-door

allow mental defilements to get in. But *sati*—mindfulness—is like a security guard. It protects the properties in your heart. You're protecting your eyes, for example, because when you see something desirable, you want it and so greed and craving arise. If an undesirable object presents itself, then you get angry—if there's no mindfulness.

With mindfulness, though, you'll be able to protect yourself from these mental defilements.

You need to be aware all the time. That's why when we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation we're not only focused on our nostrils or on our abdomen. When you see something, for instance, it's just 'seeing'. And then no craving and no hatred occurs—just mindfulness.

It's the same way when your ear hears something, you smell something, you taste something, you touch something, or you think about something. You should just be aware of whatever it is—as a psycho-physical process. When you're aware all the time, you'll see their nature. That's why the Buddha said that to cure mental defilements and go to *nibbāna*—the cessation of suffering—we need right mindfulness.

What is right concentration? Without concentration, you cannot see clearly what phenomena really are. That's why we need a main object of meditation. We have different techniques. Well, at first they're different, but later on they're the same.

For example, all of you came to this program for International Buddhist Fellowship Association from different ways—some came from the east, some came from the west, but your coming is the same. It's the same way with meditation techniques. Basically, the technique may be different but the way you see should be the same. If they're not the same, it's not the right way.

Some may concentrate their minds on their nostrils or on their abdomen. Others may concentrate on sensations in their body. I'd like people to concentrate their minds on their abdomens.

When you sit in meditation, close your eyes and focus on the abdomen. You will see the rising and falling of the abdomen. You'll see your abdomen rises upward, and at that moment make a mental note: "rising." Follow the movement from the beginning, through the middle, and to the end of the rising. When your abdomen falls downward, make a mental note: "falling." Be aware of all of the falling and all of the rising. And then you will gain concentration.

When you gain concentration, you will see their nature—every moment, your abdomen rises and then disappears. The noting mind also—one moment it arises and then it disappears. Your abdomen and the

JUST PRACTICE

noting mind arise together and disappear together. This *sammā ditṭhi*—right understanding—sees the true nature of mind and body.

So the Buddha said that the Noble Eightfold Path is the Middle Way—the *only* way—to go to *nibbāna*. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood comprise *sīla*—morality. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration are *samādhi*—concentration. And right understanding and right thinking are *paññā*—wisdom.

Even though we say that the Noble Eightfold Path is just these three components, how do *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* cure mental defilements? Well, there are three levels of mental defilement:

- 1) Transgressive. When this type of mental defilement arises, you break your precepts: you might kill someone, or steal someone's property, or rape someone, lie to someone, or drink alcohol, and so on.

You kill this mental defilement by virtue—by *sīla*, or morality. When you observe your precepts—“I will take the precept to refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, using drugs or alcohol,” and so on—then no transgressive mental defilements arise. Please remember that this type of mental defilement can be overcome by virtue. So there's no physical or verbal evil when you observe your precepts;

- 2) But in your mind, there's mental defilement—craving, hatred, jealous, and so on. We call this obsessive mental defilement. How to kill this mental defilement?

This can be overcome by concentration. So when you practice meditation, try to observe your primary object. For example, concentrate your mind on your abdomen—rising and falling. In that moment you use your effort, your mindfulness and your concentration to observe and focus on your primary object. And in that moment, no obsessive mental defilement occurs; and

- 3) The last level of mental defilement is latent. This may be overcome by wisdom perfection—by *maggayāna*, which is traveling the road to enlightenment.

As I told you earlier, *magga* means killing the mental defilements and going to *nibbāna*—supreme bliss, the cessation of suffering. How to kill? Kill transgressive mental defilements by virtue, *sīla*; kill obsessive mental defilements by concentration, *samādhi*; and kill latent defilements by wisdom.

The essence of the Buddha’s teaching is *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. I would like all of you to try to observe your precepts and practice meditation to gain concentration in order to see the phenomena of mind and body, to see the Four Noble Truths, and finally, may all of you attain enlightenment in this very life.

Does anyone have any questions?

Q: Can you talk more about latent mental defilement?

They are very subtle. They are deeply inside. Right now, for instance, you have no greed, no craving, and no anger but if someone came and hit you, anger would well up in you from deep inside. This is your latent defilement.

The mental defilements of wrong view and doubt are eradicated by the first stage of enlightenment. You can eradicate sensual pleasure and anger when you gain the third stage of enlightenment. And when you gain *arahantship*, all mental defilements are eradicated. Latent mental defilements are overcome by wisdom.

When you practice tranquility meditation, for instance, you can eliminate mental defilement only temporarily—it hasn’t uprooted it. These latent defilements are still there. But when the cat sees the rat run in front of him, he can catch it right away. It’s the same thing as you develop your *vipassanā* meditation. And when you become an *arahant*, there’s no more latent mental defilement.

Q: Can you talk more about magga?

There are four kinds of *magga*. In English, we call it path—the way. These are the four stages of enlightenment.

If you practice *vipassanā* meditation and gain the first stage of enlightenment, you become what we call a stream-enterer—*sotāpanna*. If you continue to develop your meditation and gain the second stage of enlightenment, it’s called a once-returner—*sakadāgāmi*. If you keep practicing meditation and gain the third stage of enlightenment, it’s called

JUST PRACTICE

a non-returner—*anāgāmi*. And if you practice meditation until you gain the fourth stage of enlightenment, it's called *arahant*.

You have four *magga* and four *phala*. *Magga* means path and *phala* means fruit. So there's *pathyāna* and *fruityāna*.

Q: Can you talk about chanting as a meditation?

Chanting a mantra is tranquility meditation—*samatha*. After that you can do *vipassanā* meditation. The purpose of practicing meditation is to gain enlightenment, right? The Buddha said that there's only one way to gain enlightenment: mindfulness meditation. Without it, you cannot reach your spiritual goal.

Q: Some people meditate on Chenrezig. Can you talk about that?

That's tranquility meditation, not *vipassanā* meditation. To gain enlightenment, you have to realize the nature of mind and body—the three characteristics. Without realizing these three characteristics, you cannot gain enlightenment.

I've told all of you to cultivate the good. Chanting a mantra is good. Practicing generosity, morality, and tranquility meditation are good, but they are not insight *vipassanā* meditation. We have to go further.

Tranquility, or *samatha*, meditation focuses on just one object in order to gain peace of mind. When you gain absorption, or *jhāna*, maybe you can be reborn in the *Brahmā* realm—that's it; you're still an ordinary worldling. In order to escape from suffering, we need to practice *vipassanā* meditation. If you just chant a mantra, you won't realize the nature of mind and matter.

Q: What would you realize?

When you chant a mantra, you gain concentration. Maybe you hear your words, maybe you know the meaning, or even if you don't know the meaning, you're just "listening, listening, listening." Or maybe "chanting, chanting, chanting." You gain concentration. If you'd like to gain enlightenment, but are only practicing tranquility meditation: no way.

With regard to tranquility meditation, we have forty subjects of meditation—*kammaṭṭhāna*. They include 10 *kaṣiṇa* devices, 10 impurities, 10 reflections, four sublime states, reflection, analysis, and *arūpajhāna*—altogether, 40 subjects of meditation.

Q: Can you talk about the different meditation postures, particularly walking meditation?

In meditation, we have four postures: sitting meditation, walking meditation, standing meditation, and lying down meditation.

Walking meditation is very useful for sitting meditation. If we only sit all day long, we have much concentration, but with so much concentration, we become drowsy. So we need to balance our concentration and effort. Our mental faculties include faith, mindfulness, effort, concentration and wisdom. We have to balance our faith and our wisdom. And we have to balance our concentration and our effort.

When you practice walking meditation, in general it's just "walking, walking, walking"—being aware of the movement of our feet and legs. You have to use effort.

But there are six steps of walking meditation:

For example, with the first step you're just, "walking, walking." After you're familiar with that, you gain concentration.

And then you add a step: "lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping"—so with each step, you make two mental notes. We have to use effort more than we did with the first step.

After you're familiar with that, add one more: "lifting, pushing, dropping." The lifting and noting mind should occur together. When you push, the pushing and the noting mind should occur together. And the same with the dropping.

After you're familiar with that, add one more: "heal up, lifting, pushing, dropping."

And then, add one more: "heal up, lifting, pushing, lowering, touching."

And for the sixth: "heal up, lifting, pushing, lowering, touching, pressing." Do this slowly and precisely. Patiently observe the movement, closely.

So there are six stages or steps of walking meditation.

Do the first stage for about 10 minutes: "walking, walking, walking." Then, "lifting, dropping" for 10 minutes, and so on. Do six sections for one hour, and then continue with sitting meditation. After you finish one hour of sitting meditation, then practice walking meditation for another hour. If you do that for a few days, you'll be able to walk for two hours and sit for a few hours—you can *progress*.

A Q&A with Luang Por

Someone asked me:

Q: When we sit in meditation, do we have to put our right hand on our left hand all the time?

It depends. It depends on our body, on the situation. Sometimes we can put our hand on our knee, that's fine—no problem. Mainly, our upper body should be straight—not tense, just natural. So, relax your mind, your body, your muscles.

Any more questions?

Q: If someone from a religion other than Buddhism became an arahant, would that person have to pay homage to a Buddhist monk?

No one in this world can gain enlightenment without following the Buddha's teachings. You can study the great religions and see that they don't have the method to practice meditation in sufficient detail to gain insight knowledge, step by step, which leads to enlightenment.

The ultimate goal of other religions—even some Buddhist traditions, like Pure Land—is heaven. Pure Land is Buddhism—they just recite the Buddha's name, many times a day. But just reciting, they won't understand the nature of mind and matter—there's no way they can. Their ultimate goal—Pure Land—is heaven. In Hinduism also, it's just heaven. In Christianity, it's just heaven. Higher than heaven is the *Brahmā* world.

In Buddhism only is there a method to practice meditation to gain insight knowledge, step by step, until we gain enlightenment and are able to get rid of greed, anger, and delusion. This method is *only* found in Buddhism.

So, if someone from another religion gained enlightenment, would they have to pay respect to a Buddhist monk? I don't think so. It's impossible for them to gain enlightenment without following the Noble Eightfold Path and the four foundations of mindfulness. No one can gain enlightenment without them.

Q: Can regular human beings—male or female—attain arahant without being a Buddhist monk? And would such a person have to pay respect and give homage to a Buddhist monk?

In the Buddhist scriptures, it says that even a lay person can practice meditation and gain *anāgāmi*—the third stage of enlightenment—where there’s no anger anymore. Whoever attains this stage of enlightenment has no sensual desire at all either.

Still, you have to pay respect to not just the *Saṅgha*, but even a *sāmanera*—a novice—ordained today.

So, yes, even a lay person who has gained *anāgāmi*—a non-returner—has to pay respect to a *sāmanera*. This is because of the uniform, but especially because of the *sīla*. A *sāmanera* follows not only ten precepts, but 199 precepts—they have a lot of the monastic code to follow. And some day, they may realize the Buddha—so they wear the robe. We should pay respect to the *sīla*.

This doesn’t just apply to an *anāgāmi*. Even a *brahmā*—higher than heaven, the highest angel—has to pay respect to a *sāmanera*, even if the *sāmanera* hasn’t gained enlightenment yet, because he has the higher morality.

So pay respect to the high morality. And to their uniform, as he is the Buddha’s son—or the Buddha’s *grandson*.

*Q: Let’s say there’s an elderly Buddhist monk who has achieved a high level of Buddhist education but has never practiced meditation, and you have a much younger monk who has only minimal Buddhist education but practices meditation every day and night and has become not just a *sotāpanna* but a *sakadāgāmi*—he is a noble one: does the younger Buddhist monk still have to bow down and pay respect to the older monk?*

Of course he has to—because of the seniority of the senior monk. When someone ordains as a monk, the preceptor has to tell the new monk what date and time he was ordained. It’s not about who has gained enlightenment, it’s about who has seniority. So we have to pay respect to senior monks.

Let’s talk about someone passing many levels of exams, of education. For me, I would say whoever passed the exam, like all of you who passed high school or got a B.A. or an M.A., or whatever—you passed the exam.

JUST PRACTICE

Similarly, the Buddhist scriptures have different levels. To finish the highest education, whether Buddhist or otherwise, this is mainly because we have good memorization. And so you passed the exam. See that? It's not really wisdom.

In *Pāli* terms, we call this *saññā*—memorization. When you're able to memorize the whole lecture and are asked a question, you can answer the question. You can pass. See that? Because it's based on memorization.

But if we don't pass meditation, no *paññā*—no wisdom—arises. The wisdom here is to see the nature of mind and matter. Even someone who has passed the highest examination is still attached to their mind, their body, and their belongings. They cannot even reduce their greed. See that? If they don't like something, anger arises right away. They can't control their mind, because of a lack of practice. So we need to practice.

We first need *pariyatti*: we need to study, listen, read, and hear discussion about the ultimate truth. We need that. All of us need to learn about the nature of mind and matter, so we study these things—how to reduce greed, anger and delusion. We know the technique, the method. This is *pariyatti*. But we will not gain anything if we know the method but do not put it into practice.

Pariyatti is like a map. If we want to go from here to Washington, D.C. by car, what do we need? We need a map, and we need to study the map. If we don't, we won't reach Washington, D.C. We need to follow the map, and *drive* to get there.

So after we study and know everything—that is, we know the map and the route, or *pariyatti*—we need to put it into practice. This is *paṭipatti*. We need to put it into *practice*. You see?

Everyone knows that anger is not good. Anger is like fire burning your heart, or like poison destroying your body. Everyone knows this. But how about if you come across an undesirable situation? Anger arises right away, right? That's because of a lack of practice.

From studying you may realize that anger is not good. But you cannot control your mind. That's why we need to practice. When you practice, you'll know anger is not good—it's like poison, it's like fire—so you won't accept it. See that? If you practice *vipassanā* meditation and anger arises, you realize it right away. This is wisdom. When wisdom arises, anger disappears.

That's why we need to practice—*paṭipatti*. After you study, you know the method and you put it into practice, you'll see the result—*paṭivedha*—and then you will gain enlightenment.

So you asked me about the senior monk with the highest education but he doesn't practice? He will not gain anything, but the younger monk still has to pay respect to the senior monk because he has less seniority than the other monk. He has to pay respect to him.

When you pay respect to a monk, think about the virtues of the *Saṅgha*—the holy, *Noble Saṅgha*—not just the person you see in front of you. Think about the virtues of the *Noble Saṅgha*, and pay respect to them.

It's like if we go on a pilgrimage and see a lot of Buddha statues. Some of these statues last for 1,000 years—very old antiques—and many are missing a hand or an ear, but we still have to pay respect to it. We're not paying respect to a Buddha statue with no ear or hand. Instead, think about the virtues of the Buddha—the living Buddha—and pay respect to *him*. You will gain the benefit.

So pay respect to the *Saṅgha*, even if it's not perfect. Think about the virtues of the *Noble Saṅgha*, and then you will gain the merit—100%.

Q: I have a question about new meditators. I have lots of friends who want to practice meditation but I can't explain the best way to gain concentration, because even though we're sitting in meditation, our minds are wandering all over the place. Can you help me understand?

When we practice meditation, we first need to gain concentration. And then wisdom will follow later. So, how to practice that? Mainly, just keep practicing. This is mental training—training this monkey mind. The mind is like a monkey. The nature of a monkey is to run and jump. That's its nature. The mind also wanders. And so we wonder how to deal with the mind in order to gain concentration.

You focus your mind on your main object of meditation—maybe breathing in and breathing out, or maybe the rising and falling of the abdomen. If your mind goes out—if your mind wanders—this means you forgot to focus on your main object of meditation. So try to watch your mind.

Just remember: *try to watch your mind*.

Investigate: "How about my mind? Has it stayed with the main object of meditation or not?" Try to watch your mind.

If you realize your mind has wandered, what do you have to do? Just mentally label it: "wandering, wandering, wandering, wandering." And then return to your main object of meditation. Maybe in a few minutes it wanders again and you start thinking. Just be aware of the

JUST PRACTICE

thinking. And then label it: “thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking.” Then return to your main object of meditation.

By doing this—by *continuing* to do this—the distracted, wandering mind will reduce for sure. Instead of your mind going out 100 times, you’ll reduce it to only 99 times, then 98 times, 50 times, and finally, no more going out. You’ll experience how to train this monkey mind by yourself. Try to realize what it’s doing then go back to your main or home object of meditation.

All of you come to this meditation monastery just temporarily, then go back home, right? It’s the same. So we have a home object. If something happens, and you think about something, it’s just “thinking, thinking.” Your mind wanders, and it’s just “wandering, wandering.” If you’re talking to someone, it’s just “talking, talking.” If you plan to do something, it’s just “planning, planning.”

Just realize what’s happening with your mind, and then you will know the mind is just arising and disappearing. Then go back to your home object.

So we need to practice, to watch our mind.

Q: So you’re saying that whatever we do, we need sati, right?

Yes, yes, yes, just try to be aware. And label it. Labelling just means that you know it. Labelling is knowing. And knowing is wisdom. When wisdom arises, this wandering mind—delusion—will disappear right away. No two minds can arise together. So if wisdom arises, there’s no wandering mind. If there’s a wandering mind, there’s no wisdom. So we call this mental training, or mental culture—we’re culturing this monkey mind.

We need to practice to get used to it. The method is simple—very, very simple—but it’s not easy. [*Luang Por laughs.*] But practice. Practice makes perfect.

Q: If we sit in meditation and fall asleep, what happens?

It’s sleeping meditation. It’s not wisdom anymore—it’s *moha*, or delusion. So we should always be alert. We need effort. When we lack effort, then we can fall asleep. Really, we need effort, mindfulness, and concentration. They are co-workers—they are working together.

Please remember: if you fall asleep, it’s *bhavaṅga*, and if you’re sleepy, it’s *moha*. At night, we sleep for five hours, or maybe eight hours—it’s *bhavaṅga*. It’s neither wholesome nor unwholesome. And

before you fall asleep, as you're sleepy, it's *moha*—delusion. All of you think about that. The antidote to drowsiness, how to deal with drowsiness—I'm talking about the mental hindrances—we need to study these again and again to remember them.

We need to study the map, and then, put it into practice—apply it to your practice.

Any more questions?

Q: Sometimes my meditation is good and sometimes it's bad. What should I do?

It's natural. Like, we eat every day, right? Three times a day—breakfast, lunch, dinner or supper. Sometimes, “Ah, very tasty,” right? And sometimes, it's not. Whatever comes, you have to eat it. If the time comes to eat your breakfast, your lunch, your dinner, you eat it. In the same way, if the time comes to practice meditation, you just do it.

Meditation is not only for sitting still and being peaceful—it's to realize what's happening. To realize: “My mind isn't going out, it's just quiet”—this is good, but it's not the best. What happens with your thoughts, you should know that. What happens with your sensations, feelings, emotions—you have to know that. Whatever happens to your body, you need to know that too.

Knowing is wisdom. We need wisdom, not just tranquility.

Make the determination: “Ok, I will sit in meditation three times a day, or twice a day.” When the time comes, you need to practice, just like we need to eat every day, three times a day. So we need to practice three times a day.

Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's not. This is natural. It's uncontrollable—you can't control that. If you're feeling comfortable, practice one, two, or three hours; if it's not so good, maybe just 20 or 30 minutes—that's okay. But we need to do it every day—not on and off, but on and *on*, every day—to get used to it.

Q: What does it mean to be a yogi?

To be a *yogi* means to be a meditator. *Yogi* means a person who has effort and mindfulness all the time. Lack of mindfulness is not a *yogi*. Even though you wear the *yogi's* uniform, you're not a *yogi* if you don't have

JUST PRACTICE

effort and mindfulness. You need effort and mindfulness, and practice—then you're really a *yogi*.

That's why the Buddha said to act like a sick person—slow down, walk slowly, stand up slowly, and sit down slowly. Whatever you do: slowly, mindfully, gently, precisely, attentively—this is a *yogi*.

I'd like to see all of you as *yogis*. Rushing to walk—that's not a *yogi*. Rushing, rushing—that's not a *yogi*.

Q: Sometimes my practice feels relatively concentrated, mindful and inspired, whereas at other times it feels dull, scattered and confused. During those latter periods, I tend to compensate by over-focusing and become very serious and intolerant of other people. It makes me feel tense, and concentration is almost impossible to attain. I find it very difficult to let go of the "seriousness" during these times.

Can you give me any advice?

Practicing loving kindness meditation for awhile will be helpful to regain concentration. Wish for yourself to be well and happy first, and then extend your thoughts of love to others.

Q: While chanting, should I be reflecting on the meaning of the chant, or should my focus be elsewhere?

Reflecting on the meaning is the best.

*Q: Is it appropriate for me to intentionally cultivate and try to sustain pleasurable feeling (and possibly *pīti*) in the body while meditating, or should I allow it to arise on its own, note it, then let it pass away? Or is there something else I should do?*

I allow it to arise on its own, note it, and know it as arising and disappearing.

Q: What should be the essence of our practice?

Always be mindful. Be aware of every physical activity and mental process.

Q: Can you please help me understand the correct way to note? When noting, about 90% of my focus should be on awareness of what's

happening (and only 10% on the noting itself), correct? When I note in this way, I feel that my awareness is much more refined and subtle, yet the mind has a stronger tendency to drift off.

On the other hand, when I put most emphasis on the noting itself the mind drifts less but my overall awareness seems less sharp—the awareness seems more mechanical and forced. I find that if I try to balance the awareness and the noting, the mind moves back and forth between the two extremes of drifting and mechanical/forced noting.

Noting the object accurately with awareness is best. Sometimes, when concentration becomes stronger, just being aware of the object without noting is okay too.

Q: How do I know if I'm practicing in a way that leads to progress, or if I'm wasting my time?

Just keep practicing and practicing. Be happy with what you've got.

Q: I'm noticing that I'm becoming increasingly aware of the present moment (with fewer and shorter gaps in my awareness) but my awareness seldom seems clear or strong. I've tried to apply more effort but my mind tends to resist that. It feels as if my mind needs inspiration, or something to interest it or offer it a sense of pleasure. Despite a feeling of being more aware more often, the practice overall seems rather dull.

Can you offer any advice?

Sometimes we need to change the object of meditation, such as instead of focusing on the body and mind, we need to practice loving kindness meditation for awhile. Then we resume *vipassanā*, as usual.

Q: What makes someone a Buddhist?

A person who has high respect for the Buddha, the Buddha's teaching, and the Buddha's holy disciples—this is a Buddhist.

Maybe someone is a Muslim or a Christian, but they might come and practice meditation here. Although their tradition is something else, if they understand the teaching, practice the Buddha's way, and it's because they respect the Buddha, his teaching, and his holy disciples—inside, it's because they are a Buddhist.

JUST PRACTICE

Q: What's the difference between Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism?

Fundamentally, they are the same. But some of their practices are different.

I would say that *Theravāda* is the original Buddhism. We don't change or add anything to the teaching—we just follow the original teaching.

Theravāda is followed in five countries: Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. In all five countries we use the same Buddhist scriptures. We use the *Pāli* language—the Buddhist language—and we have only one Buddha—Gotama Buddha.

For *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, it depends on the region or country, but they add some teachings—maybe some philosopher or famous writer added stuff. And some teachings have been cut out, as they didn't think it was necessary or important. So they add some and take some out.

For example, as *Theravāda* Buddhist monks we have to follow 227 precepts. For one of those 227 precepts, the Buddha said there is no eating after noon and until dawn the next day. We follow that. We fast by not eating after noon. In parts of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, on the other hand, they change that a little bit—they can eat dinner. The monks can eat dinner, but it must be vegetarian. See that? *Theravāda* monks can eat vegetarian or non-vegetarian—it's doesn't matter.

And, as I said, we have Gotama Buddha. For some *Mahāyāna* traditions, they have Medicine Buddha and Happy Buddha. They use different names. They have divine angels, spirits, and gods too. If you visit a *Mahāyāna* temple, you'll see god and angel statues. You can see three Buddhas with different names. Different names, different Buddhas—they have some for different followers—and some have very big eyes like a giant, and some stick out their tongue.

Also, *Theravāda* Buddhism doesn't allow monks to get married. But some *Mahāyāna* Buddhist monks—like Zen Masters—can get married, and have children too.

And in these five countries—Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos—none of the monks is allowed to kiss a woman, but it's different in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.

If you watch TV, you can see even the Dalai Lama go somewhere—maybe a female ambassador or the first lady of a country will come and welcome him at the airport—and they'll hug and kiss. We cannot do that. Maybe it's loving kindness on the part of *Mahāyāna*

monks, but we don't do that. If we did that, it would look ugly—maybe all over the world we'd become an infamous person. But for the Dalai Lama, it's normal. Sometimes a lady will even want to kiss the Dalai Lama nose-to-nose.

This is another difference between *Mahāyāna* and *Theravāda*.

And as *Theravāda* Buddhists, we try to practice meditation to gain one of the states of enlightenment.

Q: What's the difference between a sensitivity (e.g. eye-sensitivity) and a sense base (e.g. the eye)? Is it the eye versus the ability to see?

The eye-base, eye-door and eye-sensitivity are the same thing.

Q: With respect to body-consciousness, is that like feeling or sensation?

Feeling is *vedanā*. It's not body-consciousness, but they work together. Knowing touching or pressure is body-consciousness. But whether the touch is pleasant or unpleasant is *vedanā*.

Q: I've read about people who've had near-death experiences. Some of those people were blind, and they said that although they had no sight during their life, after they "died" they were able to see things. And sometimes there was hearing that was intensified more than when they had their bodies.

How does that work if the sensitivities are gone?

The mind can see it. They can see the object by mind. No one can see it but them. Some people close their eyes and see a dog coming, for instance. They can see through their mind. It's not through the physical eye—it's through the *mental* eye.

Q: Is it like jhāna?

Before you die, one of the six sense objects will appear. Perhaps you will see with your physical eye or hear with your physical ear, or perhaps you will see with your mind or hear with your mind. Mind is very powerful.

Kamma, which is good or bad actions you have done in the past, will appear. For example, if you used to kill animals for your livelihood, right before you die you'll think about this. This *kamma* arises. And then, *kammanimitta*: you'll see the weapon that you used to kill the animal.

JUST PRACTICE

After that, you'll see your destination—where you'll be reborn (for example, as a hell being). This is *gatinimitta*.

By practicing meditation, we're practicing how to die. Right? We're learning how to die rightly. Otherwise, you don't know anything and you just worry about your children, your business, and so on. You're about to *die*—you're not supposed to worry about that.

So, just be mindful of what happens to your body, sensations and feelings, and emotions and thoughts. Keep practicing, and before you die you can gain enlightenment.

This is the beauty of meditation practice. It's very useful in helping us to reduce mental defilements in our daily lives, and when we're close to death we know how to die. Mostly, we don't know how to die, right? That's why the Buddha's teaching is the art of living and dying. It is how to live and how to die.

Q: With respect to the realities—consciousness, mental factors, matter and nibbāna—could we say that we practice meditation on rūpa, which causes us to develop insight wisdom, which in turn leads to nibbāna?

Yes, but you cannot contemplate *nibbāna*. It is not an object of meditation.

Q: To clarify a point with respect to the five senses, do all of the five senses arise with consciousness?

Yes, of course. Remember that consciousness cannot arise alone.

What do we need for consciousness and mental factors to arise? We need objects. Without objects, no consciousness or mental factors arise.

It's like an invalid person: when they want to get up, what do they need? Maybe they need a rope line to pull themselves up. And what do they need after they get up? In order to stand they might need crutches or a walker. The rope line and the crutches or walker give support to an invalid person.

In the same way, the sense objects give support to consciousness and mental factors and enable them to arise. So, it's just cause and effect.

We have eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, and body consciousness. We call this impression-consciousness.

What does eye-consciousness depend on? It depends on visible objects. And then eye-consciousness arises. Dependent on sound, ear-consciousness arises; dependent on smell, nose-consciousness arises; dependent on taste, tongue-consciousness arises; and dependent on tangible objects, body-consciousness arises.

It's just cause and effect.

What's the cause? The five objects, or matter. And consciousness is mentality. See? Just mind and matter—there's no body, no person, no man and no woman. Just cause and effect—just mind and matter. These five sense objects are the cause, and the mind element is the effect. Just cause and effect.

Q: Does nibbāna or enlightenment arise in the mind?

Supramundane consciousness takes *nibbāna* as its object. *Nibbāna* doesn't arise. It's nature, so it cannot arise. It is supreme peace. It has its own nature.

But supramundane consciousness can take supreme peace as its object. Someone can reach this attainment for one or two hours and experience the supreme bliss as an object without going anywhere.

That's why *nibbāna* is a *dhamma* that should be realized.

Q: Wow, that's hard to understand. How many mental factors are associated with nibbāna?

You cannot associate with *nibbāna*. It's not consciousness—it's the object of supramundane consciousness. If you take *nibbāna* as an object, in that moment 36 kinds of mental states arise.

Q: So nibbāna is like a dhamma?

Yes, it's a *dhamma* object.

Q: And it can be experienced through developing the mind?

Yes, through supramundane consciousness. Try to practice meditation, gain enlightenment, and you'll know for yourself.

JUST PRACTICE

Q: Most of the stuff about Buddhism that I've been exposed to presents nibbāna as the cessation of the mind, or the extinguishing of the mind, rather than the mind taking it as an object. Is that correct?

No, the cessation of the mind is an attainment. It's not *nibbāna*. *Nirodha* is not *nibbāna*.

Q: Is this a higher definition of nibbāna?

An *anāgāmi* or an *arahant* can gain the cessation attainment—*nirodha-samāpatti*. But only those two.

Q: Is that like a jhāna?

It's not *jhāna*. *Nirodha* has no consciousness, no mental factors, and no *rūpa*—nothing produced by mind—arising in that moment. You're still alive, though. Life faculties still exist. After seven days, you become normal. It's high-class.

Q: It's really hard to understand. As lay people, we think of nibbāna as a destination. We're trying to envision it that way. But it's completely different.

You can't see *nibbāna* with your physical eye or experience it through normal consciousness. Only supramundane consciousness can see it as an object.

Q: Is it associated with a neutral feeling, or a pleasant feeling?

There's no feeling. It's not even *upekkhā*. It's relief from suffering. It's very hard to explain. It's incomparable. It's not regarding the mind. *Nibbāna* is the object of supramundane consciousness.

Q: Venerable Chaiya, can we consider ourselves noble people if we gain some of the insight knowledges?

Whoever practices meditation and gains enlightenment becomes a noble person.

If you practice meditation and become able to differentiate between mind and body, and you know cause and effect, you are a lesser

stream-enterer. A (regular) stream-enterer will never go to an unhappy state. But even if you don't gain enlightenment in this life, if you possess these two *vipassanā* knowledges—differentiating mind and body, and knowing cause and effect—you will not go to an unhappy state in the next life. And then, if you gain enlightenment you will become a stream-enterer.

So we need to improve ourselves step by step.

From the May 21, 2000 talk “The 40 Kammatṭhāna”

We have two types of meditation. In *Pāli*, they are called *samatha bhāvanā* and *vipassanā bhāvanā*. *Samatha* refers to tranquility meditation. *Vipassanā* refers to insight meditation. In *samatha* meditation, we have 40 subjects but some of them are not useful for everyone. We should still study some of these to gain knowledge.

Even if we practice *vipassanā* meditation, we still need to practice some tranquility meditation in order to support our *vipassanā* meditation. For example, *mettā* (or loving kindness) and *ānāpāna* (or breath) meditation are useful for practicing insight *vipassanā* meditation too.

Whoever would like to attain *jhāna* or supernormal knowledge needs to practice *samatha* meditation. When we practice *samatha* meditation and gain higher concentration, we gain *jhāna*. If you gain the fifth *jhāna*, you can show your psychic powers and so on. But for us, I don't think we need psychic powers. [*Luang Por laughs.*]

In *Pāli*, we call these 40 subjects of meditation *kammatṭhāna*. *Kammatṭhāna* means subject of meditation—and so we have 40 subjects of meditation. What are they?

The first ten are called *kaṣiṇa*, which means whole, all, or complete. This means that when we practice *kaṣiṇa* meditation we have to observe the entire object, not just one part—we concentrate our mind on the whole object of the meditation.

So we have the earth *kaṣiṇa*, water *kaṣiṇa*, fire *kaṣiṇa*, air *kaṣiṇa*, blue *kaṣiṇa*, yellow *kaṣiṇa*, red *kaṣiṇa*, white *kaṣiṇa*, space *kaṣiṇa*, and light *kaṣiṇa*—these are the ten *kaṣiṇa*. Nowadays, we still have people who practice these meditation objects.

And so, for example, we concentrate our mind on the circle of the earth, and we may mentally or audibly say, “earth, earth, earth, earth, earth.” When you concentrate on the subject, your mind becomes one-pointed. There are no distractions.

After you practice this every day, even when you close your eyes you'll see this object—this earth *kaṣiṇa*. Whenever you sit, you'll see this object. Practice until you're familiar with this object. Eventually, you will not see the form, but just its color.

When there are no mental hindrances disturbing you because your mind is so captivated on the earth, you'll gain *jhāna*. *Vitakka* (initial application), *vicāra* (sustained application), *pīti* (rapture), *sukha* (bliss), and *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness)—in other words, the five factors of the

first *jhāna*—will have come together from your mind concentrating on the earth *kaṣiṇa*.

When you're able to concentrate on the earth *kaṣiṇa* for one or two or three hours, practicing every day, for many, many days or many months, then you will gain *jhāna*—the first *jhāna*—and then higher and higher through the *rūpajhāna* and toward the *arūpajhāna*.

And then you will have supernormal knowledge. You can see, because your mind is so pure and strong from this concentration. You'll be able to see whatever you want to see or hear whatever you want to hear. Through the divine eye or divine ear you can read someone's mind or remember your past lives or someone else's lives.

Whoever practices meditation on the earth *kaṣiṇa* will be able to gain the first *jhāna* through the fifth *jhāna*.

You can try this at home if you want—it's easy. Use the earth *kaṣiṇa* as your object—and just concentrate on this object.

For the water *kaṣiṇa*, the technique is the same. You can use some vessel full of colorless water. Maybe use a bowl or a big cup, anything. Just put water in there and put it in front of you. Concentrate your mind on the water *kaṣiṇa*. Make a mental or audible note: "water, water, water, water, water." Don't think about anything else—just this water—until you see it even if you close your eyes. We can gain *jhāna* this way too.

When you're familiar with these *kaṣiṇa*, you can concentrate your mind in this way to gain tranquility. Don't think about anything but this object. After you gain concentration by doing this, you should practice *vipassanā* meditation using your primary object.

Next is the fire *kaṣiṇa*. Here you may imagine a fire before you and just concentrate on the fire. Or maybe use a fireplace. Just concentrate on "fire, fire, fire, fire, fire." Even if you close your eyes, you'll see the fire. You can also light a candle and just concentrate your gaze on the fire: "fire, fire, fire, fire, fire."

When you get used to it, you can do it anywhere you see fire—just concentrate on it. And you can gain tranquility this way too.

So you have earth, water, and fire *kaṣiṇa*.

And now, air *kaṣiṇa*: we can concentrate on the air. When there's wind entering through a door or a window, concentrate on "air, air, air, air, air." Sometimes you can look up at the top of a tree and watch the wind blowing it, see the tree limbs shaking and moving. And sometimes you can feel the air touch your body. Concentrate on the air.

JUST PRACTICE

We have to really practice meditation on the air *kaṣiṇa* to get used to it—to concentrate on the air—because normally it’s difficult.

And we also have blue *kaṣiṇa*, yellow *kaṣiṇa*, red *kaṣiṇa*, and white *kaṣiṇa*. You can practice with any of these colors.

Maybe use a paper or a piece of cloth that’s one of these colors. Put it in front of you and mentally or audibly note, “blue, blue, blue, blue, blue.” Don’t see anything but the blue—this is your *kaṣiṇa*. You’ll be able to close your eyes and visualize this object.

We have to practice this many times and for many days. Pick any color you like. When we practice this, it’s very easy. Even if you go somewhere, you may see someone wearing red or blue. You can concentrate on this. Don’t allow your mind to go anywhere else but on “blue, blue, blue, blue, blue,” etc. Sometimes we see flowers, so just concentrate on the color of the flowers: “red, red, red, red, red.” Don’t let your mind leave the object.

This is possible for anyone to practice. Just blue, yellow, red or white—use any of these. It’s very easy. There’s no need to read a book; you don’t have to waste your time. Just concentrate your mind on the people in front of you—what color they’re wearing. If you go somewhere and see a color—*any* color—use it.

Next is space *kaṣiṇa*. Here, space would be a hole. Concentrate on this hole, or this space: “space, space, space, space, space.” Concentrate your mind on the space as an object.

For light *kaṣiṇa*, the light may be moonlight or sunlight. You may see it enter through a window or a door, or maybe you see it cast on the wall. You just see the light: “light, light, light, light, light.” At night, in particular, you can concentrate on a light.

So, if we have strong concentration, we can gain the first through fifth *jhāna* using any of these ten *kaṣiṇa*.

Next we have the ten *asubha*, or impurities. They include:

- 1) A bloated corpse. A few days after someone dies, the body normally becomes bloated and swollen. It’s not normal in the United States to meditate on a bloated corpse, but it was in the time of the Buddha. Back then, many people were very poor, and according to their tradition, when someone died they didn’t bury or cremate the corpse. They just put it in the cemetery and animals and birds came and ate it. And so a few days after someone died, the monks would go to the cemetery to practice this

- impurity meditation. Nowadays we can't really do that. So the first one is meditation on a bloated corpse;
- 2) A discolored corpse. This means that after a few days or a week the color of the dead body has changed from flesh-colored to maybe green;
 - 3) A festering body;
 - 4) A dissected body. This means the body is split, like someone used a knife to cut the body into different parts—to dissect it;
 - 5) An eaten body. Maybe a tiger or a vulture or some other big bird came to eat the dead body. They eat the body and maybe different pieces of it are lying around the cemetery;
 - 6) A body scattered in pieces. You'll see the dead body's head is in one place, a hand is in another place, and a leg is in yet another place;
 - 7) A body scattered in pieces by using a knife to chop it up, not by an animal but by people cutting it up into different pieces;
 - 8) A bloody corpse. This means maybe someone died by a vehicle accident and the whole body is bloody;
 - 9) A worm-infested body. Maybe after a few weeks worms are infesting the whole body, congregating especially around the eyes and nose; and
 - 10) A skeleton. There are just bones—no flesh anymore.

These ten kinds of impurities are used to cultivate the concept of repulsiveness of the body. Most people are attached to their bodies and the bodies of others. As long as you're attached to your body or someone else's body, you'll have suffering.

When you develop meditation on these impurities, you're not so attached to your body. So the purpose of this type of meditation is to get rid of attachment. When you get rid of attachment, there's no suffering.

With meditation on these impurities, you can gain just the first *jhāna*—you can't gain the higher levels.

Even though we can't really practice corpse meditation in the United States, we can still practice the last one—skeleton meditation—when we go to a museum or hospital and maybe see a skeleton or bones. Even if we emphasize *vipassanā* meditation in our practice, we can still practice seeing *our* body as a skeleton too. Or sometimes we can practice

JUST PRACTICE

visualizing someone else in front of us as a skeleton. This is *samatha*, or tranquility, meditation.

If you want to practice skeleton meditation, it's easy for everyone. You can collect bones, put them in front of you, and mentally or audibly note, "skeleton, skeleton, skeleton, skeleton, skeleton." Then, even if you close your eyes, wherever you go, you just see skeletons all the time. You should also think: "I, too, will one day be like this dead body." Contemplate yourself as a corpse and you can get rid of your attachment.

In the time of the Buddha, there was a monk who used to practice skeleton meditation. One day he was walking to the village for alms round and he passed a small forest. A married couple had a quarrel and the wife was returning to her parents' house. On her way she passed the forest and saw the monk. When the monk looked at her, he saw her only as a skeleton.

Normally in the jungle, if it was just the two of them, perhaps attachment could have occurred. But for a monk used to practicing skeleton meditation, he saw her only as a skeleton. He then immediately went away to sit in meditation.

After the factors of *jhāna* arose the monk began to practice *vipassanā* meditation. When he did, he saw the nature of mind and matter, arising and disappearing: impermanent. He then gained the fourth stage of enlightenment and became an *arahant*.

After the monk became an *arahant*, the husband came by and asked him, "Did you see a woman pass this way?" The monk replied, "I don't know if it was a man or a woman. I just saw a skeleton going down the road." [*Luang Por laughs.*] The monk told him the truth. In that moment, he'd seen her only as a skeleton.

We can practice this too. The monk saw the woman's whole body as a skeleton. In America, we can't easily practice all of these impurity meditations—we can't really practice one through nine—but we can practice the skeleton meditation.

For these impurity meditations, it's good to go to a cemetery. But in America you go to a cemetery and it looks like a garden. In the event you see a car accident—maybe there's a dead body—you can use it as your meditation object.

So that's the first 20 of the 40 *kammaṭṭhāna*. Next, we'll talk about the reflections or recollections.

Before they sit down to practice meditation, Buddhist people may recollect the virtues of the Buddha, radiate loving kindness, think about the impurity of the body, and contemplate death, thinking: "I can die

anytime.” This may not be so necessary for non-Buddhists. They might simply reflect on the virtues of the Buddha.

Buddhānussati is recollection of the virtues of the Buddha. This is a kind of meditation. The reflection we do in our chanting has nine kinds of virtues of the Buddha. In brief, they are:

- 1) Worthy. The Buddha was worthy of accepting offerings from the people;
- 2) Fully enlightened. The Buddha was perfectly enlightened without a teacher. He discovered the truth;
- 3) Endowed with wisdom and conduct. As he knew, he practiced; as he practiced, he knew. Most people know everything but they don't practice (in other words, they don't follow what they know). Others practice the wrong way (that is, they practice but they don't understand). We need to know *and* practice. This is another kind of virtue of the Buddha;
- 4) Well-gone. From the time he was the *bodhisatta* until he gained enlightenment and became the Buddha, he had no wrong view. He practiced very well. He helped people to enter *nibbāna*. He was well-gone;
- 5) Knower of the world. He understood this world—the human world, the heaven world, and the *Brahmā* world—and he knew about the different kinds of beings existing in these worlds, including the nature of their form and consciousness;
- 6) Incomparable tamer of those who can be tamed. According to the tradition stories, animals, giants, *brahmā*, gods, humans—whoever—he could train any of them to be tame. There are a lot of stories about that;
- 7) Teacher of gods and men. A lot of people had problems they didn't know how to solve, so they asked the Buddha. He'd explain the solution to them, and help them understand in order to gain enlightenment;
- 8) The Awakened One, omniscient. He understood the Four Noble Truths. As he did, he taught others to understand mind and matter as it is; and
- 9) The blessed or holy one. He could explain the Dhamma.

JUST PRACTICE

So the Buddha had these nine virtues. When we contemplate on *Buddhānussati*, this is a kind of *bhāvanā*, or meditation. But no *jhāna* can be gained because the virtues of the Buddha are realities.

The next reflection is on *Dhammānussati*—the virtues of the doctrine. We have six kinds of virtue here. They include:

- 1) Well-proclaimed, or well-expounded. Even if you only study or listen to the teachings, you'll feel happy about it. No greed or anger arises in your mind. And as you practice, you'll get results—and you'll be happy. When you gain enlightenment, you'll gain a special feeling of respect. That's why the Buddha's doctrine is well-proclaimed;
- 2) To be realized by oneself. If you practice the Dhamma, you will know. If you decide to practice meditation, observe the precepts, and radiate loving kindness, how do you feel? No one knows except that person. This means "to be realized by oneself." It's like how you have to drink something to know its taste;
- 3) There's no delay; it's timeless. If you do it right now, you get results right now. You can get results anytime. For example, if you sit in meditation then no greed and no hatred arises in your mind. Otherwise, mental defilements may arise to disturb your mind;
- 4) Inviting investigation: come and see. I would like you to come and practice. For example, if you would like to go to a meditation center to practice meditation, you'll know for yourself;
- 5) Worthy of inducement in one's own mind. This means we should carry this doctrine within our mind and body all the time. Whatever we do, whatever we think, the Dhamma should be with us all the time. And then the Dhamma will lead us toward *nibbāna*. Without Dhamma, we may get depressed, suffer or cry. Dhamma is nature. When we understand nature, we don't have to suffer so much; and
- 6) To be understood by the holy ones, by the wise. Whoever practiced meditation and gained enlightenment can attain fruit consciousness and take *nibbāna* as one's object. They can stay there for one or two or three days. Whoever knows that—the stream-enterer and so on—

knows for themselves. This means that the doctrine is to be understood by the wise, each one for himself. “The wise” here means a holy person who has already gained enlightenment. They know by themselves.

So you can concentrate your mind by reflecting on the virtues of the doctrine—on one of these six *Dhammānusati bhāvanā*. This is another kind of *samatha* meditation.

Next is *Saṅghānusati*—reflection on the virtues of the order. This refers to the holy monks. When you chant, you’re reflecting on their good conduct. Why is it good conduct? Because they practice morality, concentration, and wisdom. This is good and upright conduct. When they practice upright conduct, it leads straight to *nibbāna*. This type of conduct is the right way to practice to gain enlightenment.

We also reflect on how the holy monks are worthy of gifts; for example, maybe something special from overseas or another state: “Oh, I’ll take this to offer to the holy monks.” They are worthy of receiving these gifts because they practice good conduct.

The holy monks are worthy of hospitality. Maybe you have them in your home as special guests. Or when they come to your house, you offer them something special. They are worthy of this hospitality and worthy of your welcome.

And the holy monks are worthy of offerings. If someone dies, they may become a hungry ghost. After someone offers something to monks, they can dedicate the power of the offering to that someone who has passed away. Perhaps that person will receive the merit of this offering and be reborn next in a good existence.

The holy monks are worthy of reverential salutation. When we see holy monks, we pay respect to them because their minds are very pure. There’s no mental defilement—no greed, hatred, delusion, jealousy, and so on. That’s why we pay respect to holy monks.

And last, holy monks are an incomparable field of merit for the people. That’s why people come to pay respect and offer things.

If you reflect on the virtues of the holy order—on one of the *Saṅghānusati bhāvanā*—this is another kind of tranquility meditation.

This reflection on the Triple Gem is mostly for Buddhist people, but even non-Buddhists can reflect on *sīla*, or morality. Everyone can reflect on the perfection of one’s own virtuous conduct: “Oh, I have very pure precepts. I have good conduct. I don’t harm animals,” etc.

JUST PRACTICE

Think about your own virtuous conduct: “I don’t kill anyone, I don’t steal or cheat anyone, I don’t commit sexual misconduct, and I don’t lie or use drugs or other intoxicants.” When you reflect on your own morality, it’s a kind of meditation.

Sometimes when we prepare to sit in meditation, we need this type of reflection before we begin: “I’m a good person.” So think about your precepts and your virtuous conduct. When you realize that you’re a good person, your mind becomes calm and your meditation will easily be concentrated. This is a kind of meditation.

You can also reflect on your generosity. Think about the course of your life and all the times you helped people: poor people, your friends or relatives, parents, teachers, your temple, school, a hospital, or society. Just think about your generosity. You’ll feel happy and peaceful. This is a kind of meditation. Then sit and practice *vipassanā* meditation.

Reflecting on your good conduct and your generosity supports your *vipassanā* meditation.

Next we have reflection on deities or gods. This means reflection on the virtues that make people become gods.

What are they?

Before someone became a god or an angel, what did they do? What did they have? We’re talking here about heaven, not the *Brahmā* world. Deities or gods had *saddhā* (faith or confidence), *sīla* (good conduct), and *cāga* (generosity), as well as knowledge, wisdom, moral shame, and moral fear. Because of this, after they died they became angels.

You can reflect on how you may have these same virtues of confidence, generosity, morality, knowledge, and wisdom, and that you don’t do anything evil. You can have these qualities, just like the angels. If you contemplate this, it’s another kind of meditation. Whenever you think about it, you’ll feel happy and peaceful.

We also have reflection on peace—the attributes of *nibbāna*; the cessation of suffering; the cessation of craving; supreme peace. You can reflect on this peace. When you practice meditation, you can reflect, “May I be able to gain *nibbāna* so that one day I will feel this peace.” This is a kind of meditation too.

We can reflect on death, or *maraṇasati*—the termination of this cycle of physical life. Death is certain, and life is uncertain. When you know that, you will have to prepare for it.

When you’re lying down or sitting, try to concentrate on your nostrils. As you breathe in, say to yourself, “I...” And as you breathe out,

say, "...will die." We are acknowledging that we can die at any time and in any moment. This is another kind of meditation.

With these last several subjects of meditation we talked about—from the contemplation of the virtues of the Buddha through the reflection on death—we cannot gain any *jhāna* because these objects are realities. The virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, the *Saṅgha*, etc. are realities. Our morality, our generosity, deities, confidence, and so on, are also realities. Contemplating *nibbāna* or death—these too are realities. We cannot gain any *jhāna* because we can't contemplate these objects deeply.

Now, mindfulness of the body. This body is made of 32 impure parts. In our chanting, we reflect on the hair of the head, the hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, and so on—32 parts. But mostly, we focus on the first five—hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, and skin. We think about their form, their color, and their smell. We will understand how ugly and impure they are.

Inside our bodies we have bones and bone marrow, a heart, a liver, urine, kidneys, and many other kinds of impure things. If we think about that, it's another kind of meditation. When we practice this kind of meditation, we can gain the first *jhāna* only.

And the last subject in *this* group of ten is mindfulness of breathing, or *ānāpānasati*—inhalation and exhalation. We have many, many techniques to do this. You may do breath counting, or maybe concentrate on the sensation of the breath at the nostrils, etc.

Breath meditation can be both tranquility meditation and insight *vipassanā* meditation. If you just concentrate on the touching sensation at your nostrils, this is tranquility meditation. However, if you realize that the sensations are arising and disappearing, you see the impermanence of the sensation, and the impermanence of the noting mind, this becomes insight *vipassanā* meditation.

Beginners should practice tranquility meditation first. After you're familiar with that and can gain deep concentration, you will know the impermanent nature of the breath and the noting mind. That's why *ānāpānasati* can be both tranquility meditation and insight *vipassanā* meditation.

And next we have the sublime states, or *brahmavihārā*. This means "noble living." We have four of these:

- 1) *Mettā*. Goodwill is very important for everyone. Meditators and non-meditators need this. Without this loving

JUST PRACTICE

kindness, we cannot gain peace in our world. Try to love everyone. *Mettā* is very important;

- 2) *Karunā*. Compassion is a kind of meditation. You want someone to overcome suffering. You don't want anyone to be harmed;
- 3) *Muditā*. This is appreciative joy. If we see someone happy and prosperous, we feel happy about that. There's no jealousy; and
- 4) *Upekkhā*. This is equanimity. When someone does something that leads them to get arrested and be punished, for example, you may not be able to help them. We recognize that this is happening according to their *kamma*. Equanimity is an impartial view, with no attachment, no aversion—a balanced mind.

The next subject is the loathsomeness of food. We can think about our food, such as how long it takes to prepare and cook it, how we insert it into our mouths, and the chewing and swallowing that is required. We can think about what it's like once it gets to our stomach, about how it'll be sitting in there, and what it'll be like when it comes out of our body.

If we don't contemplate the loathsomeness of food, we'll get attached to food and crave it. But when you think about the loathsomeness of food, there's no attachment. You eat for survival, for life. We don't survive to eat; we eat to survive.

With the meditations on *mettā*, *karunā* and *muditā*, you can gain the first through fourth *jhāna* only. For *upekkhā*, you can gain the fifth *jhāna*. As for perception of the loathsomeness of food, you cannot gain *jhāna*.

And next, we have analysis of the four elements: investigation of the four elements with regard to their characteristics and so on.

The characteristics of the earth element are hardness and softness.

The characteristics of the water element are cohesion and fluidity.

The characteristics of the fire element are hot and cold.

And the characteristics of the air element are supporting, pushing, moving, etc.

Think about these characteristics, their functions, and their manifestations. This is analysis.

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

In the body we have 20 kinds of earth elements, hard elements like hair, nails, the heart, etc. And of the 32 parts of the body, about 12 are of the water element, such as urine, etc.

The body also has four fire elements, including body heat; fever, such as when you get sick—this is one kind of fire element; excessive heat or cold, which can cause a body to die; and digestive heat.

And this body has six air elements, including up-going (such as hiccups); down-going, like feces or urine being carried out of the body (without this down-going element, we cannot go to the restroom); and when you feel hungry, you'll hear noise—this is wind in the belly; wind in the bones; wind running through the organs (opening the eyes, closing the eyes, opening the hand, stretching the hand, and winds that run through all limbs); and we have the breath (specifically, the in- and out-breath).

And the last group of the 40 subjects is *arūpajhāna*. This includes the infinity of space (where you don't see anything, just infinity or space); the infinity of consciousness; nothingness; and neither perception nor non-perception (which is very subtle).

So altogether we have 40 subjects of meditation.

From the February 4, 2001 talk “Mettā Meditation”

Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist psychology, and even Buddhist meditation, have to do with realities. They are all for the realization of mind and matter—realization of their impermanence, their fearfulness, and their uncontrollability.

We’ve talked about consciousness—mind. The lifespan of one consciousness is three minor instances: arising, continuing, and disappearing. We need to understand the nature of our mind as just arising and disappearing.

We’ve talked about mental states. There are 52 mental states, including contacts, feelings, perceptions, volitions, and so on. They arise together with the mind and disappear together with the mind. They also are impermanent. Everything, every condition of mind and matter, has its cause. As cause and effect, they are related to each other—arising and disappearing. This shows us that their nature is impermanence.

We’ve talked about thought processes. Our mind is not the same mind, the same consciousness. When we see something, eye-consciousness arises and disappears. When we hear something, ear-consciousness arises and disappears, and so on. One mind, one consciousness, arises and disappears. Then another mind, another consciousness, arises and disappears, etc. This shows us impermanence.

We’ve talked about *kamma*. There’s not just *kamma* of this life. In previous lives too we’ve done good or evil *kamma*. *Kamma* is the cause of the results we receive in this present life. This is cause and effect. There’s no person arising here—only cause and effect. They are related to each other. And this continues our life.

We’ve talked about *rūpa*—matter, including the great essential elements of earth, fire, water, and air. Their nature is hardness, softness, heat, cold, supporting, motion, cohesion, fluidity, and so on. This is the nature of our body—there’s no man or woman here, just realities.

We’ve talked about the factors of enlightenment. We have 37 factors of enlightenment: we have four for mindfulness, four for effort, four for accomplishments, five mental faculties, and so on. This is all to support our meditation, to realize realities—to realize the nature of mind and body.

We’ve talked about the law of dependent origination—the law of causal relations. Because of ignorance, volitional activities arise, and so on. It’s just cause and effect. Mind and matter are related to each other through the power of root condition, object condition, and so on.

We've talked about the 40 subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). A few people still practice these, but nowadays we mostly practice insight *vipassanā* meditation. Among the 40 subjects of meditation, some are useful for everyone—meditators and non-meditators. We especially need *mettā*, or loving kindness, which we'll talk about today.

In English, *mettā* translates as loving kindness or friendliness. But really, no English words are equivalent to the intended meaning. We cannot find the exact words but friendliness or loving kindness come close. In English, for instance, we say love, but the meaning is so wide. So, it's better here if we use the word *mettā*.

Before we practice *vipassanā* meditation, we can use loving kindness meditation, contemplate the impurity of the body, contemplate death, and contemplate the virtues of the Buddha—these four kinds of meditation, we call the guardian meditations—to support our *vipassanā* meditation in getting better. Among these four, we're focusing on *mettā* now.

We have two purposes in practicing *mettā* meditation. One is to gain absorption. It takes time to discuss this, but for us, maybe we don't need much of it. But we also need to use *mettā* in our daily lives and study it a bit. So, we have two methods to practice this loving kindness meditation. First, we'll talk about the formula of *mettā* meditation. Then we'll discuss practicing *mettā* in our daily lives.

With meditation on *mettā*, we should have loving kindness toward oneself. This helps us to see that others also want to be happy, right? *Just like us*. We need to radiate loving kindness to ourselves first.

Among the 40 subjects of meditation, there are four sublime states (*brahmavihārā*): *mettā* or loving kindness, *karunā* or compassion, *muditā* or sympathetic joy, and *upekkhā* or equanimity. We call this noble living. Here we use all four sublime states, not just *mettā*.

I'll explain:

When we give loving kindness to oneself—"May I avoid danger and the consequences of my past (from doing this or that)"—we wish for ourselves to be free from harm and suffering. Everyone has done wrong things and committed evil actions in previous lives, and so we all want to avoid the consequences of these past actions. So we pray for ourselves, right? "May I avoid seeking revenge. May I avoid sickness, and physical as well as mental difficulty. May I have good health and peace of mind. May I keep myself from suffering, danger, and harm. May I be released from

JUST PRACTICE

suffering. May I not be deprived of my fortune duly acquired. I have *kamma* as my own.” We pray for ourselves.

After we give loving kindness to ourselves, then we try to release this loving kindness to everyone.

Everyone should practice generalized radiation of loving kindness (but we should also practice specified radiation of loving kindness). “May all beings, all living creatures, be free from enmity, anxiety, and affliction.” This is the way we pray. “May they live happily”—this is for loving kindness only. “May they be released from suffering”—this is compassion. Compassion is one kind of *bhāvanā*, or mental culture. “May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired”—this is sympathetic joy. “They have *kamma* as their own”—this is *upekkhā*, or equanimity.

We pray for all beings. And when we pray, it’s not just a recitation. Your mind should be directed toward the recipient of the *mettā*. As you say, “May all beings,” your mind should be radiating loving kindness to *all* beings, since you already prayed for yourself. There are many living creatures in this world, so we pray for “all living beings to be free from enmity” and so on.

Sattā is a *Pāli* word that refers to whoever delights in sensual objects—you see something or hear something and delight in it. But for *arahants*, they don’t delight in sensual objects. But here, we’re focused on *all* beings.

We also reflect on all those who breathe, who are alive through respiration. Some *brahmās*—the highest *brahmās*—have no body, no nose, but they still have life. That’s why this reflection is directed to those who are alive through respiration. So, “May all those that breathe”—we pray for them—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

And now we go to the next group: “May all creatures...” Here, this means conspicuous living beings—beings that obviously exist. With some creatures, we can’t see their bodies—some spirits, for instance, we can’t see their bodies—but we can see *these* creatures’ bodies. “May all creatures be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

And next: “May all those with individual existences be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

Next: “May all those who are embodied”—this means whoever has material aggregates, whoever possesses a bodily self of four or five aggregates—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortunate duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.” This last line is for equanimity. When, for example, the police arrest someone you care about, how do you release your *mettā* to that person? You do so by reflected on this situation as being dependent upon their *kamma*: their evil action led to the police arresting them. This means that they have *kamma* as their own. There’s no love or hatred—just balance your mind upon this person. We call this equanimity.

So although we are practicing loving kindness, the remaining three—compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity—are included in this reflection because they are related to each other. Without compassion, you cannot have loving kindness. When you have *mettā*, you love someone, you don’t want that person to suffer, and you want that person to be free from suffering. If you want someone to be free from suffering, that’s compassion—*karunā*.

So, “May all beings...all those who breathe...all creatures...all those with individual existences...all those who are embodied...” This refers to the total dimension of existence—the three worlds: the sensual sphere, the form sphere, and the formless sphere.

Now we go to specified radiation of loving kindness:

“May all females”—this includes human beings, hell beings, animals, and angels—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.” Then, “May all males be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.” “Men” also includes human beings, hell beings, animals, angels, and so on.

Next: “May all the noble ones”—those who have already gained enlightenment and become a stream-enterer, a once-returner, a non-returner, or an *arahant*—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

So we’re radiating loving kindness by pair. So far we’ve done female and male, then noble ones. And now, worldlings: “May all worldlings”—just ordinary people, common people who haven’t gained

JUST PRACTICE

enlightenment yet—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortunate duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

Now we go to gods, or *deva*. Gods here are male and female. There’s not just one, but many—*billions*—gods. “May all gods be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.” Even gods still have suffering. It’s not physical suffering, but it is mental suffering—many, when they die, don’t want to depart from their realm. So we pray for them, we radiate loving kindness for them.

Gods and human beings are one pair. So next: “May all human beings be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortunate duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

Next: “May all those in states of woe”—those who become hell beings, animals, spirits, demons, ghosts: those in unhappy or lower states—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

Now, how many people have we covered? For generalized radiation, we have five persons. For specified radiation, we have seven persons. So we have 12 persons. We radiate our loving kindness to them one by one.

Why does it take so long? In order to gain *jhāna*, or absorption, we need to do it slowly, gradually. It takes time. And not just one time to attain absorption—we may need to repeat it again and again, to radiate our loving kindness maybe *millions* of times, until we gain absorption.

Now we go to directional radiation. First, there’s no direction—just the 12 people. But now we go by direction:

“May all beings in the eastern direction”—your mind should be directed toward those who live in the eastern direction—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

[A student interrupts with a question.]

Q: Do we have to do this whole thing?

For gaining merit or perception, we can do this briefly—“May all beings in the eastern direction, the western direction, etc.” That’s okay. But for whoever would like to gain absorption, it should be one by one. So, “May all beings in the *western* direction...”

Now, remember that we have 12 people, and this one is for “all beings.” So after we’re done here, we go to the remaining 11 persons. It takes time—maybe two hours to finish it.

You have to visualize the person having a happy face when you say it. “May all beings in the eastern direction...” And then pray for them, one by one.

Q: Should it be all beings?

Yes, all of them.

“May all beings in the northern direction...” “May all beings in the southern direction...” There are four directions, right?

Now we go to intermediary directions:

“May all beings in the southeastern direction...” It’s not just recitation: your mind should visualize the persons you’re meditating on in that direction...until you finish. “May all beings in the northwestern direction...in the northeastern direction...in the southwestern direction be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

Now we’ve finished the eight directions. We still have below and above. “May all beings in the downward direction be free from enmity...” “May all beings in the upward direction”—above—“be free from enmity, anxiety, affliction. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired. They have *kamma* as their own.”

This is taken directly from one of the Buddhist scriptures.

We also have a short, one-minute version we sometimes use by chanting it in *Pāli*. Because we’re already familiar with the *Pāli* words and know their meanings, we just pray. In our country we do that every day, and we pray together during morning and evening chanting. We close our eyes and radiate our loving kindness. And we diffuse loving kindness to all beings living on the earth, in the water, in the sky or in space.

In Burma, they use a specific *Pāli* word that covers this concept but other countries don’t really use it: “May all sentient beings who are

JUST PRACTICE

living in this universe, on the earth, in the water, and in the sky or in space, from the lowest plane of hell to the highest plane of *brahmā*, be released from worry, enmity, misery and distrust”—this covers *everything*. You can use this one too. You can use “all sentient beings” or “all *living* beings.”

Now: “May all *creatures* who are living in the universe, on the earth, in the water, and in the sky or in space, from the lowest plane of hell to the highest plane of *brahma*, be released from worry, enmity, misery and distrust.” And so on.

According to the cosmology of Buddhism, there are innumerable world systems inhabited by infinite beings. That’s why we should radiate our measureless universal love to everywhere or everyone. When we talked in the past about the 31 planes of existence, that was just for our universe. But there are others. That’s why we use ten directions—because we believe that we still have other universes and living beings.

This is one method to practice loving kindness meditation. And we still have another method:

When we go somewhere—maybe a house for a ceremony—we chant the *Mettā Sutta* for a blessing. We use this a lot. It covers eight things. You should know a bit about the background:

In the time of the Buddha, there were 500 monks who received instruction regarding meditation from the Buddha and they went to the jungle to practice meditation for their spiritual liberation. Each one selected a tree to meditate under by day and by night.

These great trees were inhabited by the guardians—the angels—of the trees, who were using the trees as their celestial mansions. Those deities, out of reverence for the meditating monks, didn’t want to stay in their celestial mansions in the trees while the monks sat below them. So they stood aside with their families.

The angels thought the monks would remain for just a few days but day after day passed and the monks still kept at the base of the trees. So then the angels decided to frighten the monks away by showing them terrifying objects, by making dreadful noises, and by creating sickening stench. Accordingly, all the monks’ complexions turned pale and they could no longer concentrate on their objects of meditation. They lost even their basic mindfulness. Their minds became restless with worry and fright.

Finally, the leader monk made a decision to go back and place their problem before the Buddha. After they related their frightful experiences to the Buddha, he used his supernatural power to search but

could find no place where they could achieve spiritual liberation except the place where they had been. So he then told them to go back to the same spot. To help them be free from the harassment caused by the tree deities, the Buddha taught the monks the *Mettā Sutta*.

Then they went back to the forest. As the 500 monks got near the forest dwellings, reciting the *Mettā Sutta* and radiating their loving kindness to the tree deities in the forest, the hearts of the deities changed and they warmly welcomed the monks.

During the ensuing three months of the rains residence (*vassa*), the deities not only looked after the monks in every way, but they also made sure that the place was completely free from any noise. By the end of the rainy season, all 500 monks had become *arahants*.

Whoever meditates on loving kindness will make spiritual progress. No harm can ever befall them while meditating on loving kindness. When we do it for a ceremony, we recite the *Mettā Sutta*. We already know the meaning. Now I'd like all of you to know what it means.

You can use this method to radiate loving kindness:

"May all sentient beings be cheerful and endowed with a happy, secure life." Or, "May all beings be happy, free from suffering, and secure." You can use either phrasing. This method doesn't classify beings as two or three; it just puts them all together: "May all beings..."

And later on, we classify beings as two groups, or into two parts: "May all the frail..." And, "May all the firm..." There's a lot of meaning here. Frail means "the weak or unstable." The firm means "strong or stable." You can use either wording.

Frail, weak or unstable here means whoever gets easily frightened, as they're not free from craving and anger—this is a frail or weak, unstable person. When you have craving, for example: a person is a very poor person, and when you give him one million dollars his body is shaking—they have craving. Or when you say something bad at him, he gets angry and his mind and body starts shaking. He's an unstable person. Someone is easy to frighten by craving or anger because they are a frail, weak, unstable person.

A strong, stable, firm person here—who are they? Those who are steadfast and without fear, because they're free from craving and anger: an *arahant*, or one who has already gained the fourth stage of enlightenment. This is a strong, firm, stable person. They see something nice or very beautiful—and they don't care. There's no craving. Even if you try to kill them, they're not scared. There's no anger.

We pray for these two people.

JUST PRACTICE

So here we're separating beings into two parts: a weak person and a strong person. A stable person is an *arahant*. Who is an unstable person? An ordinary worldling—and even a stream-enterer, a once-returner, or a non-returner—because they still have craving. For the stream-enterer and once-returner, they still have craving for sensual objects. For a non-returner, they still have attachment for existence but there's no anger anymore.

So if you say a weak person, you mean ordinary worldlings, stream-enterers, once-returners, and non-returners. A strong person is an *arahant*. We pray for them: "May all the frail and firm beings be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life."

Next: "May all those who are seen and unseen be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life."

Who are "seen" beings? This means someone we've met or seen before. So we're separating these two types of beings. "Unseen" means someone we've never met or seen before.

We can also say, "all those who are visible or invisible." So, "May all visible or invisible beings be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life." Or you can say, "...be happy, free from suffering, and secure, and may their minds be wholesome." Or, "may they enjoy their happiness." Or even, "may they be happy in heart."

Next: "May all those who are dwelling far (or in the distance) and near be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life." People who are living close or far—both of these groups of beings—pray for them to be happy and free from suffering.

And next: "May all those who are already born and those still to be born be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life."

We have two meanings here. "Already born" means an *arahant* because an *arahant* will not be reborn again—he's already born. "Still to be born" is everyone but an *arahant*. This includes all worldlings, stream-enterers, once-returners, and non-returners, because they have to be born again.

So we say: "who are already born," or an *arahant*, and "still to be born," who are the remaining persons. This is one meaning.

Another meaning: "Already born" is those beings who have already come to be born (such as a normal person), and the "still to be born" are those who are about to become or have been conceived in the womb. "May all those who are already born and those who are still to be born be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life."

Now we divide it into three parts: “May all tall, short, and medium sized beings be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life.”

In the universe you have people who are tall, short, and medium sized. We pray for all three kinds of beings. Release loving kindness for these beings to be happy and to be free from suffering and secure. “May all huge, minute (small), and medium sized beings be cheerful and be endowed with a happy, secure life.” Some beings are huge (large, big), some are small, and some are medium sized. We classify them into three parts.

Next: “May all fat, thin, and medium sized beings...” “Fat” means all beings whose physical structure is fat and round; like some fish, their physical structure is round and fat. Other beings are very small and tiny. And there are medium sized beings.

So these eight groups include all beings in the world. With the first group, we just put in *all* beings. With groups two through five, we divided beings into two parts. And for groups six through eight, we separated them into three parts.

And then, we make a wish: “Let none deceive another.” We don’t want anyone to cheat someone. “Let none despise or disdain or condemn another.” You don’t want them to be like that. “Let none wish another to suffer.” You can use either of these last two.

When the 500 monks radiated their loving kindness in that way toward the deities in the forest, the deities knew it and so they changed their minds. They welcomed the monks—it wasn’t like before.

This is very useful for meditation. Whenever we go sit in meditation, we can use this.

Whoever practices loving kindness meditation until they attain absorption, or *jhāna*, will get 11 advantages from the *mettā*. Whoever has not attained *jhāna*, but just prays or radiates loving kindness every day, can get some of the advantages. The 11 advantages include:

- 1) One sleeps in comfort. When you sleep, you are comfortable. You sleep happily. If someone’s not happy, you can look at their face while they sleep and see it. But when there’s *mettā*, it’s different;
- 2) One wakes in comfort. When you wake up, you’re happy;
- 3) One does not suffer bad dreams. Even if you dream, they are good dreams. Whoever prays or radiates loving kindness every day will have only good dreams;

JUST PRACTICE

- 4) One is dear and beloved to human beings. So everyone will have kindness to you and love you. They will help you;
- 5) One is dear and beloved to non-human beings. Deities, animals, and other non-human beings will bring no danger to such a person;
- 6) The gods protect one. For example, if you plan to go somewhere that has bad things or dangers, they will lead you to change your mind. You might find yourself saying, "Oh, I've canceled this trip now." The gods protect you;
- 7) Fire, poison, and weapons will not affect one. They can't harm you. Even one who has not developed loving kindness meditation can benefit this way.

There's a famous story of a cow giving milk to her calf in the forest out of motherly love. When a hunter threw his spear at her, the spear bounced off. It was a simple case of the consciousness of love for the offspring, so the weapon could not harm her.

A weapon cannot harm someone who has loving kindness. You may have someone get angry with you and try to kill you or maybe poison you—perhaps put it in your milk or your food—but the poison cannot affect you. This applies to those who practice loving kindness meditation. And it's not just fire, poison, or weapons. *No one* can harm you;

- 8) One's mind gets easily concentrated. When you practice meditation after you've prayed and radiated loving kindness, it's very easy and quick to gain concentration;
- 9) The expression on one's face is serene. It's happy, cheerful;
- 10) One dies unconfused. When the person is about to die, they have mindfulness. Some don't remember anything, so they die confused. But this person is not confused: they have mindfulness. And it's because they used to practice loving kindness meditation; and
- 11) Even if one fails to attain the highest state of enlightenment, one will at least be reborn in the *Brahmā* world. And whoever attains *jhāna* absorption can be reborn in the *Brahmā* world even if they don't gain *any* enlightenment.

These are the 11 advantages of *mettā*. A normal person can get some of them.

Now we'll talk about the method of practicing this meditation to gain *jhāna* absorption:

Firstly, we have to start with ourselves. Then, we move on to persons we respect—not those who are beloved or neutral—but someone *revered*, such as our teacher or someone like that. Pray for him or her and radiate loving kindness to this person. Choose maybe 5-10 people and radiate loving kindness to each of them, one after another, until you gain absorption. And then you can radiate loving kindness to neutral people. And then radiate loving kindness to your enemies.

The scriptures talk about how we should not start our *mettā bhāvanā* toward people who are unfriendly. You can't gain concentration by starting with them because you get angry when thinking about them. You can't start with your beloved ones either because you're attached to them. And you can't start with neutral people because you don't care about them. We also cannot gain absorption by meditating on the opposite sex because we may have attachment to them. Nor can we start with someone who has already died because we may also have attachment.

You should start with yourself and then move to a revered person.

We should practice loving kindness every day for at least five minutes before we start our meditation. Loving kindness meditation is very important for everyone.

If everyone had a loving mind, our world would become beautiful and very peaceful. We could live together, stay together, go places together, but even with just two people, if one person lacks loving kindness, it's not a happy trip. But if everyone has a loving mind, then maybe 100 or even 1,000 people could go somewhere together and stay together and be peaceful.

It's the nature of *mettā*, or goodwill, to wish for the well-being of others, to have the desire to see peace and success for others, and to wish for others to be free from harm.

One who has sufficiently developed this loving kindness is exceptionally thoughtful and gentle. But here we have to be careful to set up our minds rightly; otherwise, *mettā* can be changed into attachment or anger. Evil and anger are the visible enemies of *mettā*. But attachment and lust are the *invisible* enemies of *mettā*. If your *mettā* becomes natural, then aversion and anger are greatly reduced.

JUST PRACTICE

Meditators in particular must cultivate love before taking up any other subject of meditation and must maintain it as part of their general practice. Meditation on love is the source within which concentration and wisdom are cultivated. That's why before we sit in meditation and start to concentrate our mind on our primary object, we need to radiate loving kindness—even for a few minutes.

I would like all of you to think about *mettā*. When we sit together or go somewhere together, think about how we're all family. The Buddha said we used to be a family. There's no one who didn't used to be a part of our family in a previous life. Because we have to be reborn and die, reborn and die, reborn and die—we've had many, many previous lives—maybe in one life we were brother and sister, or maybe friends or family, something like that. We should keep this in mind. We should *help* each other.

Mettā is not just a recitation. And it's not just mind. We have bodily *mettā*, verbal *mettā*, and mental *mettā*—there are three we can use in our daily lives.

Bodily *mettā* means you do something for someone. For example, you cook something for someone, or you help someone to do something. Helping someone because of your *mettā*—your kindness generated from your mind—is then expressed through your physical or verbal actions. So doing something nice for someone is bodily *mettā*.

Whenever you see someone, help them. Maybe you can't help them physically, but you can maybe help them verbally. We call this verbal *mettā*. You tell them good things, you help them understand things better, you give them good advice for their welfare—we need verbal *mettā*.

And sometimes we don't have the opportunity to help them physically or verbally, so we pray for them mentally: "May you be happy, be free from suffering" and so on.

So *mettā* is bodily, verbal, and mental. We should use these in our daily lives.

Maybe someone's behavior is not good but the way they talk is very polite. Or maybe the way someone talks is not polite but the way they act is very gentle or very humble. Or maybe the way someone talks is not agreeable but their heart is *so* good.

When you see a person's good points, you can release your loving kindness to them very easily. Try to see the good points in people and then radiate your loving kindness. This is easy.

And for meditation, before you sit, pray for yourself first: “May I be well, happy, and peaceful.” And then you can pray and radiate loving kindness by location: “May all beings in this house”—or this monastery or this building—“be well, happy, and peaceful.” And then, extend your loving kindness: “May all living beings in this area...”—in the city or in the state, the country, in the world, or in this universe.

Gradually, you will extend the location from your house until you reach the entire universe and all of its living beings: “Be well, happy, and peaceful.”

You can also radiate loving kindness by way of person. After you pray for yourself, you can say, “May my teachers...” or “May my parents...” or “May my brothers and sisters...” or “May my relatives and friends...,” and so on: “May all of these people be well, happy, and peaceful.”

Do that again and again. Not just one time—maybe three times, or *ten* times. Maybe do it for five minutes or ten minutes, depending on how much time you have. After you radiate your loving kindness, then sit in meditation. And then you can easily gain concentration.

So before you sit, I’d like all of you to do that. Pray for yourself first, then parents, teachers, relatives, friends, people in the city, the state, the country, the world, to be well, happy and peaceful. That’s enough.

I’d like all of you to have this loving kindness practice for the welfare of yourself and others. May your loving kindness support your insight meditation in order to fulfill your spiritual goals.

Does anyone have any questions?

Q: If a person dies and one of their relatives practices mettā for them and sends them good energy, would it affect the dead person?

Yes. After *everyone* dies, they take a new life right away. But someone who is attached to their property or attached to someone when they died can’t go away. They become a ghost.

Sometimes a ghost may come in to someone’s dream: “Oh, I’m very poor now. I don’t have clothes to wear. I don’t have something to eat. I don’t have a place to stay.” Then that person wakes up in the morning and goes to the temple and offers something to the monks and takes the five precepts. And then after they do these meritorious deeds, they transfer the merit to the dead person: “What we’ve done today—we

JUST PRACTICE

made offerings, we observed the precepts, we listened to a Dhamma talk, the monks prayed and made blessings—we'll transfer this to you. May you receive this merit and be reborn in a good life." And one day, the person dreams again and this time the dead person has good clothes, is fine, and has gratitude.

So, yes, if someone dies and becomes a ghost, they may have the good fortune to hear of the merit you transfer to them.

From the February 11, 2001 talk “Six Kinds of Temperament”

Today we’ll talk about *carita*. *Carita* means temperament. There are six kinds of temperaments. Temperament signifies the intrinsic nature of a person.

In *Pāli*, these are the six temperaments: 1) *rāga carita*, 2) *dosa carita*, 3) *moha carita*, 4) *saddhā carita*, 5) *buddhi carita*, and 6) *vitakka carita*.

Rāga carita means a lustful temperament— whoever has a lot of greed. *Dosa carita* means a hateful temperament— whoever has a lot of anger. *Moha carita* means an ignorant temperament. *Saddhā carita* means a devout or faithful temperament. *Buddhi carita* means an intellectual temperament— whoever has good wisdom. And *vitakka carita* means a speculative temperament— whoever thinks a lot.

So, altogether, there are these six temperaments.

Why do we need to study these?

We have 40 subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). We should know what kind of temperament is suited to a particular meditation subject. So, firstly, we have to know what temperament means. We study their nature. We can recognize temperaments by a person’s posture, their actions, the way they eat, the way they see things, and by their other varying ways of being.

Let’s say someone used to be a soldier for twenty or more years in a previous life. When they die, and if they happen to be reborn as a human being, they will show signs of that previous existence in the way they react to patriotic matters. Ever since they were a child, for instance, they’ll show signs of that previous life. We can see it in their actions and in their mental behavior—they will show where they came from.

As another example, someone who was a famous singer in a previous life may be reborn as someone who can easily memorize songs and loved to sing ever since they were very young. This is because of their previous life experience.

Or maybe someone else was a famous dancer. After they died and were born as a human being again, ever since they were one or two years old they watched TV and saw someone dancing and somehow knew how to dance, even without training. This is because of their previous life experience.

Or perhaps someone was a Buddhist monk in a previous life. After dying and being reborn as a human being, ever since they were a year or two old whenever they saw a cloth or a blanket they’d wear it around

JUST PRACTICE

them like a monk. They might like to sit like a monk or talk or act like a monk.

Carita is related to our previous life habits.

We'll talk about *rāga*—lustful temperament—first.

Some people had desirable jobs—maybe architecture or art or a designer—they had gratifying work to do in a previous life. When they become a human being again, most of them have a lustful temperament.

And also, those who were an angel in heaven in a previous life were accustomed to being in a very beautiful place with beautiful objects. After they die from heaven and then reappear in this human world, these people generally have *rāga carita*—a lustful temperament. This is because of their previous life.

We can also know what kind of temperament a person has by their posture—you can guess it.

When a person of lustful temperament walks, they are very careful. When they put their foot down, they do it slowly. They lift their feet up evenly too, but their steps are springy—they don't touch in the middle. If they wear shoes or sandals, you can look at the middle of their step and nothing touches. This is because of their lustful temperament. They walk slowly, and they lift and put their feet down slowly, evenly.

When they sit, they are confident and graceful. When they prepare to go to sleep at night, they do so in an unhurried way. And then they will lie down for sleep slowly. This is the way they act. When they sleep, their limbs are composed—they sleep in a confident manner. And when getting up in the morning, they do so slowly. If someone asks them a question, they answer slowly.

We can also know their temperament by their actions.

They like to keep things clean. Maybe they'll grab a broom to sweep, doing so cleanly and evenly, without hurry. You can hear the noise of the sweeping—it's not much noise, just a slow sweeping. And when they cook in the kitchen, suppose they're chopping up meat or fruit, they do it slowly and evenly, gently. This is their temperament.

If they do something, they act skillfully, gently, evenly, and carefully. You can look at their bedroom too—very clean. They like to be clean. When they wear their clothes, they wear them neither too tight nor too loose. If we visit their house and see their decorations, the house might look like a model home or a museum—every decoration and all the pictures are perfect. Not one thing is out of place—it's all very beautiful. This person is of lustful temperament.

How about your house? [*Luang Por laughs.*]

What about their eating? They like to eat rich, sweet foods—maybe chocolate. When they eat, they eat just the right amount. When they chew, it's unhurried. They savor the various tastes. And they enjoy getting something good. They like to eat good food, not junk food.

As for their way of seeing, if they go see a movie or to a show or go shopping, they will look at even a slightly pleasing object for a long time. Not just a quick look—they'll take one or two *hours*. This is their nature.

Among those of lustful temperament, there's frequent occurrence of such states as deceit—they like to cheat people. They are proud—they like someone to please them: "Oh, you're very wonderful." They like to hear that.

Their wishes go very high too—even if they have only one dollar, they may expect or imagine they will be a millionaire. And they're discontent—even if they get everything, it's not enough for them—no contentment. And they have personal vanity: "I have a beautiful body and beautiful eyes" or something like that. This is the nature of someone with a lustful temperament.

The teacher should know these things. After we know the meditator's temperament, we can better give them a suitable meditation object. So this is the *rāga carita*.

Now we go to *dosa carita*—the hateful temperament. This temperament is also connected to previous lives.

Maybe someone experienced a lot of stabbing and torturing—maybe they stabbed or tortured someone or maybe someone stabbed or tortured them. Or maybe they had brutal work to do in a previous life—killing animals to sell, or maybe they fought a long time in an army. When they die and are reborn as a human being, this type of person becomes *dosa carita*—of hateful temperament. This is because of their previous lives.

Animals can be reborn as humans too. And a human can become an animal. So maybe a person was a hairy being in a previous life, a being that was tortured by someone—a being who was angry, afraid, or scared all their life. Or maybe in a previous life they were a serpent—a poisonous snake.

When this type of person walks, they will dig in with the toes of their feet because they want to reach their destination quickly. We can look at their shoes or sandals and see the marked up point of their shoe from this way of walking. When they put their foot down or lift it up, they do so quickly.

JUST PRACTICE

When they go to sleep, they will do it quickly, hastily. They will lie down right away, unlike the lustful temperament which lies down slowly—they will lie down right away. And after sleeping, they get up quickly.

When asked a question, they answer like it's something that annoys them. Even when answering a telephone, they don't say, "Hello, may I help you?" They say only, "Hello" or "Hi." It's their nature. It's like we disturbed them. The manner of their sitting is rigid, so tense and stiff, too.

And when they have to do something—for example, clean the kitchen or the house—they grab the broom tightly. When they sweep, they sweep uncleanly. After they clean, you can see it's still unclean. And they do it with a lot of noise.

If they have to do something in the kitchen, this type of person chops or cuts something too fast because their mind is so fast—they want to finish quickly. You can hear the noise, the speed. This is those of hateful temperament.

And when they act, they act tensely, stiffly, and unevenly. When they wear their clothes, they're too tight. Someone like this might wear their pants or shirt so tight—it's their nature. How about you? [*Luang Por laughs.*] You wear it normal?

For their eating, they like to eat rough foods, sour foods, spicy foods, and junk food. When they eat a hamburger, they want to finish quickly. They eat hurriedly, not slowly. And they eat without savoring the taste—they don't care. They just want to finish quickly. And when they have to eat something that's not good, they become angry—"Who cooked this!?"

Regarding seeing, when they see even a slightly displeasing object, they avoid looking—"I don't want to see that." This is according to their nature. They pick up trivial faults, even small things, and they will complain. They will discount someone's virtue. They don't want to hear that. This is their nature.

And as for other states of occurrence, there's a frequent occurrence of anger. They get angry a lot, have enmity, and are disparaging. They look down on others with contempt. They like to boss people around: "Do this ... don't do that." They are domineering and jealous. This is their nature.

Now we'll talk about *moha carita*—the ignorance temperament.

In a previous life, this type of person may have been a drunk, used intoxicants, or had negligent learning—they didn't learn or question things.

If in a previous life we have learned, questioned, and we *understood*, this will carry into the next life and we will be an intellectual person. But this type of *moha carita* person neglected learning, or maybe this person came from an animal existence.

An animal has no learning and asks no questions in their life. According to some of their good *kamma*, maybe they were later reborn a human being, but one of ignorant temperament, because they didn't know anything in their previous animal existence.

This ignorant temperament person walks with a perplexed step. It's not slow, or even. When they put their foot down or lift it up, they do so hesitantly. If you see their shoe or sandal, the sole is not even because of the perplexed way they walk. When they step, they press down suddenly.

And the manner of their sitting is muddled. If they press clothes or bed sheets, they will do so unevenly. When they sleep, they are mostly face-down, with the body sprawling. When they wake up, they get up slowly and make lazy sounds.

As for their actions, if they sweep or clean something, it's neither clean nor even. They just do it to finish it—they don't care. If you go and see their bedroom, there's so much stuff that is not clean. They like to live like this. In their car, there's a lot of stuff on the seats. This is the ignorance temperament.

When they act, it's unskillful, uneven, and indecisive. When they wear clothes, they wear them loosely and in a sloppy way. They like to wear pants too big for their body size. This is *moha carita*.

When this type of person eats, there are no subtle choices. They don't say, "I like this ... I don't like that." And they make very small, un-round lumps, using a small spoon, and they drop big pieces onto their dish—it doesn't get into the mouth. Even with just a small spoonful, they still drop food on their dish. This is their nature.

And they eat with their mind astray, thinking of this and that. You can look at their face and see they're thinking about something. They don't pay attention while eating.

When they see something or hear something, they follow someone else's way—they copy what others do. If someone says, "Oh, this is very good," they will praise it the same way. They just follow others—it's not their own decision.

JUST PRACTICE

So now we've talked about just three of the temperaments. What about the others?

Saddhā carita—or faithful temperament—is by posture, by action, by eating, and by seeing, similar to lustful temperament.

Buddhi carita—the intellectual temperament—is by posture, by action, by eating, and by seeing, similar to hateful temperament.

And *vitakka carita*—or speculative temperament—is by posture, by action, by eating, and by seeing, similar to ignorance temperament.

But now, the various kinds of states occurring are different.

Whoever has a faithful or devout temperament has a frequent occurrence of such states as free generosity—they like to perform generosity—a desire to see noble ones, and they like to hear good direction, good thought, and good Dhamma. So even though their posture, actions, eating, and seeing are similar to a person of lustful temperament, these kinds of states are different.

They also have great gladness, honesty, and trust—they see something or someone, and they trust easily. This is those of devout temperament.

For *buddhi carita*—the intellectual temperament—the frequently occurring states include readiness to be spoken to (because they have a lot of knowledge), possession of good friends, knowledge of the right amount of eating, and they know what kind of food they should or should not have. These people don't eat until full. This means they have knowledge of the right amount of eating. They have moderation in eating.

And these people also tend to have mindfulness and full awareness. You see the way they walk, the way they sit, the way they lie down, and the way they talk—they're mindful all the time.

This is *buddhi carita*—those who have wisdom, or the intellectual temperament.

And as for the speculative temperament, the frequently occurring states include talkativeness, and others. They like to talk and talk and talk. Their talking is discursive, it's not about generosity or morality or wisdom—it's just talking, talkativeness, sociability.

They also tend to be bored with devotion or with things that are profitable. They don't want to do even profitable things. They find it boring.

And they tend to fail to finish undertakings. They typically don't finish projects, but then they start another project. And they are prone to "smoking by night, and flaming by day"—this means mentally running hither and thither, their mind wandering most of the time.

This is the sixth temperament.

So after we know the six kinds of temperament, we need to know what kind of temperament is suited to what subject of meditation. We'll look at that now and review the 40 subjects of meditation. What are they?

There are ten *kaṣiṇa* (earth, water, fire, air, blue, yellow, red, white, space, and light); ten *asubha*, or impurities (a bloated corpse, a discolored corpse, a festering corpse, a dissected corpse, an eaten corpse, a scattered-in-pieces corpse, a hacked-and-scattered-in-pieces corpse, a bloody corpse, a worm-infested corpse, and a skeleton)—so we have ten kinds of impurities, and these are objects of meditation; next, ten reflections or recollections (reflection on the Buddha, reflection on the doctrine, reflection on the monastic order, reflection on morality, reflection on generosity, reflection on the virtues of deities, contemplation of peace, contemplation of death, mindfulness regarding the body or contemplation on the 32 impure parts of the body, and mindfulness of breathing or *ānāpānasati*); four sublime states (*mettā* or loving kindness, *karuṇā* or compassion, *muditā* or sympathetic joy, and *upekkhā* or equanimity); perception (*saññā*) of the loathsomeness of food; analysis of the four elements with regard to their characteristics; and the last four are *arūpa* (infinity of space, infinity of first consciousness, nothingness, and neither perception nor non-perception).

So altogether we have these 40 subjects of meditation. Now, we should know the suitability of the meditation subjects for the different temperaments:

The ten impurities and mindfulness regarding the body—these 11 subjects of meditation—are suitable for those of lustful temperament. A person of this temperament has lots of craving arising, so it is suitable for them to counter that by contemplating these ten impurities and mindfulness of the body (the 32 impure parts of the body).

The four sublime states and the four color *kaṣiṇa* (blue, yellow, red, and white)—these eight subjects of meditation—are suitable for those of hateful temperament. Whoever has a lot of anger should practice loving kindness and so on, and contemplate the color *kaṣiṇas*. Their anger will come down.

The reflection on breathing, or *ānāpānasati*, is suitable for those of ignorant temperament and speculative temperament.

Six of the reflections—reflection on the Buddha, the Dhamma, the *Saṅgha*, reflection on morality, reflection on generosity, and reflection on the virtues of deities—are suitable for those of devout temperament.

JUST PRACTICE

Reflection on death, reflection on peace, perception of the loathsomeness of food, and analysis of the four elements are suitable for those of intellectual temperament.

The ten remaining subjects of mental culture—earth *kaṣiṇa*, water *kaṣiṇa*, fire *kaṣiṇa*, air *kaṣiṇa*, space *kaṣiṇa*, light *kaṣiṇa*, and the four *arūpajhāna*—are suitable for all temperaments.

For anyone practicing *samatha*, or tranquility, meditation, it's necessary to understand what we've been talking about here.

But for those who practice *vipassanā* meditation, our objects of meditation are the four foundations of mindfulness: contemplation of the body; contemplation of feelings and sensations; contemplation of mind; and contemplation of mental objects, such as the five mental hindrances, the five aggregates of clinging, the six internal and six external bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Four Noble Truths.

So let's talk a bit about contemplation of *dukkha*, or suffering—and the arising and disappearing of suffering. We should know this.

What kind of *satipaṭṭhāna*, or what kind of object, should someone of lustful or devout temperament contemplate? They should contemplate *vedanā*, or feelings and sensations. When you contemplate feelings and sensations in light of the law of dependent origination, you see that when there is the cessation of feeling or sensation, craving ceases. So to kill craving we should contemplate feelings and sensations.

What kind of *satipaṭṭhāna* should someone who has *dosa*—a hateful temperament, so much anger—contemplate? They should contemplate mental objects. Because their nature is similar to those of intellectual temperament, they should contemplate *dukkha*. Whatever is oppressed by arising and disappearing, we call *dukkha*. So just see it—you don't see your body, or your feelings, or your mind—you just see arising and disappearing. This means you just see *dukkha*.

So whoever has a hateful temperament or an intellectual temperament should contemplate mental objects.

Whoever has an ignorant temperament and weak insight should contemplate the body. When the body arises and disappears, it takes time—17 thought-moments. The body arises very slowly and then disappears very slowly. So these people should contemplate the body, and then they will see its nature. Normally, when phenomena arise it's so fast that you can't follow it. But now, you follow matter—you follow the body, because it arises slowly.

Those of speculative temperament, because their minds wander and are distracted, have to contemplate the body too—breathing in and

breathing out. And then their mind has no way to go out—no *time*—because they have to observe their nostrils.

So this is for those of *moha* (ignorant) or *vitakka* (speculative) temperament: contemplate the body using *ānāpāna*.

Someone who has weak insight and so much wrong view—doubt about many things—that person should contemplate mind. They might have so many wrong views: “This is my mind ... this is my body ... this is a man ... this is a woman ... everything lasts a long time ... there is permanence.” Maybe they think that way. When they contemplate the mind—which moves very quickly, everything arises quickly and then disappears—they will know: “Oh, this is not my body. It’s just mind arising and disappearing, arising and disappearing.”

Or maybe this type of person has other wrong views, such as eternalism or annihilation. When they see the mind arising and disappearing, this wrong view of eternalism will be inhibited. And when they see arising every moment—arising, arising—this wrong view of annihilation will be inhibited.

So for whoever has wrong view, it’s good to contemplate the mind.

It’s important for teachers to know that although they may give instructions to a student based on their *carita*, for some meditators it’s not suitable for them and they won’t be able to gain enlightenment, or even concentration. Here’s a story:

In the time of the Buddha there was a very handsome young man who was the son of a goldsmith. And he became a monk. The Buddha’s chief disciple, Venerable Sāriputta, was his preceptor. So the young man was admitted into the order by Venerable Sāriputta and then given loathsomeness of a dead body as his subject of meditation.

Venerable Sāriputta chose this subject of meditation because he thought, “Oh, this gentlemen, this young man, is very handsome. He comes from a goldsmith family, so maybe he has a lustful temperament.” He thought that, and so he instructed the new monk to practice contemplation of the loathsomeness of a dead body.

The young monk tried to practice this for three months but made no progress—no *jhāna*, no enlightenment, nor even any concentration.

He told his preceptor, “I cannot make any progress. What’s happened to me?”

So Venerable Sāriputta considered this. “Hmm, a few months have passed and you’ve made no progress. We should go and ask the Buddha.”

JUST PRACTICE

And then he took the monk to see the Buddha and they related the young monk's background, where he came from, his family, and the meditation instructions he'd received.

Using his supernormal powers, the Buddha looked back into the young monk's previous lives and saw that he had been in a family of goldsmiths in 500 previous lives. The Buddha saw that the young monk simply liked beautiful things, not ugly ones, and so contemplation of the loathsomeness of the body was not suitable for him.

And seeing this, the Buddha changed the young monk's object of meditation, instructing him to practice contemplating a beautiful lotus flower. The Buddha used his supernormal power to create a beautiful lotus flower and then let the young monk contemplate it.

As the young monk concentrated on it, he was filled with delighted satisfaction. His mind became fixed on the beautiful lotus flower, and step by step he reached the first level of mental absorption—he gained full *jhāna*. He'd gained happiness and one-pointedness to reach this level, where his mind had never been before.

Seeing that the young monk had reached this level of mental absorption, the Buddha used his supernormal power to make the flower instantly wither. Whereas it was once beautiful, it now withered and changed its color.

When the young monk saw the flower wither and change color, he perceived the impermanent nature of the flower: first it was very beautiful, then it withered and changed color—it was impermanent. And he realized that this didn't just apply to a beautiful lotus flower—all other things, all beings, including himself, are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and insubstantial.

Finally, he gained enlightenment. Not just *sotāpanna*, but he gained the *fourth* stage of enlightenment and became an *arahant*.

This story illustrates the importance of the subject of meditation being suitable for one's temperament.

See? The young monk practiced for several months and couldn't even gain concentration because his preceptor let him contemplate loathsomeness of a dead body, which wasn't suitable for his temperament due to him having been in a goldsmith family for 500 previous existences. He just *liked* beautiful things, and so when the Buddha gave him a beautiful lotus flower as an object of meditation he gained enlightenment right away.

We should know about these temperaments, especially teachers, who should know them for themselves first and then be in a position to guide or give advice to others.

So this is regarding temperaments.

And for meditators, we should know the things that are favorable to mental development.

And so there are seven kinds of suitabilities. This is very important too. They include: suitable place, suitable resort, suitable speech, suitable person, suitable food, suitable temperature or climate, and suitable posture. We should know about this.

If it's not suitable for you, you can't gain enlightenment. So you should adjust yourself to ensure these seven suitabilities are met.

Let's talk about these seven suitabilities:

- 1) Suitable place. This is a place where it's possible to gain insight knowledge. You should avoid places which ruin your concentration. This means busy, active places where the mind is likely to be distracted from its object of meditation. This means that a certain amount of quiet is important and required.

When you sit in meditation—maybe at a meditation center or a monastery or a temple or maybe at home—a suitable place is very important for you. And if we practice meditation at home, we should clean the house. A clean place is very important. If there's a lot of stuff around you, you cannot gain concentration easily.

So the place where you sit in meditation should be clean and quiet;

- 2) Suitable resort. This refers to an ancient practice for monks—the place where we practice meditation should be neither too far nor too near. If it's too far, it's very hard to get food because the monks depend on the villagers for food. If it's too near, maybe it's not quiet. So it should be neither too far nor too near.

For lay people, the place you sit in meditation or for practice should have food that is easily and consistently available.

JUST PRACTICE

This means suitable resort:

- 3) Suitable speech. This means you're not supposed to talk too much when you practice meditation. If you talk too much, even before you say something you have to think about what you're going to say. So you lose your concentration at the time you talk, and you lose your concentration after you talk—thinking about what you said or what the other person said.

Just one word of talking stops your concentration a lot. If you say many, many words—talk too much—it's a big disturbance to your meditation. So you should not talk too much. And it's not just you that gets disturbed; you disturb other meditators as well. Your talking causes other meditators to become distracted. So you're not supposed to talk too much when you're practicing meditation, except for necessities.

For regular meditators—those of us who practice meditation every day, or twice a day, at least—while we're practicing meditation our goal is to gain enlightenment and become a noble one—this is our goal. If you really have your goal and want to reach it—you *really* want to attain your goal—then even in your daily life there are only *certain* things you should talk about.

The Buddha taught about what subjects are appropriate for discussion if it's necessary to talk. This is useful for everyone, but especially so for meditators who would like to gain enlightenment.

When we talk, the subject for discussion should be:

- a) About wanting little. This means conversation on frugality;
- b) About contentment;
- c) About seclusion;
- d) About dissociation. This means conversation on aloofness from society;

- e) About exertion;
- f) About morality;
- g) About concentration;
- h) About wisdom, understanding or insight;
- i) About deliverance; or
- j) About the knowledge and vision relating to deliverance.

This is very important for us. When we need to talk, when we meet each other, or when we meet with our friends, we should talk only about wanting little, contentment, seclusion, dissociation, exertion, morality, concentration, wisdom, deliverance, or knowledge and vision relating to deliverance. This will motivate you to practice meditation to gain enlightenment.

- This is suitable speech—the way we should talk every day;
- 4) The next suitability is a suitable person. For a meditator, this chiefly relates to a meditation teacher. You should have a meditation teacher. You cannot practice meditation by yourself and gain enlightenment—you *need* a teacher.

So what kind of teacher should you have? The qualities of a teacher are the qualities of a good friend. They include:

- a) Endowed with faith, or confidence;
- b) Endowed with virtue;
- c) Endowed with learning;
- d) Endowed with generosity;
- e) Endowed with effort;
- f) Endowed with mindfulness;
- g) Endowed with concentration; and
- h) Endowed with wisdom.

These are the qualities of a good teacher or a good friend. And here are seven other qualities of a good friend or teacher—some are similar and some are different:

- a) Lovable or endearing. Why do we call this person lovable or endearing? Because he's endowed with virtue or good conduct. And he's honest;

JUST PRACTICE

- b) Respectable, because he is endowed with virtue, concentration and good practice, and so on;
- c) He is impartial and fair. Whatever he does, whatever decisions he makes, he's fair and impartial;
- d) Being a counselor, because he has knowledge and is able to teach, to guide, and to give advice to the student, to the meditator;
- e) Being a patient listener. If someone comes to tell him something, he accepts what they have to say, he doesn't reject it. He listens. Some might say, "I'm a teacher. Don't tell me that." But he will not say that;
- f) Able to deliver deep discourses, or to expound upon profound subjects. This regards mind and matter, impermanence, and so on—realities. He can teach you these; and
- g) Will never guide you the wrong way, will not lead you toward a useless end. He will guide you the right way.

These are the qualities of a good teacher or a good friend. So when you decide to practice meditation, you should look for this type of person.

We call this a suitable person;

- 5) And the next suitability is suitable food. When you practice meditation, there should be moderation in eating. When you eat and you're about five spoonfuls away from being full, you should stop eating and fill yourself with water;
- 6) Suitable climate. You should adjust yourself to a suitable climate—hot or cold—and this is very easy in the U.S. We already have heaters and air conditioning. So we don't need to worry about climate or the weather or temperature here;
- 7) And last is suitable posture. This means sitting, standing, walking, or lying down—there are these four kinds of postures.

When you practice meditation, sitting and walking meditations are better. Just sitting is not right, and only

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

walking is not right. We should do both, alternating sitting for one hour with walking for one hour. So the sitting posture and walking posture are suitable for meditators.

Beginners, in particular, will easily become drowsy and fall asleep if they practice lying down meditation. And doing only standing meditation leads easily to pain, stiffness, and pressure in the legs which will disturb your meditation.

So it is necessary that we adjust ourselves to these seven kinds of suitabilities in order for our meditation and concentration to progress.

Thank you everyone for your attention.

[Luang Por addresses the students one last time as they prepare to depart.]

What kind of temperament do you think you have? Everyone has all six temperaments but one should be dominant over the others.

Q: Are we supposed to figure it out for ourselves?

Yeah, by the way you talk, eat, sit, walk, and act. *[Luang Por laughs.]* Think about that. Do you do these things slowly or quickly? When you cut something or chop something, how do you do it?

From the February 18, 2001 talk “Mental Culture and Images”

We recently talked about *carita*—the six kinds of temperaments. Today we’re going to study *bhāvanā*—mental culture, and *nimitta*—the signs, or images. For now, we’re just talking about *samatha*, or tranquility, meditation. We’re not talking about insight *vipassanā* meditation yet. Today we’ll focus on *samatha* meditation and by what subject of meditation we can attain *jhāna*, and so on. We should know this. Not every subject of meditation can lead us to attain *jhāna*. Some can’t, so we’re going to study that today.

So, first: *bhāvanā*. *Bhāvanā* is mental culture. We have three *bhāvanā*—three stages of mental culture:

- 1) *Parikamma bhāvanā*, or the preliminaries of mental culture. This is when beginner meditators take any subject of meditation and they practice their meditation. We call this the preliminaries of mental culture;
- 2) *Upacāra bhāvanā*, or proximate mental culture. This means that when you practice meditation, you focus your mind on your primary object, you gain some concentration, and you *almost* gain *jhāna*. This is proximate mental culture; and
- 3) *Appanā bhāvanā*, or concentrative mental culture. Now, you gain one-pointedness of the mind—you’ve gained *jhāna*.

And with regard to *nimitta*—the signs—we have three signs, or three images:

- 1) *Parikamma nimitta*, or preliminary image. For example, maybe you take the earth *kaṣiṇa* to meditate on. This earth *kaṣiṇa* is a preliminary image;
- 2) *Uggaha nimitta*, or visualized image. You keep practicing with your subject of meditation, and you’re later able to close your eyes and visualize the object. We call this a visualized image, or an abstract image. This means that this sign, or this image, is perceived by the mind as if seen by the eyes. For example, when you meditate on the earth *kaṣiṇa*, firstly you need to open your eyes, look at the earth *kaṣiṇa*, and say, “earth, earth, earth.” Later on, you don’t need to see it with your eyes. Even if you close

your eyes, you can see it. We call this a visualized image;
and

- 3) *Patibhāga nimitta*, or conceptualized image. After that, you practice your meditation, and finally, you will gain the conceptualized image. At that stage, you may gain *jhāna*.

When your *nimitta* is either a preliminary image or a visualized image, the level of *bhāvanā* is still preliminary mental culture. For example, you practice the earth *kaṣiṇa* and the preliminary image becomes the visualized image, but the *bhāvanā* is still preliminary mental culture. Later on, you gain the conceptualized image, at which point the level of your *bhāvanā* is proximate mental culture or concentrative mental culture. In other words, the preliminary and visualized *nimitta* levels are still preliminary mental culture, but the conceptualized *nimitta* level is either proximate or concentrative mental culture.

Now we know the three stages of mental culture and the three images.

Next, we have to ask: Of the 40 subjects of meditation, what kind of meditation can lead us to attain *jhāna*?

We'll start by talking about the ten *kaṣiṇa*:

The first four *kaṣiṇa*—earth, water, fire and air—are suitable for all *carita*. Whatever temperament you have, you can practice these four *kaṣiṇa*. And whoever practices these four *kaṣiṇa* can attain preliminary mental culture, proximate mental culture, and concentrative mental culture. As for the *nimitta* here, you can gain the preliminary image, the visualized image, and the conceptualized image. With regard to *jhāna*, whoever practices these four *kaṣiṇa* can gain the first through fifth *jhāna*.

After we understand *these*, the remaining ones are very easy to understand.

Now, we have the four color *kaṣiṇa*: blue, yellow, red, white. These four color *kaṣiṇa* are suitable for what kind of temperament? *Dosa*, or hateful, temperament. It's suitable for them to practice the color *kaṣiṇa*. Whoever practices them can attain what kind of *bhāvanā*? Answer: the three kinds of *bhāvanā*. What kinds of images can be obtained? The three kinds of images can be obtained. And what about *jhāna*? Same, the first through fifth.

And we have the space and light *kaṣiṇa*. These *kaṣiṇa* are suitable for all temperaments. These *kaṣiṇa* can be used to attain the three mental cultures, the three images, and the first through fifth *jhāna*.

And now, we'll go to *asubha*—the ten impurities:

JUST PRACTICE

The ten impurities are suitable for those of lustful temperament. The three kinds of mental culture and the three images can be attained, but as for *jhāna*, only the first *jhāna* can be attained. If someone says they practiced the impurities and gained the second *jhāna*—that’s impossible. Only first *jhāna* can be attained. Why only the first *jhāna*? Because the objects are very gross. Bloating corpses or discolored corpses, and so on—the objects are gross. To attain the first *jhāna*, what do we need? We need *vitakka*—initial application—to direct our mind to the object. We also need *vicāra* (sustained application), *pīti* (rapture), *sukha* (happiness), and *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness). But for the second *jhāna*, there’s no *vitakka* anymore. So because the object is gross, we need *vitakka*, or initial application.

[A student interrupts with a question.]

Q: If someone has a lustful temperament and needs to practice meditation on the impurities, how are they supposed to gain deeper levels of concentration?

If you practice *only* the impurities, because you cannot gain the second *jhāna* you’d have to change your object. Again, *asubha* meditation can lead only to the first *jhāna*. But here, you should know that in the early days most people practiced impurities to develop detachment from their body. After they attained the first *jhāna*, when rapture arose in the body and the mind, they no longer concentrated on this *samatha* object. They now concentrated on the arising and disappearing of the rapture and *sukha*, which became *vipassanā*. They were now practicing *satipaṭṭhāna*. As they concentrated on *pīti* and *sukha* and realized the three characteristics of mind and body, they attained *arahant*.

This was all based on *asubha*. But whoever just wants to practice *asubha* can only attain the first *jhāna*.

I’ve talked before about the monk who practiced the skeleton *asubha*. It’s a story where a monk encounters a woman but he saw her only as a skeleton. When he did, he found rapture and happiness. When he concentrated on the rapture and happiness, he attained *arahant*. And that incident was based on his skeleton contemplation.

We need to contemplate these impurities sometimes. For instance, before we sit in meditation we have the guardian meditations, or supportive meditations, we can use. These are reflection on the virtues of the Buddha, radiating loving kindness, reflection on the impurities of

the body, and reflection on death—these four are the guardian meditations. We can reflect on these for five, ten, or maybe 15 minutes, and then sit in meditation. They're useful even for meditators who practice *vipassanā*.

Next we have the ten reflections or recollections:

Six of these—reflection on the Buddha, reflection on the doctrine, reflection on the order, reflection on morality, reflection on generosity, and reflection on deities—are suitable for those of faithful or devout temperament. Because you have devout temperament, when you consider these things you will gain concentration and be happy. Whoever practices these six subjects of meditation can gain preliminary and proximate mental culture only. As for the *nimitta*, only the preliminary and visualized can be attained. And as for the *jhāna*, no *jhāna*.

Why no *jhāna*? Because the object has no shape or form, no concept—the subject is reality. The virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, the *Saṅgha*, reflection on morality, and so on—these are realities. The object is a reality and not a concept. To gain *jhāna*, we see a *nimitta* from preliminary to visualized, and then from a visualized image to a conceptualized image, step by step. We cannot imagine the virtues of the Buddha as a conceptualized image because it's not a concept—it's a reality. So you should know that the subjects of meditation that are realities cannot lead to *jhāna*.

Next is the reflection on peace—this is a reflection on the attributes of *nibbāna*, such as cessation of suffering, and so on—and the reflection on death. These two kinds of meditation are suitable for those of intellectual temperament. Why? To be able to reflect on the qualities of *nibbāna*, the cessation of suffering, for example, the person usually has wisdom. How about *bhāvanā*? Only two kinds of *bhāvanā*—preliminary and proximate. For the *nimitta* image, only two—preliminary and visualized. And no *jhāna*, because these are realities.

And next is mindfulness of the body, of the 32 impure parts of the body. This is suitable for those of lustful temperament. For this person, they can attain the three states of mental culture and the three kinds of images, but only the first *jhāna*. Why only the first *jhāna*? For the same reason as the *asubha* impurities. The 32 impure parts of the body are gross, and so we still need *vitakka*, or initial application.

Do you remember the 32 impure parts of the body? They are hair, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, bowels, undigested food, stomach,

JUST PRACTICE

feces, brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, lymph, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucus, oil of the joints, and urine. We should remember this. There's no person here. See? It's just ugly stuff. [*Luang Por laughs.*] There's no Roger here, no Marjorie here—there's only hair, nails, teeth, skin, right? They combine and become this person, but actually, there is no person here.

There's a Burmese saying that it's better to go to a cemetery or a funeral one time than to go to a temple *ten* times. If you have an opportunity to see, or even think about, the different stages of decay of a corpse, there's no craving, no attachment to the body, no attachment to property, or to anything. This means that wholesome consciousness has arisen in your mind in that moment. *That's* why it's better to go to a cemetery or funeral one time than to go to a temple ten times.

How about the last recollection—*ānāpānasati*, or mindfulness of respiration? This is suitable for those who have *moha* (or ignorant) or *vitakka* (or speculative) temperament. This is because the breathing process arises slowly. Whoever practices *ānāpānasati* can attain the three stages of mental culture, the three images, and the first through fifth *jhāna*. See that? This is why most people who practice meditation concentrate on their breathing in and breathing out. So, the *samatha* meditator can attain the first through fifth *jhāna*.

Now we go to the four sublime states—*mettā*, *karunā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā*. These are suitable for those who have *dosa*, or hateful, temperament. For those people, how about *bhāvanā*? How many kinds? The three states of *bhāvanā*, and the three images. And for *mettā*, *karunā*, and *muditā*, the first through fourth *jhāna* can be attained. For *upekkhā*, or equanimity, only the fifth *jhāna* can be attained. For this reason, we cannot start with equanimity as our first meditation object. Rather, it should be after we gain the fourth *jhāna*, and then we just continue with equanimity. And then we'll attain the fifth *jhāna*.

Next is perception or the feeling of the loathsomeness of food. We call this one 'perception'. Perception is suitable for those of intellectual temperament because you have to think about, have a feeling about, the loathsomeness of food. Those with no wisdom can't practice this meditation. This perception gains only two *bhāvanā*—preliminary and proximate. And for the *nimitta*, only two—preliminary and visualized. And there's no *jhāna*. You cannot attain *jhāna*.

And the next is analysis. This is analysis of the four elements with regard to their characteristics, and so on. This kind of meditation is suitable for those of intellectual temperament because we need to have

enough wisdom to investigate the four elements with regard to their characteristics. For this meditation, there are just two *bhāvanā*—preliminary and proximate. For the *nimitta* image, there's just preliminary and visualized—only two. And no *jhāna*.

And the last meditation is the four *arūpajhāna*. These are suitable for all temperaments. Whatever temperament you have, you can practice these. How many *bhāvanā*? Three *bhāvanā*. And three images. As for *jhāna*, the infinity of space (the first *arūpajhāna*); infinite consciousness (the second *arūpajhāna*); infinite nothingness (the third *arūpajhāna*); and neither perception nor non-perception (the fourth *arūpajhāna*) are attainable. There's no form here. With the first *arūpajhāna*—infinity of space—it's just space and no form. *Nothing*—just space. You close your eyes and see all the space. This is contemplation of the infinity of space. For the infinity of the first consciousness, they call this infinity. Infinite nothingness is nothingness—the absence of consciousness. And the last one, this is calm, this is sublime—neither perception nor non-perception—very, very subtle.

If someone becomes a non-returner or an *arahant* and enters the cessation attainment—*nirodha-samāpatti*—for seven days even their mind doesn't arise. There's no mind, no mental state. But even a person who has attained *arahant* but who has not developed all the *jhāna* can't do that. They have to attain the *rūpajhāna* and the *arūpajhāna*. And it is very difficult to attain *arūpajhāna*. But a non-returner and an *arahant* who attained all the *jhāna* can enter into this cessation attainment for seven days. So all the *rūpajhāna*, levels one through five, and the four *arūpajhāna* should be attained in order to get to this stage.

Whoever practices *samatha* meditation and gains the fifth *jhāna* can gain the five supernormal powers—the various psychic powers. They can have divine eye or ear, they can read someone's mind, or they can remember past lives. This is those who have attained the fifth *jhāna*.

If someone who doesn't practice meditation says, "I have psychic powers. I can see everything" or "I can hear things"—it's impossible. It's not within their abilities. But if you practice meditation and gain the fifth *jhāna*, you have the ability to show these psychic powers, these miracles. Anyone can do this. It doesn't require you to be a noble person. Even an ordinary worldling can do this. But it's impermanent. When you get angry, or maybe sometimes you attach to something, then all your *jhāna* will go away—you're still a worldling.

So now we know the 40 subjects of meditation, the three stages of mental culture, and the three signs. Amongst these 40 subjects of

JUST PRACTICE

meditation, for eight of them (reflection on the special qualities of the Buddha, reflection on the doctrine, reflection on the order, reflection on morality, reflection on generosity, reflection on deities, reflection on peace, and reflection on death), as well as the one perception, and analysis—so these *ten*—only proximate *bhāvanā* can be attained, not the concentrative stage. This means that whoever practices these ten kinds of meditation cannot gain any *jhāna*.

And for the remaining 30 subjects of meditation, *jhāna* can be attained.

Now I would like to discuss contemplation on the repulsiveness or ugliness—the impurities—of the body. Especially before we do sitting meditation, it is very useful to practice this in order to be able to get rid of attachment to our body, or to get rid of personal wrong view.

Our body is like an old house. There's only one entrance but it has several exits. Every day we eat so many kinds of foods and drink different kinds of liquids, through our mouth only. But why are there so many holes, or doors, where the impurities come out of the body? How many holes or doors *are* there in our body? Not less than nine. When you eat, you just eat through your mouth—just one entrance—but when it goes out, how many exits are there? Not less than nine. Think about that: these impurities come out from our two ears, our two eyes, our nose—we have two holes there—and so on. So not less than nine, right? Think about that. This old house has one entrance and *so many* exits. In this body we eat only through our mouth—*one* entrance—but it comes out through several holes and doors.

And in one day we take only two or three meals, right? But the impurities are leaking out every moment—not just one time—but *every moment*. They are leaking from several holes in our body—consciously or unconsciously, sometimes we know it and sometimes we don't know it. That's why we need to have some tissue paper and so on around us all the time, especially women—maybe they need more than a man. All of you know about that. Why do you need to have tissue around you all the time? Because we need to clean our eyes, our ears, our nose, our mouth, our face, our body, and so on.

When the impurities are full, what do you have to do? You have to excrete them right away, with no delay. Even though it's midnight, a time you're sleeping well, or maybe think about all the times you're enjoying watching or hearing or tasting something. And what happens? Consider this. Sometimes you're sleeping well at midnight and you have a

stomach problem and you have to run to the restroom without delay. Sometimes you're enjoying watching TV, a movie, or enjoying a meal, when you have a stomach problem and then you have to run quickly to the toilet. Think about this. Think about our bodies, and how ugly they are.

The more we eat and drink, the more we have to run to the restroom. Not less than ten times a day. We eat only two or three meals but we have to go to the toilet at least twice, right? And when you drink, how many cups? Maybe ten cups. So if you drink ten times, you have to run to the restroom ten times. That's why the more you eat and drink, the more you have to run to the restroom. And not less than ten times a day.

When we're eating, we can enjoy the food with our family and friends unhurriedly in the dining room. Some of you may have a birthday party and buy a lot of food, maybe even order from a restaurant. You think, "Oh, this is very expensive, very delicious food." You'll call someone to join you for the meal. You'll be proud of the food, and maybe even take a picture, because it's so expensive. And when you eat the meal with your family or friends, you just talk and eat, eat and talk, maybe taking one or two hours to finish it.

But when the time comes that we have to relieve our abdominal suffering, everyone has to run to the toilet, right? We close the door hastily, and with an unhappy face. You complain when you eat too much and you complain when you're excreting. When you eat it, you enjoy it with your friends and family, but when it comes out you have an unhappy face. We cannot make that trip to the restroom slowly—it must be made hastily. And even though you may enjoy the meal with *so many* people—maybe 10 or 20 people—when you go to the restroom you cannot go together, it's only you. You run to the restroom, and you're all alone.

And now the delicious food and the fragrant things that you've eaten and drunk, it comes out with an ugly shape and smell. We need to think about that. "Oh, this chicken, this lobster, this fish," and the next day, the colors have changed, it's not like before, right? Fragrant things now have a bad smell. Sometimes you might take out a dish and sniff: "Aw, it smells good." But when it comes out of your body, it has a bad shape *and* a bad smell.

As a matter of fact, it's not just when it's excreted from the body. Even while it's being chewed by the teeth in our mouth, it's already become ugly and repulsive. This is very evident and plain. No matter how delicious it is, the food you're chewing for, say, one minute, take it out and give it to someone else to eat. There would be no one to accept it.

JUST PRACTICE

Something that you've chewed for just one minute has already become ugly. Even *you* wouldn't desire to look at it if you spit it on the spoon. So, only one minute—it took an hour to prepare it, it's so expensive, and so delicious—but put it in your mouth for one minute and then take it out. Then you don't want to look at it anymore. Why? Because everything that is touched by our body becomes ugly right away. This is very evident and plain.

And as for many of the things we're taught as being beautiful and worthy of appreciation, such as your hair, your teeth, your nails, your skin, and so on, if you accidentally drop some of that into your dish while you're eating, you may not want to continue eating. You may throw it away. These *belong* to you, right? They're not someone else's. And if it *was* someone else's hair or someone else's nail that dropped into your dish, you'd get angry with them, right? The same is true for someone else.

I would like all of you to think about our bodies and how ugly they are. Our hair, our nails, our teeth, and so on—when they remain in their place, what do you think? Do you think highly of them, appreciate them, and feel proud of them? Why? Because you're attached to them as being pretty, by prejudgment. You think, "My hair is very pretty" or "My teeth are good." This is prejudgment.

In reality, hair (and so on) is just part of the 32 impure parts of the body. No matter whether they exist in their original places or drop off from our body, they are impurities.

But few people think like that. Like your hair, for example, when it exists on your head, you are attached to it: "Ah, my hair is very pretty." But when some of your hair drops off from your body, what do you think of it? You don't want to touch it with your hand. Instead, you'll maybe take a tissue to pick it up and then throw it away. Why don't you think it's beautiful at that moment?

This is the human mind, and human nature.

What about your teeth? You look in the mirror and maybe you're proud of yourself: "Oh, I have beautiful teeth." But when you have a tooth pulled, maybe the doctor will show it to you—"This is your tooth." "Oh, I don't want to see that." Even your own tooth you don't want to see.

Moreover, the inside of our body, especially in our stomach, is gross. There are 80 different species of worms. This comes from Buddhist scripture. They are born there, mate there, live their lives there, and finally, die there. Do you believe that? All these creatures are born and die, in every moment. You can ask a doctor—they'll tell you about this. Every moment, they are just being born and dying. So, there are a lot of

different species of worms in our stomach and in our body. This body that we appreciate and are proud of is just a hospital and cemetery of small creatures, right? Just a hospital and a cemetery.

If you want to make sure what I'm saying is correct, don't forget to examine this matter after you've excreted in the restroom. Sometimes you may see some small living creatures on your excrement.

For a doctor or a nurse, they know about this. They use their microscopes to see this a lot—there are dying creatures and living creatures in your excrement. Sometimes you can actually see this yourself. This means that our stomachs have a lot of kinds of worms. If you ask a medical doctor, he will explain and prove this to you.

We also have so many bacteria and viruses and so on in our bodies. See? This is why our bodies are hospitals and playgrounds and cemeteries for all these creatures. Our bodies look like mobile cemeteries, especially for those who are non-vegetarian.

All over the world, we have cemeteries where there are only dead human bodies and human ashes. All over the world, and in every city, are cemeteries—with just buried dead human bodies and ashes. But terribly, our bodies—these so-called mobile cemeteries—have *so many* kinds of dead bodies buried in them, such as cow, pig, chicken, duck, lobster, turkey, fish, crab, shrimp, prawn, and so forth. Every day we eat these kinds of animals, right?

That's why I say this is especially the case for those who are non-vegetarian.

How about you, Mary?

Q: Well, I've been a vegetarian for two weeks...

Oh good. *[A lot of laughter in the room.]*

This means we bury them in our stomach, right? Accordingly, our stomach becomes a mobile cemetery. So, when you eat chicken and so on, just think about that.

And also, because of the impurities of our body, whatever new clothes are worn for a couple of days—just a *couple* of days—they become dirty and unclean. Think about that too.

Whatever foods or other things are held by your bare hands become impure at once. That's why food sellers have to use a spoon or gloves instead of their bare hands—because whatever comes into contact with our body, including our hands, becomes ugly.

JUST PRACTICE

And in the same way, a new car or a new house—or whatever—when they've been touched by our bodies, they become impure and dirty instantly. If you buy a new house—maybe you've only lived there one month—but it's not a new house anymore. The price is now different—it may come down.

So all your clothes, you wear them one week, and they're not new anymore because whatever touches your body becomes ugly and dirty and impure.

We need to think about this. Otherwise, you'll just be proud of yourself: "I'm pretty" or "I'm handsome." But it's not really that way. That's how we should think about this. We should examine to realize the nature of our body and accept it as the way it is.

And also, I would like to tell you some other analogies:

We are like a sick person—a patient—and our houses are like our own hospitals. So you're going to buy your hospital, right? Our various food stuffs and drinks, which we store at home, are like medicine. And all of our different clothes are like bandages.

Remember: our body is like a sick patient, our house is like a hospital, food and drink are like medicine, and our clothes are like bandages. If you think like this, there'll be no attachment anymore. *[Luang Por laughs.]*

How do we look like a sick person? Because we cannot live without shelter, otherwise we will get sick. To be able to handle hot and cold weather, we need a house to act as a hospital that keeps us from getting sick.

Also, we cannot sit still, even for *five* minutes—except, of course, for sitting in meditation—but normally, you cannot sit still and you have to change your position very often and rush to the restroom now and again, as if you have diarrhea. Like a patient, right? As I told you before, we run to the restroom not less than ten times a day, as if we're someone with diarrhea.

Wherever you go, you always need to carry some snacks and medicine with you. Why some snacks and medicine? We do this all the time, otherwise we might pass out somewhere, right? So when you travel to other states, you need some snacks and some medicine with you.

And also, you have to change your clothes, or take them off, according to the climate. This is because you're not a normal person, but a *sick* person.

This is why our body is like a sick person.

Everyone's a sick person, including me. Not just all of you.

How are food and drinks like medicine? According to the nature of being a human being (although this applies to *all* living creatures), we are dependent on food, right? We cannot survive without food. Therefore, food is necessary for existence. We have to provide for our body by feeding it food and drink every day. Shortage of food and drink leads to hunger and thirst, and even death.

This is why I made the analogy that food stuff and drinks, whatever we serve in our house, are medicines to cure our hunger as a so-called disease. Hunger is like a disease, and that's why food stuff and drinks are medicine. So we have a lot of medicine at home in the refrigerator—to cure our hunger.

And how are our clothes like bandages? Our bodies are like someone who has been wounded—they should be bandaged all the time to protect us from undesirable insects, heat and cold. That's why we have to wear robes or clothes.

Similarly, without clothes so many flies and other insects will come and enjoy our bare body as their food. We will have a lot of flies and insects around us if we have no clothes. For the purpose of protecting us from an intensive hot and cold climate, as well as to keep dangerous flies and other insects away, clothes become indispensable, like a bandage for a wound. Everyone has a wound, right? And so you need a bandage.

I think a lot of you have a lot of bandages at home in the closet. Sometimes you may tell someone, "I bought this shirt...or these pants" and how much you paid for them. Maybe you're proud of your clothes, your pants, your shirts, your coat—these are bandages for your wounds.

Everyone has wounds, so we need bandages all the time.

When you consider yourself as a sick person, your house as a hospital, food and drink as medicine, and your clothes as bandages, you will not attach to your body and your possessions. Personal vanity will have no room. Your mindfulness and concentration will be strengthened, and you will eventually be able to penetrate your wisdom into the intrinsic nature of mind and matter and then realize the Four Noble Truths in this very life.

This is why we need to practice and consider this reflection on the impurities of the body before we sit in meditation. I'm talking about this so we can develop detachment from our body, the bodies of others, and also to non-living things.

So, before sitting in meditation, some of these reflections should be considered as supportive meditation. Even if not all, *some*. Before you sit, even for a few minutes, think about these things.

JUST PRACTICE

This last analogy that I talked about—“Oh, we’re like a sick person, this building is like a hospital, what we eat or drink is medicine, and our clothes are bandages for our wounds”—this is so you’re not attached to your body and when you sit in meditation you can gain concentration easily. That’s why we call it supportive meditation.

How many are there? Four, right? I already talked about loving kindness and the impurities of our body, but we still have to talk about contemplation of death and the virtues of the Buddha, briefly, and then we’ll sit in meditation. But I think that’s enough for today.

May all of you be able to develop detachment from the body and practice meditation until you reach your spiritual goal.

Any questions?

Q: So many questions. You should write a book, Ajahn. It would be so helpful. People would buy that. You know, diet books are so popular but if they read something like that, they might wake up.

When you sit in meditation and you think, “Oh, I hurt,” you’re already attached to your body. Instead, just think: “There’s nothing there. It’s just hair, it’s just nails, teeth, skin—just the 32 impure parts of the body. They combine together but they’re not mine.”

Even if someone talks bad to you, you’re not supposed to get angry with them—“How could they say that to me?” There’s no me, no I, and no my. Just hair, you know.

In some ways, the person who talks back to you is not a *person* either—not a man, not a woman. You’re angry with them, but are you angry with their *hair*? You’re angry with their teeth or their skin or their nails, right?

Reflection on the 32 impure parts is not just for ourselves. It’s so that you’re not attached to yourself *or* someone else.

Sometimes you think, “Oh, I have a big house...or a *new* house”—you’re attached to your house. But instead, think, “Oh, I’m a sick person. This is my hospital.” And attachment will go right away.

**From the February 25, 2001 talk
“The Eight Rules for Serious Meditators”**

Today I would first like to talk about the guardian meditations. We've already talked about loving kindness and the impurity of the body, so today I would like to talk briefly about the recollection of the special qualities of the Buddha and the reflection on death.

Before we sit in meditation, we should reflect on the virtues of the Buddha, as he is regarded as our supreme teacher who showed us the way to liberation. We have nine virtues of the Buddha to reflect upon. Reflection on these virtues will be great motivation for our work toward spiritual liberation to become energetic and industrious.

The Lord Buddha came from a royal family. Because of his great compassion for all beings, he sacrificed his kingdom, his beloved and dear ones, and he renounced the world in order to find the way leading to the end of suffering. He walked that path for six years. In contrast, it's hard for normal people to leave their house for the purpose of practicing meditation for even *one day*. They have no time to go for a meditation retreat. If you compare this to the Buddha, there's quite a distance between the two approaches.

In walking the path, the Lord Buddha eradicated all mental defilements through his supreme enlightenment, and so he is worthy of respect. His mind was pure, all mental defilements were eradicated, and there was no more greed, hatred, jealousy, and so on. For normal people, on the other hand, when we see something we like, we attach to it and greed arises. If we don't like something, we get angry and hatred arises. If there's an indifferent object, then maybe delusion arises. But for the Buddha, there was no more greed, hatred, delusion, jealousy, and so forth. His mind was very pure. He was endowed with supreme knowledge and virtue after he became an enlightened one. He appeared as a supreme one in the world.

We should recollect these special virtues of the Buddha before we sit in meditation.

We should also follow his footprints. After we think about his virtues, we should follow his footprints in order to have a pure mind and overcome all kinds of suffering and mental defilements.

The Buddha was the most industrious supreme one in the world. If you study his life, you'll know that. During his spiritual ministry of 45 years, he slept for two hours a day. Do you know that? Only two hours a

JUST PRACTICE

day. During the remaining hours, he conducted his spiritual duty for people all over the world, including men and gods, out of compassion. He untiringly led people to understand the law of nature, to realize the intrinsic nature of mind and matter, and finally, to realize the Noble Truths, to get rid of all kinds of mental defilement—to reach the cessation of suffering.

When the Buddha would get up in the morning, around 4 am, he would look all over the world and say, “Today, I have to go and teach this person to gain enlightenment.” He knew that the person already had enough virtue perfection to be able to listen to his teaching and gain enlightenment. Then he took his alms bowl and went to that place to collect his alms food and teach the person. If someone asked a question, he explained to them until they realized the Noble Truths. After that, he returned to the monastery and took his lunch. After he finished lunch, he would teach the monks. Some of them would ask questions and some requested meditation instruction. After all the monks received instruction from the Buddha, they went to practice meditation in the monastery or maybe under a tree in the jungle.

In the evening, about 3 or 4 pm, all the devotees who were interested in the Buddha’s teaching came to the temple to listen to the doctrine. The Buddha would teach them every day. Depending on their virtue perfection and their wisdom, he would give them instruction and teach them every aspect of the doctrine. And then most of them gained enlightenment. About 6 or 7 pm, all of the lay devotees went back home and then the monks would come to report their experiences during the whole day’s meditation. Maybe some of them gained the first stage of enlightenment, or perhaps even the second stage of enlightenment, and they would report it to the Buddha. If they had any questions about, or any problems with, their meditation, they asked the Buddha. He explained to them and gave them direction or corrected them until about 10 pm. According to the stories, after 10 pm the angels would come to the Buddha to listen to the doctrine and ask questions. The Buddha would teach them until about 1 am.

This didn’t only happen to the Buddha. According to our experience in certain countries, some monks practiced meditation at the tops of mountains or in the jungle for many years and became very famous. And sometimes around midnight from far away you can see a light come down around a mountain or the jungle. This means that an angel, a god, has come to listen to the Dhamma or pay respect to the monk. We believe that. So, even a monk, some special holy person, the

angels will come to pay respect to them. In the same way, late every evening angels and gods came to pay respect to the Buddha.

In our chanting book, we have the *Maṅgala Sutta*, which talks about the 38 kinds of highest blessings. It's very interesting. This *sutta* refers to an occasion late one night when one of the gods came to the Buddha and asked him what the highest blessing was. No one knew the answer. Some people think that if they see something good, this is the highest blessing. Some say that what they wish to hear, if they can hear it it's the highest blessing. Some think that. Or others think that if they want something with a good smell and they get it, this is the highest blessing. It depends on their thoughts. But for 12 years, no one knew exactly what the highest blessing really was. So one god came to ask the Buddha, and the Buddha explained the 38 highest blessings.

And having done that, about 1 or 2 am the Buddha would walk back and forth for a little exercise because he'd sat the entire day and entire night. He'd practice this meditation for awhile and then go to sleep for just about two hours.

This is why the Lord Buddha is the most industrious supreme one in the world. He worked so hard. Recollecting the Buddha's virtues will motivate you and increase your energy of practicing toward spiritual liberation. The Buddha is an example for us, and that's why the reflection on the virtues of the Buddha is recommended. This is one kind of guardian meditation. You can think about this for many hours, but we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation, and so it's not necessary to reflect on these special qualities of the Buddha for an hour or two—just briefly is okay.

Another kind of guardian meditation is recollection of death.

Death is certain, life is uncertain. Death can be faced anytime, anywhere. We should not get caught up in sensual pleasures and forget about our spiritual development. Everything in the world, including our life, is impermanent. There's no one who can ensure that your properties will remain the same or that you will be prosperous or that you will not die until you are 100 years of age. We have no agreement with any supreme being that allows us to escape death. We don't know when we have to depart from this world. We are like cattle being led to slaughter.

As a being moves toward death, in every moment, in every *second*, it gets closer. This means that our life becomes shorter and shorter every second of every day. Think about that. Sometimes we say, "Oh, today's my birthday—happy birthday!" It's not 'happy' birthday, right? What does this *mean*? I don't agree with 'happy' birthday. Your life has just gotten one year shorter. It's not 'happy' birthday.

[A student interrupts with a comment.]

Q: I always tell people “happy birthday.”

Worldlings say “happy birthday.” I don't want to say that. But sometimes we have to follow society and its culture. It's just culture, right? It's not 'happy' birthday.

We should prepare to face whatever confronts us with regard to our health, life, business, family problems, and so on. We should be ready for it. For example, a business man should have no thoughts that he will be successful forever. Sometimes we have to face loss. Gain and loss are natural. Unfortunately, his business may have a loss, but he will not have to suffer too much if he is used to thinking about this. Otherwise, he may have to go to a mental hospital, or maybe he'll commit suicide because he lost his business, his family, or ends up with family problems. You see a lot of people who don't understand this and they end up committing suicide or killing someone. We should think about this.

For this reason, we should contemplate the impermanence of all conditioned things, including our lives. This impermanence and dissolution are realities that should be accepted. Accordingly, we should also think about the different kinds of insurances we buy. Nothing in our lives is sure. If our lives, our health, our belongings, and our material things were permanent and not subject to dissolution, it would not be necessary at all to buy life insurance, health insurance, house insurance, car insurance, and so on. People just buy these things but they don't ask, “Why do I have to buy this?” Nothing in the future is sure. This is the nature of conditioned things.

Anyhow, for us, now is the time to get ready for anything that might be happening in the near-future. We don't have any vision of how long our life may be—maybe 30 years, or 40 or 50 or 60 years—but no one knows. We don't have any vision about our lives. Eventually, after breathing in, there will be no breathing out. Or after breathing out, there will be no breathing in. We will die in that very moment.

We can't foresee what kind of disease we'll have to suffer and will bring an end to our life. We have so many diseases in this world. How many kinds do you think there are? More than 1,000, I think. You can't even name them all, there are so many. We don't know how long we have to live. Even if we know that one day we will die, we don't know at what age or what year it will happen. And we don't know what kind of diseases

we will have to suffer through—heart attack, cancer, an accident? No one knows. Think about that. And we also don't know what time of day or night we'll die—in the morning, noon, in the evening, at night, or maybe at midnight—we don't know. We don't know whether our bodies will be cremated or buried after we die. And we also don't know where we'll have to be reborn.

So, you should remember these five kinds of things related to your death:

- 1) You don't know at what age you'll have to die;
- 2) You don't know what kind of disease you'll have to suffer through and die from;
- 3) You don't know what time of day or night, morning or evening, you will die;
- 4) You don't know whether your body will be cremated or buried. If you die in America, the dead body may be taken to China to be buried or cremated. Even if they cremate it in America, maybe they'll take the ashes to some other country to bury it. No one knows; and especially
- 5) You don't know where you'll have to be reborn. Do you know where you will be reborn—as a human being in this human world, in heaven, in hell, or maybe in the animal kingdom? No one knows.

Because of the uncertainty of our lives, we need to practice meditation until we gain enlightenment, at least to the stage of stream-enterer, whereupon we're sure not to be reborn in a state of misery. Although you won't be sure what plane you'll be reborn into, at least you will not be reborn into a woeful state, a state of misery. This means you'll not be reborn as an animal, a ghost, a demon, or a hell being. You will be reborn as either a human being, an angel, or a *brahmā*.

For this reason, practicing meditation is the best way to escape both mental and physical suffering, from this moment to forever. When you practice meditation for five minutes, you will have no suffering, especially mentally. From moment to moment, you can get rid of all kinds of suffering, forever.

Before we sit in meditation, we need to reflect on death. Now, while we still have time, while we're still strong, while we're still healthy, we can practice meditation, and especially reflect on these five kinds of things we cannot be sure about. Eventually, even if you have your life,

JUST PRACTICE

maybe your health is not good anymore and you can't practice meditation. But for now, everything is still fine. After you make this reflection on death, you'll have energy to practice meditation.

So, how many kinds of these guardian meditations are there? Four, right?

You radiate your loving kindness, even briefly, for yourself first: "May I be well, happy and peaceful." And then: "May all beings, and may my family, be well, happy and peaceful. May all beings in this area, this city, this state, this country, this world, this universe, be well and happy." And so on. You may release your loving kindness to your parents, your teachers, your friends, your relatives, and to all people around you, to be well, happy, and peaceful.

Then, contemplate the impurity of the body, otherwise you may attach to your body.

Next, briefly recollect the virtues of the Buddha as our supreme teacher who showed us the way to follow his footprints to be able to get rid of all kinds of mental defilement.

And then, we should reflect on death, to give us energy to be industrious.

After you contemplate these four kinds of supportive meditations, you have to get ready for sitting meditation.

I would now like to talk about the requirements for meditators. There are eight requirements that should be followed by meditators who really want to attain enlightenment in this very life. Namely, 1) accomplishment of morals, 2) control of the senses, 3) not to be fond of busyness, 4) not to be fond of gossip, 5) not to be fond of sleeping, 6) not to be fond of society, 7) moderation in eating, and 8) seclusion.

First, meditators have to observe at least five precepts perfectly to have accomplishment of morals. These five precepts are: abstaining from killing; stealing; sexual misconduct; lying; and taking fermented liquors, drugs, intoxicants, and so on.

If your moral conduct is not pure, or if it's incomplete, you cannot expect to attain any stage of enlightenment, because morality is the foundation of concentration and wisdom. Without accomplishment, it is not possible for concentration and insight to arise.

By violating any of these precepts, you will have a guilty conscience whenever you think about it. That's why these five precepts should be observed firmly, forever.

In meditation retreats, meditators are required to observe eight precepts for the sake of reducing sensual desire and having more time to practice meditation. The eight precepts are: 1) abstaining from killing; 2) abstaining from stealing; 3) abstaining from all kinds of sexual conduct; 4) abstaining from lying; 5) abstaining from taking intoxicants; 6) abstaining from taking food at an improper time—after noon until dawn of the next day; 7) abstaining from dancing, singing, music, going to shows, wearing garlands, beautifying oneself with perfume and cosmetics; and 8) abstaining from using high and luxurious seats and beds.

Second, we need to control the senses. This means you need to restrain your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Whatever object appears to your six senses, you should not allow attachment and anger and so forth to arise. In a meditation retreat, you should act like a blind, deaf, dumb, and dead person by means of controlling your senses. Whatever you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think, don't give a chance for attachment, hatred, and delusion to arise.

Now, how to control the eyes? Ordinary people usually like to watch TV, movies, shows, boxing, and the like. They even spend large amounts of money on these things. When they are seeing—looking at pleasant places and objects—craving may occur. Or while seeing or watching unpleasant objects, maybe hatred arises.

Ordinary people may spend many hours of their time watching TV and so on, but meditators are not supposed to waste their time by watching TV and so on. Instead, meditators should practice meditation to improve their mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom if they wish to achieve their spiritual goal.

Nowadays, most people enjoy watching TV because they are much concerned about the outside world. But pitifully, they forget to consider the inside world for their own benefit. In this context, inside means the internal bases—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. They don't realize that everything in their daily life with regard to their internal bases just causes attachment, hatred, ignorance, jealousy, agitation, frustration, and so on, to successively arise. Actually, such attachment and so on are the cause of suffering.

For meditators, whatever pleasant or unpleasant objects appear to the eyes, just consider that they are impermanent—they just come and go. And while practicing meditation, when you see something just be mindful of the seeing then make a mental note as “seeing, seeing, seeing.” In this way, there will be no room for attachment, hatred, or

JUST PRACTICE

ignorance to arise. This means you control your eyes by means of reason and insight.

And how to control the ears? Common people like to hear beautiful songs, music, or a beloved one's voice. But they dislike hearing disagreeable voices or sounds. According to *Abhidhamma*, the Buddhist philosophy, liking and disliking are craving and anger, respectively. Therefore, for meditators, when you happen to hear a song, some noise, you should not like or dislike it. Each occurrence will not last long—it is impermanent, so just note it as “hearing, hearing, hearing.” Then there will be no craving or hatred with regard to what you're hearing. It is human nature that we cannot keep ourselves away from society. It is necessary to deal with the outside world, and with others. Accordingly, we have to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch, and to think about so many things in the course of our daily lives. Seeing and so on are in evidence, but don't let yourself be a slave of mental defilements. Being mindful and contemplating these objects is absolutely essential.

How to control the nose? When you happen to smell something from someone's spouse who is using perfume, maybe you like it or maybe you don't. If you feel that you like it, that means greed has arisen. If you dislike it, that means in that moment anger has arisen. In the same way, when you get some smell from the kitchen, depending on whether liking or disliking is there, for most people greed or hatred will usually arise. In order for meditators to prohibit greed and hatred, we should consider that the arising of smell is impermanent—it does not last long. Or we can use a meditation technique: just be mindful of it and note it as “smelling, smelling, smelling.” Greed and anger will not arise.

How to control the tongue? Whenever you eat or drink anything, just consider that everything that you take into your mouth becomes disgusting at once. Or, keeping your mindfulness on your eating, say to yourself, “chewing, chewing, chewing” then “swallowing, swallowing, swallowing.” Then no attachment or anger will arise with regard to eating and drinking.

As for how to control the body, whenever any kind of tangible object, such as clothes, a chair, a bed, a sofa, a car, and so on, is touched by your body, don't give a chance for greed or hatred to arise. The impurity of our body and the impermanence of all material things should be contemplated. Whenever things come to your touch, just note it as “touching, touching, touching.” Don't consider it as beautiful or ugly, soft or hard. By considering and contemplating touching in this way, greed and anger will not arise.

How to control the mind? Without practicing meditation, the mind has the tendency to wander—that is its nature. Sometimes you may think about something you have experienced before—just make a note: “thinking, thinking, thinking.” When you reflect on good things that you have experienced, you might smile. In that moment, greed will have arisen. On the other hand, when you reflect on bad things you have experienced, you may cry or take a deep breath with emotion. In that moment, anger has arisen. And someone may think about something they have lost recently, maybe their business, power, position, or beloved ones. They might be greatly disappointed and depressed, and then, maybe even take poison and commit suicide. We should control or tame our mind by practicing meditation. This is the best way to overcome all kinds of mental defilement and suffering.

Third, meditators should not be fond of busyness. This means that when you are on a meditation retreat, you are not supposed to do this or do that, such as preparing food, gardening, making decorations, watering plants, and so on. Even if you are at home, it means refraining from such things as playing games, watching TV, spending time on the internet, making decorations, enjoying cooking, and so on.

Fourth, meditators should not be fond of gossip. This means talking too much about politics, war, movies, family, and so forth—in other words, talking about what is not at all related to morality, concentration, and wisdom.

Sometimes you might like to talk with your friends for a few hours, which is useless. And some people talk tirelessly even while doing something else, such as cooking. They like to have someone near them to talk to all the time. And if no one is around, they may pick up the telephone and call someone to talk.

Actually, enjoying oneself by talking is a great danger to the progress of insight. Therefore, it should not be done by meditators.

Fifth, we should not be fond of sleeping. We sleep more than enough in our lives. When we were a baby, we might have slept about 20 hours a day. Normally, people sleep eight hours a day. Some sleep more than that. Meditators, though, should not sleep more than six hours a day. And in a meditation retreat, four hours of sleeping or resting is sufficient.

Enjoying sleeping more than eight hours a day is not the way for meditators. We spend so much time in our lives sleeping and get nothing from it. And because we enjoy sleeping too much, we have to be reborn and die again and again in this world.

JUST PRACTICE

Sixth, we should not be fond of society, such as going to parties a lot, enjoying time with friends, and going to concerts, the cinema, a show, a casino, restaurants, nightclubs, the zoo, to the park for picnics, and making various excursions to places. When you do these things, you're wasting a lot of time instead of engaging in spiritual development. Therefore, such kinds of actions should not be done by regular meditators.

Seventh, we should have moderation in eating. We usually eat two or three meals a day. Everyone depends on food. We cannot survive without food. But for regular meditators, especially in a meditation retreat, we should not eat as much as we can until our stomachs are full. Instead, we should stop about four or five lumps, or four or five spoonfuls, before we are full and then fill the rest of our stomach with water. If you eat as much as you can, very soon you will feel uncomfortable or drowsy. You will not be able to concentrate your attention on the object of meditation. You will become a slave of sloth and torpor, or ignorance. You will not be able to make any progress at all in your mental development. That's why moderation in eating is required.

And eighth, meditators should seek seclusion. This means you should devote your time to mental development. In the 24 hours of each day, regular meditators should practice sitting meditation at least twice a day for not less than one hour each time. Meditators should also find time to practice silent retreats at least once a week. Once a month, you should use a day off to practice nothing but meditation. And once a year, you should use your vacation to devote your time to a meditation retreat of a week or a month.

Following these eight rules is indispensable for meditators who would really like to achieve spiritual liberation. I hope all of you will be able to fulfill these eight requirements and achieve your goal in this life.

Now I'd like to talk about preparing for meditation. Before you start sitting meditation, in order to motivate your energy, mindfulness, and concentration, you should reflect on those special virtues of the Buddha, the repulsiveness of the body, the inevitability of death, and radiate your loving kindness to yourself and all living beings. These are called the guardian meditations, the protection meditations, or the supportive meditations.

Then, ask forgiveness from others, as well as forgive others and yourself. As this is a Buddhist culture, we hold our hands in a prayerful position and say, "For so many previous existences up to now, if I have

done wrong to the Buddha, to the Dhamma, to the *Saṅgha*, to my parents, teachers, elders, or to the noble ones, by deed, speech, or thought, may all forgive me. I freely forgive anyone who may have hurt or insulted me. Also, I freely forgive myself.”

After you ask forgiveness from others, and forgive others and yourself, you are totally free from a guilty conscience and gain purity of mind. Then you’ll be able to focus your mind on the objects of meditation. Accordingly, you will come to realize the nature of mind and matter as they truly are.

According to the suggestions of old masters of Buddhist tradition, before sitting meditation we should entrust ourselves to the Buddha by saying, “During this training period of meditation, may I entrust my body and mind—all my life—to the Lord Buddha.”

Then, during sitting meditation you will not be afraid of any frightful visions that may occur to your state of mind. You have encouraged yourself that your body has already been offered to the Buddha: “So I’m a son or a daughter of him. That’s why no one can harm me at all.”

Sometimes while sitting in meditation, you may face intense painful feelings and you may get disappointed and wish to quit your meditation at once. Or sensual desire or anger may come and disturb your concentration. In such cases, you should consider that you are a son or daughter—a follower—of the Buddha: “I must be patient and persevere through these painful feelings, and my mind should be pure.”

One with impurity of mind does not deserve to be a follower of the supreme enlightened one. It’s not good for your meditation either. Reflecting thus, your mind will become calm, serene, tranquil, and happy. Therefore, entrusting yourselves to the enlightened one is greatly suggested.

From now on, I would like to talk briefly about how to practice sitting meditation.

First, you need to have a suitable place. Suppose you may not find a quiet *place* at home but try to find a quiet *time*, perhaps when others are sleeping or going out.

To begin your meditation, sit down and put one leg in front of the other without interlocking. You may feel more comfortable by using this type of sitting position. Put your right hand on your left hand and place them on your lap, or place one hand on the top of each knee. Whatever

JUST PRACTICE

kind of position you sit in, the important thing is to keep your upper body erect. Don't sit leaning against a wall or other support.

Breathing must be normal. Don't make it quick or deep. If you do so, you will get tired very soon. Just relax the mind and body as much as possible. Then, close your eyes and focus your mind on your nostrils, as an example.

Most meditators focus their mind on either breathing in and breathing out or on the rising and falling movements of the abdomen as their primary object. Whatever method you are practicing, if it's consistent with the four foundations of mindfulness, it is correct because the Buddha taught this. These four foundations of mindfulness are the only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the cessation of pain and distress, for the attainment of supramundane knowledge, and for the realization of *nibbāna*.

What kind of technique should you follow? If it's the right technique, you will reach your destination. It's like you coming to Chaiya Meditation Monastery: whether you came from the east or the west, either way was fine because you eventually reached the monastery. In the same way, either way of right technique that you practice will lead you to achieve your spiritual goal.

You can try either one of these techniques—the nostrils or the abdomen. Use whichever you think is more comfortable and easiest to gain concentration.

If you take breathing in and breathing out as your primary object, be mindful of your breath. You may feel the sensation of the air at your nostrils. Try to see the in-breath and the out-breath as two separate things, not just the same breath going in and out. When you inhale, make a mental note: "breathing in." While you exhale, make a mental note: "breathing out."

If you feel that focusing your mind on the nostrils feels difficult or unclear, you should instead keep your mind on the abdomen and be mindful of the rising and falling movement there.

When you breathe in, your abdomen will rise upward. Be mindful of the rising from the beginning to the end by making a mental note: "rising." When you exhale, your abdomen will fall downward, as is its nature. Be mindful of the falling from the beginning to the end by making a mental note: "falling."

During your sitting meditation, you should not think about something in the past—what you have experienced—or think about something in the future. You should not expect to experience something

strange, to see spiritual visions, or whatever. You should really focus on the present object only. The rising and falling of your abdomen and the noting mind should be arising together simultaneously.

If you feel painful feelings in any part of your body, be aware of it, focus on the place of the pain, and make a mental note: “pain, pain, pain, pain.” You have to be patient and mindful of it. Pain is a very good and strong object for a meditator. Stay with it as long as you can. Try to see it as just pain. Don’t identify with the pain.

If you cannot bear the pain any longer, just ignore it and go back to the rising and falling of your abdomen. Or, you may move and change your position to ease the pain. But note the intention to change position. Be mindful of every movement involved, then go back to your main object.

However hard you try to keep your mind on your primary object, your mind may go wandering, in accordance with its nature.

If you realize that your mind has gone out, just say to yourself, “going out, going out, going out.” If you plan to do something in the future, just make a mental note: “planning, planning.” If you talk to someone in your thoughts, just make a mental note: “talking, talking, talking.” If you remember something in the past, just make a mental note: “remembering, remembering, remembering.” If you think about something, just make a mental note: “thinking, thinking, thinking.” If you attach to something in your thoughts, just make a mental note: “attachment, attachment.” If you get angry with someone in your thoughts, just make a mental note: “anger, anger, anger.” When you feel happy, this must be observed as it is. Make a mental note: “happy, happy, happy.” If you feel unhappy or sad, you must observe it as it really is. Make a mental note: “sad, sad, sad.”

You should be careful with your noting. Your noting mind must be energetic and precise, and quick—not slow. Basically, whatever mental and physical activities appear in the present moment should be noted. Be mindful of them by constant noting. Uninterrupted mindfulness will give rise to deep concentration, which will in time give rise to wisdom. You will see the end of arising and disappearing, and the end of suffering.

May all of you be able to practice this insight *vipassanā* meditation, realize the Four Noble Truths, and at least become a stream-enterer in the near-future.

From the March 4, 2001 talk “Sitting Meditation”

Today I would like to talk about sitting meditation.

When we sit in meditation, we first need to have a suitable place. If you cannot find a quiet place at your home, at least find a quiet time when your family is sleeping or out.

To begin your meditation, you should sit down and cross your legs. Some may find that crossing their legs is uncomfortable and doesn't allow them to sit for long. Those people may choose to sit by putting one leg on top of the other. That's fine too. Or you can put one leg in front of the other, making them parallel without interlocking them. Or you may sit on a cushion, a chair, or on a bench. Just choose one of these positions, whichever you think is the most comfortable and will allow you to sit for a long period of time and most easily gain concentration. You know best what position is suitable for you. For me, I always sit and put one leg in front of the other without them pressing against each other. Whatever your position, make sure it's comfortable enough that you can maintain your sitting meditation for a longer period of time. If there are no painful feelings, you can gain concentration easily.

Next, put your right hand on your left hand and place them on your lap, or place one hand on top of each knee. Either one is fine.

Whatever position you are taking, the important thing is to keep your upper body erect. Don't sit leaning against the wall or against any kind of support. If you lean against the wall, you may feel sleepy. You're not supposed to be sleepy.

When you breathe, your breathing must be normal. Don't try to make it quick or deep. If you make your breath quick or deep, you will get tired very soon. Make it natural and normal. Just relax your mind and body as much as possible, then close your eyes and focus your mind on your nostrils. Be aware of the breathing in and breathing out. Or you can focus your mind on your abdomen, by noting it rising and falling. Most meditators use one of these two primary objects—focusing their mind on the in-breath and out-breath, or on the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. Whatever method you practice, if it's in-line with the four foundations of mindfulness, or *satipaṭṭhāna*, it's correct. This is the method taught by the Buddha.

The four foundations of mindfulness are the only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the cessation of pain and distress, for the attainment of supramundane knowledge, and for the realization of *nibbāna*. Whoever wants to purify

their mind and eradicate all mental defilements needs to practice mindfulness meditation. Whoever doesn't want to feel sorrow or cry should practice mindfulness meditation. Whoever wants to overcome physical and mental pain should practice mindfulness meditation. Whoever would like to gain enlightenment should practice the four foundations of mindfulness. Whoever would like to realize the cessation of suffering or supreme bliss needs to practice mindfulness meditation.

Without practicing mindfulness meditation, you cannot purify your mind, you cannot overcome sorrow and lamentation, you cannot destroy mental and physical pain, you cannot attain enlightenment, and you cannot realize the cessation of suffering. The Buddha said that this is the only way to gain all of these advantages.

As long as your technique is a correct technique, you will achieve your spiritual goal. It's similar to how some of you came to the meditation monastery from the south and some came from the north. As long as you took a correct way, you got here. So, in the same way, whatever correct method you practice will lead you to your goal. Even if you don't achieve your goal today, or this month, or this year, maybe you will tomorrow, or next month, or next year. You still have a chance. But we need to practice the right way, using the right technique.

So, some meditators are familiar with breathing in and breathing out, and some are familiar with the rising and falling of the abdomen. Either one is the right way.

Those who practice breathing in and breathing out should focus their mind on their nostrils, where they will feel the sensations of the air. Try to see the in-breath and the out-breath as two separate things—it's not the same breath in and out. As you breathe in, make a mental note or just be aware of it—but be *mindful* of the breath. At the end of the breath, there's a pause. Realize that—*notice* that. Then breathe out. It's not the same breath—it is two separate things, breathing in and then breathing out. Try to observe these two separate processes. If you see breathing in and breathing out as a single process, you will not realize the true nature of breathing. There's breathing in, followed by maybe a one-second pause, and then there's breathing out. Try to see it as two separate things. When you inhale, make a mental note: "breathing in." While you exhale, make a mental note: "breathing out." Keep doing this. If nothing special arises in mind or body, just keep your attention on your nostrils, on and on.

For anyone who feels that focusing on the nostrils is difficult or it's unclear, they should instead focus their mind on their abdomen rising

JUST PRACTICE

and falling because the abdomen is more prominent than breathing in and breathing out. Our meditation master suggested we keep our mind on the rising and falling of our abdomen, because it's more prominent, it's very easy to watch, and it's very easy for beginners. Whatever technique you practice, if you start with the easy way it'll be very easy to make progress. So, if focusing your mind on your nostrils is difficult, focus instead on the abdomen.

When you breathe in, your abdomen will rise upward as is its nature. In that moment, make a mental note: "rising." This should be done in the present moment. When you breathe out, your abdomen falls downward. In that moment, make a mental note: "falling." At the end of the rising, notice a pause that occurs, and then there's the falling. At the end of the falling, there's also a pause. Again, it's not just a single movement—it is two separate things, rising and falling.

Whoever practices this technique must attentively observe the movement. The breath should be normal. As soon as the abdomen begins to rise, mentally note "rising" and continue this noting until the end of the rising. The noting should be simultaneous with the rising. This is very important. Otherwise, maybe you finish noting "rising" although the abdomen hasn't finished rising yet. If this happens, during the rising your mind may go out and start thinking about something. That's why the noting and the rising movement should be simultaneous. The noting should begin with the beginning of the rising and the noting should end with the end of the rising. In the same way, when the abdomen falls down, "falling"—the mental note—should begin with the falling and it should end with the falling. The rising of the abdomen and the noting mind should occur together, and the falling of the abdomen and the noting mind should occur together. Your mind will then have no time to go out. Just fix your mind on the rising and falling of the abdomen. You should be aware from the beginning, through the middle, and to the end. It's very easy to gain concentration this way, otherwise, if you have just a surface "rising and falling," you cannot fix your mind on the object and your mind will wander. This is something we have to be careful of.

Sometimes, if you feel that the rising and falling of the abdomen is not prominent or clear, you can put one hand or both hands on your abdomen and feel the movement more clearly. Our object is very important, and if it's not prominent or clear we can't fix our mind on it. So, sometimes we need to make it more clear, more prominent, for beginners. Later on, it's not necessary to do that. Sometimes we put a hand on our abdomen and make a mental note of rising and falling but we

still can't concentrate our mind on the object. Or perhaps we just want to keep our eyes closed and refrain from moving—maybe we don't want to raise our hand to touch our abdomen. In either case, use another object: sitting, touching. You can use that too.

With "sitting," you will focus your attention on the erect position of your upper body, or focus your mind on your whole body. And with "touching," you may choose to start by focusing your mind on the touching of your body on the floor. But we should note touching different parts successively, not just the same part over and over. If it's the same part we're noting, it's not the right way.

Mentally note "sitting" and know you are sitting in the present moment. And then mentally note "touching" and notice a different part of your body touching something each time. For example, you may first note your left buttock touching the floor and the next time you may note your right buttock touching the floor. So, "sitting" and know you are sitting, then "touching" and notice the left buttock touching the floor, then "sitting" and know you are sitting, and then "touching" and notice the right buttock touching the floor. And so on. Keep changing where there is touching, including the right hip touching the floor, the left hip touching the floor, the right knee touching the floor, the left knee touching the floor. Or maybe you can focus your mind on the right ankle on the floor—you feel the touching—or the left ankle on the floor. Or sometimes you feel your foot or your legs touching the floor. Even your hands—*know* they are touching. While sitting, you can focus on your hands touching your legs. Or there's your tongue touching the inside of your mouth. And when you close your eyes, you can feel your eyelid touching. Sometimes you feel your upper teeth touching your lower teeth. And when you close your mouth, you can feel the touching of your lips. So "sitting," "touching," "sitting," "touching." The "touching" should be different parts, so focus your attention on different parts successively.

Or you can do only one. Try to do just sitting. "Sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting." Know you are sitting, and focus your mind on the whole of your body. Or you can use both sitting and touching. Or you can use only touching. You need to practice this.

With touching, you can focus on your eyelids, the touching of your teeth, your lips, your hands, your tongue, your knees, your buttocks—*any* part of your body, wherever you feel a touching sensation. And it's not just for when you're sitting in meditation. Wherever you go, whether you are sitting or lying down, your body will touch something, and then you

JUST PRACTICE

can keep your attention on this touching. This is a meditation for our daily life. You can do this anytime. It's very easy.

Most people think meditation is just about focusing on breathing in and breathing out or the rising and falling of our abdomen. This isn't right. It's not just about working with these primary objects. You can also be aware of this touching, of your body contacting outside things, of your hand touching a table, or your leg feeling the touch of your pants. This is meditation too. Be aware of the touching. When you're aware of the touching, your mind doesn't feel anything. There's no mental defilement arising in that moment because you are focused on the touching. When we first practice this, it's just "sitting" and "touching" but later on you will understand the touching and noting as they relate to the nature of mind and matter. We need to study this step by step.

So, if you had placed your hands on your abdomen to more clearly notice the rising and falling and were able to gain concentration, you can then put your hands down in their usual position and go back to noting the abdomen rising and falling as normal. Or if you focused on sitting and touching for awhile, go back to your primary object. Notice if it's clear and easy to focus on. If so, continue your focus on the abdominal movement as normal. This is the way to maintain concentration. Otherwise, your mind will go out and you'll think about something. Sometimes we need to use these other methods to solve this problem.

During sitting meditation, you are not supposed to think about the past or think about the future. Some people don't understand this and so for one or two hours of sitting, they're thinking about something. You're not supposed to think about anything. Whether it's good or bad, don't think about *anything*. Some people expect to experience something strange, to see a special vision or whatever, in meditation. After sitting in meditation, they'll compare with others: "What did you see?" We should not expect to experience something strange. This curiosity, or this expectation to see something, is a great obstacle for our mental development. It delays our progress. Don't expect *anything*.

Why do we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation? To understand, right? To understand the nature of mind and body as they truly are, and then, we'll gain enlightenment. This is our purpose and our goal. That's why we're not supposed to do anything.

Most people think about the past. They feel very happy about sensual pleasures, but not about mental culture. And people think about the future, worrying about business or their life. Worry is one kind of mental defilement. We're not supposed to think about anything from the

past or future. Just try to focus your mind on your primary object. As long as you are able to keep your mind on the rising and falling of the abdomen, there will be no greed, hatred or delusion occurring. Since you observe your precepts, since you restrain your body and speech, this means that in that moment of making a mental note, you fulfill your good conduct—your morality. As your mind does not wander, you keep your attention on the rising and falling or on the breathing in and out at your nostrils, in that moment you have fulfilled your concentration. And as you gain concentration, you will realize that the rising and falling of your abdomen is the air element, it's just matter, and the noting mind is just mind—just mind and matter, arising together and disappearing together. There are just these body processes and mental processes. They arise and vanish together, very swiftly. This means you fulfill your wisdom.

So when you're able to focus your mind on your primary object of meditation, in that very moment you have now fulfilled your morality, concentration, and wisdom, right? These three factors combined will lead you to achieve your spiritual goal, which is the cessation of suffering. We can accumulate *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* in every moment.

Maybe sometimes we'll sit in meditation for one hour, and for 30 of those minutes we observe our primary object of meditation, but for the other 30 minutes our mind wanders. By practicing every day, we accumulate morality, concentration, and wisdom more and more. We bring our virtue perfection, our concentration, and our wisdom closer to maturity every day.

You cannot gain any real peace of mind or happiness without practicing meditation. In this present life, everyone should practice meditation every day. And as regular meditators, we shouldn't just limit it to twice a day. After we understand the technique, we see that we can practice this in any posture, at any time, and anywhere. We may focus our mind on our body, or we may contemplate our feelings and sensations, our mind, or our mind objects, such as seeing, hearing, and so on. The technique is not too difficult. But we need to practice to be familiar with it. Then we can practice meditation anytime.

Even though you try to focus your mind on your main object, as is natural sometimes some view, some person, or some object will appear to your mind. When you see a person or an object, in that moment you have to make a mental note: "seeing, seeing." It's not right to just ignore it. Insight *vipassanā* meditation is not like tranquility meditation. For tranquility meditation, we just focus our mind on one object. We ignore everything else. For example, you focus your mind on one object and

JUST PRACTICE

whenever you have a feeling, you don't do anything about it—you just ignore it. That's why you can't realize the nature of your mind or your sensations—because you ignore them. Those who practice tranquility meditation just want to get peace of mind. They don't need to develop wisdom. They need concentration, so they just focus on one object.

Those who practice *vipassanā* have a main object—breathing in and out, or the rising and falling of the abdomen. If something appears to your eye, you should now focus your mind on that object and say in your mind, “seeing, seeing, seeing.” After you make a mental note, this person or this form that appeared to your eyes will disappear, in line with its nature. Sometimes when you close your eyes, a form appears to your thoughts. If you do not make a mental note and say to yourself, “seeing, seeing, seeing,” you might follow this person or this object in your thoughts. Maybe you like or don't like what you see. So we need to make a mental note—“seeing, seeing”—until this form disappears. And then return to your abdomen.

Sometimes we hear a song or a noise. When you hear that, concentrate your mind on your ear and say to yourself, “hearing, hearing, hearing.” Don't follow the sound. If you follow the sound, you may see the person, or the car, or the plane where the sound came from. We're not supposed to follow sounds. Just concentrate your mind on your ear, just “hearing, hearing, hearing.” Don't classify it as a woman's sound, a man's sound, a car, a plane—it's just ‘hearing’.

Regarding your nose, when you sit in meditation a smell rarely occurs. But maybe one or two times you might get a smell at your nose. If so, it's just “smelling, smelling, smelling.” After the smell goes away, return to your abdomen. There should be no gaps between instances of noting.

As for your tongue, during sitting meditation it's nothing special because you usually only taste when you eat or drink. But sometimes some saliva comes and you may want to swallow it. You have to be mindful of this. Firstly, you want to swallow the saliva. You should know it. Then you make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” After you make a mental note, then you may want to gather your saliva in your mouth. Make a mental note: “gathering, gathering, gathering.” When you swallow it, make a mental note: “swallowing, swallowing, swallowing.” After that, come back to your abdomen rising and falling.

Regarding your body, you'll have *so many* experiences while sitting in meditation, including heat, cold, itching, numbness, and so on. A lot of sensations will occur. If you have painful feelings in any part of your

body, in that moment you need to focus your mind on that point. Concentrate your mind about one or two inches from the part where there is a painful feeling, and then you mentally say “pain, pain, pain, pain” for awhile. If you have strong concentration, the painful feeling will go away in line with its nature. If it doesn’t go away, the more you say “pain, pain, pain,” the more it grows. And then what do you have to do? You have to come back to your abdomen. Just ignore the pain for awhile. Focus your mind on your abdomen rising and falling, attentively and precisely, from the beginning to the end. Follow the rising and falling for maybe up to three minutes. After that, how about the pain? Maybe your pain has already disappeared because you ignored it. This is the way to deal with painful feelings.

If it hasn’t gone away yet and is more intense, just stay with the painful feelings for awhile. Just mentally note, “pain, pain, pain, pain, pain, pain, pain” for a few minutes. If it still hasn’t gone away yet, come back to your abdomen again. Practice noting rising and falling, as usual. After awhile, go back to the pain. Do this two or three times, as needed. Perhaps the pain has decreased, or perhaps it has become worse.

If it still hasn’t gone away and you feel you can no longer be patient, you need to change your position. You may feel you have to move your sitting position a bit because you are unable to bear the feelings. And then you should pay attention. As you intend to move, you should make a mental note of “intending, intending, intending” and then prepare to move. When you move, it’s very important to not open your eyes. If you open your eyes, your concentration will go away. Keep your eyes closed, and then as you slowly lift your hand or your knee or your legs, make an appropriate mental note: “lifting, lifting, lifting” or “moving, moving, moving,” or whatever. During the change of position, be aware of every movement. Every movement should be noted.

After you change your position, continue to make a mental note of the rising and falling of the abdomen. Now, your pain is gone, but your concentration has remained mostly the same.

When you gain a little concentration, you may feel a small insect or other creature creeping about on your face. When you feel that, you may want to rub it or scratch it right away. Normally, without realizing, you just scratch it. But during meditation, you will know that you want to rub the itchy part, so you mentally say, “wanting, wanting, wanting.” You know in your mind that you want to scratch it, but you don’t. Just note: “itching, itching, itching.” Maybe the itching will go away. But sometimes it won’t go away. Maybe the creeping insect will go to your nose or your

JUST PRACTICE

eye or your ear, and you feel it. Don't worry about that—just make a mental note: “itching, itching, itching.” You will see in every moment the sensation and the noting mind arising and disappearing together.

But if you're not patient with this insect, you may finally feel like you have to rub it and scratch it. When you intend to scratch the itchy part, make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” When you raise your hand, make a mental note: “raising, raising, raising.” Slowly lifting your hand to your face should take 15 or 20 times of noting “raising.” With every ‘raising’, you will not feel itching in that moment because your mind is on the ‘raising’. The movement of your hand and the noting mind go together. This is concentration. You don't have to worry: “Oh, I will lose my concentration if I move my hand.” The concentration remains the same. Just be aware of the ‘raising, raising’ until you touch your face. And then, know you are touching, and in that moment, mentally say “touching, touching, touching.” When you intend to scratch, make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” When you scratch, note: “scratching, scratching, scratching.”

After you've scratched and the itching goes away, you don't just put your hand down right away. That's not right. It should be *slowly*. So now, as you withdraw your hand from your face, make a mental note: “withdrawing, withdrawing, withdrawing.” Moving your hand from your face and returning it to its normal place should be done very slowly—about 15 or 20 notings. When your hand touches your other hand and you feel touching, mentally note “touching, touching, touching” and then continue with your noting mind on your primary object, rising and falling.

This is what we do during sitting meditation. If something appears to our eyes, our ears, our nose, our tongue, or our body, we need to know how to deal with it. Just be mindful of all these objects.

Regarding the mind, even if you try to focus your mind on your primary object, it will wander according to its nature. If you realize that your mind has gone out, just say to yourself, “going out, going out, going out.” You will realize that your mind has gone out. Some beginner meditators may get upset: “Oh, I can't sit in meditation. My mind just wanders.” Then they get angry with themselves. You're not supposed to be like this. Even the angry mind is a meditation object. We should understand this. When it's going out, you know it's going out. Just make a mental note: “going out, going out, going out.” Then, after you've realized that it's gone out, return to your abdomen. Or sometimes you plan to do something. Just make a mental note: “planning, planning, planning.” Whatever occurs in your mind, just realize it and make a mental note.

Maybe sometimes when you're sitting in meditation, and as it is your human nature and the nature of your mind, you think of someone. You may imagine yourself talking to that person. When you realize this, just make a mental note of "talking, talking, talking" and then come back to your abdomen. Sometimes you may analyze something. Just be aware of this and make a mental note: "analyzing, analyzing, analyzing." Or if you remember something, just make a mental note: "remembering, remembering, remembering." And then return to your abdomen. If you think about something, just note it as "thinking, thinking, thinking." Sometimes you feel lazy. Just make a mental note: "lazy, lazy, lazy." See? Even laziness is one of our meditation objects.

If you feel bored, just make a mental note: "bored, bored, bored." If you're attached to any of the five sense objects, just note "attachment, attachment, attachment." You'll know in that moment that attachment has arisen. Just make a mental note. If you get angry with someone, just make a mental note: "angry, angry, angry." After any kind of thought has disappeared, go back to the rising and falling of your abdomen.

Whatever mental or physical activity appears in the present moment should be noted. Be mindful of them. Try to understand their nature. By constantly noting and with uninterrupted mindfulness, deep concentration arises. This, in turn, will give rise to wisdom. This wisdom means you perceive the nature of mind and matter as impermanence, as fearfulness, and as being uncontrollable. Upon full development of this spiritual knowledge, you will realize the Noble Truths.

What do you need to do to realize the Noble Truths? You need to gain insight, step by step. First, you need to know what mind and matter are. There's no body, no person, no man, and no woman—there are only mind and body processes, arising all the time. And then you have to know their causes. Everything has a cause. Because of *that* cause, *this* effect arises. And then you will know their nature. Everything, and whatever happens, is just arising and disappearing. Nothing lasts long. And then you will know their impermanence, right? After you know the three characteristics of mind and matter as impermanence, fearfulness, and uncontrollability, you will finally come to see and realize the end of suffering.

For meditators, we initially just see arising and disappearing. Whatever is subject to oppression by this arising and disappearing we call suffering. And when you have full development of these spiritual knowledges, as step by step your insight knowledge increases, you will see the end of arising and disappearing. This means you realize the end of

JUST PRACTICE

suffering. This is why we need to practice meditation every day. This is our purpose.

May all of you be able to practice this insight meditation and realize the Noble Truths. May you at least become a stream-enterer in the near-future.

Any questions?

Q: What if my mind starts to wander and I bring it back? I mean, maybe I don't note it but I realize that it wandered and I bring it back. Is that okay?

You have to realize it. That's fine, as long as you realize what it's done. Noting, observing, contemplating—it's the same. Keep your mind on the object. If you know it, it's fine.

Q: I mean, I'm aware of the wandering, but I don't actually say the word "wandering." Is what I'm doing still okay, or should I be doing it differently?

If your mind is wandering but you just keep concentrating on your main object, it's not right. It means you do not realize what's going on in your mind, this wandering mind. This is not the right way. You should realize what it's doing. Even if you don't make a mental note, try to realize that your mind is wandering and then come back to your abdomen. Then you will know your wandering mind arises and disappears. For those who make a mental note, it's very easy to understand: "Oh, my wandering mind arises and disappears." You know very clearly, see? Otherwise, you don't know.

So, just bringing your mind back is not right. You have to *realize* that it has wandered. Making a mental note is better.

Q: Sometimes you think you're coming back but you really aren't. Your mind is still kind of lost.

You want to realize the impermanence. Otherwise, if you just come back but don't realize your mind has wandered, it's not right. For example, if you get angry with something or someone and you try to keep your mind on your primary object rising and falling, it's not right. It means you don't realize the anger, and you don't see the nature of your anger. But by noting "angry, angry, angry," you see that first there was no anger, then

anger arose, and then anger disappeared. You'll know this very clearly. That's why noting is the best way.

With any emotion, if you just try to keep your mind on your main object of meditation, you won't realize the nature of your mind. But when you make a mental note, such as "anger, anger, anger," and later, when you're happy, you note, "happy, happy, happy," you'll know that anger is one mind and a happy mind is a different mind. Your mind isn't just one mind—it's now a different mind. In every moment there is just arising and disappearing, arising and disappearing. When we study this in a book, we understand it in one way, but now we begin to understand it in a practicing way. You see that, right? "Oh, anger arises. Now it disappears."

Q: Sometimes I'll hear something and note "hearing, hearing," then I'll go back to rising and falling, but do I need to realize the end of the hearing?

No, just be aware of 'hearing, hearing'. When hearing appears, it's just ear-consciousness. This consciousness is just arising and disappearing, arising and disappearing. You'll realize that your knowing mind is arising and disappearing. Even the sound is just a vibration, arising and disappearing.

Q: And sometimes when I hear something, I visualize where it's coming from. Should I then make a note: "seeing, seeing?"

No, you shouldn't visualize it. If you hear, it's just 'hearing'. If you visualize the source of the sound, then you'll get lost in that object. Similarly, if you think about the past, it's just "thinking, thinking." You'll know the thinking arises and then disappears, and then you come back to your primary object. You will begin to know more clearly that your thinking arises and disappears, your hearing arises and disappears, your anger arises and disappears, and your happy mind arises and disappears.

Nothing is permanent. You'll know right away. It's not necessary to consider it. When you have good concentration, you'll know right away. Whatever appears to your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or mind, you'll know right away. They are arising and disappearing at the same time. You'll know this very clearly when you have good concentration.

This is why the noting mind is very important and very useful to understanding impermanence.

JUST PRACTICE

Q: So, no matter what arises, it's not about staying with the object; it's about realizing the impermanence. Is that the whole point?

Yes, right. And if there's no secondary object, if nothing else appears, just stay with your main object.

Q: Ah, so that's why, wherever your mind goes, whatever it's thinking about or paying attention to, it's about the impermanence?

Yes.

Q: I've noticed that when I breathe in, it's like fresh air. But then the air processes through the body, becomes impure, and comes out. It's a very complex process. Am I looking at this correctly?

Those who are practicing insight *vipassanā* meditation and concentrating on breathing in and breathing out are not supposed to be investigating what's going on inside or outside the body. They should just keep concentrating on the nostrils. This is the right way.

Q: But when you breathe in and breathe out, it's not the same air. What happens to it?

It's not the same air. It's different.

Some people teach that when you breathe in, you should start at the nostril and then perhaps go to the chest, then the nose, then the end of the nose, and so on, but you won't realize the impermanence this way. This is okay for tranquility meditation but not for insight *vipassanā* meditation.

From the March 11, 2001 talk “Mindfulness in Every Activity”

Today I would like to talk about walking meditation and general practice in our daily lives.

There are six sections of walking meditation. I’ll be talking a bit about each of them today.

When you practice walking meditation, your hands should be locked together in front of you or behind you. Then, look in front of you about four or five feet. If you look straight, it’s too far, and your mind will be distracted. If you look at your feet, or look at your legs, you will feel dizzy and feel stress in your neck. So when you practice walking meditation, you should look in front of you about four or five feet. This is good enough. Open your eyes half-way, just enough to be able to see your walking path ahead of you.

When you sit in meditation, your primary object may be the rising and falling of your abdomen, or maybe breathing in and out at your nostrils. But for walking meditation, your primary object is the movement of your legs or your feet.

When you begin, you should first be aware of the standing position. As you stand, keep your attention from your head to the soles of your feet, by noting “standing, standing, standing, standing, standing.” Note this maybe four or five times, but more than that is fine too. Your noting should be neither slow nor quick. Then you’ll want to start your walking. Be aware of your intention. This is very important, so be aware of your intention and make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” After that, you have to practice walking meditation. As you do this, with each step your attention should be fixed on the movement from the point of lifting the legs to the point of putting them down. Begin by making a mental note: “walking, walking, walking.” For now, we’re talking about the first of the six sections of walking meditation.

Your steps and the noting mind should be together, simultaneous. It is very important that they are together as a pair. And it’s very important for you to be aware of every movement in each step, from the beginning to the end of your step. This should be done in the present moment. This *doesn’t* mean you have already walked and then you make a mental note later on. That’s not correct. They should be at the same time—the walking and the noting mind should be together.

Should any painful feelings occur during walking meditation, what do you have to do? Stop your walking for a bit and be aware of the painful

JUST PRACTICE

feeling. Make a mental note. If you feel pain, just label it: “pain, pain, pain.” To be clear, if you’re practicing walking meditation and you have a painful feeling, you do not merely continue to focus your mind on the movement of your feet or legs. This is not correct. Because we practice mindfulness meditation, sometimes we contemplate the movement of the body, sometimes sensation, and sometimes the mind. As such, if any painful feelings occur during the walking meditation, stop for awhile, be aware of the painful feeling, and contemplate it: “pain, pain, pain, pain.” After the pain disappears, continue your walking meditation.

Sometimes you’ll be practicing walking meditation and you think about something, or maybe your mind wanders. At that moment, be mindful of your thinking or your wandering mind. Make a mental note: “thinking, thinking” or “wandering, wandering.” After that, continue your walking meditation. During walking meditation, we have to apply our mindfulness to painful feelings or any other mental state.

This last week we were talking about noting, naming, or labeling. The word we say, such as “thinking, thinking” or “wandering, wandering,” and so on, isn’t so important. The important thing is to observe our mind and the movement of our feet (when we’re practicing walking meditation).

When you reach the end of your walking path, stop for a bit and make a mental note: “standing, standing, standing.” This means you realize that you’re standing. When you’re noting the standing, your mind should be aware of the standing position. You’re not just saying “standing, standing, standing” in your mind. That’s not right. Your attention should be kept on the standing position, from your head to your soles.

After you note the standing, you will want to turn around. Be aware of your intention and then make a mental note about four or five times: “intending, intending, intending, intending.” Then you will have to turn around. When you’re turning around, do it slowly and note it as “turning, turning, turning, turning.” The turning and the noting mind should be simultaneous. Do the turning until you are in the position you want and then stop for a bit and make a mental note four or five times: “standing, standing, standing, standing.”

When we practice walking meditation, we don’t need to be hurried about anything, so just move slowly. When you intend to walk again, note it as “intending, intending, intending” and then proceed with your walking, back and forth as usual.

This is the technique for practicing walking meditation. In the context of *vipassanā* meditation, so far we’ve just been talking about the

basics of practicing the right way. Later on, we'll talk about why we have to make a mental note, why we have to be aware of our intention, and so on.

A regular meditator may practice walking meditation two or three times a day using the first section I've just described. That is enough. But in a meditation retreat, we have six sections to practice. After we are familiar with the first section, we'll be able to concentrate our mind very well, and then we have to go to the second section.

The second section is "lifting, dropping." Most meditators will only use the first section ("walking, walking, walking") and the third section ("lifting, pushing, dropping"). But now, for your knowledge, in case you want to try moving from one section to the next, I'd like to briefly talk about the second section.

With the second section, for each step you have to be aware of the movement of your legs and make a mental note two times. When you lift your leg, you make a mental note of "lifting," pause briefly, and drop the leg. When you drop your leg, be aware of the dropping of your leg and make a mental note of "dropping." So, just "lifting" and "dropping," "lifting" and "dropping." When you lift your leg, don't lift it too high—just normal. "Lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping." You can practice this back and forth.

During a meditation retreat, the meditation master will advise meditators to practice one section for a few days. After you're familiar with the first section, for instance, you go to the second section. During that second section—"lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping"—for each step you'll be able to be aware of the movement of your legs two times. And after you're familiar with the second section, you go to the third section.

The third section is very useful for everyone who meditates. When you practice this third section, you should slow your walking. For the first section, it's just "walking, walking, walking," so you don't have to slow down too much. But for the third section, you have to slow down your walking and practice in three steps.

When you're about to lift your foot, say to yourself, "intending, intending, intending." When you lift your foot, be mindful of the lifting and make a mental note—"lifting"—then pause for one or two seconds. When you push your foot forward, note it as "pushing" then pause for a bit. Then you have to drop your foot. When you drop your foot to the floor, be mindful of the dropping. This mindfulness should follow every movement. As you drop your foot, make a mental note: "dropping."

JUST PRACTICE

When you practice this third section, you should notice that a pause occurs at the end of each section: “lifting”—pause—“pushing”—pause—“dropping”—pause. It should take a few seconds to complete each step.

You should also ensure that you have your foot completely on the floor before you lift the other foot to begin the next step. Usually, when we’re practicing ‘lifting, pushing, dropping,’ when we say “dropping,” the other foot has already started to lift for the next step. That’s not right. You should have the foot completely on the floor *then* lift the other foot to begin the next step. This is the correct way. Otherwise, you cannot gain concentration. So, it should be perfect.

If you are going to sit in meditation for more than one hour, such as on a one-day silent retreat, a weekend retreat, or an intensive meditation retreat, every session of sitting must be preceded by walking meditation. You should be careful to do this because the movement of the foot is more distinct than abdominal movement. The abdomen is rising and falling but it’s not as distinct as the walking movement of the foot. Therefore, you can attain some degree of concentration more easily than in sitting. But, if you just sit in meditation for an hour or less, walking meditation isn’t necessary. If you want, you can still do it for five minutes or so. But, if you’ll be doing more than one hour of sitting meditation, it must be preceded by walking meditation.

Gradually, as your meditation practice matures, you may sit in meditation for longer periods than you do for walking. For instance, when you reach that point, you might go to a meditation center for a 10-day or month-long retreat and you can sit for a few hours. If so, maybe just practice walking meditation for 45 minutes or one hour and your concentration will be good. But normally, when you practice a 1-day retreat or a weekend retreat, you should at least be practicing walking meditation for one hour and then continuing your sitting meditation for one hour. You should be doing walking meditation at least seven times a day, and sitting meditation at least seven times a day. This is required in those situations.

When you happen to practice walking meditation in a small space or in your room, familiarity with these six sections is very useful. Sometimes you cannot go to a meditation center, and you may need to practice at home in a small room. In that case, if you practice “walking, walking,” you’ll be at the end of your walking path after four or five steps. You’ll get dizzy. Our walking meditation should be done slowly in that

situation, so we need to know the six sections of walking meditation. It's very useful.

For the fourth section, when you're standing, as usual make a mental note: "standing, standing, standing, standing." When you intend to walk, make a mental note: "intending, intending, intending." Now, you lift your heel and make a mental note: "heel up." Your attention should be on your heel. When you lift your leg, make a mental note: "lifting." When you push your leg forward, just note it as "pushing." When you drop your foot, make a mental note: "dropping."

So, "heel up" then stop for at least one second, "lifting" then stop for at least one second, "pushing" then pause a second, and "dropping." After the foot is completely on the floor, you will then start the next step, "heel up, lifting, pushing, dropping." Just practice this back and forth. After you're familiar with the fourth section, you can go to the fifth section.

For the fifth section, when standing, make a mental note: "standing." When you intend to walk, make a mental note: "intending." When you lift the heel, make a mental note: "heel up." When you lift your leg, make a mental note: "lifting." When you push your foot forward, make a mental note: "pushing." When you lower your leg, make a mental note: "lowering." When your foot treads on the floor, make a mental note: "treading." See? Five sections. At the end of every segment, a pause should be noticed.

Now, the sixth section is a very important section. I use this when I practice meditation for three months in my room upstairs. For this section, walking about 10 or 15 feet from one side of the room to the other may take one minute or more. As you stand there before starting, make a mental note: "standing, standing, standing." When you make this mental note, keep your attention from your head to your soles, noticing that you are standing. When you intend to raise your heel, just make a mental note: "intending, intending, intending." At the time you raise your heel, be aware of it and label it as "heel up." The heel up and the noting mind should be at the same time. When you lift your foot, be aware of the lifting and say to yourself, "lifting." When you push your foot forward, be aware of the pushing and note "pushing." When you lower your foot, be aware of the lowering and say in your mind, "lowering." Be sure that the foot hasn't touched the floor yet. And when your foot touches the floor, be aware of the touching and make a mental note: "touching." Before you begin the next step, you have to press your foot into the floor. At the time of pressing, be aware of it and note "pressing." See? Six steps.

JUST PRACTICE

So, besides “standing” and “intending,” for each step you have to be aware of and make a mental note for six segments, including “heel up”—pause one second—“lifting”—pause one second—“pushing”—pause one second—“lowering”—pause one second—“touching”—pause one second. And before you start the next step, make a mental note: “pressing.” And then start the next step. So, 10 or 15 feet in your room may take about two minutes. Do this 10 times and it takes 20 minutes or half an hour. Practice these six sections as much as you can.

After you’re familiar with this sixth section, you can even close your eyes and do it slowly. Before you reach the end of your walking path, you may be able to sense that a door or a wall is very close, and so you stop and make a mental note: “stopping.” And then, “standing, standing,” “intending, intending,” “turning, turning.” Do all of this slowly. You might practice this for three hours, but if you have gained concentration you might think it’s only been about 45 minutes. This is specifically for the sixth section of walking meditation.

If you have confidence in yourself, you’ll be able to note more than that—it doesn’t have to be *only* six segments. For example, on a 1-day retreat, you can try to do this: When you stand, make a mental note: “standing, standing.” When you intend to walk, make a mental note four or five times: “intending, intending, intending, intending.” When you start to lift your heel, make a mental note: “heel up.” And then, as you know your heel is up, make a mental note: “knowing.” When you lift your foot, make a mental note: “lifting.” And then, as you know you’re lifting, make a mental note: “knowing.” When pushing forward, make a mental note: “pushing.” As you know this, make a mental note: “knowing.” When you lower your leg, make a mental note: “lowering.” Then, as you know, make a mental note: “knowing.” When you touch the floor, make a mental note: “touching.” Then, “knowing.” When you press the floor, make a mental note: “pressing.” And then, “knowing.”

So, it becomes how many mental notes? *Twelve* mental notes. It’s very detailed, and your mind has no time to wander because you have to be careful of every movement. You’ll know every movement in detail. This is very useful for intensive meditation retreats.

Now I would like to talk about transitioning between positions. We’ll start by talking about transitioning from the standing position to the sitting meditation position. It’s not right for us to practice walking meditation in such detail and then lose our mindfulness as we just walk quickly to the place we’re going to sit.

After you have practiced walking meditation, you should proceed directly to sitting meditation. The place where you sit in meditation should already be arranged and so you walk slowly to it. And now, you intend to sit. When you intend to sit, just make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” Then, you sit down slowly. Keep the mind on the downward movement of the body and note “sitting down, sitting down, sitting down.” You should do this slowly. After you have sat on the floor, you must notice every movement in bringing the hands and legs into position. Don’t just sit and right away continue with sitting meditation. You need to move and arrange your limbs slowly and mindfully. You need to know every movement until you are ready to sit in meditation.

Then, as your sitting position is arranged, you next intend to close your eyes. When you intend to close your eyes, make a mental note: “intending, intending.” When you close your eyes, make a mental note: “closing.” Now you’re ready. As you are settled into the new position, just continue with contemplation of the abdominal movement or breathing in and out, depending on your main object of meditation.

So, from standing to sitting, that is how we have to be aware.

But we have to know how to transition from the sitting position to the standing position too. It’s not right to finish sitting meditation and just get up and go somewhere.

When you want to finish sitting meditation, you may want to open your eyes. Make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” When you open your eyes, be mindful of the opening and note it as “opening.” When you intend to stand, just make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” When you stand, the act of rising should be carried out slowly, with the same deliberation as when you sat down, as if you’re a sick person. A sick person must be cautious and move slowly to avoid pain. You should always try to keep slow-motion in all actions, whatever you do. If you stand up, sit down, lie down, or walk—*whatever* you do—you should slow down.

Every aspect of changing positions from sitting to standing should be done with awareness of every movement. For example, when you lift your hand, make a mental note: “lifting, lifting, lifting.” When moving, make a mental note: “moving, moving.” If your hand touches the floor, be aware of the touching. Don’t just use the word—you should be aware of the actual touching. So, “lifting, moving, touching.” And then, to lift your legs, you have to press them against the floor. Just make a mental note: “pressing.” Your attention should be on the pressing. After that, you try to stand up. When you stand up, make a mental note: “rising up, rising up”

JUST PRACTICE

or “standing up, standing up.” Do this slowly. Every movement until you are standing should have a mental note. Then, you’re “standing, standing, standing.” And then continue your walking.

That was from the sitting position to the standing position.

Now, from the sitting position to the lying down position:

Maybe you’ve been sitting in meditation at night before it’s time for you to go to bed. Or even during the day, maybe you’ve practiced all day long doing standing meditation, sitting meditation, and walking meditation, and now you want to stretch your body and practice lying down meditation for awhile. In either case, you should be aware of every movement involved in the act of changing from the sitting position to the lying down position. Each movement should be noted as appropriate, such as when bending your body, you should be aware of the bending and make a mental note: “bending.” When you swing your body, be aware of the swinging and make a mental note: “swing, swing.” When your hands press the floor, be aware of the pressing and make a mental note: “pressing.” When your body touches the floor or your head touches the pillow, make a mental note: “touching.” You should know every movement, every sensation, every touching. We have to be mindful of this. And you must notice every movement involved in bringing the hands and legs into position when lying down. Bring your hands and legs into position with awareness and appropriate mental notes, like “moving, lifting, touching.”

Once you’ve established your lying down position, resume mentally noting “rising, falling” if you observe the movement of the abdomen. Alternatively, you can observe your nostrils breathing in and out or just be aware of the sensation of touching at the nostrils.

Another option at this point is to observe ‘lying’ and ‘touching’ without observing the rising and falling or breathing in and out. For this technique, as you know you’re ‘lying’, make a mental note: “lying.” Keep your mind on the whole body lying down, from the head to the feet. And when you know there’s ‘touching’, keep your attention on the touching of any part of your body with the floor or other surface. Alternate different parts of the body touching different things, such as your head touching the pillow, then your hand touching the floor, then your leg touching the floor, then your hands touching each other, then the legs touching each other, and so on. So, you are aware and note “lying” and then you are aware and note “touching.” The first “touching” may be your head and the pillow. Then “lying” and “touching” again. This next “touching” is perhaps your back touching the floor. The next time, “lying” and

“touching,” and maybe this time it’s your hands touching each other. Then, “lying” and “touching,” and perhaps it’s your leg touching the floor.

A few other options: you can just be aware of lying and note “lying, lying, lying.” That’s fine too. Similarly, you can just be aware of the sensation of touching and note “touching.” The number of notes you make depends on what is comfortable for you. For some, maybe “rising, falling, lying, touching” is good. For others, maybe only “rising, falling” is appropriate. You can use any of these techniques.

So, this was for transitioning from the sitting position to the lying down position.

We have four postures, right? We’ve already talked about sitting meditation, walking meditation, and lying down meditation. Now we’ll talk about standing meditation.

When you practice walking meditation and reach the end of your walking path, you should stand as long as possible, be aware of the standing posture, and make a mental note: “standing, standing, standing.” It depends on how long is comfortable for you. And we can just note it as “standing”—that’s fine. Or, we can be aware and note “standing, touching, standing, touching.” When you note ‘standing’, keep your attention from your head to your feet. If you observe two points, such as “standing, touching,” when you note ‘touching’ keep your mind on the touching of your left sole to the floor the first time, then the right sole to the floor the next time. You can use only ‘touching’ too: “touching”—left heel touching the floor—“touching”—right heel touching the floor. If this is too easy, use two: “standing, touching, standing, touching.”

During a meditation retreat, you should continuously practice meditation from the moment you first wake up until you fall asleep. Some may sit in meditation for one, two, three, or even four hours and then start talking and talking, or doing something else—that’s not right. Your practice should be continuous. As such, we should also know how to practice meditation in our daily lives. We talked about the six sections for walking meditation, but normal people can’t do this in daily life. Still, we should know the proper way to practice as we go about our day.

So, your contemplation should start at the moment you wake up. As you’re getting up from the bed, mindfulness should be directed toward every movement of the body. Those meditators who are practicing during a meditation retreat, in particular, should be aware of every detail of the body’s activities.

JUST PRACTICE

If you intend to get out of bed, note “intending.” If you prepare to move the body into position, you have to note “preparing, preparing.” When you are in a sitting position, make a mental note: “sitting, sitting.” Should you remain sitting for any length of time, revert to contemplating the abdominal movements of rising and falling, or whatever your main object is.

Because of the impurities of the body, we may now have to go to the restroom or take a shower or wash our face. For these activities, whether it’s washing the face, taking a bath or shower, dressing, or whatever, we should make a mental note and be aware of every physical activity involved.

When you perform the act of washing the face, be mindful of every activity, such as ‘looking’, ‘seeing’, and so on. As you walk from your bed to the restroom, you should at minimum be aware of and note “walking, walking, walking.” When you stop before starting to wash your face, make a mental note: “stopping, stopping.” If you look at the water faucet, make a mental note: “looking, looking.” If you see something, such as a bar of soap, make a mental note: “seeing, seeing, seeing.” And then, you may stretch your hand to pick up the soap. Be aware of the stretching and make a mental note: “stretching.” As you hold the soap, be aware of the holding and make a mental note: “holding, holding.” And you’re aware of the touching sensation, make a mental note: “touching, touching.” As you turn on the water, make a mental note: “turning, turning.” And as you wash the face, it may feel cold. Be aware of the cold feeling and make a mental note: “cold, cold.” Next, you may rub your face with the soap. At that moment, be aware of the rubbing and make a mental note: “rubbing, rubbing, rubbing.” And when you withdraw your hands from your face, make a mental note: “withdrawing.” Continue to be aware of every movement and make mental notes until you finish washing your face.

For taking a shower, when you turn on the water, make a mental note: “turning.” If you bend down, make a mental note: “bending.” Be aware of the bending. If you handle the soap, make a mental note: “handling, handling.” If you rub your body, make a mental note: “rubbing, rubbing, rubbing.” If you feel cold, make a mental note: “cold.” If you’re warm, make a mental note: “warm.” You should know every movement and every mental process.

After you finish washing your face and taking a shower, you may also have to brush your teeth, right? At minimum, be aware of and note “brushing, brushing, brushing, brushing, brushing, brushing.” Don’t do it

too fast. Do it slowly. If you rinse your mouth, make a mental note: “rinsing.” Afterward, when you change your clothes, make a mental note: “dressing.” When you stretch your hand to handle something, be aware and note it as “stretching.” If you raise your hand, make a mental note: “raising.” If you prepare your new clothes, make a mental note: “preparing, preparing.” Maybe you look at the mirror at some point. If so, make a mental note: “looking.” When you see your image in the mirror, make a mental note: “seeing.” If you turn around, make a mental note: “turning.” When you walk away, make a mental note: “walking, walking, walking.”

This is all meditation, right? We need to practice this *every* day once we know the technique.

For drinking, maybe you’ll look at the faucet. If so, make a mental note: “looking, looking.” If you see water, make a mental note: “seeing, seeing.” If you stretch your hand to grab a cup, make a mental note: “stretching.” If you touch the cup, make a mental note: “touching.” When you bring it to your mouth, make a mental note: “bringing, bringing.” When the cup touches your lip, make a mental note: “touching.” Should you feel cold at the touch, make a mental note: “cold.” When you swallow the water, make a mental note: “swallowing.” When you withdraw your hand from your face, make a mental note: “withdrawing.” And when you bring your hand down, make a mental note: “bringing, bringing.”

So, you can practice meditation even while drinking some water.

We eat at least two or three times each day, right? During the act of eating, you should be aware of every action and every activity involved. When you move your hand, be aware of the movement, of the stretching, and make a mental note: “stretching, stretching.” When your hand touches the food or the spoon, be aware of the touch sensation and make a mental note: “touching.” When you hold the food, or maybe hold the spoon, be aware of the sensation of holding and make a mental note: “holding.” Then maybe you dip a spoon into the dish or into some soup. In that moment, be aware of the dipping movement and make a mental note: “dipping.” When taking the food, make a mental note: “taking.” When bringing it to your mouth, make a mental note: “bringing.” All activities must be observed and noted.

When you look at the table, you may see a lot of dishes. You should make a mental note: “looking, looking, looking.” If you see anything, make a mental note: “seeing, seeing, seeing.” If you arrange something, make a mental note: “arranging.” When you bend down to eat, be aware of the bending of your body and make a mental note:

JUST PRACTICE

“bending.” When you use your hand or your spoon and touch the food to your mouth, make a mental note: “touching.” When you place the food or spoon in your mouth, make a mental note: “placing.” Then, you need to close your mouth. Make a mental note: “closing.”

So, this process is very detailed. After you close your mouth, what do you do next?

Q: “Chewing.”

Not yet! [*Luang Por laughs.*] Next, you withdraw your hand and make a mental note: “withdrawing, withdrawing.” When your hand touches the table or any part of your body, make a mental note: “touching.” You then straighten your body and make a mental note: “straightening.” Then, you chew. Make a mental note: “chewing, chewing, chewing, chewing.” When you know the taste—“Oh, this is sweet”—just make a mental note: “knowing, knowing.” Even if you know the food’s good, it’s just “knowing, knowing.” When you intend to swallow, make a mental note: “intending, intending.” When swallowing, make a mental note: “swallowing.” When the food goes down your throat, you’ll feel the sensation of touch. Make a mental note: “touching, touching.”

So, when you eat, try to practice this as much as you can. At least, be aware of and mentally note “chewing, chewing, chewing.” You must be mindful of your actions and proceed with contemplation. ‘Contemplation’ or ‘observing’ or ‘noting’ all mean the act of keeping the mind fixed on the object and knowing it clearly, without your mind going anywhere else.

Now, briefly, I’ll say that on every act of seeing you should just make a mental note: “seeing, seeing.” On every occasion of hearing, concentrate your mind on the ear and make a mental note: “hearing, hearing.” If you get any smell, concentrate your mind on your nose and make a mental note: “smelling, smelling.” When you eat something, you will know the taste. With every occasion of knowing the taste, make a mental note: “tasting, tasting.” In the case of knowing a feeling or the sensation of touching in the body, or *any* mental state, it should be noted. If there’s pain, make a mental note: “pain, pain.” If there’s numbness, make a mental note: “numb.” Or if it feels hot, just make a mental note: “hot, hot, hot.” If you think about something, just make a mental note: “thinking, thinking, thinking.” If the mind is wandering, make a mental note: “wandering.”

As the case may be, this mindfulness must be applied to all postures of the body. We have four postures, right? We have standing, sitting, walking, and lying down. And we also have the small movements, such as stretching your hand or your legs, or bending or looking around, right? We also have looking forward or looking sideways. You should be aware of every posture, even these small movements.

Your mental note of each rising and falling movement of the abdomen must be made while the movement occurs. If your main object is breathing in and breathing out, your noting should be while the in-breath or out-breath occurs. It should be in the present moment. And when you make a mental note of your abdominal movement as your primary object, you're not concerned with the form of the abdomen. Instead, what you're actually perceiving is the bodily sensation of abdominal pressure, which is caused by the expansion and contraction of the abdomen. When you practice on respiration at your nostrils, you're not supposed to see the form of your nose. It should be the sensation of touching that you're observing. So, if you practice rising and falling of the abdomen and see the form of your stomach, this is a concept. It's not reality, and so it's not correct. And likewise, if you see your nose in any form, it's not right. It should be the sensation of touching that you're aware of.

And also, avoid rapid breathing for the purpose of making the abdominal movement more distinct. If the movement of your stomach is not clear, it's not right to make it more rapid. Everything should be normal. This is proper *vipassanā* meditation technique.

Let's talk a bit more about general practice in our daily life.

Walking meditation is very useful for everyone. Everyone, from the time they get up in the morning until they go to sleep, is going in and out, up and down, back and forth, many times a day. In one day, a person might walk 1,000 steps, but generally, people forget to contemplate even *one* step. You can see people around you who don't know how to practice this meditation. They get up each morning and walk many, many steps all day until they fall asleep, but they don't contemplate even one step.

Practicing meditation is not just for when you're sitting. It's also for the other postures. Therefore, you can practice this mindfulness meditation at anytime, anywhere, and in any posture.

Granted, there are people who have to work hard and cannot devote their time for regular sitting meditation. Instead, they need to focus their mind on the movement of their steps, being mindful of their

JUST PRACTICE

stepping as much as possible, and make a mental note: “walking, walking.” That’s enough. In this way, they will be able to concentrate their mind on the movement of their feet, and over the course of a single day the noting time will be not less than one hour. See, it’s very useful for everyone.

Wherever you go, even at home—just walking around, up and down, back and forth, sometimes you go outside—or at work, walking all the time, sometimes for eight hours a day, just daydreaming and thinking about things isn’t right. If you know the way of practice, it’s very useful. When walking, just make a mental note: “walking, walking, walking.” Be aware of the movement, observe it, and make a mental note. So, in one day, the noting time may be more than one hour. It’s not necessary to say, “I don’t have time to practice meditation.” You already practiced, right?

And even if you have to work eight hours a day, you can sit and relax while contemplating the rising and falling of your abdomen or focusing on your breathing in and breathing out during your break times. We don’t work eight hours straight through; we still have break times. Whenever you sit on a chair or a sofa, even for a few minutes at home or at work, you can concentrate your mind on your nostrils or your abdomen, or on ‘sitting’ or ‘touching’—whatever. So, five or ten minutes at a time, many times over the course of the day, add up to more than one hour of meditation each day. You can practice even while working.

Even if you are a student or a businessperson, busy reading or writing or studying or doing other things when you’re at home, you should use your time beneficially by contemplating for 10 or 15 minutes each hour. So, for 10-15 minutes every hour, just close your eyes and concentrate your mind on your primary object—breathing in and breathing out, or rising and falling—and then, continue your work or your study. You can do this.

And, at minimum, each time you eat—you might spend an hour eating—your ‘chewing, chewing’ should be noted. Even if it’s not detailed, just mentally note “chewing, chewing.” In eating one meal, how many times do you chew the food? Maybe over 100 times. So make a mental note of “chewing, chewing” whenever you’re eating. This is meditation time. See? You can gain enlightenment even while eating, so you should be mindful *all* the time.

We talked about how you can lay down, put both of your hands on your abdomen, and fix your mind on the rising and falling of the abdomen, or on the breathing in and breathing out. When you go to bed,

you should do this until you fall asleep. By contemplating your abdominal movement or your nostrils during breathing in and breathing out for awhile, you may fall asleep. That's good for your health. Without taking any sleeping pills, you can sleep soundly. You are saving energy and resting well. You work so hard during the day and sometimes you can't sleep well. It's not supposed to be like that, right? But, by using this technique, you are saving your energy and resting well.

And if you contemplate the rising and falling of the abdomen or breathing in and breathing out at the nostrils for half an hour or an hour without sleepiness, it is good for your concentration, for your mental development. If you don't have time during the day to practice meditation, you can practice for 30 minutes or one hour before you fall asleep. This is very good for your mental development.

All of these techniques help you accumulate a lot of merit, virtue perfection, and mental development in your daily life, which by doing them every day will lead you to achieve your spiritual liberation. That's why I would like to suggest to all of you that you don't let your time pass by meaninglessly. Instead, use your time to be beneficial by contemplating mental and physical activities.

May all of you be able to attain your spiritual goal and whatever else you're longing for.

Any questions?

Q: I have a question about sensation. You say it's a reality, but it's only temporary also.

Yes, everything's impermanent.

Q: But isn't sensation a mental fabrication, just a concept, like form?

No, it's not a concept. In *Pāli*, sensation is *vedanā*. *Vedanā* is one kind of mental state. Be careful about this. When most people feel sensation, they say it's the body. It's not the body. Sensation is one kind of mental state.

Q: How can that be a reality if it's just a mental state?

JUST PRACTICE

Mental states are realities. There are four kinds of realities: consciousness, or mind; mental states; matter; and *nibbāna*. Except for these four, everything's a concept.

Q: So, all mental states are realities? It can be a mental fabrication, though, right?

Yes.

Q: So, focusing on the movement of the body, that's not a mental state?

No, the movement is the air element, caused by the mind. It's one kind of matter. Movement is not a mental state; it's one kind of matter.

Q: When you meditate, if you focus on movement, you're focusing on matter. But if you're focusing on sensation, you're focusing on mind?

Sensation is *vedanā*. Remember that we have the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. If you focus on movement, it's *kāya*; if you focus on sensation, that's not mind—it's *vedanā*; if you think about something—"thinking, thinking"—or your mind wanders—"wandering, wandering"—you're focusing on your mind, or *citta*.

Q: What about other kinds of mental states? Can you be aware of those mental states, and how would they be categorized?

We have 52 mental states. For example, when you eat, you know the taste, right? You make a mental note: "knowing, knowing, knowing." Who is knowing? This knowing is *paññā*. *Paññā* is wisdom. Wisdom consists of mental states, see? Or, there's *mettā*: you pray for or love someone. *Mettā* is one kind of mental state. Or, you want to do something—the intention is one kind of mental state. There are a lot of mental states.

Q: So all of that fits into what category?

Mental states are part of *dhammānupassanā*.

Q: What does 'dhamma' mean in this context?

We have two kinds.

If you say *dharmaramana*—mind objects—this is consciousness and mental states, the five sense bases, the 16 subtle material properties, *nibbāna*, and concepts. These are called *dharmaramana*. We can take these as mind objects.

But, there's also *dharmānupassanā*. We have the four foundations of mindfulness, right? We have form, feeling, mind, and mind objects (*dhamma*). Be careful. With *dharmānupassanā*, the 'dhamma' here is that you can observe the five hindrances, the five aggregates of attachment, the six internal & external bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Four Noble Truths—just these five.

So this is the difference between *dharmaramana* and *dharmānupassanā*.

Q: So if you're meditating on the 52 mental states, this is part of 'dhamma', right?

Yes.

Q: Why do they separate out vedanā if it's one of the 52 mental states?

Vedanā is more evident than other mental states, so it's by itself. These others we might not even realize, so they are in a different group. When we practice meditation, though, we experience *vedanā* in a more dominant way, so it's classified on its own.

Q: Like kāya, it's also part of dhamma.

Kāya is the four great essential elements.

Q: So it's not just about being aware of movement, it's also being aware of the properties of each of the movements?

It's about their nature. The movement is not a concept; it's the nature of the air element. We can study the specified characteristics and the common characteristics. The specified characteristic of the air element is the movement, but the common characteristic is impermanence.

Q: So, even though you can call them a reality, they are impermanent. Vedanā is a reality but it's impermanent.

JUST PRACTICE

Everything is impermanent.

Q: What about nibbāna?

Nibbāna is permanent. It is permanent happiness and *anattā*. It is different. Conditioned things are impermanent, suffering, and not-self.

Q: So, reality is the Four Noble Truths?

Yes, exactly. *Nibbāna* is *nicca*, *sukha* and *anattā*.

From the April 1, 2001 talk

“Intro to the Seven Purifications and the Insight Knowledges”

Today I’m going to talk a bit about the seven purifications and the insight knowledges. To be able to gain enlightenment, we must go through seven stages of purification and insight knowledges, step by step.

First of all, the purification of virtue is required. This consists of four kinds of perfect discipline:

- 1) Keeping precepts;
- 2) Sense faculty restraint;
- 3) Purity of livelihood; and
- 4) Discipline regarding the four requisites.

Regarding keeping precepts, for general people, keeping the precepts purely and firmly is very important. These precepts include refraining from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies, and from using intoxicating liquors and drugs. These are the five precepts. These five precepts are said to be a universal law—anyone who is well disciplined in morality will have no harm come to them in this present life, and they will be reborn in a happy existence in a future life. When meditators, in particular, observe these five precepts purely and perfectly, they will not feel guilty about their behaviors. When moral conduct is purified, the mind is also purified to some extent, and it becomes steady. You can easily attain deep concentration of mind, which in turn gives rise to wisdom.

There are eight precepts to be observed by lay people in daily life. These include: refraining from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, from slandering, from harsh speech, from vain talk, and from wrong livelihood. We should observe these eight too. The first four are similar to the five precepts, right? The next four—slandering, harsh speech, vain talk, and wrong livelihood—differ.

In a meditation retreat, it is advisable to observe the holy eight precepts. We do this for the purpose of having more time to practice meditation, reduce sensual desire, and so on. We call these the *holy* eight precepts. These eight precepts include refraining from killing; from stealing; from sexual intercourse; from lying; from using intoxicants; from eating at the wrong time (this means from noon to the next dawn); refraining from dancing, singing, music, going to shows, wearing garlands,

JUST PRACTICE

and beautifying oneself with perfume and cosmetics; and refraining from sleeping or sitting on high or luxurious places. When our devotees come to the temple to practice meditation, we advise them to take these eight precepts.

So, we have two kinds of “eight precepts”: one is for general people, and the other is for devotees who come to practice meditation on a retreat.

Regarding sense faculty restraint, after you are perfect in morality you still need to restrain your six senses by means of paying attention to meditation practice and ignoring all sensual objects as well as mental objects. We must also contemplate the six sense objects which present themselves to our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, without allowing craving, anger, and so on, to arise. We call this sense faculty restraint.

If any kind of mental defilement arises while contemplating, it will be a great obstacle to your concentration. So you need to be aware of whatever object appears to your six sense bases. That’s why you always need to restrain your sense faculties. This is one kind of fighting. But we’re fighting inside, right? Not outside, with someone else; rather, we are fighting our mental defilements. We don’t let them arise. When you’re aware of every object—whatever appears—just be aware and contemplate it, and then there’s no chance for mental defilement to arise.

Next, purity of livelihood is necessary for meditators who want to attain enlightenment in this life. Your vocation must be pure, without violation of any precepts. In other words, you don’t kill anyone, steal or cheat, or lie, for example. And also, you must avoid trading in arms; intoxicants; poisons; human beings (in the Buddha’s time, this meant slaves, but nowadays it means prostitution); and flesh (or animals for slaughter). We’re not supposed to sell these. If your vocation violates any of these precepts, or you trade any of these five things, you don’t have purity of livelihood.

A meditator whose livelihood is not pure will feel guilty about oneself whenever he thinks about it. There are no secret places in the world. You can lie to someone else but you cannot lie to yourself. For this reason, meditators should have a guiltless vocation so that they will be able to easily gain concentration and penetrative insight into the true nature of mind and matter.

And regarding discipline with respect to the requisites, a meditator should reflect on using the four requisites of clothing, food, lodging, and medicine—everyone needs these things—for the purpose of

removing attachment to them. If you do not reflect on these four requisites, attachment will arise. So we should make this reflection for the purpose of removing attachment.

Whenever you take a meal, you should reflect: “I have my meal. It’s not for fun. It’s not for pleasure or for purification. It is only for the maintenance and nourishment of this body. By keeping it healthy, I will be able to do my duty and strive for spiritual liberation.” When you eat, you should consider why you are eating; otherwise, you will attach to the food.

Whatever clothing you are wearing, you should consider: “I wear these clothes, not for beautification of my body, but just for the purpose of warding off cold, heat, wind, burning, the touch of flies, creeping things, and so on, and also for the sake of modesty.” When you go somewhere, reflect on the purpose of wearing your clothes; otherwise: “Oh, these clothes are very nice. I like them.” This is attachment.

With respect to your lodging or your house, you should reflect: “I live in this building (or this house, this monastery, or this meditation center) for the purpose of removing the danger from weather, for living in security, and to be able to practice meditation without disturbance.” Think about this too. Whether you’re at home or at the monastery, when you practice meditation you won’t be attached to your building, your house, or your room.

Also, some people have to take medicine. For a similar reason, we take juice when we observe the eight precepts during a meditation retreat. We are allowed to drink some juice in the evening. When we happen to drink some water or juice, we have to reflect on it as medicine. Medicine is not just a pill or a vitamin we take; it also includes honey, sugar, orange juice, and so on. We can drink these things in the evening because we get hungry. It is to cure our hunger. Hunger is one kind of disease. So we should reflect on juice in the evening as medicine. We should reflect: “I take this medicine for the purpose of warding off painful feelings or hunger that has arisen, and mainly for freedom from disease.” This is the purpose, right? We take medicine to be able to practice meditation comfortably. If you get sick, you cannot practice meditation well.

By reflecting on these four requisites, attachment will have no room to occur.

So, for the purity of virtue—of morality—we need these four disciplines.

JUST PRACTICE

Next is purification of mind. We're going step-by-step. After your morality is purified, you will gain purity of mind—so-called concentration. Purity of mind consists of two kinds of concentration:

For meditators who practice tranquility meditation, they have to fulfill access (or proximate) concentration, as well as absorption (or attainment) concentration. Proximate concentration means gaining concentration in the proximity of mental absorption. In other words, you *almost* gain *jhāna*. At that stage of concentration, meditators are able to visualize meditational objects by the mind as if seeing them with the eyes. This is proximate concentration. As mental hindrances are subdued to some extent, a meditator is about to gain absorption in the near-future if they continue to practice their meditation. When a meditator gains mental absorption, or *jhāna*, the concentration is called absorption, or attainment, concentration. Then, purity of mind is fulfilled.

On the other hand, meditators who practice insight *vipassanā* meditation have to start from momentary concentration, which is different. This means that meditators have to focus their mind on their primary object, which may be breathing in and out or the rising and falling of the abdomen, whenever it occurs in the present moment. And also, meditators have to contemplate the secondary objects which come to appear to the six sense bases in the present moment. This type of concentration is called momentary concentration.

With tranquility meditation, we need to observe only one object, which is usually a concept. On the contrary, with insight *vipassanā* meditation we need to observe several physical and mental objects, which are realities. So the two kinds are different, right? When momentary concentration becomes mature, it is similar to the stage of proximate, or access, concentration. At this point, the five mental hindrances are subdued. To be fulfilled of purity of mind, meditators who practice insight meditation should at least strive to reach this level.

The five mental hindrances hinder the way to achievement of mental absorption (*jhāna*), insight knowledge, and enlightenment. So we fight with these five mental hindrances. If any one of them comes to disturb our meditation, we cannot gain concentration or insight knowledge—we cannot gain *jhāna*, and we cannot gain enlightenment.

These five mental hindrances include sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. When you practice meditation, these five mental hindrances come again and again. Sometimes there's sensual desire—you long for a form, a sound, a smell, a taste, a touch, or you think about something that has already passed or

imagine the future. This is sensual desire. Or you're not satisfied about someone or something in the past, you're upset about this or that, or you get angry with someone, and these emotions arise. This is ill will. Or with sloth and torpor, you feel sleepy and want to give up your practice. You think that maybe if you finish your meditation this sleepiness will go away. This kind of thinking comes and disturbs us, so we have to fight these mental hindrances. And next, there's restlessness—your mind wanders, you're not able to focus on the main object, you're thinking about this or that—and remorse, where you think about the past and wonder why you did this or that, feeling sorry about doing something wrong. Lastly, you'll have doubt, especially about your meditation technique.

We have to be aware of these five mental hindrances all the time and not let any of them overtake us.

Now I'd like to talk about differentiation of mind and matter to reach the first insight knowledge.

As you regularly practice mindfulness meditation every day, you will come to differentiate mind and matter. For instance, when you observe the rising and falling of your abdomen, you make a mental note of "rising" and "falling." You will come to realize that the rising and falling movement of the abdomen is matter, which is the air element. This is one kind of material property among twenty eight. The noting of the rising and falling movement is mind. So there is just mind and matter existing during the noting of rising and falling.

Mind here means both consciousness and the mental states associated with it, because consciousness does not arise by itself. It is associated with mental states all the time. Whenever you say or hear the word 'mind', it should be understood that it means consciousness and mental states. And mental states cannot arise by themselves as mind. They arise together and disappear together. We just use the word 'mind'.

So, in every moment of noting, it's just mind and matter—no person, no man, no woman, no I, and no living entity, is existing.

When you see something, you make a mental note as "seeing, seeing, seeing." The thing you see is form—it's matter. The noting of it is mind. See? In the same way, when you hear something, you note it: "hearing, hearing, hearing." The thing you hear is sound, which is one kind of matter. The noting of it is mind. When you smell something, you note it as "smelling, smelling, smelling." In this case, smell is one kind of material thing, which is matter. The noting mind is mind—not a person. When you taste something, you make a mental note as "tasting tasting." Taste, or edible things or drinks, are matter. You drink juice or water, for instance.

JUST PRACTICE

What is water? It's the water element. So, whatever you eat or drink is matter. The noting of it is mind. Similarly, when you touch something, you note that as "touching, touching, touching." The thing you touch is a tangible object, it is matter. The noting of it is mind. Again, only mind and matter exist in any moment of noting. We should know this. There's only mind and matter.

In the case of knowing feeling or sensations in the body, you make a mental note: "pain" or "numb" or "hot" or "cold," and so on, as the case may be. In this regard, pain, numbness, hot, cold, and so on, is *vedanā*, or sensation, which is a mental state. Please remember that most people feel pain or numbness and they think it's the body. It's not, really. It's *vedanā*, or one kind of mental state. And the noting of it is mind. Therefore, the object being noted is mentality and the noting is mentality. So both are mentality—the object *and* the noting mind. They are not a person, a man, a woman, or a being.

So when you have good concentration, you try to be aware of the object, keep continuous mindfulness, and you will understand very clearly that it's just mind and matter. *Just* mind and matter, except that mind and matter is not a person—in reality, there's no man and no woman.

Regarding mental or emotional states, when you think about something and get angry, you note it as "angry, angry, angry." When you feel happy, you note it as "happy, happy, happy." When you feel sleepy, you contemplate that: "sleepy, sleepy, sleepy." These objects—angry, happy, sleepy, and so forth—are mental states. The noting of those objects is mind. So both objects and mind are mentality.

When your mind is going out, you note it: "going out, going out, going out." When your mind wanders, you note it as "wandering, wandering, wandering." When you plan to do something, you note it as "planning, planning, planning." When you imagine something, you make a mental note: "imagining, imagining, imagining." So 'going out', 'wandering', 'planning', and 'imagining', and also what you see and hear in your mind, are just mental objects. Sometimes we can see things in our mind, right? Not by eye, but mentally. When you see or hear something in your mind, these are just mental objects. The noting of these is mind—there's no person that's existing. So whenever you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think, it's all just mind and matter, mind and matter.

When you go from standing to sitting down, you contemplate: "sitting down, sitting down, sitting down"—slowly. When you stand up from sitting, you contemplate: "standing up, standing up, standing up"—slowly. The movement of sitting down and standing up are the air

element. It is just the air element, which is matter. Contemplating on those movements is mind. So just matter and mind, nothing else. See? There's nothing else.

When you are sitting while practicing meditation, you may note "sitting, sitting, sitting." When you're standing before you start to walk, you note "standing, standing." When you walk, you note it as "walking, walking, walking." When you're lying down, you make a mental note: "lying, lying, lying." When you move, you note "moving, moving, moving." When you bend, you note "bending, bending, bending." When you stretch your hands or legs, you note "stretching, stretching, stretching"—slowly, step-by-step. This sitting, standing, walking, lying, moving, and stretching are matter. The noting of those is mind. Just mind and matter. The intention to walk—"intending, intending, intending"—is mind. The act of walking is matter. Just mind and matter.

From the time you get up in the morning until you fall asleep in the evening, you make mental notes. There's only mind and matter. With every moment of noting you will come to know that only mind and matter are existing. In fact, there's no person, no man, no woman, no self, no ego. The object noted is one. And the noting mind is another. You will see this. You will very clearly differentiate mind and matter in your mind.

General people who don't practice insight *vipassanā* meditation are still holding the wrong view or belief that mind and matter are "I" or self, a person, an ego, a man, a woman, a living entity. They think that "I see," right? They think that the seeing is "I." There is no "I." The seeing is eye-consciousness, which is mentality. As you gain the knowledge of discerning mind and matter, you'll be able to remove the wrong view of personality, which is the cause of attachment.

Accordingly, meditators should observe objects of reality, not concepts. This means that your objects of meditation should be realities. For example, when you focus your mind on the rising and falling of the abdomen, you are not supposed to see the shape of the abdomen. Instead, you should focus on the bodily sensation of movement. Sensation is movement. And also, when you practice walking meditation, try to perceive the movement without seeing the shape of the foot. Try to perceive the movement, and the lightness or heaviness. When you raise your legs you'll feel lightness, and when you drop your legs, you will feel heaviness. Try to observe the lightness and heaviness of your foot. In the same way, when you sit, stand, or lie down, try to perceive the supporting of your bodily position as well as the lightness and heaviness of the body. You should not focus on the form of the body. If you see the form, it's just

JUST PRACTICE

a concept. The meditation then becomes *samatha*, or tranquility, meditation, and not *vipassanā* meditation.

With *vipassanā* meditation, your object should be a reality. If you still see the form or shape, it's a concept. This means that your meditation is still *samatha*—it hasn't reached insight *vipassanā* meditation yet. Meditators who practice insight meditation should always have realities as their meditational object, not concepts. When a concept appears to your view, realities will lie hidden. But when realities reveal themselves, a concept will disappear.

The difference between tranquility and insight meditation is that with tranquility meditation you keep your awareness on just one object, right? And you ignore everything else. On the contrary, with insight meditation you should keep your awareness on a variety of objects that come to you in the present moment. Note them in the present moment, while they occur, but not before or after—it should be in the *present* moment. Your focus should be on realities.

You can make inquiry of yourself as to what kind of meditation you are practicing and what your purpose is. Is it to gain *jhāna* (absorption), or is it to gain enlightenment? You know your own purpose. Your goal—your aim, your purpose—and your practice must be in accord. If you say you want to gain enlightenment and you want to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation but your object remains a concept, you cannot achieve your goal.

If your goal is a tranquil state of mind and you want to practice *samatha* meditation, you can attain the absorptions, or the *jhānas*. We have *rūpajhāna* and *arūpajhāna*, and so, step-by-step, we can live with happiness, because we gained *jhāna*. If we attain these *jhānas*, we'll be happy and peaceful in this present life and will be reborn in the plane of *Brahmā* after we die. Those who gain the first *jhāna* will have to be reborn in the first *jhāna* plane after they die. But, as you are not free from mental defilements, you may commit de-meritorious deeds on many occasions, and because you are still a worldling, you may become a victim of your own evil actions and eventually be reborn in the lower states of miserable existence. You can become a hell being, an animal, or a ghost.

Vipassanā, on the other hand, is right understanding of the three characteristics of mind and matter. The purpose of insight meditation is to realize these characteristics, which are impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and uncontrollability. By realizing these three characteristics, we can exterminate every mental defilement, such as lust, greed, craving, hatred, ill will, jealousy, conceit, sloth, torpor, sorrow, worry, and restlessness. As

long as we have *any* of these mental defilements, we are sure to experience many kinds of suffering. Mental defilements are the cause of suffering. When they have been destroyed, all kinds of suffering cease to exist. Then you will experience the cessation of suffering. And that's why we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation.

To be able to remove the concept of being, we need to contemplate the nature of the four great elements, which are earth, water, fire, and air. We should contemplate their nature. We should see them separately in our body. By this I mean that we should see our body as only four kinds of elements. When you realize their nature, there's no wrong view and there is no attachment. If there's no attachment, there's no suffering.

The earth element doesn't mean the earth, but something that is *inherent* in the earth—hardness and softness. The water element means its characteristics. The fire element means the quality of fire. The air element refers to its characteristics. We should understand that it's not really earth or air, and so on. A meditator can experience the characteristics, function, or manifestation of the great elements. The characteristics of any one of those elements may appear when you practice meditation. Or sometimes it's their function or manifestation. One of those will be experienced.

The characteristic of the earth element is hardness and softness. Its function is to act as a foundation. It manifests itself as receiving or accepting something from the other elements.

The characteristic of the water element is cohesion or fluidity. Its function is intensity. It intensifies everything that comes into contact with it. Its manifestation is holding things together. Our body, this form, is 75% water, so this water element holds things together.

The characteristic of the fire element is heat or cold. Its function is to mature things. The manifestation is to continue a supply of softness when you cook something. As long as you cook, it becomes soft. This is because of the fire element.

The characteristic of the air element is expansion or contraction. The rising and falling of the abdomen is the air element. When you see the form, it's a concept. Even if you say you're practicing *vipassanā* meditation, if you just see the form, it's a concept—it's *samatha*. Instead, you should see the air element—the expansion and contraction. When you contemplate your nostrils breathing in and breathing out, it's not right if you see the form of your nose. Instead, you should see the air

JUST PRACTICE

element. The air element's function is to cause motion. Its manifestation is conveyed when you walk.

The characteristic of mind is knowing an object. Its function is to act as chief. Continuous processing is its manifestation—it just keeps going on and going on and going on.

The characteristic of matter is to change by heat, cold, and so on. Our body has different kinds of matter. Scattering is its function. Sometimes we can feel that. We can feel scattering of material. And not cognizing the object is its manifestation.

When you practice meditation, you can see the characteristics, function, and manifestation of the four great elements or the mind. For example, when you are walking, especially when practicing walking meditation, you can observe these four elements. With the upward movement as you lift your leg, the lightness in the foot is manifested. You can contemplate the lifting, the upward movement, manifested as this lightness in the foot. The lightness is caused by the fire element. When you raise and push your foot forward, this movement is caused by the air element. When you put your foot down, it becomes heavy. This indicates the pressure of the water element. And when your foot touches the ground, you feel hardness or softness, which is the earth element.

So during one step you may contemplate the lifting, pushing, and dropping, and distinguish these four elements, which is materiality. The noting mind is mentality. Just matter and mind is existing with every step.

In meditation retreats, you practice walking meditation for an hour or two, and if you keep at it every day you will experience what I'm talking about. Sometimes you may see their characteristics, sometimes their function, sometimes their manifestation, and sometimes it's the air element, sometimes it's the water element, and so on.

[A student interrupts with a question.]

Q: The difference between the function and the characteristic—can you give me an example for earth? I'm trying to understand it.

The characteristic of the earth element is hardness and softness. The function is to act as a foundation. If there's no earth, there'll be no water element, fire element, or air element.

This knowledge of defining mind and matter belongs to purification of view. What I've been talking about is for the purpose of gaining the knowledge of defining mind and matter, to be able to differentiate mind and matter, and to be able to remove the concept of a being, a person. Otherwise, you'll just see it as a person, and then you'll attach to it. And if you attach, you'll suffer. This wrong view of personality is the cause of attachment. When there is no attachment, there is no suffering. Then you will get real happiness in your life.

May all of you be able to practice meditation and discern the characteristics of mind and matter. May you be happy forever.

Any questions?

Q: So, you went through the first three?

Yes, we talked about purification of morality, purification of mind, and for insight knowledge, we talked about discerning mind and matter.

Q: Can you talk a bit more about jhāna as it relates to this?

Jhāna is when you observe one object to gain strong concentration. But a person who only practices this way doesn't realize the nature of mind and matter, their characteristics, and they don't see impermanence. Because they don't understand mind and body, they have wrong view. And then they attach to it. And attachment is the cause of suffering.

Q: So it's important to know the difference between tranquility meditation and vipassanā meditation, right?

Yes, we should know the difference. Some people practice meditation for many years and think they are practicing *vipassanā*, but in reality they are practicing *samatha*. Some say, "Oh, I don't want to be reborn again," but they don't practice *vipassanā* meditation. We *need* to practice *vipassanā*.

When you practice *vipassanā*, you will know that it's just mind and matter. You will know that we talk about a man, or a woman, or I, or you, as a matter of convention, but that it's not reality. When you realize this, you're not attached to anything. Knowing is *vijjā*, *paññā*, or wisdom. When wisdom arises, there's no attachment, no *lobha*, and no craving. This is very important. You attach to something because you don't know it. If you know, you're not attached.

JUST PRACTICE

Q: If people really knew about the four great elements, it would be very useful in science. I wonder if scientists know about that.

They do, but they only know the outside world. They don't know through *practice*.

Q: Am I right in understanding that you can only observe mind?

No, when you see, you just see mind and matter. And sometimes you know the characteristics of mind and matter. This is for the first insight knowledge. Later on, you just see impermanence. We go step-by-step. For now, we're just talking about discerning mind and matter. We're just talking about this level.

When you practice walking meditation, you will know the movement of your body, your legs—it's just matter. And the noting mind is mind. There is just mind and matter. Sometimes you'll see their characteristics—the moving is the air element, and there's the lightness and heaviness. You see these characteristics. After you pass this knowledge, you will reach the higher knowledges.

Q: There are so many different consciousnesses arising that it's so hard to know them all. It's too fast, right?

It's so fast. You cannot contemplate every type of consciousness, because it's so fast.

Q: So, you just concentrate on the ones that have a more dominant presence?

For meditation, just remember to fix your mind on the object, your body, your feelings or sensations, or your mind. Then, no unwholesome consciousness, no mental hindrances, and no mental defilements arise in your mind. This is enough for you. Just keep going. You'll know for yourself: "Oh, my mind isn't going out now." The mind is *very* fast.

Q: So we can concentrate on a bunch of different types of consciousness?

Just think about the four foundations of mindfulness. For example, contemplate your body, or sensations, or vibrations, or rising and falling, or breathing in and breathing out. Just focus on that. Your body is an

object, so you contemplate matter. As you do that, wholesome consciousness arises. You make a mental note. Later on, you may think about the past and get angry about something. As you do, unwholesome consciousness arises. So, first, your object is the body, but later it becomes something else.

When you observe your body or sensations, your feelings, your mind, or your mental objects, wholesome consciousness arises in every moment. But if you think about something else and attach to it or perhaps feel unhappy, then unwholesome consciousness arises.

Sometimes, for example, you think about your mind: "Oh, I have compassion. I am a good person. I want to help people." Think about your mind: in that moment, the object is your mind, right? The noting mind is just mind.

Wholesome consciousness and unwholesome consciousness cannot arise together. After one moment of consciousness arises and disappears, another will replace it. This is the nature of our mind.

From the April 8, 2001 talk “Discerning Causes”

Today I would like to talk about the knowledge of discerning causes. By continuing to contemplate the true nature of mental and physical processes, you will gain the knowledge of discerning causes.

The rising and falling movement of the abdomen is a physical process. It's caused by the pressure of the air element. So the air element is the cause, and the rising and falling of the abdomen is the effect. So, there's cause and effect. We won't understand this in the beginning—we will just know the rising and falling movement as matter and the noting mind as mind. So, there's just mind and matter. But now, we know it is cause and effect. Your ability to sit is caused by the air element. If you're paralyzed, you cannot sit. And the mind that wants to sit is also a cause. If you don't want to sit, you won't sit. You sit because of the air element and the mind that wants to sit. So the air element and mind are the causes, right? And the sitting posture is the effect. This is cause and effect. And in moving, the air element is predominant. Our intention causes the air to arise in a part of the body, which leads you to move. So, in your mind you intend to stand. Your intention causes the air to arise. If you want to raise your hand or your leg, the air element causes the body or a part of the body to move. If you don't have intention, you won't raise your hand. The intentions cause the air to arise in the applicable part of your body. Maybe you want to turn your head, but if there's no air element you can't turn it. But ultimately, your head turns because of your intention. That's why the air element and mind are the causes. The turning is the effect.

In the case of eating, when you practice meditation you should try to be aware of every moment. You will realize that every moment is just cause and effect. The chewing, taking, stretching, bending, moving of limbs, and so forth, are the effects. The intention to eat, to chew, and so forth, is the cause. Even if you put food in your mouth, if you don't want to chew it, it just remains in your mouth. The chewing arises because of your intention. As for taking something, if you don't want to take it, your hands won't move. But if you want to take something, your hands move. And so, in eating, the chewing, stretching, bending, the moving of your limbs, and so on, are the effect. The intention to eat, to chew, and so forth, is the cause. With the act of opening the mouth—you can't eat without opening your mouth—the intention is the cause. And the opening of the mouth is the effect. Just cause and effect. There's nothing else. There's no person and no self involved. See that. There's no person here—no man, no woman, and no I. There's just cause and effect.

Sometimes we practice walking meditation. When you stand, you try to be mindful of the standing position, and you note “intending, intending, intending.” Your intention is the cause, and the standing position is the effect. If you don’t want to stand, there will be no standing posture. Next, you have the intention to walk, which is the cause. So you make a mental note as “intending, intending.” This intention is the cause, and the act of walking is the effect. While you’re walking, it’s because of your intention that you lift your foot. So the intention to lift the foot is the cause and the lifting of the foot is the effect. Step by step, there’s just cause and effect. The intention to push your foot forward is the cause. The action of pushing forward is the effect. The intention to drop your foot to the floor is the cause. And the dropping of the foot is the effect. The intention to turn around at the end of your walkway is the cause. The action of turning around is the effect. As you are in the course of turning, intentions arise with every movement. If you don’t want to continue turning, you’ll just keep standing there. But now you want to continue turning. So intention is the cause, and with every movement—“turning, turning”—is the effect.

Because of your intention to sit, stand or lie down, the actions follow it as the effect. Sometimes you want to sit. Because your intention is the cause, you sit down as the effect. Sometimes you want to stand up. Your intention is the cause, and standing up is the effect. Sometimes you want to lie down. Your intention is the cause, and lying down is the effect. And when you want to walk, intention is the cause and walking is the effect.

There’s just cause and effect with these four postures. In these cases, mind is the cause and the air element—which is matter—is the effect. So what do we see here? Just mind and matter, as cause and effect.

This is knowledge of discerning causes. We know the cause of mind and matter. If you compare this with going to school, the knowledge of defining mind and matter is first grade. But now you have come to second grade—you know the knowledge of discerning causes—you know the cause of mind and matter.

When your concentration is deep enough, by being aware of your intentions and the actions that follow you will come to realize that nothing arises without a cause. Everything arises dependent on a cause. Every moment of this present life—as well as every moment of previous and future lives—is dependent upon a cause. Sometimes you feel very happy—it has a cause. If you feel sorry about something, it has a cause.

JUST PRACTICE

Some people are poor or very rich—it's because of a cause. The cause may be in the present, or it may be from the past. There's just cause and effect.

Everything arises dependent on the cause. In the past, there was the existence of only cause and effect. This is the case in the present too. There is just the process of cause and effect. When we see this, we have no doubt about our past existences, or about future existences. And in this present life, you won't have doubt either—it's just cause and effect. How about a future life? If we have to be reborn again, it will depend on a cause—just cause and effect. It keeps going on. You'll have no doubt about that. What *really* exists is just the process of cause and effect.

In the case of seeing and so on, because of eye-sensitivity and a visible object, eye-consciousness arises. So eye-sensitivity and visible objects are the cause. And seeing-consciousness is the effect. So you realize cause and effect. And likewise, ear-sensitivity and sounds are the cause, and ear-consciousness is the effect. Nose-sensitivity and odor are the cause, and nose-consciousness is the effect. Tongue-sensitivity and taste are the cause, and tongue-consciousness is the effect. Body-sensitivity and tangible objects are the cause, and knowing the touch—or body-consciousness—is the effect.

So in these cases, matter is the cause and mind is the effect. See? It's changed. For example, eye-sensitivity and so on is matter. Visible objects and so on are matter. So matter is the cause, and eye-consciousness and so on is mind. There's just matter as the cause and mind as the effect.

With regard to mental states, when you're thinking about something, there is the mind element. And whatever you're thinking about—which are mental objects—may be mind *or* matter. Therefore, mind *or* matter are the cause, and mind is the effect. Again: we'll think about something—this is the mind element. The object, which we call a mental object, may be mind *or* matter. But the thinking mind is the effect. Mind *or* matter is the cause, and mind is the effect. So, occasionally, matter is the cause and mind is the effect, and sometimes mind is the cause and mind is the effect. See? And sometimes, mind *and* matter are the cause, and mind is the effect. So, there are three categories.

In the case of feelings or sensations, maybe you feel a painful sensation in your body—perhaps someone hit you, or you ran into something. The external object is the cause, and the feeling sensation—which is mentality—is the effect. So here, you just see the cause and effect. So, matter is the cause and mind is the effect.

You should be aware of your intentions and make mental notes—“intending, intending, intending”—for the purpose of seeing mind and matter. If you’re not aware of your intentions, you will not realize this cause and effect. We’re trying to see mind and matter as two separate things. So, “intending, intending”—you’re aware of your intention. This intention is mind. You want to walk, for instance. Walking is moving, which is the air element. These are two separate things. They are also cause and effect. Because of the intention, moving arises. This shows the true nature of mind and matter: impermanence.

I suggest you make a mental note of your intentions before you stand, sit, lie down, or before you do something, as your intentions arise. So be aware of your intentions, and make a mental note: “intending, intending.” Then you can stand, sit, lie down, or do something. This is to realize their nature as cause and effect.

So, we’re talking about cause and effect. When you reach this knowledge of discerning mind and matter, it belongs to purification of overcoming doubt. We have seven purifications, right? When we reach this stage, it belongs to purification of overcoming doubt—we have no doubt about mind and matter of the past, present, or future. Then, we will understand that present mind and matter at conception—when we started in our mother’s womb, at *conception*—was conditioned by past ignorance, craving, grasping, and action. These were the cause for our present mind and matter.

In our previous existences, due to our ignorance we didn’t understand the law of cause and effect, or the nature of mind and body. This gave rise to craving in a previous life. Why did we have craving? Because we didn’t understand the true nature of things. If you understood, you wouldn’t want it, right? Because of ignorance, craving arose. When craving becomes stronger and stronger, it becomes grasping. When you have grasping, physical, verbal and mental actions take place. You’ll do something, you’ll say something, or you’ll think about something—*kamma* arises. According to these four causes—ignorance, craving, grasping, and action—one life is started again and again in this *samsāra*—the world of rebirth and death, or the cycle of rebirth and death. Because of what? Because of ignorance, craving, grasping, and action.

We’re talking about the past, right? When life is started—from the very beginning—mind and matter will have arisen in our mother’s womb. Our present mind and matter at conception were conditioned by past ignorance, craving, and so on. When we come to understand this, we

JUST PRACTICE

will have no doubt about where we came from, who created us, and so on. According to the Buddha's teaching, who creates our body? Ignorance, craving, grasping, and *kamma*. Whose ignorance? Our ignorance—we create ourselves.

Maybe someone in a previous life didn't understand the law of cause and effect. They might not have known that if they stole, killed, raped, lied, and so on, they would inevitably receive retributions from their evil actions. Some people don't know this. Some think that due to their power, their strength, or their wealth, whatever they do will not receive any blame or punishment under the law. Some people think like this. In fact, one may escape from criminal law because of power or position, wealth or cleverness, but they cannot escape the law of *kamma*, or the law of nature.

In this scenario, whenever the person thinks about their bad deeds, they'll feel bad about themselves—every time. And after they die, they have to receive the consequences of whatever evil actions they have done and be reborn in a miserable state. So, we have to face the consequences of our evil actions in this present life and in the next life, for sure. This means that we cannot escape from the law of nature.

Most people don't understand this. They aren't concerned about their evil actions. Why? It's because of their ignorance. And then they crave something. Why does craving arise? Because of this ignorance. Ignorance and craving go together. If they understood this, they wouldn't have attachment. And if there's no attachment, there will be no evil actions. It's just cause and effect.

As someone doesn't understand or believe in the law of nature, he might conduct evil actions. And due to his craving and grasping and evil actions, he will have to experience physical and mental suffering not just in this life, but he will also have to be reborn in a miserable state in a future existence. So, the previous actions of individuals are the cause.

We're talking about previous causes, right? The form, the body, or the features, of all creatures in this world are different. We have many creatures in this world. There are creatures we see, such as animals, and creatures we cannot see, like gods and angels. All these creatures have different forms, bodies, and features. Why do they have different bodies and features? Because of the cause. It depends on the cause.

Even human beings are different. Why are they different? Because of their cause. See? We're talking about ignorance, craving, grasping, and so forth in a previous life being the cause of all creatures being different in this present life. And as for human beings and gods,

because of previous life ignorance—which is not knowing the truth, such as the truth of suffering, the cause of suffering, and so forth, and even while performing meritorious deeds, such as generosity, morality, and mental culture—we still had the desire to be reborn in the human world or in heaven. We did good things in our previous lives but this existence was caused by our ignorance. We didn't understand the truth. We may say, "By the power of my generosity, my morality, or my mental culture, may I be reborn in the human world and become a rich person," or something like that. You still have *desire*. Some people may say, "I want to be reborn in heaven," and so they do meritorious deeds to get there. Actually, desire is the cause of being reborn there. But, birth is suffering. If you know you have to be reborn again—and it's suffering—then you won't have the desire to be reborn again. What is desire? It's craving. In this case, it is craving for existence. Why does craving arise? Because of ignorance.

As we begin to understand that birth is suffering, and we begin to lose the desire to be reborn in an existence arising from craving and grasping in a previous life, we will develop good deeds, speech and thought. We've been talking about beings becoming animals and hell beings, which is because of evil actions, but now we're talking about gods and human beings. By the power of our good actions, we come to be reborn in this human world, and sometimes, in heaven—the so-called blissful states. All of this doesn't just apply to us. We will know that it applies to *anyone*. This is why people or angels, men or animals come into this world. Why? We should know the cause. Our features are different *and* our states of mind are different. Some beings have good hearts, some have tempers, and so on. This is because of our previous actions—this is the main cause of our being different from others.

What I have been talking about so far is how present mind and matter at conception are conditioned by past ignorance, craving, grasping, and action. This applies to previous lives and this present life.

Now, we're a human being and we have mind and matter.

During this lifetime, by what is matter conditioned? There are four causes:

- 1) Action. Without having any action, our body will not exist for long. So, action here is *kamma*, right? As our nature, we see something, hear something, or listen to something, we have to breathe, to eat, to touch, and to think about something—we do these every day. It is called *action*. If

JUST PRACTICE

we move against this nature by not allowing ourselves to see, to hear, to breathe, to eat, to touch, then this body and mind will die soon. If someone puts you in a narrow room so that you can't see or hear anything, you can't breathe, eat, or touch anything, what would happen? Your body and mind will die. This is because of lack of action. We came to be reborn as a human being because of our previous good *kamma*, or action. And thus far we have survived because of our previous good *kamma*. This good *kamma* is similar to electric energy. An electric light is sustained by electric energy. The electric energy sustains it every moment. As long as the electric energy has not run out, the electric light continues. But if there's no electric energy, the light goes out. In a similar way, our previous *kammic* energy that supports our body decreases in every moment. When our *kammic* energy is gone, the body, or this person, is said to die. Why did they die? Because they had no more *kammic* energy. But by practicing generosity, observing morality, and developing mental culture, we strengthen our good *kammic* force to support our body and life. Whenever you don't feel well, try to do good things. When you do good things every day, your *kammic* force supports your body and life. You'll have a long life and be healthy. We're talking about *kamma*, right? This is the cause of our body;

- 2) Mind. When there's no mind, there's no matter. Suppose you have too much depression in your life. It will affect your body and you can easily get sick. You may even die earlier than you ordinarily might. Even if you have good *kamma*, if there's too much depression you will not be well. On the other hand, if you can set your mind to have proper intention, or wise intention, whatever you come across on any occasion you may consider as merely natural, as realities, and as lessons to be learned. Then, no depression arises. You may think: "Oh, this is natural. It's reality. This is a good lesson for me." You'll have proper attention. There will be no depression. By having such proper intention and no depression, you will be healthy, happy, and free from disease. Happy people don't have diseases. This is because of their mind. Some people have

so many diseases. About 75% of the time, this is because of their mind. If your mind is clear and pure, it's very rare to get a disease. Therefore, you should always keep your mind serene and happy by practicing mindfulness meditation. As a result, you'll be able to keep your body stronger, and it will last longer;

- 3) Seasonal phenomena, or weather/temperature. Without having suitable seasonal phenomena, our body will not be healthy. We will easily get diseases and the life will become short. Even if you have good *kamma*, a good heart and a pure mind, if you're not concerned about the weather, you can't have a long life. Therefore, to have a long life with a healthy body, we need to adjust ourselves to accord with the weather, heat and cold; and
- 4) Edible food, or nutriment. Food upholds the existence of the body. If you have good *kamma*, a good mind, and good weather, but you don't have good food, your body will not last long. No one can survive without food. Actually, food is medicine, and medicine is food. Where does medicine come from? It comes from food. By taking an overdose—or overeating—your body is negatively affected, and you can even die. An overdose of even good medicine causes problems. Even with good food, if you eat too much, it's not good, right? So accordingly, we need to choose suitable food for our health and for our body. What you eat every day can make your health or body strong, or it can make it weak. We should think about our food. Some say, "I like to eat this bad food." And then their health becomes poor. We should be moderate in eating—neither too much nor too little. Even though some kinds of food may not be desirable for you, you still need to eat them, even just a little, as medicine or nutriment. On the contrary, you are not supposed to overeat your favorite foods either. This is very important. We have to eat every day—twice a day, or maybe more than that. If you're not concerned about your food, your body gets diseased and your life becomes short.

So, our body—our matter—is conditioned by the four factors: action, mind, seasonal phenomena, and edible food.

JUST PRACTICE

Our mind is sustained by the senses and their corresponding objects. Why does consciousness arise in every moment? Because of the six senses and the six objects. This is the cause of the mind in this present life. If there is no eye-sensitivity when visible objects are present, there will be no eye-consciousness. It's like a blind person—there's no seeing-consciousness. This is because of a lack of eye-sensitivity. Even if you have good sight and good eyes, but no visible objects appear before you or if you close your eyes, seeing-consciousness will not arise. See? Why does the mind arise? In this example, it depends on eye-sensitivity and visible objects. The same is true for the remaining consciousnesses and senses. If there is no ear-sensitivity and audible object, and so on, there will be no ear-consciousness and so forth. So, in summary, because of the six senses and sense objects, mind or consciousness is sustained.

So we know the conditioning of mind and matter at conception and during our lifetime—just cause and effect, continuing on and on.

Even though everyone wants to be happy and peaceful, we still have to face different kinds of suffering. Suffering is a part of our lives, right? We started our life with crying. This is because we were suffering. No one smiles when they're born—only crying, right? If there's no crying, what happens? The nurse will spank us. So our life starts with crying anyway. This is suffering.

In our daily life, we can clearly see that the cause of suffering is attachment. When there's attachment, there is suffering. People who have a hundred things they are attached to will in turn have a hundred things that cause them suffering. This is natural. This is the law of cause and effect. People who do not understand the real facts of suffering may blame someone or something for being the cause of suffering. It is like a policeman who arrests an innocent person, by a great mistake. The real criminal is one person; the one arrested is another person. Please remember this: the main cause of suffering is attachment. Attachment arises because of wrong view. You're attached to yourself, other people, and even unliving things, due to your wrong view. You take this as a person, a being, or a permanent thing. This is wrong view. Because of this wrong view, attachment arises.

After you realize this, you will see just the process of mind and matter arising and disappearing one after another, incessantly. Nothing lasts long. You will not attach to anyone or anything, including yourself. You know their nature. When there is no wrong view, or ignorance, there is no attachment. When there's no attachment, there is no suffering. See? Cause and effect. What is the cause of suffering? Attachment. What's the

cause of attachment? Wrong view. If you have wrong view, you have attachment. If you have attachment, you have suffering.

As an example, someone who has lustful temperament likes to collect and keep so many things at home—you see decorations and antiques all over the ceiling or the walls. If even one of those is lost or broken or stolen, they feel very upset about it. And if any of those hundreds of things are lost, broken or stolen now and again, every day they will have to suffer about it. Inevitably, there'll be crying. One day, maybe someone steals something and so they cry. There are so many things at home, and when everything's lost, there's just suffering. Why? Because they are attached to these things.

Think about the lives of some householders who have even more attachment. They may be attached to their hair, their eyes, their teeth, their nails, their skin, their homes, their clothes, and their cars, as well as their adornments, jewelry, and so on. How about if they *lose* their hair? They feel very upset about it. This is because they're attached to their hair. Or maybe something happens to their eye. Then they worry about their eye. Or some are attached to their teeth, and when something happens to them they feel unhappy. Some are even attached to their nails—they spend a lot of money on them every month—but if something happens to them they get upset about it. Sometimes something happens to their skin—it gets wrinkly and looks old—and they feel sorry about it. How about their clothes or their house, right? So many attachments, and so much suffering. How about those who are attached to their jewelry? They lose it, and so they might not eat for a week or two because they're thinking and dreaming about their loss. They feel very sad about it. We can guess how much they will have to worry and suffer about these things they are attached to.

Some people are not only attached to their body and belongings. They are also attached to their boyfriend or girlfriend, wife or husband, son or daughter, or even dogs, pets, birds, fish, cats, and so on. See? These things don't always behave the way you want them to. If one of these gets sick or dies, you might worry and cry about it. This is because you're attached. How often do people get upset and cry about their boyfriend or girlfriend? They can't follow your desires. Even your own body cannot follow your wishes. Someone else? No way. If you don't understand this nature, you will be upset and crying every day. Some people lose their cat or dog, and they cry. It's like it's one of their family members they've lost. This is attachment. It becomes suffering.

JUST PRACTICE

As you are about to die, you may feel sad for having to depart from your beloved ones and pleasurable things. Even if you have to depart from those near and dear for just a week or a month, worry and sorrow and sadness are there, as long as you are under the power of ignorance and attachment. If you go on a vacation for a few weeks, you worry about your dog, right? You worry about your property: “Maybe something will happen to my house.” See? And if you are about to die, you worry about *everything*. You worry about your family, parents, daughter, relatives, property, your car—*everything*. And then, sorrow and sadness arise.

It’s not supposed to be like this. Especially as meditators, we need to understand the nature of mind and matter, of *all* conditioned things. To be able to overcome such kinds of suffering, we need to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation, in order to understand the true nature of mind and body—including conditioned things, which are impermanent, fearful and uncontrollable. Then you will realize that you are not supposed to attach to and worry about these things. We can have all kinds of things and take care of them, but not attach to them. Take care of them as your duty, but without attachment. Accordingly, you will experience the real happiness of peace in your life—if you practice meditation.

The meditator who reaches the stage of knowledge of defining mind and matter and the knowledge of discerning causes is said to be a ‘lesser stream-enterer’. To reach this stage, what do we need to have? We need to have these two knowledges. This is second grade, right? The first is defining mind and matter. And the second is discerning causes. If you possess these two knowledges, you’re said to become a ‘lesser stream-enterer’. That means that you will surely not be reborn in an unhappy state for two or three existences, as you possess purity of mind and have exterminated wrong view of personality. See that? There’s no wrong view for them. They understand the nature of mind and matter, and they understand cause and effect. As they understand this, there’s no wrong view. This is purity of mind. That’s why when they die, for the next two or three lives they will not be reborn in an unhappy state, for sure.

[A student interrupts with a question.]

Q: What’s the difference between a ‘lesser stream-enterer’ and a regular stream-enterer?

A stream-enterer gains 16 knowledges or insights. He has gained enlightenment. A stream-enterer will not be reborn in an unhappy state at all. But the lesser stream-enterer has gained only *two* knowledges. By practicing in this way, he has exterminated wrong view of personality, so he will not do any evil actions. Accordingly, when he dies, even without gaining enlightenment yet, he won't be reborn in an unwholesome state for two or three existences. After that, he may commit evil action, so he still has a chance to be born in a woeful state. So we call this a 'lesser stream-enterer'.

A stream-enterer will *never* be reborn in a woeful state, whereas a lesser stream-enterer is protected for only two or three existences. This is the difference between the two stream-enterers.

Now we go to the third stage of knowledges. We can call it *third* grade. This is the knowledge of comprehension.

By keeping your practice on mind and matter, you will come to know the impermanent, fearful and uncontrollable nature of phenomena. All conditioned things are constantly changing. On every occasion of noting, processes are seen arising and vanishing. In every moment, you will experience this yourself. Generally, though, non-meditators consider this body and mind to remain in a permanent state, as a truth of life or existence. They think that the same body of childhood has grown up into manhood. They think that the same young mind grows up into maturity. They think that both body and mind are one—the same person. Somebody might say, "Oh, I'm the same person I was when I was young." This is the way they think. The real fact is that nothing is permanent. Everything comes into existence for a moment and then vanishes. Nothing can remain, even for one second. We practice meditation and we know that mind and matter arise and disappear, arise and disappear, in every moment. How can we say it's the same body or the same mind? It's not the same. Changes are taking place very swiftly. The mind and matter are simply processes that come up and disappear one after another very quickly.

You see that, right? This is insight into the impermanent state of things. This is your knowledge. You'll see this.

In fact, mind changes 17 times faster than matter. During the time occupied by a flash of lightning, *billions* of thought-moments may arise. We can't observe these individually. But you can reflect for just a few minutes on the innumerable experiences you've had over the course of your entire life and it will be sufficient for you to remember *so much*. You

JUST PRACTICE

might sit in meditation for only a few minutes and you can think about when you were a kid, who talked bad to you, who hit you or bit you, about how you went to school, about how you got married, and so on. You can think about this long period of time in just a few minutes and have adequate recollection of a wide range of experiences. This demonstrates how quickly the mind arises.

You will come to know that all conditioned things are subject to suffering. Even happiness is just a prelude to suffering. Now you're very happy, but before long your happiness is gone and you become unhappy. It is the nature of the law of impermanence. You will come to feel that this ever-changing state of things is distressing and not to be desired.

So, birth is suffering, and decay, disease and death are suffering. Union with the unpleasant, and separation from the pleasant, are suffering. Not to get what you desire is suffering. So, in brief, the five aggregates of attachment are suffering. This is insight into suffering. When you contemplate mind and body, you will come to realize this about impermanence and suffering. This is the knowledge of comprehension. It is the third stage of insight knowledge.

Moreover, you will perceive the elements of mind and matter. They never follow your wish, but instead act according to their own nature and conditioning. Sometimes you see their impermanence, sometimes their suffering, and sometimes their non-self nature. You are then convinced that these processes are not controllable. You'll know that you cannot control your mind or body, or any situation. They are dependent upon their nature and conditioning. You will be convinced that these processes are not controllable, and that they are neither a person nor a living entity—it's just mind and matter. There's no self. Dependent on the cause, mind and matter arise. There is no permanent entity. Some religions say that we have *atta*—an immortal entity—in our body. But according to the Buddha's teaching, there is no permanent entity, and no controllability. Someone who has strong attachment cannot escape from suffering. Whenever there is a cause, an effect will arise. No one can stop or control the law of cause and effect.

This is insight into the absence of self. You'll know their nature, right?

So, time is up for today. May all of you be able to keep constant mindfulness on mental and physical activities and gain insight knowledge higher and higher, until there is the realization of the Four Noble Truths by your own direct knowledge.

Any questions?

Q: In view of self and non-self, what is it that moves from one life to the next?

When I attended college, our philosophy teacher was a minister. He said to me, “Why does Buddhism say ‘no-self’? I’m *right here*. How can you say there’s no self?”

To understand this, we should understand the *Pāli* word *atta*. It translates as “self.” Some religions believe that in our body we have an *atta*, a self. They believe that even when you die and your body is cremated or buried, the *atta* is immortal and continues into another life. They believe that this *atta* is permanent. Perhaps they believe that when they might see something, this *atta* will peer through their eye-door and it’ll see it. *Who* sees it? They’ll say ‘*atta*’ sees it. But the Buddha said ‘*anattā*’, there is no immortal entity. *Who* sees it? *Eye-consciousness* sees it. *Why* does it see it? Because when there is eye-sensitivity and a visible object, eye-consciousness arises. It is eye-consciousness that sees it. We call this *anattā*.

You can’t control it, right? This isn’t just referring to the body. The way to understand non-self is that “self” is uncontrollable. Other religions say that *atta* can know everything and can control everything. The Buddha said *anattā*—you cannot control *anything*. Everything depends on cause and effect.

Please remember: instead of thinking about non-self, or no-self, just translate it in your mind as ‘uncontrollability’—we cannot control our mind and body.

Q: We feel like “I do this” but there’s no “I” there, right?

There’s no “I.” *You* want to do something; that’s just desire. And your desire is mind. *Who* did that? *Who* took that? It’s not your hand that took something. Hand is a concept. *Who* took that? This ‘taking’ is just the air element. See that it’s not a person.

Q: I can very clearly see the uncontrollability of things.

When we understand ourselves, we’ll understand the outside world.

JUST PRACTICE

Q: When a person has become an arahant, even though they have no more kamma stored, are they still alive because of their senses?

Their organs are still part of their body and life. They still have their old *kamma*, this present *kamma*, but this is their last life. There's nothing left for another life.

Q: So when you're an arahant, it means you're not producing any more kamma, but maybe you haven't gotten rid of your old kamma yet, right?

Yeah, but in this present life, even though the *arahant* has present *kamma*, this *kamma* doesn't give results in a future life—just in the present life.

Q: The arahant can still have old kamma?

Yes, an arahant can still have old *kamma*. For some people, their old *kamma* is very little. And so, after they gain *arahantship*, they die right away because their old *kamma* is gone.

Q: Can you enter parinibbāna and still have old kamma, or does it have to be totally gone?

If you are still a stream-enterer, a once-returner, or a non-returner, old *kamma* still follows you. If you have attained *arahantship*, it won't follow you, even if it's there.

From the April 22, 2001 talk “Knowledge of Rising and Falling”

Today I would like to talk about the knowledge of rising and falling. In this stage of knowledge, when you contemplate your primary object—breathing in and breathing out, or the rising and falling movement of your abdomen—you will not see it as the knowledge of discerning mind and matter, during which we came to know only the movement, the motion, the pushing, supporting, expansion, and contraction of the air element, and the noting mind. We came to know that just mind and body processes exist. As you become more practiced, you will perceive in every act of noting that an object appears suddenly and disappears instantly. See, it’s very different from the first knowledge, which was just seeing mind and matter. Now, you see the rising and falling—just appearing and disappearing. When you contemplate the rising and falling of the abdomen, you will clearly see that the rising and falling of the abdomen and the noting mind arise together and disappear together—just arising and passing away.

In the case of practicing walking meditation, there is first the intention to walk and then there will be walking. You will see these two things separately—your intention, and the walking. There are successive intentions and successive movements of the body. With every step, and in every movement involved in stepping, you will clearly see that. So before every movement, the intention comes and then goes away.

For instance, say you want to practice walking meditation in three sections—lifting, pushing, and dropping. Your initial intention is to lift your foot. This is one intention. It comes and then goes away, and then you lift your foot. Now your intention is to move forward. This is another intention that arises and then goes away. Then you push your foot forward. After you push it forward, you now want to drop your foot. This intention comes and goes away. And then you drop your foot. So, with every movement the intention comes and goes away. The intention and the going are arising and disappearing in every moment. As intention comes and goes away, the going—the lifting, pushing, and dropping—is doing the same. They both are arising and disappearing in every moment.

You’ll come to know that what is happening in this moment is mind and matter. See? Intention is mind, and going is matter—just mind and matter. And *this* mind and matter is different from the mind and matter that existed a moment ago. In every moment, a new mind and a new matter arise, and the old ones disappear. A new intention—you want to lift your leg, for example—is new mind, and then matter arising. And

JUST PRACTICE

then, you want to push forward again. In that moment, the old mind and matter have disappeared as new ones continue to arise. In every moment, a new mind and new matter arise and the old ones disappear.

With whatever you see, you hear, you smell, you taste, or you touch, you will see the beginning of the arising and the end of it as well. In the case of walking meditation, when you say “lifting” you’ll see its beginning and its end. When you see a visible object, like a picture, you’ll see the beginning, and later on, you’ll see the end. When you observe a sensation in any part of the body, you will know when it arises and also when it vanishes. Because you have good concentration, you will feel pain or numbness or itching in any part of your body—you’ll concentrate your mind and contemplate the sensation—and you’ll see it start to arise, and then it’ll finish. So, you’ll know when it arises and also when it vanishes. And sometimes a thought comes suddenly and then goes away instantly. While you’re concentrating on your primary object, you may think about something. You’ll realize it right away. You’ll see it just come suddenly, and when you realize that, it goes away instantly. You don’t even have to say “thinking, thinking”—you’ll know it right away. Thoughts arise and disappear very quickly.

At this stage of knowledge, meditators will be able to note almost all objects of meditation that appear to the six senses. No wandering mind arises as it used to. For the beginner, the thinking mind wanders about, going here and there, thinking about the past and future. Now, when you gain concentration and reach this stage of rising and falling, your mind is no longer wandering.

At that point, we have two parts to the knowledge. At the first part of knowledge of rising and falling, you’ll come across at least one of ten impediments. They are illumination, rapture, tranquility, excessive faith, effort, happiness, wisdom, mindfulness, equanimity, and delight. These are called impediments. Why are they called that? We’ll talk about this soon.

On the way of striving for spiritual liberation, you *have* to come across these ten impediments, or at least some of them. If you are not experiencing any one of these, it means you’ve not yet reached the knowledge of rising and falling. Some people practice meditation and say they have never experienced this. Maybe they haven’t reached this stage yet. Or maybe they’re going the wrong way. But if you go the right way, you have to come across at least one of these ten impediments. *Everyone* who practices insight *vipassanā* meditation has to pass this point.

Meditators who have experienced any one of these impediments are said to be capable of attaining enlightenment in this very life. They can even become an *arahant*. This is very important to know. Therefore, whether you are a person who is capable of becoming a stream-enterer or not, this is criterion for you to consider. If you talk with your friend who is a meditator and they tell you about their experience and feelings about these impediments, you'll know right away if they have reached the stage of rising and falling.

At this point, insight is still weak. This is the first part of the knowledge of rising and falling. It hasn't reached the second part yet. When you become a teacher one day, and students report their experiences to you, you'll know which stage they've reached. And so you can help guide them forward. And, you need to know these things for your own practice too.

Now I'll talk in some detail about the impediments:

- 1) Illumination means that when you're meditating, a brilliant light may appear to you. You may even feel an aura emanating from your body. You'll be sitting there and you'll feel an aura emanating from your eye or your face, your head or your forehead, or your whole body. And although you are meditating in a dark room, you may feel as if you are sitting in a room with a brilliant light. You may feel that your eye is being hit with a spotlight in front of you. When you open your eyes, though, there's nothing—you only *feel* it. This happens because of the power of your concentration and insight. This can appear to you;
- 2) Rapture. While contemplating your primary object—maybe the nostrils, or the abdomen—you may experience a minor rapture. This minor rapture may cause gooseflesh, you may feel cold, there may be the falling of tears, or you may feel tremors in the limbs or a shaking of your body, your hands or head. This is one kind of rapture, or *pīti*. You may also experience instantaneous joy. You'll be contemplating your primary object and you'll feel very happy without apparent reason. It just comes, again and again. Or you may feel that your body is swaying back and forth. Sometimes it feels like its swaying right and left, and sometimes it feels like it is really swinging. It may not

JUST PRACTICE

really swing but it may feel like it's swinging. This can happen to you. Occasionally, you may feel as if you are sitting in a swinging cradle, or as if you are sitting on a springy cushion. When you sit on the floor for the first time, it feels very hard and uncomfortable, but now, it feels like a nice, soft cushion. You'll have this special feeling. And sometimes you may feel that your body is not touching the floor, as if you are sitting on a cloud or floating in the sky. You won't feel anything under you. Or you may feel a great rapture and it will seem as if your body is bigger than it really is. Don't be scared. This is one kind of rapture. It may feel like your hand or your head, your face or your body is very big. You'll feel this;

- 3) Tranquility. In all postures, you feel quite at ease and are able to attend to an object of meditation for any length of time desired. If you want to sit in meditation for one or two hours, you can. At this stage, a meditator can sit longer than before. Before you reach this stage, you may sit for one hour and think, "When will this end?" You wanted it to end, but now, you're not concerned about time any more. You can sit for one or two, or even three, hours. You can practice walking for a few hours. And you are free from sloth and torpor, or drowsiness. Your energy is neither lax nor tense. Beginners have to use their effort to observe and focus their mind, but even if they try to focus, it still wanders. Now, it won't go away—the mind becomes serene. You don't have to try too hard to fix your mind on the object of meditation. The noting mind takes the object automatically, without exertion. Practicing sitting and walking meditation are enjoyable—it's not like before. There's no sleepiness at all. Your mindfulness is strengthened, and wisdom also ripens;
- 4) Excessive faith. You'll want to advise others to practice meditation, like you do. This kind of thinking will arise and you'll want to share your experiences with others. You may even want to write a meditation book or to teach Dhamma to others. You'll think, "I would like to write about this. I want to let people know, like I do." This kind of thinking will arise a lot. And sometimes you may think about and miss someone near to you who has passed

away without having an opportunity to practice meditation and realize the true nature of mind and matter like you do: “Oh, my friend, my parents...” You’ll think about these people, miss them, and lament that they’d died before they could practice and realize the nature of mind and matter like you have. You’ll think like this all the time. This thinking is wholesome, but meditators are not supposed to think too much. If you think too much, you delay your practice. Maybe some of you have experienced what I’m talking about. In that moment, you’ve reached the first stage of the knowledge of rising and falling. You will notice that you possess excessive faith in the Buddha as the first supreme meditation teacher. You may have been practicing meditation for a short time and are already experiencing all these kinds of things. The Buddha practiced for six years. As he experienced all these kinds of things, he taught us about them. So now you possess excessive faith in the Buddha as our first supreme meditation teacher. You will totally accept and appreciate his doctrine, as you are experiencing what he taught for yourself. This isn’t because you read about it in a book—you *experienced* it for yourself. That’s why you appreciate the Buddha’s doctrine. Moreover, you will have high respect for the Buddha’s noble disciples who practiced this same meditation and gained the various stages of enlightenment. They had right conduct and eradicated all kinds of mental defilement through the same method that you are practicing. You’ll be grateful and respectful to your meditation master as well: “Because of my teacher, who guides me and teaches me, I’ve experienced this for myself.” So you’re grateful and respectful to your meditation master. No one can change your belief regarding the Buddha, the doctrine, the noble disciples, the law of cause and effect, impermanence, and so on, as you have experienced it for yourself. Even if someone tries to explain another point of view, you won’t accept it. They can’t change your belief, because you have experienced this for *yourself*.

JUST PRACTICE

When you experience this aura, rapture, and so on, you may delight in that. If you are delighted in these unprecedented situations, your meditation progress will be delayed. Please remember this. Also, excessive reflection is an impediment to progress of insight. This means that you think too much about what you have read, what you've studied, or what you've experienced. Your thinking is good, but there's too much of it. Some people might say, "We have to think about our mind, about impermanence, suffering, selflessness, and so on." Thinking is just thinking. It's not meditation. If you have excessive reflection, your insight will not go further. It will stop right there. For the rest of your life, you will never go further. You're not supposed to have excessive reflection on what you experience.

When there is brightness, you should contemplate it as 'bright' until it disappears. If you're sitting in meditation and you see brightness, you're not supposed to delight in the object. Just make a mental note—"bright"—and realize it's bright until it disappears. Similar acts of contemplating should be made in the other cases. We have ten kinds of impediments, right? It should be the same for the others. Whatever appears to you, just be aware of it until it disappears. Be mindful and *detached* until it disappears. Then you will overcome this point for a few days. Since this may be the first time in your entire life that you've experienced this, you can't always just make a mental note and let it go away. Maybe you'll experience this for several days. But whatever appears, just make a mental note—with mindfulness and detachment—until it disappears. You will overcome this point for a few days.

The rapture and so forth that you're experiencing is not the path, or *maggā*. You have not reached a stage of enlightenment yet. You should know: "Oh, it's not the path." The impediments are imperfections of insight. In this stage, your knowledge of rising and falling is still weak. From the knowledge of comprehension up to the first path of the knowledge of rising and falling belongs to the purity of knowledge and vision of path and non-path. This means that you know whether or not it's the path of enlightenment. You recognize: "Oh, this is an impediment. I have to be aware of every object in order to overcome this." As you know that what you're experiencing is not the path or enlightenment, you make continuous noting of the object of your meditation; otherwise, you'll delight in it. Without paying interest in those impediments, you will clearly notice that the previous occurrence is one thing and the succeeding occurrence is another.

Your knowledge of rising and falling becomes strong and mature after you overcome the ten impediments. Then, no more impediments appear. Every act of noting the arising and disappearing of mental and physical processes is very fast and clear in your knowledge—more clear than before. At this point you have reached strong knowledge of rising and falling, perfectly. You'll know your status.

So, we have two parts of rising and falling knowledge. In the first part, you'll experience impediments. And in the second part, you'll overcome them.

There is an analogy between a traveler and a meditator. I would like to share it:

When you reach this strong knowledge of rising and falling, it is said that you are already on the freeway that you wish to take. So just keep driving—or *striving*—and sooner or later you are sure to reach your destination.

How about you, Roger? Are you on the freeway, or not?

Q: The freeway is the second part, right?

Yes.

Similarly, from the beginning of your drive until you reach the freeway, you have to pass so many streets and roadways. If you happen to drive by yourself, you need to study a map first. And you must drive carefully, according to the map. Otherwise, you will not be able to take the freeway you intend. You just waste your time and gas. And also, driving without knowing the map or the direction, you can't expect to reach your destination—no way. But if you are traveling with someone who is familiar with the map or the region, by following his direction you can reach the freeway easily and quickly—without any hesitation, right? And without wasting your gas and time.

Please remember that until you reach the freeway, a meditation master is indispensable. From then on, you can proceed to your destination by yourself via the freeway without confusion. Have you reached the freeway? If so, just keep going. Then there's no confusion anymore. But until you reach it, you need help.

If no one is there to guide you, what do you have to do? Study the map. In the same way, meditators who expect to reach spiritual liberation should study the map of liberation. That means you should study the nature of mind and matter, as we do. The four essential elements, the five aggregates of clinging, and the 12 bases—the six internal senses and the

JUST PRACTICE

six external objects—must be contemplated. We will experience these all the time. We should also study how mind and matter are related to each other as cause and effect. Preferably, though, we should practice under the guidance of a competent teacher. It is very hard to exterminate your wrong view of personality without knowing the nature of mind and matter.

Now, we're almost finished studying the map. You already know about mind and matter, the four essential elements, the five aggregates, the 12 bases, the Four Noble Truths, the law of dependent origination, and so on. We know everything, right? We've studied the map. After you study the map, you have to follow it. If you are still holding onto the wrong view of personality—"This is myself, my body"—or you still have the wrong view of 'man' or 'woman' and so on, attachment will arise often. By having attachment arising in our mind, it will block our way to liberation. If you have attachment as the cause, suffering will be the effect. You *have* to suffer. However, after we study the map—after we study all these realities—step by step we will know the wrong view of personality. If there is no wrong view of personality, there will be no attachment. If you have no attachment, you will have no suffering. This wrong view—this attachment—will block your way to liberation and you will not be able to reach your goal, in spite of your striving a long time for it.

So we need to clear the mind first. We need to study, then take the knowledge from the studying and apply it to our practice. In not so long, you will come to realize the arising and vanishing of mind and matter, which is said to be reaching the freeway of your spiritual liberation. You can then be proud of yourself, and keep *practicing*. Gradually, you will come closer and closer to your destination. Eventually, you will reach your goal and attain enlightenment.

See? Without realization of mind and body, cause and effect, impermanence, and so on, you cannot eradicate this wrong view. So we need to study. If we don't have a lot of time to study, we especially need a competent teacher close to us to guide us. And then, we can reach the freeway. We *need* this. After you reach the freeway, you can go by yourself, right?

It's very important to study the Buddha's teaching. There's *pariyatti*, or study, *paṭipatti*, or practice, and *paṭivedha*, or realization. So first, we need to study, then we need to practice. After we have practiced, we'll have realization as the result.

Now I would like to talk about the five aggregates, which are the objects of meditation that we experience all the time. When you practice meditation, you can observe mind and matter or the five aggregates—either one. When your insight knowledge becomes more mature, you will just see the five aggregates, which are corporeal realities, feeling or sensation, perception, mental formation, and consciousness. They arise and disappear in every moment with the noting mind.

For general people, when they see a visible object, a pleasant feeling may arise if it is desirable. If the object is undesirable, an unpleasant feeling may arise. When the object is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, a neutral feeling arises. The same is true in the case of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. But in reality, when a meditator happens to see a visible object—whether desirable or undesirable—a feeling of like or dislike should not arise. In fact, you should just be aware of the seeing and make a mental note—“seeing.” It’s just ‘seeing’. In the case of seeing, in that moment the visible object and eye-sensitivity are corporeal realities.

I would like to explain how these five aggregates arise when we see. Visible objects and eye-sensitivity are matter, right? As you know it as ‘seeing, seeing, seeing’, this is a neutral feeling—there’s no “I like” or “I don’t like.” There’s just seeing. This is neutral. If you remember or recognize what it is you see or what it’s called, this is perception. To be able to see the form, and the performing of volition, intention, and so on, are called mental formations. Without volition, intention, and so on, you can’t see it. And at the moment of seeing, you will know what it is. We call this consciousness. “Oh, I *know* that.” You will realize that the five aggregates are arising and disappearing together, very swiftly. You don’t see a man or a woman—you don’t see a person. You will realize: “I see that.” But it’s just the five aggregates in the moment of seeing. They are arising and disappearing.

In the same way, in the moment of hearing it is just the five aggregates arising and vanishing, right away. The sound that you hear and ear-sensitivity are corporeal realities—just matter. As you’re mindful of the hearing and note it as “hearing, hearing, hearing,” the feeling is neutral. You may remember the song. This is perception. To be able to hear the sound, and the performing of intention, motive, and so on are called mental formations. And knowing the meaning of the song is consciousness. There are just the five aggregates, arising and disappearing together.

JUST PRACTICE

When you smell something, the odor and nose-sensitivity are corporeal realities, or matter. As you're aware of it and make a mental note—"smelling, smelling, smelling"—a neutral feeling arises in that moment. You may recognize what kind of smell it is—perhaps a perfume. This is perception. To be able to take this object of smell, and the performing of intention, volition, and so on, are called mental formations. And knowing the object is consciousness. There's just the five aggregates arising and disappearing at the moment you smell something.

In the case of tasting, edible food or drink and tongue-sensitivity are corporeal realities. As you're mindful of it and note it as "tasting, tasting, tasting," "drinking, drinking" or "chewing, chewing," there will be a neutral feeling. There's no "I like" or "I don't like"—it's neutral. You recognize what kind of taste it is. You know it's fish or beef. You recognize it. This is perception. To be able to know the taste, and the performing of volition, intention, and so on, are called mental formations. The knowing of the taste is consciousness. Just five aggregates.

When you are touched by something, the tangible object and body-sensitivity are corporeal realities. As you are aware of the touching and note "touching, touching, touching," a neutral feeling arises. As you recognize what it is that has touched you, it is said to be perception. To be able to realize the touching, and the performing of volition, intention, and so on, are mental formations. The knowing of the touching is consciousness.

With every 'seeing', 'hearing', 'smelling', 'tasting' and 'touching', it's just the five aggregates arising and disappearing instantly in every moment. We have to be aware of these five aggregates. When you see just these five aggregates, there's no wrong view of personality. Then, there's no attachment.

When you are thinking about something, your mental object can be mind *or* matter. For instance, you may think, "This person has a good heart." In that case, you're thinking about their mind. Or you may think, "This person is very beautiful." Here, you're thinking about matter. So, mental objects can be mind *or* matter. As you make a mental note—"thinking, thinking, thinking"—a neutral feeling arises in that moment. When you recognize what it is that you're thinking about—a person, an animal, and so on—it is said to be perception. To be able to take this mental object, and the performing of volition, intention, and so forth, are called mental formations. The knowing of the object is consciousness. There's just these five aggregates taking place, and then, vanishing quickly.

I've classified these aggregates into five individual components and explained them to you so that you can understand their nature, but in reality, they arise and disappear together simultaneously. We should know this.

For meditators who are seriously practicing meditation, whenever any object comes to appear to the six sense bases they just note "seeing" (and so on) and no like or dislike arises. This is a neutral feeling. If you do not consider these objects as desirable or undesirable, a neutral feeling arises. But if you think it's a desirable object, a pleasant feeling will arise. And if you think it's an undesirable object, an unpleasant feeling arises. If the meditator considers the object neither good nor bad, a neutral feeling arises. So, just make a mental note, and a neutral feeling will arise.

If you forget to make a mental note—or if you can't catch the arising object in that moment—upon seeing or hearing something (and so on) sensual desire or anger will arise. What should you do then? You should be aware of the forgetfulness, and the desire or the anger, and make an appropriate mental note. If you realize that you forgot to make a mental note, note it as "forgetting, forgetting, forgetting." If you have desire for the object, make a mental note: "desire, desire, desire." If you get angry, just make a mental note: "anger, anger."

When you cannot grab it the first time, grab it the second time. Then this becomes your meditation object too. See? When you cannot make a mental note and desire or anger arises, just contemplate the desire or the anger. Forgetfulness, desire and anger can become a meditation object. As you do that, you will realize that all desire, anger and so forth arise suddenly and pass away instantly. If you don't practice in this way, you may lament that while you sat in meditation all you could do was think about the past or your feelings. But even if anger arises, just immediately contemplate it. Make it your meditation object. You'll see your anger arise and then disappear. It's the same with sensual desire—it just arises, and now it disappears. You will know their impermanence. You shouldn't feel upset if you forgot to note an object, and so desire or anger arose. Whatever occurs in your mind, just make a mental note and be aware of it. You will see its nature as arising and disappearing.

So with what we've been talking about—from the beginning up to the knowledge of rising and falling—we have to see two kinds of characteristics: specific characteristics and common characteristics. This is very important.

What are the characteristic of matter? It is formed by heat and so on, and there is also the hardness or softness of the earth element.

JUST PRACTICE

Cohesion or fluidity are the characteristics of the water element. Heat or cold are the characteristics of the fire element. Expansion or contraction are the characteristics of the air element. And also, the characteristic of feeling is enjoying the object. The nature of perception is remembering or recognizing the object. The nature of mental formations is led by volition that motivates or organizes the mental factors it is associated with. And the characteristic of the mind is knowing an object.

The characteristics I've just talked about are specific, or unique, characteristics of mind and matter. When you know and understand these specific characteristics, the corresponding stage of insight knowledge is knowledge of discerning mind and matter, which is the first one.

When you're able to realize the true nature of mind and matter as being impermanent, fearful or unsatisfactory, and insubstantial and uncontrollable, then it is said you have realized the common, or universal, characteristics of mind and matter. This knowledge is higher. These universal characteristics can be found in all compounded phenomena.

I'll share an example elaborating upon these two types of characteristics:

When you contemplate your abdomen, you may see the rising of the abdomen as the expansion of the air element, and you may see the falling of the abdomen as the contraction of the air element. If you see only the nature of the air element it means you see the *specific* characteristics of the air element. On the other hand, if you see the rising and the falling of the abdomen as just arising and disappearing, you see impermanence. We call this a *common* characteristic.

We should try to see and to realize these common, or universal, characteristics. If you see specific characteristics, it is the knowledge of discerning mind and matter. You see that, right? But if you see common characteristics, it is the knowledge of rising and falling. They are different. As your insight knowledge matures with every moment that you practice meditation, especially in a retreat, you come to realize the arising and disappearing of mind and matter as being unsatisfactory. You also come to realize your lack of absolute ownership over them—you cannot control them. This insight knowledge is said to be the knowledge of rising and falling. Therefore, you should strive to realize the specific characteristics on up to the common characteristics of mind and matter with every noting mind.

May all of you succeed in your ultimate goal.

Q: We started talking about the ten impediments, but we only covered four.

No, I talked about all of them. I covered all of them in the course of elaborating upon the first four.

One is illumination, two is rapture, three is tranquility, and four is excessive faith. I've talked about these. And then there's effort—we have more effort than needed. A beginner might have no drowsiness and can practice meditation the whole night with effort. But after that, they don't have to try too much to observe one object—it automatically arises. Next is happiness—you'll feel happy about your experience. With wisdom, you know everything. As for mindfulness, you can memorize things. As there's no wandering mind, there is equanimity. And finally, there's delight.

Q: So is delight different from rapture?

You delight in the nine things that you experience. You delight in the other nine impediments.

Q: I've experienced some of these impediments. Not in a major way, but sort of like you described. It hasn't happened too often.

No, not too often. We might experience these once or twice.

Q: You talked about the lesser—or first—knowledge of rising and falling and the ten impediments. Are the ten impediments directly connected to the first part of that knowledge?

Yes, the first part. After you overcome all of them, you gain the second part. Your insight knowledge will be stronger than it was with the first part.

Q: How do you know if you're at the second part?

You have already overcome the ten impediments. You'll know that they don't appear to you—they've already passed. It'll be very clear to you and your mind will see arising and falling away very quickly.

Q: You've talked about realities. Have we studied all of them?

JUST PRACTICE

Yes. There are 121 kinds of consciousness, 52 mental factors, 28 kinds of matter, and *nibbāna*. Except for these four realities, everything is a concept.

Your meditation should be focused on realities in the present moment. If when you contemplate your nostrils, you see your nose, it's a concept. But when practicing *vipassanā* meditation, your object should always be realities. If it's a concept, it's tranquility meditation.

Q: I'll sometimes hear people talking about Buddhism and they often mention 'The Middle Way'. I don't remember you talking about the Middle Way. Can you talk about it now?

This is the Noble Eightfold Path. It is the Middle Way. Briefly, it is *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom). This is the Middle Way.

Next week will be our last class because the following week I have to go to Virginia and North Carolina. When I come back, it's the Buddha's birthday, or *Vesākha Pūjā*. Then I have to go to Canada. Maybe we can do more classes after my 3-month retreat ends in October.

From the April 29, 2001 talk “The 16 Insight Knowledges”

For those who practice insight *vipassanā* meditation, there are 16 kinds of insight knowledge that can be attained, step by step. They include:

- 1) The knowledge of defining mind and matter;
- 2) The knowledge of discerning causes;
- 3) The knowledge of comprehension;
- 4) The knowledge of rising and falling;
- 5) The knowledge of falling only;
- 6) The knowledge of fearfulness;
- 7) The knowledge of faultiness;
- 8) The knowledge of disgusting;
- 9) The knowledge of desire for freedom;
- 10) The knowledge of re-comprehension;
- 11) The knowledge of equanimity about formations;
- 12) The knowledge of conformity;
- 13) The knowledge of changed lineage;
- 14) The knowledge of path;
- 15) The knowledge of fruits, and
- 16) The knowledge of reviewing, or the knowledge of reflection.

When you gain the 16 stages of knowledge, you gain enlightenment—you have reached your spiritual goal.

I have already talked about the first four insight knowledges, right? Let’s talk about the rest:

- 5) The knowledge of falling only. In the knowledge of rising and falling, when you contemplate meditation objects you see the arising and disappearing of the objects. No matter what you contemplate, you’ll just see the arising and disappearing of mind and matter, all the time. With improvement of practice, when you reach the knowledge of falling, you just notice the ceasing of mind and matter. It’s no longer arising and falling—it’s just ceasing. This is the nature of this insight knowledge. Whether you contemplate your abdomen or the nostrils during sitting meditation, it’s the same thing. You don’t see the arising. Arising is no longer appearing—just vanishing. Particular features, such as the body or the head or hands or legs,

JUST PRACTICE

are no longer appearing to you in that moment—everything is ceasing and vanishing. At that stage, you cannot feel your body—“Where is my body? Where is my hand? Where is my head?”

By keeping to your noting, as usual, you will gain momentum and know that what you are seeing is broken apart. Maybe it’s a feeling or a sensation, and it is just broken apart. What you hear fades away, one after another, with no continuation between them. This is seeing things as they truly are. We should see their true nature. It’s not the same object, or the same mind—it’s different. As the vanishing is so quick, you will feel it. When you go somewhere, you will feel that your eyesight is getting poor: “Oh, what happened to my eyes?” You’ll see something but it’s not clear. You’ll feel that your eyesight is getting poor. This is the result of not seeing the features of form. If you look outside, you’ll see all the houses and trees. But it’s not like before. You can’t see the form anymore. At this stage of knowledge, your attention is fixed on the cessation. There is no longer arising—just the cessation of both the object of meditation and the contemplating mind, one after another.

For example, we contemplate our abdomen. As we say “rising,” we try to observe the movement from the beginning, through the middle, and to the end. But when you reach the knowledge of falling only, you just see the cessation—just the falling. You just see the disappearing. The arising is no longer apparent to you;

- 6) By continuously practicing, you will come to know the truth of continuous dissolution that is truly fearful. You’ll see that everything in every moment is just disappearing. You’ll feel fearful. In this stage, you no longer seem bright in spirit. You’re not happy about your meditation but you still contemplate. These feelings changing means that your insight knowledge is increasing. As it becomes higher, you will see the nature of your meditation object differently, step by step. But you should not be

disappointed: “Why do I feel like this?” Don’t be disappointed. It’s the nature of this stage of knowledge. This is a sign of progress of insight.

When you practice meditation for a month or a few months in a retreat, please remember one thing: today, you try the best you can. Even if you try hard, and you practice all day long, you feel that “today my contemplation is not good.” By continuing to note all the time, notice that tomorrow is different. If today is not good, tomorrow you may gain another, higher insight knowledge. See? Before, your insight went one step up for one day and you didn’t feel that it was a good contemplation, but the next day you may overcome it and gain the higher stage. If you practice for only one week, you won’t experience this. But you’ll see this if you practice for one or two or three months. We shouldn’t be disappointed by this. This is the nature of this insight knowledge. So before you go to the next stage, you’ll have a feeling that your contemplation is not good. But really, that’s not the case. This means you have reached the knowledge of fearfulness.

You see that mind and matter are dissolving incessantly. You just see disappearing, disappearing, disappearing all the time—no matter what you’re doing. Even as you practice walking meditation, you say “lifting” but you can’t see from the beginning to the end anymore, because your insight is so sharp at that time. It’s become ripe. You say “lifting,” and all you see is the object disappearing. “Pushing”—you just see the end. And “dropping”—you just see the end. Disappearing only.

So you feel this object is fearful. This is the knowledge of fearfulness. Now you’ve reached sixth grade;

- 7) As you’re contemplating, you’ll find faults in this body and mind. You’ll see that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and uncontrollable. You’ll see that. When you see their characteristics, you will feel that it’s not good to have been born in *any* existence. You won’t want

JUST PRACTICE

to be reborn again. You won't want to be reborn as a human being or even as an angel. You don't want anything. This is because you see these characteristics all the time. You'll feel that decay, disease, death, and so on, are dreadful: "Oh, if I have to be reborn again, I'll have to experience these three characteristics all over again." So you feel it's dreadful. This is the knowledge of faultiness—the seventh insight knowledge;

- 8) By contemplating the arising and disappearing of mind and matter, you'll get sick of them. You might see the decaying and decomposing of your own body. You'll be practicing meditation and you may feel that your body is decaying or decomposing in different parts. As you get sick of this body, your contemplation is associated with disgust and you become too lazy to notice objects. You don't want to make a mental note or contemplate like before. This is because you are sick of your object. Sometimes you become too lazy to notice it. However, continue noting. In your mind you may have the feeling that you don't want to contemplate it, but you still do it. You may think, "I'm lazy. I'll just go to sleep." Keep contemplating.

This is similar to a person who walks on a dirty road. He may feel disgusted with every step, because the road is so dirty. But he cannot stop going. He has to continue walking in order to pass this point. This is the knowledge of disgusting;

- 9) By continuing to practice, the desire to be liberated from physical and mental processes arises. You want to be free from mind and matter: "Oh, I don't want this anymore." You don't want to be reborn again. And you want to escape from the processes of mind and matter. Since we were young until now, there's been just mind and body processes arising and disappearing all the time. Now, you want to be free from these processes of mind and matter. This is said to be knowledge of desire for freedom—freedom from the processes of mind and matter.

After some time in this stage, you will feel various painful feelings in your body. Intense pain may even arise. It's nothing special, for you can easily contemplate the painful feelings and they will cease under the power of your concentration and insight knowledge. In this stage, you may find that long-term diseases or troublesome issues with your body have disappeared too. Most meditators will experience this if they reach this stage and practice with it for more than three weeks. Some people may have had a doctor tell them that they need to operate on something. But before the operation the meditator may go to practice intensive meditation for a month or two. They'll see the doctor before the procedure and the doctor may find that the issue has been resolved. The doctor may ask, "What kind of medicine did you take?" The meditator could tell them, "I didn't take any. I went to practice meditation."

So, in this stage of knowledge your old diseases can be cured. This is incredible, right? These problems won't give you trouble for the rest of your life. You don't have to worry about that disease anymore—it was just temporary.

Even though painful feelings still arise at this stage, they are less intense than what you've experienced in the past. They don't become unbearable, as they don't exist long after you contemplate them. What used to take you one or two hours to deal with now disappears after you contemplate it once or twice. This is because your concentration and insight knowledge is so strong. When you were a beginner, your concentration wasn't so strong, so you had to deal with pain for many days.

In this stage, you may change your posture often. While sitting in meditation, you may think that you will do better if you practice walking meditation. And then, you'll practice walking meditation and before long think that you should resume sitting meditation. This is the nature of this insight knowledge. After you've sat back down,

JUST PRACTICE

you'll want to go to another place or maybe lie down: "Maybe I'll practice lying down meditation." You cannot remain in one particular position for long. You'll contemplate this all the time. You're not satisfied with your contemplation. Even if it's good, you'll think it's not good enough. You may become restless and wonder why your concentration is weak after practicing intensive meditation for a month or two.

But you should not despair. All of this happens because you have come to realize the true nature of this formation, which manifests as a mass of suffering. However, you should try to adhere to one posture. When you know this is just the nature of this insight knowledge, you should try to maintain your position. Soon after, you will find that you're comfortable in that posture. You'll be past this point in maybe just a day or two. And then, your mind will gradually become composed and bright;

- 10) Now, your feeling will change. In order to escape from this mass of suffering, you'll reflect on transiency, sorrowfulness, and the absence of self in conditioned things. You'll reflect on these three characteristics of mind and body. Because you want to be free from these processes of mind and matter, you have reached the knowledge of re-comprehension.

Whereas for the first few stages of insight knowledge we had to deal with our meditation object for many, many days before it progressed, we can progress from the knowledge of falling to the knowledge of re-comprehension in just a few days, or even one day, or even during a single period of sitting meditation. Please remember this;

- 11) After that, you will reach the knowledge of equanimity of formations. This is a very important insight knowledge. When you reach this knowledge, your noticing runs smoothly, as if no effort is required. And impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and uncontrollability are becoming evident without any reflection. At first, you had to think

about these characteristics, but now they are evident without any reflection.

Also, the objects being noticed become sparse. This means that, although you used to contemplate your body and feel many sensations or pains or vibrations arising in the body, they now become sparse and very slow—maybe just one sensation will slowly arise, and you can notice it easily and calmly. For example, if you contemplate your abdominal movement, you won't feel any other sensations—just the abdomen moving slowly. It's very easy and comfortable. The object of meditation gradually becomes more and more subtle. You will be suffused with serenity. If you contemplate your abdominal movement, it will feel very tiny—just moving a little bit. And as the object is very subtle, your mind also becomes very subtle. You won't be concerned with the outside world at that time. You just observe this very subtle object. You may even feel that your body disappears. Sometimes you'll feel like "Where's my head? Where's my body?" It's as if your body has disappeared, because it's so subtle.

You'll just stay with this very subtle object. And if you experience this, you'll know, "Oh, I've reached the knowledge of equanimity of formations." Equanimity means you don't care about *saṅkhāra*, or formations—you just contemplate arising and disappearing. Sometimes you might also see brightness, like a clear sky. Before, when you reached the knowledge of rising and falling, you may have seen this and felt very happy and proud of yourself. But now, these mind experiences don't influence you excessively. You are able to contemplate desirable and undesirable objects without pleasure or displeasure, liking or disliking—because there is equanimity. Whatever you see, it's equal. Your insight knowledge is so high that you don't care if it's desirable. There's just equanimity—a neutral feeling.

JUST PRACTICE

As you are free from painful feelings, you can sit and contemplate for a few hours without moving. Why can you sit so long? Because there are no painful feelings and no features to your body—there is just the knowing mind. You can now spend your time tirelessly. You may intend to sit for just 15 or 30 minutes but it may actually go on for two or three hours.

This stage of insight knowledge is said to be the top of mundane insight knowledge. When this insight knowledge becomes more mature, sometimes the object you're noting arises quickly. You may then become anxious—"What happened to me?" However, you should notice the anxiety. If you don't contemplate it, it becomes a problem—you cannot reach higher. You may look forward to the progress of your insight. If you do not note this anticipation, you may think that the goal is very near—"Oh, maybe I will gain enlightenment soon." Don't think about that. If you do, just make a mental note. Otherwise, it will disturb you. By contemplating with great energy, some people may think, "My goal is very near, so I will try my best." Conversely, their noticing becomes lax and retrogressive. Because of what? Because of the anxiety. If sufficient strength of insight has not been achieved or developed, concentration becomes slack. In this case, you may progress higher, and then fall back again, several times. This is why you should contemplate steadily whatever arises, and balance your faith and wisdom, energy and concentration, with strong mindfulness;

- 12) As the five faculties are developed in an even manner, you will soon experience the cessation of formation, which means you will gain enlightenment and realize the supreme bliss. It takes time for this insight knowledge. You will know when you reach this knowledge. You will know what stage you have experienced. You'll know for yourself. And now, you are said to have reached your spiritual destination, which is the first stage of enlightenment, or stream-entry.

During the realization of the Four Noble Truths, conformity, a changing lineage, path consciousness, and two or three fruit consciousnesses arise. It then subsides. The duration of the realization is just an instant of noting. From the knowledge of equanimity of formations until we reach the realization of the Four Noble Truths, for that instant of noting there is the de-functioning of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind—they stop for an instant. Every six sense function stops. We don't see or hear anything—the function stops for an instant of noting. So now we're talking about the process of *maggā* for the 12 stages of insight, right? The 12th stage of insight is the knowledge of conformity. If you start it, it can't stop.

After you pass this knowledge, the remaining knowledges come together in one thought process. Your experience is in conformity with the lower stages of insight—which is the previous *nine* kinds of insight—and with the higher stages of insight, or subsequent insight. We call this knowledge of conformity. It is conforming with the previous nine knowledges—starting from the knowledge of comprehension.

What does this mean? Knowledge of defining mind and matter and knowledge of discerning cause are not really *vipassanā* knowledge yet, so we start to count from the knowledge of comprehension. So, your experience is in conformity with the lower stages of insight—the previous nine stages—and with the higher stages, which means from knowledge of changing lineage to the knowledge of reviewing. We call this the knowledge of conformity—it conforms to the 37 factors of enlightenment. The 37 factors of enlightenment have been fulfilled in that moment. You experience and develop all of them. This is why it's called the knowledge of conformity;

- 13) From the second part of the knowledge of rising and falling to the knowledge of conformity belongs to purity of vision discerning the method. This is the sixth purification. The knowledge of change of lineage means that at that moment the meditator changes his worldly lineage and

JUST PRACTICE

enters the lineage of the noble ones. They are no longer a worldling—they become a noble person. This knowledge of changed lineage can take *nibbāna*, or supreme bliss, as its object. This knowledge of changed lineage does not belong to the sixth or seventh purifications—it is one of the insight knowledges. There is insight leading to emergence. ‘Emergence’ means emergence from woeful states. Since you have reached this point, you will never again be reborn in a woeful state. There are no signs of conditioned things, no *sankhāra*—*nibbāna* is the object;

- 14) The knowledge of path fully understands the truth of suffering. We’ve understood suffering since the knowledge of comprehension, but not fully. Now, we understand fully. The knowledge eradicates the cause of suffering, which is craving. It realizes the cessation of suffering, which is supreme bliss. And at that moment, there is the realization of the Noble Truths and the development of the way leading to the cessation of suffering—the Noble Eightfold Path is fully developed;
- 15) The knowledge of fruit is the consequence of *magga*. By following the path, and as a fruit of the path, we experience peace. This is due to the cessation of mental defilements. Whoever realizes *nibbāna* can see this. In that moment, there are no mental defilements—they feel very peaceful. The realization of the Four Noble Truths belongs to the purity of knowledge and vision with regard to intuitive wisdom—the seventh purification. This stage of purification is free from mental defilement as a result of the realization of the Four Noble Truths.

After path consciousness arises and disappears, two or three thought-moments of fruit consciousness immediately follow. For the average person, there will be only two moments of fruit consciousness. For keen insight, there will be three thought-moments of fruit consciousness arising. We’ve talked before about the virtues of the doctrine—*akālika*, which means that it is effective immediately. After *maggayāna* arises and disappears, *phala* consciousness arises as an effect. That’s why we call it *akālika*, or immediately effective;

16) Soon after, the knowledge of reviewing arises. What is it that meditators are reviewing?

- a) They review the path;
- b) They review the fruit;
- c) They review *nibbāna*;
- d) They review defilements eradicated. (For example, a *sotāpanna* has eradicated wrong view and doubt.); and
- e) They either review, or do not review, any defilements that may be remaining.

After gaining enlightenment, every noble person will review these four or five things. Generally speaking for all noble ones, there are 19 reflecting or reviewing knowledges. For the stream-enterer there are five; for the once-returner there are five; for the non-returner there are five; and *arahants* reflect only on the first four because they have no remaining defilements. A non-returner who gains *arahantship* will review *magga*, *phala*, *nibbāna*, and the defilements eradicated—then, “Oh, no more remaining.” So, there are 19 reflective knowledges.

Whoever gains the first stage of enlightenment is called a *sotāpanna*. According to the etymology, the word is broken down into *sota* and *appaṇā*. *Sota* means the stream leading to *nibbāna*. What is the stream? The Noble Eightfold Path. *Appaṇā* means one who has entered or reached for the first time. Therefore, *sotāpanna* means stream-enterer, or one who has reached the stream that leads to *nibbāna* for the first time. From then on, the person will definitely one day reach *nibbāna*, because they have reached the stream that leads there.

If we say *sotāpattimagga*, the first path consciousness, we have three words: *sota*, *āpatti* and *magga*. *Sota* means stream, *āpatti* means entering for the first time, and *magga* means killing, which refers to killing passion and going to *nibbāna*. *Magga* itself can be broken down into “ma,” which means killing passion, and “gga,” which means going to *nibbāna*.

There are three categories of stream-enterers. A given category will depend on their insight knowledge. Here are the categories:

JUST PRACTICE

- (a) One who will be reborn in the sensual, blissful plane at most seven more times. He will then become an *arahant* and enter *nibbāna*;
- (b) One who will be reborn in a noble family two to six more times before becoming an *arahant* and entering *nibbāna*; and
- (c) One who will be reborn only one more time and then attain *arahantship* and enter *nibbāna*.

Why are they different? It depends on their insight. If it's weak, maybe there will be seven more births. If it's medium, there may be two, or up to six, times. And there's only one time for those who have keen insight.

On the attaining of this first stage of sainthood and becoming a stream-enterer, the person will eradicate wrong view of personality—or unchanging entity—wrongful practices and habits, and doubt. There is no longer doubt. Doubt here refers to doubt about the supreme enlightenment of the Buddha, about his doctrine, about his noble disciples, about the disciplinary rules, about past and future lives, and about the law of dependent origination. There will no longer be doubt about these things. And as the person gains confidence in the supreme enlightenment of the Buddha, he will not violate any of the five precepts for any reason—there will be no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no lying, and no drinking alcohol. Accordingly, that person is free from the round of reborn in the unhappy life of lower existences.

Therefore, everyone should endeavor to reach this first stage of enlightenment at minimum. We have done a lot of evil in previous lives. This evil action will give results, but whoever reaches this first stage of sainthood will no more be reborn in a woeful state. This is one reason why we practice meditation—it's not just for peace of mind.

There are three ways of emancipation. They are:

- (a) Devoid of soul. This means emancipation gained by meditating on soullessness. In this context, when you practice meditation you contemplate mind and matter as selflessness, and then you gain enlightenment right away;
- (b) Free from signs of permanence. This means emancipation gained by meditating on signlessness. In this context, you contemplate impermanence of mind and body. You see impermanence and gain enlightenment right away; and

- (c) Free from hankering or craving. This is emancipation gained by meditation on unhankering. This means you contemplate mind and body as suffering, and then you gain enlightenment.

After you know the three ways of emancipation, there are three doors before you leading to enlightenment. By contemplating *anattā*, or absence of self, it becomes an avenue of emancipation. Then, immediately, path consciousness arises and you gain enlightenment. By contemplating *anicca*, you gain enlightenment at once. This is said to be the door of signless emancipation. You contemplate impermanence and gain enlightenment right away. And by contemplation of sorrowfulness or fearfulness, you gain enlightenment right away. It's called the door or avenue of desireless emancipation. You contemplate suffering, right?

According to the Commentaries, someone who has faith as a dominant faculty—remember, we have five faculties, right?—should contemplate *anicca*. So, we can guess about our temperament. Then just see *anicca*. If you have concentration as a dominant faculty, you should contemplate sorrowfulness. And if you have wisdom as your dominant faculty, you should contemplate *anattā*.

Whoever has an ardent wish to attain the higher paths—for example, after you gain the first stage of sainthood, you want to get to a higher stage—should make a determination: “During this period of my meditation, I do not wish to experience the fruit knowledge that I have attained. May I reach to a higher path I have not yet attained.” If you still wish to enter the fruit you cannot reach higher, so you make a determination that you don't wish to experience any longer what you've attained—you want to go higher.

By continuing to practice, and making this determination, one day you can progress to the second stage of enlightenment—a once-returned—step by step. *Sakadāgāmi*, or once-returned, means one who returns to the human realm only once. This is possible.

There are five kinds of once-returned:

- (a) Those who attain this stage in this human realm, and attain *nibbāna* here as well. They keep practicing and reach *arahant*;
- (b) Those who attain this stage in this human realm, and attain *nibbāna* in the celestial realm. This means they attain the second stage in this life, and when they die and are

JUST PRACTICE

reborn as an angel they keep practicing meditation and gain *arahant* in that realm;

- (c) Those attain this stage in the celestial realm, and they keep practicing meditation and become an *arahant* in that realm;
- (d) Those who attain this stage in the celestial realm, and attain *nibbāna* in this human realm. This means that they gain the second stage in heaven, and then when they die and are reborn as a human being they keep practicing meditation as a human and became an *arahant* in the human world; and
- (e) Those who attain this stage in this human realm, who will be reborn in a celestial realm, and who will then be reborn in this human realm, where they will gain *nibbāna*. This means that in this life they become a once-returner then they die and are reborn as an angel. After they die again, they are reborn as a human being, who then practices meditation and gains *arahant*.

Those who reach the second stage of sainthood, or become a once-returner, can only *weaken* sense desire and evil. They can't uproot it yet. But this means that sense desire and evil are weaker than when they were a stream-enterer.

By continuing to practice and making a determination, a once-returner can attain the third stage of sainthood and become a non-returner. A non-returner is called an *anāgāmi*, which means one who will not return to this sense sphere as a human being or as an angel. If you reach this stage of enlightenment, you cannot be reborn as a human or angel because there is no more desire. With no more desire, you can't be reborn in this sense sphere. These beings are born in the Pure Abodes. These are "pure" because no worldlings can live there—only non-returners and *arahants*.

There are five classes of non-returners:

- (a) Those who attain *parinibbāna*—this is a very polite word that means to pass away—after spending half of a lifespan in the Pure Abodes;
- (b) Those who attain *parinibbāna* having lived more than half a lifespan in the Pure Abodes. For example, if their lifespan

is 1,000 eons, they will live over 500 eons and then attain *parinibbāna*;

- (c) Those who attain *parinibbāna* without exertion. They attain the fourth stage of enlightenment very easily;
- (d) Those who attain *parinibbāna* with exertion. It is very difficult for them to gain the fourth stage of enlightenment; and
- (e) Those who attain *parinibbāna* after they pass beyond one *Brahmā* realm to another, higher *Brahmā* realm. There are five Pure Abodes. So, for example, a being attains *anāgāmi* in the first *Brahmā* realm, and after they die they go to the second realm and gain *nibbāna*.

As an *anāgāmi* has completely uprooted desire for sensual gratification, he will not return to be reborn in this human world, or the celestial realm. Also, a lay person who becomes a non-returner will live a celibate life. And there will be no more anger at all.

Stream-enterers, once-returners and non-returners are called *sikkhā*, because they have yet to finish their training. *Arahants*, on the other hand, are called *asikkhā*, because they no longer have any training to finish.

By continuing to practice meditation, a non-returner can finally reach the fourth stage of sainthood and become an *arahant*. In English, we might translate this word as “worthy one.” With an *arahant*, all mental defilements have been destroyed and he will not be reborn again.

An *arahant* realizes that what was to be accomplished has been accomplished—this is the last life, there will be no more rebirth, and this is the end of the cycle of rebirth and death. An *arahant* deserves to receive the highest offerings in the world—that’s why we call an *arahant* a ‘worthy one’. There are no more mental defilements, and there will be no more rebirth in *any* existence. The spiritual practice is finished. There’s no longer ignorance or desire, and what an *arahant* does entails only functional consciousness—that is, it no longer gives results. And when an *arahant* enters *parinibbāna*, there’s no more consciousness.

[A student interrupts with a question.]

Q: What’s the difference between an *anāgāmi*’s *parinibbāna* and an *arahant*’s *parinibbāna*?

JUST PRACTICE

No, no, no. *Parinibbāna* is passing away. An *anāgāmi* still has to be reborn in the Pure Abodes, and that's where they continue to practice meditation and gain the fourth stage of enlightenment and become an *arahant*.

Now I'd like to talk about attainment:

If their concentration and insight knowledges are mature or gain momentum, a noble one can attain the fruition attainment, which is the knowledge of cessation of formations. If the power of concentration is keen and firm, then such knowledge can repeat itself frequently—you can get into fruit attainment very often. Even one with just enough concentration will have no awareness of mental or physical processes during the experience of the fruition knowledge. There will be just *phala*, which takes *nibbāna* as its object. If one's concentration is weak, then entry to fruition knowledge is slow—you cannot get into it quickly. And even if it comes, it does not last long—maybe a few minutes.

This fruition attainment is common to all noble ones, in accordance with their respective fruits.

The cessation attainment, or *nirodha-samāpatti*, is only possible for non-returners and *arahants* who have developed the *rūpajhānas* and *arūpajhānas*.

[A student interrupts with another question.]

Q: So, a non-returner or an arahant who hasn't attained all of those levels of jhāna can't attain the cessation attainment?

No, they cannot. Even for an *arahant*, if he has attained only *rūpajhāna*, it's not enough. *All* of the *rūpajhānas* and *arūpajhanas* must be attained, and then this strongest concentration can be attained.

So, in this case, a non-returner or an *arahant* who would like to attain the supreme cessation should first enter into the first absorption, or *jhāna*. He should then emerge from this *jhāna* and contemplate the factors of *jhāna*, in terms of the transiency, sorrowfulness and soullessness of conditioned things found in that particular *jhāna*.

Continuing in the same way, he should proceed through each of the absorptions to the stage of nothingness. He should then emerge from it and make a resolution:

- (a) That his four requisites not be destroyed;

- (b) That he should arise in time when his services are needed by the community of monks;
- (c) That he should arise from the cessation attainment in time when he is summoned by the Buddha. (This comes from the time of the Buddha but isn't necessary nowadays.);
and
- (d) Whether or not he will live for more than seven days from that moment. This is because if he attains for seven days, he can't do it if he's going to die in five days.

After that, he attains to the stage of neither perception nor non-perception—the highest *arūpajhāna*. Two *jhāna* thought-moments will arise then his stream of consciousness temporarily ceases to flow, normally for seven days. There will be no consciousness, no mental factors, and no moving, but vitality persists—it's not like the person dies.

This is said to be attainment of the supreme cessation—*nirodha-samāpatti*.

Q: He's no longer taking nibbāna as the object, right?

No, because there's no mind.

After seven days, he emerges from this stage. Fruit consciousness arises for a non-returner, and fruit consciousness arises for an *arahant*, and then normal thought processes arise as usual.

So those who wish to enjoy the essence of practice in this dispensation, or enjoy the supreme bliss by your own direct knowledge, should develop sublime tranquility and insight *vipassanā* meditation.

Developing only *vipassanā* is not enough if you would like to experience *nirodha-samāpatti*—you need to do tranquility *and* insight *vipassanā* meditation.

Q: So, after you go through the first level of jhāna, then you go to another level?

Yes, you enter the first *jhāna* then you emerge and contemplate the factors of that *jhāna*. Then you enter the next *jhāna*, emerge and contemplate the factors of that *jhāna*. From there, you enter the next level of *jhāna*, emerge and contemplate the factors of that *jhāna*, and so on. You're doing one after another, until the third stage of the formless

JUST PRACTICE

absorption, at which point you make determination, two thought-moments arise, and then you enter into the supreme cessation attainment.

May all of you be able to enjoy the supreme bliss through your practice in this very life.

Are there any questions?

Q: Can we carry these knowledges to future lives?

If you attain enlightenment, you don't have to start again. From that state, you can just go higher. But if you're still a worldling, you have to start again. But even if you have to start again, if you used to practice in this present life, in a future life you may only need to sit for one time or maybe one day before you can reach the same level. We call this *pāramī*. We have already accumulated a lot of *pāramī*.

Sometimes someone will practice meditation for a month and see nothing, whereas someone else will practice for just a few days and will see results. Why is it different? Because of our previous lives.

Q: You were talking earlier about diseases miraculously going away if we meditate for three weeks. Did I understand that correctly?

I was giving you an example of what can sometimes happen when we practice meditation. I've had many, many people come to practice meditation and say, "Oh, I'm having surgery next month. Maybe I will die, so I've come to practice meditation." So they'll come for 2-3 weeks and then see their doctor before their surgery and be told that the disease is gone.

In the context of what I was saying, it means that if you have a painful feeling arise, at that stage you have to be patient—your old diseases will be cured. Even the first part—before you reach the knowledge of rising and falling—can also cure your diseases. But the second part, for sure. How long it takes will depend.

Q: You mentioned about the person arising if the Buddha summoned them while they were in meditation. Does this mean the Buddha is still alive as the Buddha?

No. Making that resolution was necessary in the Buddha's lifetime. You don't have to make that determination anymore—just the other three.

Q: Pāramī means perfection, right?

Yes, virtue perfection.

Q: If a sotāpanna enters nibbāna, is it the same experience as for an arahant?

The same.

Q: Okay, so the difference is the mental defilements that are extinguished after they've come out of it?

Yes, but *nibbāna* is the same.

Q: Going back to the knowledge of equanimity about formations, is that when someone becomes a stream-enterer?

After you *pass* this knowledge, you become a stream-enterer.

Also, for a person to become a *bodhisatta* they must practice meditation until they reach the stage of knowledge of equanimity of formations. After that, you cannot stop. This is the top of mundane insight knowledge.

Q: When a person experiences that, is it a neutral feeling?

Mostly. There will be some pleasant or unpleasant feelings, but they just contemplate the impermanency.

Q: When they experience the bliss of phala, is it still vedanā?

No, it's supreme bliss, not normal bliss. This is because there's no mental defilement. This *phala* attainment is supreme bliss. You can't explain it to others.

Q: If you're in meditation and you experience a lot of pleasant sensations, it's still mundane. Is neutrality higher than pleasant feelings?

JUST PRACTICE

Oh, sure. Even with the first *jhāna*, there's still initial application, sustained application, rapture, happiness, and so on. But when you attain the fifth *jhāna* there's just equanimity and one-pointedness. And so on through the *jhānas*. When you have a higher level, it's like a person having higher thoughts, with a mind that's become balanced. It's not pleasant or unpleasant—mostly neutral.

**From the December 17, 2010 talk
“The Requirements for Happiness,”
given at Theravāda Dhamma Hall in Daly City, California**

This is an auspicious occasion for all of us. And this is the first time for me to give a Dhamma talk in the Dhamma Hall of the Theravāda Dhamma Society in Daly City, California. The topic of my Dhamma talk today is “the requirements for happiness.”

It is human nature that everyone is longing, searching and striving for peace and happiness in life. But in reality, most of the time, it is not discoverable. We need to discover the reason for this, and correct it. The cause of happiness is not lying in the outer world, but in our *inner* world. We have to improve our inner life by developing our mind.

There are four requirements for peace and happiness. They are: 1) believing in the law of nature (the law of cause and effect, or that every action has an effect); 2) upholding moral conduct; 3) striving for self-improvement; and 4) developing mental culture.

First of all, let’s address the belief in the law of nature. Nothing in this world escapes the law of cause and effect. If you look deeply into any phenomenon, you will see this. All living beings have to accept responsibility for the good and bad results that are due to their actions in the past.

Through this concept, we can see the reason for the inequalities of people in this world. Some have the good fortune of wealth, health, and beauty, while others do not. Even in mental and physical capabilities, people are totally different.

Why are they so different? Nothing happens by chance. Everything has its cause. Without cause, there is no effect. The main cause of people being different is the law of nature. What one has done in the past will affect the present. What one is doing in the present affects the future. If we plant good seeds, we will grow a good plant and there will be a good harvest. If we plant bad seeds, we’ll grow plants that produce suffering.

This law of nature distinguishes people to become inferior and superior. In Buddhism, we call this the law of *kamma*, or the law of cause and effect (or action and reaction). Action in this context refers to physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions. All of these actions will produce corresponding good and bad results. Scripturally speaking, by actions we mean mental volitions. Mental volitions are always associated

JUST PRACTICE

with the mind or consciousness. Whether we do good or bad depends on our mental volitions. If there's a good volition associated with the mind, for instance, it will stimulate the mind to have a good thought. Then a wholesome thought starts to take place. This wholesome mental action will subsequently cause physical actions and verbal actions to take place, thereby rendering wholesome deeds and speech. The same is true with bad volitions associated with the mind, which cause unwholesome mental actions, physical actions, and verbal actions to arise. We need to control the starting point in the mind, since all actions generate from the mind.

As dictated by our own volition or choice, we have the right to receive the good and bad consequences of that volition or choice. This is how the law of nature works. For example, in the case of someone who commits a crime, he may run away from the law, hide his wealth, use his power or connections, and so on, to avoid legal consequences, but no one can run away from the law of nature—the law of cause and effect. The law of nature may give results to evil-doers in this present life, or if the results of the *kamma* are not yet ripe, the results will come in the next life or perhaps follow in successive births over many, many existences in the future. This is how the law of cause and effect takes place.

As we get to know the workings of the law of cause and effect, we have to be careful about our words, deeds, and thoughts because all of the seeds we plant will bear fruits of happiness and suffering, depending on the seeds we plant. The law of nature applies equally, or fairly, to all living beings. All living beings are the owners of their actions. All of our actions will shape our destinies. We have to be born and live under this authority, so as we get to know the workings of the law of nature we have to be careful of our actions. In view of this, there's nothing to fear in life or in this world, except our own unwholesome actions, our misdeeds.

As we are beings endowed with superior qualities and intelligence, we should make attempts to perfect ourselves and strive to live a life of honor and self-respect. We are extremely fortunate to be in this world. However, if we fail to take this great opportunity to better our lot in life and shape our future, there will be great, great loss for all of us. By believing in the law of nature, and acting accordingly, we can become noble and virtuous. In time, this will lead us to gain peace and happiness in life.

Now, let's discuss upholding moral conduct:

As we are moral beings, we should have morality. To be able to uphold moral conduct, we need to have the qualities of loving kindness, compassion, sympathy, goodwill, contentment, reason, patience, and so

on. These are qualities available to all mankind. Whoever possesses all of these qualities can undoubtedly live in this world peacefully and happily.

In our daily life, speaking is necessary. It is an unavoidable thing. Sometimes it may be useful or it may be dangerous, depending on the way we use it. Right use of our words can be a blessing. On the other hand, wrongly used words can become poisonous. We have to be careful.

Sometimes just one word can destroy someone's family, their property, name, fame, happiness, business, and life. It may also cause harm to the country, even leading to war. Many problems and conflicts occur amongst families, societies, and friends due to wrong speech. On the basis of our wrong speech, old friends can turn to enemies and loving wives and husbands can become like someone else. Then both sides become sad and miserable.

As commonly said, wounds caused by words are hard to heal. Avoidance of wrong speech can bring peace and happiness. Wrong speech means telling lies, divisive talk, harsh language, abusive words, and frivolous talk. However, refraining from wrong speech is not good enough. We need to know how to speak rightly.

Whenever we have to speak, we should consider the consequences of our words. We should consider whether the words are harmful to one self and/or others. When we foresee a bad outcome from our words, we should be quiet and not say anything at all. But after considering the words we are going to say and seeing that they would tend to bring about the welfare and happiness of others, we should go ahead and say them.

In terms of the Buddha's teachings, when we have to say something, we should make sure that the words are true, beneficial, reasonable, purposeful, doctrinal, and polite. The words should be in moderation, and timely; in other words, at the right time, at the right place, to the right person, and also on the right subject. We have to be careful about this. We especially need to talk from the heart, through our goodwill and without expecting anything in return. This is excellent guidance from the Buddha on how to speak rightly. In terms of the law of nature, making someone happy, or unhappy, results in your receiving similar effects of that action in the future.

The Lord Buddha not only taught us how to speak rightly, but he also taught us what subjects we should talk about. This was especially done so that we can achieve our goal of spiritual development quickly and effectively. The topics we should be talking about should be favorable to wanting little, contentment, seclusion, not mingling, moral conduct, moral

JUST PRACTICE

effort, concentration, wisdom, and the knowledge and vision of deliverance. This is precious advice from the Buddha.

Whoever possesses right actions and avoids unwholesome speech will gain peace and happiness in this life.

Now, we will discuss right actions.

Right action means refraining from killing, stealing, and attachment. All living beings love their lives, possessions, and families. Life is precious to everyone. Everyone is afraid of death.

By upholding human dignity, and by having compassion and sympathy for *all* living creatures, we should offer living beings a chance to be free from getting killed. We should also refrain from stealing and committing sexual misconduct. Instead, we should provide others with the chance to have longevity, help them to live happily and peacefully, support them to gain wealth, provide for the security of their belongings, and encourage them to live in harmony and peace with their families.

This is the right way for mankind to act toward their fellow beings in the oceans of life. Whoever possesses these right actions, and renders noble effort for the welfare and happiness of others, will gain peace and happiness in life.

Right action, right speech—in other words, refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, and getting involved with drugs or alcohol. These are universal laws, so we have to abide by them by our own means. This universal law is just, righteous. Whoever respects it will reap the results of peace and happiness.

On the other hand, whoever is disrespectful of it will get the results of great suffering. We have to get paid back according to our misdeeds. This is very much in evidence in how the universal law takes place. If you have a chance to interview prisoners, they will tell their stories of what got them into jail, including acts such as murdering, stealing, raping, telling lies, and getting involved with drugs or alcohol.

To be perfect in moral conduct also means having right livelihood. Our livelihood should be pure and should consist of moral physical and verbal actions. It should include abstinence from selling or trading in such things as poison, weapons, drugs, intoxicants, human beings, and animals for slaughter. Our prosperity should not be had through destroying the lives of living beings. This is not good and fair. This is shameful behavior in the eyes of the virtuous.

We need to refrain from immoral actions. Whoever is perfect in moral conduct, whenever he reflects on his own deeds, speech, and livelihood, there's no guilty conscience, no fear of being blamed or

accused by others, there's no fear of being punished by the law, and there's no worry of being born in a state of misery in a future life. In other words, he will be proud and satisfied that he lives rightly, purely, and blamelessly, without harming others.

Life is short, so by behaving this way, you will enjoy your life. Be as a noble and virtuous one, and then you can gain peace and happiness in this life and the next life.

Now, let's discuss striving for self-improvement:

As a part of human nature, in the past we have performed actions both meritorious and de-meritorious. We should have a holy heart to change our actions from bad to good and replace our unwholesome, evil actions with good ones. If we don't change and correct our faulty actions and bad habits, there's no one else who can change them for us. There's no one who can purify or defile others. We ourselves are responsible for our purification. By loving ourselves in order to live in this world peacefully and happily, we should have strong resolution to improve and uplift ourselves. No one is perfect by birth but we can make our lives perfect. As long as we have free will, noble effort, good thoughts and reason, there's nothing that we cannot achieve.

In our daily life, we can plainly see the nature of people around us. Some people possess good physical behaviors but we do not want to listen to their speech. Other people are very nice in speech but the way they act is not agreeable. And some people are good in behavior and speech but are not truly good in the heart—something seems to be lacking or imperfect.

But the most important thing is to examine our own deeds, speech, and thoughts, rather than those of others. Then we can determine just what kind of person we are and what kind of group we belong to.

We can ask ourselves: "Which is greater? Our good deeds, our good parts, or our bad parts?" After examining ourselves, we will see our shortfalls and weak points, and the good parts as well. There are no secrets in this world. Even if no one else knows, at least you know for yourself what you're thinking and doing.

This is why we should have a holy heart and make the *right effort* to overcome our shortfalls and improve our good parts.

Right effort can be classified into four categories:

- 1) Try to make improvement in order to discard unwholesome deeds, speech, and thoughts that used to occur in your

JUST PRACTICE

life. For instance, if you used to kill animals or lie to others, from now on make the determination to not let it happen again. Don't even think about or reflect on these behaviors again;

- 2) Use your holy effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome deeds, speech, and thoughts that have never happened before. For example, for your whole life you've never taken anyone's belongings unless they were given to you. Strongly keep in mind for the rest of your life that you will not allow this type of de-meritorious action to arise;
- 3) Use your strenuous effort to cultivate meritorious deeds that you have not yet done in your life. Let's say you never used to practice generosity, observe moral conduct, radiate loving kindness, or practice meditation. After considering the matter and realizing the value of human life, the value of loving kindness, and the good results of meritorious deeds, you start doing those things now. Life is impermanent. All material things are also subject to change, so use your abilities, your deeds, your speech, your thoughts, and your material things to be beneficial to yourself and others; and
- 4) Use your noble effort to maintain, develop, improve, and enhance wholesome actions that you've been doing. Suppose you used to practice generosity, observe or uphold morality, radiate loving kindness, and practice meditation for one hour a day. From now on, make a strong determination to improve your great effort to contribute more material things to whomever and wherever it's necessary. And so on. And you can further develop yourself mentally by increasing your meditation time. By doing so, when you have seen your mental progress, surely you will feel so happy and peaceful.

Now, let's go to the last requirement to gain peace and happiness, which is developing mental culture, or practicing meditation:

This factor is the most important, and an indispensable one, to achieving peace and happiness in life. Let me talk briefly about it here.

When you practice sitting meditation, you may choose to use your breath—breathing in and breathing out—as your main object of meditation, or you may choose your abdominal movement—rising and

falling—as your main object of meditation. As long as you’re able to focus your mind on the main object of meditation, you will gain peace of mind, moment by moment. Try to focus your mind on your primary object of meditation as much as you can.

Every day in our lives, the external six sense objects—visions, sounds, odors, tastes, touch, and mental objects—are always appearing. Whenever any kind of object appears to our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind without our being mindful—especially for non-meditators—greed, hatred or delusion arise, depending on the object.

Normally, when it’s a desirable object, there is greed. If it is an undesirable object, there is anger or aversion. If it is neither desirable nor undesirable, there is delusion. All of these respectively arise.

This greed, hatred, and delusion are the main causes of suffering. They are internal enemies of ours which follow us day and night. There’s no modern technology that can eradicate them. But meditation can. Without eliminating and eradicating them, no one can gain genuine peace and happiness. That’s why whoever wants to gain real peace and happiness absolutely needs to develop mental culture and practice meditation.

In our daily routine, we have to be careful to be aware of any kind of objects appearing to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind, and make an appropriate mental note: “seeing,” “hearing,” and so on. None of the objects that appear last long, and they then disappear swiftly. But without mindfulness, which allows us to gain an understanding of the impermanent nature of these objects, craving, anger, conceit, jealousy, and wrong views may arise in us. All of these mental states can produce unhappiness and hinder the progress of our mental development. We need to be aware of them.

If you’re able to direct your attention to meditation objects closely and precisely, you will get to know in every moment that only the object of attention and the observing mind exist. No personalities or egos get involved. As your mindfulness and concentration become mature, and your insight knowledge becomes sharp, you will realize the characteristics of mind and matter as impermanent, unsatisfactory, insubstantial, and uncontrollable.

As you practice further, you will get to know the intrinsic nature of mind and body.

Through your meditation practice, there’s no attachment to mind and matter. Or, at least, you will be able to reduce or remove attachment to some extent. Since your attachment will produce your suffering, when

JUST PRACTICE

you have less attachment, you will have less suffering. *Without* attachment, there will be no suffering at all. We will contribute to our own obtaining of peace of mind and happiness.

As long as you're able to live in the present moment, by observing the current objects of meditation, there's no room for mental defilements to arise. The moment you engage in meditation practice, your morality, concentration, and wisdom are said to be perfect.

This morality, concentration, and wisdom are the main causes of happiness. By proceeding further, your meditation insights getting higher and higher, and eventually you will experience eternal peace and the highest of all happiness.

So, whoever wants to achieve peace and happiness needs to believe in the law of nature, uphold moral conduct, strive for self-improvement, and develop mental culture by practicing meditation.

I would like all of you to complete all of these requirements, achieve peace and happiness, and experience the supreme bliss of *nibbāna*—the cessation of suffering—in this very life.

Excerpts from the January 9, 2012 talk “Vipassanā”

We have tranquility meditation and insight *vipassanā* meditation. For tranquility meditation, we just focus our mind on one object to gain peace and happiness. For insight *vipassanā* meditation, we need to develop our wisdom. Meditation is not only for concentration; we need to develop our *wisdom*.

When you practice insight *vipassanā* meditation, you can use your breath—in and out—as your main object of meditation, or you can use your abdominal movements—rising and falling.

If using the breath, try to focus your mind on your breathing—in and out. It's so very easy. The breath always appears; you don't have to find it somewhere else. You have to concentrate your mind on your breath—in and out. Alternatively, you can use your abdominal movement—rising and falling.

You can practice this in any posture. When you sit in meditation, just focus on the main object of your meditation.

But even though you may try to focus your mind on your main object, it's the tendency of our minds to think about something else—it goes out, goes here and there, it starts to wander.

Just try to be aware of your mind.

If you think about something, just realize that there's 'thinking'. If your mind goes out, just be aware that it's gone out. If your mind still wanders, just make a mental note: "wandering, wandering." When it stops thinking or wandering, then you return to your main object of meditation—the rising and falling of the abdomen, or the breathing in and breathing out. When you see something or hear something, just be aware of the seeing or hearing, and make a mental note: "seeing" or "hearing." And then return to your main object.

This rising and falling—or this breathing in and breathing out—has been with us as long as we've been alive. And it will be with us until we die. So we take this as the main object of our meditation. Other objects—like sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch—become our main objects of meditation just temporarily. We call them our *secondary* objects of meditation. If there's no secondary object of meditation, just stay with the main object of meditation.

You will come to see that the rising and falling of the abdomen or the breathing in and breathing out are just the air element. And the noting mind is just mentality. There's just mind and body. They are interrelated as cause and effect. They arise and disappear together. You

JUST PRACTICE

will see this nature of mind and body and begin to gain *vipassanā* knowledge—step by step, higher and higher.

The moment you focus on the main object of your meditation, there's no room for mental defilements to arise. By loving ourselves, we should recognize the need to reduce and remove mental defilements, as they are the cause of suffering.

You need to practice meditation at home too, and at night.

You can practice lying down meditation. Most people don't want to sit long: "Oh, my back will hurt. I'll be uncomfortable." So many excuses. But at night, lying down on your back, cover yourself with a blanket, close your eyes, relax your mind and body, put your hand on your abdomen, and try to focus on the movement of your abdomen.

When you breathe in, your abdomen starts to rise. At that moment, make a mental note: "rising." Be aware of the movement of your abdomen from the beginning, through the middle, and to the end. When you breathe out and the abdomen falls, make a mental note: "falling." From the beginning, through the middle, and to the end, be aware of the movement of your abdomen. So: "rising...falling."

In six or seven seconds, you'll gain concentration. There's no greed, anger or delusion arising. The moment you make a mental note, focusing your mind on your abdomen rising and falling, you've done nothing morally wrong.

From the December 28, 2012 talk “The Right Effort”

Today is a Buddhist holy day. All of you devotees came here today to observe the five precepts—and especially, some of you came to observe the *eight* precepts—to offer alms, and to practice meditation. You also offered all this stuff to the *Saṅgha*, to the monk communities, and to the temple. All of your donations, your contributions, and your kindness are greatly appreciated. One person, in particular, today donated \$100 to the temple, \$100 to welcome in 2013, and another \$100 for *saṅghadāna*—so, a total of \$300. I would like all of us to say *sādhu* three times: *Sādhu. Sādhu. Sādhu.*

As part of our human nature, everyone wants to be successful in their worldly affairs and in their spiritual goals. So what do we have to do? We have to follow the Buddha’s guidance and teaching.

Not just in this present life, but also in many, many previous lives, we have made good *kamma* and developed our virtue perfections. All of our previous virtue perfections will give results, in line with the law of cause and effect. But if we lack effort, mindfulness and wisdom, our previous virtue perfections will not have a chance to give the results to us. So we need to have right effort, mindfulness and wisdom.

Think about what you need to possess to be successful in your worldly affairs. What do you need?

- 1) You need right effort. If you’re lazy, you will not be successful;
- 2) You need mindfulness. If you lack mindfulness, you will lose your property, and your chance; and
- 3) You need wisdom, or knowledge. You need to have wisdom and knowledge regarding your business.

When you possess right effort, mindfulness and wisdom, you’ll be successful. This is the Buddha’s teaching. Success doesn’t depend on someone else; it depends on you.

In particular, we need these three things to be successful with our *spiritual* goals:

- 1) We need right effort. We need to *not* be a lazy person. We should try the best we can. One day has 24 hours: except for time spent sleeping, we should have right effort *and be mindful*;

JUST PRACTICE

- 2) We need to be mindful. From the time we get up in the morning, we need to have right effort and mindfulness. Try to be aware of every physical activity, as well as your thoughts and emotions. And then, you will understand their nature;
- 3) We need wisdom. We need to create the conditions that allow wisdom to arise.

So, we need to have right effort to gain our spiritual goals.

The Buddha said that we need to have right effort, so with every step you walk just be mindful. Be aware of every step. You know what you're doing. With every step, make a mental note: "walking."

Most people, mostly non-meditators, may walk many thousands of steps in one day but will not realize it. But meditators, especially those who would like to gain enlightenment—our spiritual goal—need to have right effort and try the best they can.

Every step you walk, be aware of it and make a mental note. At the minimum, note "walking, walking, walking." It's very easy. The Buddha's teaching on mindfulness meditation is very simple. So we need to have right effort.

And sometimes, if we have time, we should close our eyes, cross our legs, relax our mind and body, and use our effort to try to sit still and focus on our primary object of meditation. This means we're putting forth right effort. And then, you will see, you will *realize*, this primary object.

Maybe you focus on your in- and out-breath, or maybe you focus on your abdominal movement—rising and falling. Either one is fine.

If you focus on abdominal movement, for example, you will feel that the abdomen rises and falls. Whenever you see or feel the abdomen rising, make a mental note: "rising." When you feel it fall, it's "falling." There's just rising and falling.

If you focus on your breath, when you breathe in, it's just "breathing in." And when you're breathing out, it's just "breathing out." You will realize this for yourself.

Try to stay in the present moment. This is right effort. And so, in every moment, with every rising and falling, or with every breathing in and breathing out, you will be able to be aware of it. This is mindfulness.

So when we have right effort, we try to be mindful, we know every moment, and we stay in the present moment, there's no greed, no anger, no delusion, and no jealousy arising. We'll be able to eliminate these mental defilements. And then we'll understand their nature.

The rising and falling is the air element. Your breathing in and out is the air element. This element is materiality. It's the nature of matter. The noting mind, or the *knowing* mind, is mentality.

So, in every moment, it's just materiality and mentality—just mind and matter, except that mind and matter are not a person. There's no man or woman. You will understand the nature of mind and body. This is wisdom.

If every day of our lives we try to possess right effort, try to be aware of every mental and physical process, and come to understand their nature, we will gain *vipassanā*, or insight, knowledge. By doing this every day, our *vipassanā* knowledge then grows higher and higher.

When we see the nature of mind and body, what do we see? We see their three characteristics:

- 1) Impermanence. As we focus on our abdominal movement, we will see the rising and falling, rising and falling, one after another. This means that we see the impermanence of this body. The noting mind is also arising and disappearing in every moment. This noting mind is also *impermanent*. Keep knowing that;
- 2) Suffering. Whatever is oppressed by this arising and disappearing is called suffering, or unsatisfactoriness; and
- 3) Uncontrollability. We will see the nature of mind and body, not as a form or a shape, but as just movement and knowing. There's no form, no shape—it's insubstantial. We call this *anattā*. It's all uncontrollable. You cannot control your breath or your abdominal movement. They are dependent on their own nature, as cause and effect—just arising and disappearing.

So we see these three characteristics of mind and body. We will see this suffering.

The Buddha said we *need* to see suffering. Suffering doesn't only mean painful feelings. Rather, whatever is oppressed by arising and disappearing, we call that suffering. When we see suffering, we will not want to be reborn again. We will not want *anything*.

But we will want to *overcome* this suffering. As we want to overcome this suffering, we continue to develop our concentration, our mindfulness, our effort, and our wisdom, and one day we will see the end of suffering. The end of suffering is called *nibbāna*.

JUST PRACTICE

Whoever sees the end of suffering sees *nibbāna*. So we'll see the end of suffering. We'll experience the supreme bliss. It's not normal bliss—it's *supreme* bliss.

I'd like all of you to try the best you can to use your effort, try to be mindful, and develop your wisdom to be able to see the nature of mind and body as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and uncontrollable. And eventually, may all of you be able to see the end of suffering—the supreme bliss, or *nibbāna*—in this very life.

From the January 21, 2013 talk “Four Kinds of Kamma”

Kamma is very just and very fair. *Kamma* means action. We do good things or bad things every day, all the time—sometimes by our physical actions, sometimes by our verbal actions, and sometimes by our mental actions—except when we are sleeping. Wholesome and unwholesome actions arise all the time. But how will these wholesome and unwholesome actions give the results? We should know this.

We have four kinds of *kamma*:

- 1) Great deed *kamma*, which is very powerful;
- 2) Death-proximate *kamma*;
- 3) Habitual *kamma*; and
- 4) Reserve *kamma*.

I’d first like to talk about great deed *kamma*.

For whoever has committed matricide or patricide, and so on, no other *kamma* can stop the power of this *kamma*. You have to go to hell after you die. In this context, patricide means killing your mother or father, or an *arahant*. Even though a person may have done a lot of meritorious deeds in previous lives, or even in *this* life, whoever has done great deed *kamma* will not see the results of this good *kamma* after they die. The great deed *kamma* will give results first. This is regarding *unwholesome* actions.

If you’re a meditator and gain deep concentration, you will eventually gain meditative absorption, or *jhāna*. When you gain *jhāna*, you will be reborn in the *Brahmā* world after you die. The level will depend on the stages of absorption that you gain. If you gain the first stage of *jhāna*, you will gain the first stage of the *Brahmā* world. And even though you’ve done unwholesome actions, they’ll not give the results to you. This is great deed *kamma*. When you gain meditative absorption, you’ll be reborn in the *Brahmā* world—higher than heaven—after you die.

Next, I’d like to talk about death-proximate *kamma*.

So, if you’ve never committed matricide—you’ve never killed your parents, or an *arahant*—and you haven’t gained any *jhāna*, what kind of results will come to you? Before you die, death-proximate *kamma* may appear to you.

Perhaps you used to go to the temple to offer lunch to the monks, to bring food and flowers, to offer *saṅghadāna*, and to see the monks and the Buddha statues. Before you die, you may think about this. Wholesome

JUST PRACTICE

kamma will arise. We call this the sign of *kamma*. You'll see these same things happening as if you're performing those meritorious deeds right then. And then, when you have to be reborn, you'll see the sign of the place where you'll be reborn. If you'll be reborn in heaven, you'll see the gardens of flowers, you'll see angels, and you'll see people dressed nicely. You'll be happy. And after you die, you will go to heaven. This is death-proximate *kamma*. This good sign appears and you will see gardens and the beautiful things in the place where you will be reborn.

On the other hand, if you used to do bad *kamma*—for example, killing fish, animals, and so on—before you die you may think about this and these deeds will appear to your mind. You'll see yourself doing bad things—you'll capture and kill a fish, you'll see the fish, your knife, and you'll see the place around you. When you have performed unwholesome actions, this will appear to your mind. And then, when you have to be reborn, the sign of the place will appear. If your unwholesome actions have enough power to send you to hell, you'll see giants, dogs, and fire in your heart. So, in that moment, it's like going to hell. After you die, you will be reborn as a hell being. This is death-proximate *kamma*.

If you're attached to something—your belongings, your house, your car, your clothes, your jewelry, and so on—what happens? You will become a hungry ghost or a spirit—you cannot go anywhere. This death-proximate *kamma* may appear before you die.

And if you do wholesome actions every day, before you die you may think about the good things you used to do, and you will see a nice house, a nice car, good clothes, and you'll see your mother's womb. And then you'll die and become a human being.

Now, if you have no great deed *kamma* and no death-proximate *kamma*, what will give results? Habitual *kamma*. Whatever you used to do every day as habitual *kamma* will appear.

Perhaps every day you do good things, like chanting, offering flowers to Buddha statues, making offerings to the monks, and practicing meditation. This becomes your good habit. This habitual *kamma* will give good results to you, so before you die you will think about these good things. Because you have good habits and have done good things, you'll be reborn in a good existence—as a human being, as an angel in heaven, and possibly, even higher than heaven. This is habitual *kamma*.

And if there's no great deed *kamma*, no death-proximate *kamma*, and no habitual *kamma*, what kind of *kamma* will give results? Reserve *kamma*. This is your unexpended *kamma*. It will condition your next birth.

From the July 22, 2013 talk “Āsāḷhā Pūjā”

Today is the full moon day of July. This is a special day in Buddhism. It is the day the Buddha took conception in his mother’s womb, the day he renounced the world to practice meditation for six years and eventually gain enlightenment, and the day he gave the first sermon to the five ascetics.

The Buddha was born in 623 BC. At the age of 29, he renounced the world to practice meditation in the jungle. He finally gained supreme enlightenment at 35 years old. So, in 588 BC, he gained supreme enlightenment and became a Buddha. He became the Buddha on the full moon day of May. After that, he gave the first sermon to the five ascetics in Vārāṇasi.

So, today is the full moon of July. We call today *Āsāḷhā Pūjā*. Today, the Buddha appeared to the world and gave the first sermon. And so today, the Dhamma appeared to this world. And as he gave the first sermon to the five ascetics, one of them gained the first stage of enlightenment and become a stream-enterer. This means that today is the day the Buddha, the Buddha’s doctrine, and the Buddha’s holy disciples—the so-called Triple Gem—appeared in the world. That’s why we celebrate today: to pay homage to the Triple Gem.

In his first sermon, which is called *Dhamma-cakkappavattana Sutta*, the Buddha mainly talked about the Four Noble Truths. This refers to the noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of the cause of suffering, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. This is mainly what he taught.

After the Buddha gained supreme enlightenment, he taught other beings, including both men and gods, for 45 years. Even though he had a lot of teachings, in essence his dispensation mainly consisted of the Four Noble Truths. So all of us should understand what the Four Noble Truths are.

The Buddha said that all of us need to understand the noble truth of suffering. Suffering doesn’t come by itself. It has a cause. What’s the cause of suffering? It’s craving, attachment.

We need to overcome all forms of suffering. What do we have to do to accomplish that? The Buddha said that the noble truth of the cause of suffering should be abandoned. We should abandon craving and attachment. As we’re able to remove the cause of suffering, we will reach the cessation of suffering—so-called *nibbāna*, the supreme bliss.

JUST PRACTICE

And what do we need to do to understand suffering and abandon the cause of suffering in order to reach the cessation of suffering? It's called the Middle Way. The way leading to the cessation of suffering should be developed. That's why we need to practice meditation. Just reading a book or listening to a Dhamma talk, you will not be able to overcome suffering.

So, firstly, we need to understand what suffering is. The Buddha explained suffering many times.

We have to be conceived and be in our mother's wombs for nine or ten months. This birth is suffering. But we forget. We don't remember. Sometimes we live in a small room, and we feel uncomfortable. So how about when we took conception in our mother's womb for nine or ten months? The place is so narrow.

So the Buddha said that *birth* is suffering.

Since we were born, with every moment we are getting older and older. The Buddha said that old age and decay are suffering. We want to be young but it's impossible. Every moment—every *second*—we're getting older and older. No one's getting younger. Even if you take care of yourself the best you can, you're still getting older and older every second, every moment. That's why *decay* is suffering. It does not follow our desire.

As we get older and older, so many kinds of diseases arise in our body. We have physical disease as well as mental disease. *Disease* is suffering. No one wants to get sick. But we come across so many kinds of disease every day. That's why everyone has to carry medicine all the time.

When the time comes to depart the world—we have to die—no one wants to die. Even though we encounter difficulties in our life, we still want to have a long life. But when the time comes to say goodbye to this world, we have to. *That* is suffering.

Sometimes we have to associate with persons or things we dislike. This is suffering. Just think about that. Sometimes we want to stay or be with someone or something, but we can't. This is suffering. And sometimes we don't get what we want. This is suffering.

This suffering has a cause. What's the cause? Craving, greed, attachment.

If you attach to something or someone too much, you will have suffering. That's why the Buddha said that as human beings—as moral beings—we should do our part the best we can to be a good friend, a good wife, husband, son or daughter, parent, teacher, student, or follower. But don't attach. If you have a little attachment, you will have a

little suffering. If you have a lot of attachment, you will have a lot of suffering. This is a matter of cause and effect. So we have to abandon this craving and attachment.

And so, if there's no attachment, then there's no suffering. If there's no suffering, then we have happiness.

This is why I'd like all of you to follow the Buddha's teaching, try to understand suffering, and then try to reduce and remove attachment.

How do we do this? We do this by following the Middle Way, or the Noble Eightfold Path. We have to walk through the Middle Way.

What is the Middle Way? It is right understanding—we understand that good or bad actions are our own. Our actions will shape our destiny. We should try to refrain from unwholesome actions and cultivate wholesome actions. Good actions will receive good consequences.

We also have to practice meditation.

When we practice meditation, step by step we will gain *vipassanā* knowledge, higher and higher. We will understand what is concept and what is reality, what is mind and body, and what is cause and effect.

After we understand that, we will understand that this mind and body are interrelated as cause and effect, arising and disappearing. As they arise and disappear all the time, we call this suffering—suffering due to formation. We cannot stop it. We cannot alter it. We cannot control it. It depends on cause and effect. They just arise and disappear. It's beyond our control, which we call *anattā*—uncontrollable.

Mind and body—all conditioned things in this world—are impermanent. If we think that they're permanent, but then they become impermanent, we will suffer about it.

This is why we should study impermanence, suffering, and uncontrollability. If we gain this knowledge, this is called right understanding. Nothing lasts long or forever in this world. It's just temporary. Everything is subject to change. Everything is suffering, unsatisfactory, and uncontrollable. We need to understand this.

And also, if we keep practicing meditation, we will see the Four Noble Truths. Every moment—just arising and disappearing—is suffering. Whatever is oppressed by arising and disappearing is called suffering. And what's the cause? Attachment. You understand that? As you have no attachment, there's no suffering. In that moment, you will experience peace and happiness. This is *nirodha*—momentary *nirodha*, momentary happiness.

JUST PRACTICE

So we need right understanding. When we have right understanding, we will have right thinking. As we have right thinking, we will have right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

I would like all of you to have all of these—right understanding, and so on, this Noble Eightfold Path. And try to develop virtue perfection higher and higher. And then you will understand suffering. Eventually, you will be able to overcome suffering and gain the supreme bliss—*nibbāna*.

I would like all of you from today on to try to do the best you can to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation, to be able to understand the Four Noble Truths and overcome all kinds of suffering, and to experience supreme bliss in this life.

From the October 8, 2014 talk “A Sharing of Merit”

[5 AM on the full moon. Luang Por has just emerged from his annual 3-month intensive solitary meditation retreat.]

I have just finished three months on retreat practicing meditation. I would like to share a portion of that merit with all of you.

We are getting older and older. This is the way of our body. Its lifespan gets less and less, decreasing every day, every hour, every minute, and every second. But even though our lives are shortening every day, we should improve them to be valuable.

What do we have to do?

We should reflect upon ourselves every day. Ask yourself: how do I spend my days and nights? Is it useful or useless? Examine yourselves. Reflect on whether there was generosity and virtue, and whether you practiced meditation.

If you know how, use your time—your days and your nights—to be valuable, by practicing generosity, restraining your physical and verbal actions, and working to make your virtue pure. And you should practice meditation every day.

This means that even though our body’s lifespan is decreasing every day throughout our lives, our virtue perfections are *increasing* every day. Our lives will become valuable.

I would like all of you to perfect yourselves. Know how to spend your time—your days and your nights—and your belongings to be beneficial. Try to cultivate good things.

May you achieve your spiritual goals in this life.

**From the January 18, 2015 talk
“World Peace Lucky Happy Pagoda”**

Our Sunday donors came today to offer lunch to the monks, the nuns, and the meditators. Another person’s family came to offer lunch and *saṅghadāna*. They did this to dedicate the merit to someone who passed away, so that the person can receive a portion of the merit and be reborn in a good existence. And today some of our devotees from Long Beach came to offer a Buddha statue to enshrine inside the World Peace Lucky Happy Pagoda on May 3. This will be one day after Vesak Day. Two other families donated one Buddha statue each. And yesterday, a family from Los Angeles made a donation for Buddha statues. So, all of you came to make contributions. Your contributions, your faith, and your wisdom are greatly appreciated.

According to the cosmology of Buddhism, there are 31 planes of existence. There are four woeful states, the human world, six celestial worlds, and 20 *Brahmā* worlds—so, a total of 31. Amongst these 31 kinds of existence, over time our Lord Buddha accumulated and developed *dāna*, *sīla*, and so on—the many kinds of virtue perfections. In his last birth, he became a supreme being and gained supreme enlightenment. He became the Lord Buddha and taught all the people to overcome suffering and to gain enlightenment.

Although the Buddha passed away 2,600 years ago, his teachings remain the same. Just like in the time of the Buddha, whoever follows his teachings can gain this enlightenment.

Fortunately, we’ve had a chance to build the pagoda in our garden in the meditation compound. The city has allowed us to build it. So we are fortunate. Now, we have to pay respect to the pagoda as a symbol of Buddhism.

On May 3 is the two-year anniversary of our pagoda, which we’ve named the World Peace Lucky Happy Pagoda. On that day we are going to take the Lucky Happy Buddha statues that have been donated and enshrine them inside the pagoda. Fortunately, we still have space to put them in there.

There is another great opportunity for those of you who have donated Buddha statues. We will engrave the donor’s name at the base of each Buddha statue. And inside the pagoda, we have the Buddha’s relics. This means that your name and your family name will honor the Buddha’s relics forever—it will last for many thousands of years.

We named the pagoda the World Peace Lucky Happy Pagoda to remind us that we need to gain peace and happiness, we need to be able to eradicate all kinds of defilement, and we need to be liberated from suffering. And so as our donors have made contributions for these Buddha statues, which will be presented to the Buddha as a supreme being, as a result they will gain supreme bliss, or *nibbāna*.

How does that work?

Well, you've made a contribution for the Buddha statue. And so whenever you come to the temple and see the pagoda, you will reflect on your contribution: "I donated a Buddha statue to go inside this pagoda." Whenever you reflect on that, you will gain merit. Wholesome consciousness will arise—you'll be happy about it. Even if you stay at home, you may sometimes think about the temple and think about the pagoda. You can visualize it. The pagoda's image, or an image of these statues, will appear in your mind. And then, you will gain merit. And you may reflect on the Buddha's virtues too.

So, whenever you think about this, you will gain merit, for the rest of your lives.

I would like all of you to understand this. I would like all of you to be a sponsor for a Buddha statue to be enshrined in the pagoda.

We don't just do this for ourselves. It's also for the next generation to come.

In 100 years all of us will probably be gone, right? No one can live much more than 100 years. So even though we have to depart one day, our contribution—our Buddha statue—will remain forever, for our next generation.

Whoever comes to pay respect to the Buddha statue or to the pagoda will gain a lot of merit. Every day, people come to pay respect to the pagoda, so it's not just us. But because we have built this pagoda and we will donate and enshrine these Buddha statues inside of it, it's good for us *and* others, including the next generation to come.

I would like all of you to be sponsors for the Buddha statues to be enshrined in the pagoda and to think about it as the best kind of donation. This is because the Buddha is the best being in the world—a *supreme* being.

I would like all of you to gain genuine peace and happiness, and experience supreme bliss, or *nibbāna*, in this life.

From the January 25, 2015 talk “Good News for All of You”

All of you came to Chaiya Meditation Monastery today to offer lunch, *saṅghadāna*, and to observe the five precepts. Your contributions and your time are greatly appreciated.

I have good news for all of you who are interested in Buddhist philosophy and meditation. We will have class every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8 pm. We have meditation from 5-6:15 pm, and after that we will have class. So, if you’re interested, you’re welcome to join us.

The class will be about what we call *Paṭṭhāna* in *Pāli*. It is part of *Abhidhamma*—the highest doctrine of the Buddha. In English, it is translated as the law of causal relations—how mind and body are interrelated. We have 24 causes or conditions. Although we say it is Buddhist philosophy, we study our mind and body—we study our lives. Everything has a cause. It could be a good cause or a bad cause. A good cause will receive good consequences. And an unwholesome action or condition will receive bad consequences.

So we need to understand our lives, and we especially need to understand our mind. And then we’ll know the truth. We’ll know the cause of suffering. We will find out that greed, anger, and delusion—these mental defilements—are the cause of suffering. As long as we have greed, anger, and delusion, we have to receive mental suffering.

So, how do we reduce greed, anger, and delusion? We will study this. Sometimes we use tranquility meditation and sometimes we use insight *vipassanā* meditation to reduce mental defilement. We should have wise attention and wise thinking.

Why do we do unwholesome actions? Because of craving, anger, delusion, jealousy, aversion, conceit, wrong view, and so on.

So how do we reduce the cause of suffering? We need to study our mind with regard to greed, attachment, and craving.

What do we need to do?

We need to contemplate our body in terms of its impurity. We need to think about our life as impermanent. Then we can reduce our greed.

When we practice loving kindness meditation, we can reduce our anger.

And when we practice meditation and see the phenomena of mind and body as they really are, we can reduce our delusion.

Mental action is very important, so we have to guard our mental action to keep it on the right path. Everything is generated by mental action. And mental action transfers to physical and verbal action. We will be studying this.

Most people just think about Dhamma, listen to Dhamma talks, or attend a Dhamma class. But it's not just about studying. These are theories. What we know should be applied to our daily lives and put into practice. And then you'll know for yourself how good it is.

Here at Chaiya Meditation Monastery we provide group meditation periods every day: 4-5 am, 9-10 am, 2-3 pm and 5-6 pm—four times a day, seven days a week. So, even though you can't come to practice for a whole week or a whole month, when you have time come and join our one-hour meditation. We have four good times a day available for you. This is good news for all of you.

Today all of you came to perform meritorious deeds. What you have done is a good thing, so we have to transfer a portion of the merit for everyone to be happy. So, by the power of your contributions, your morality, your understanding, and your meditation, may all of you be healthy. And may all of you be able to practice meditation and achieve your liberation—free from all kinds of miseries.

From the March 18, 2015 talk “Mental Factors, Part I”

Today we will talk about mental factors. There are 52 mental factors, or mental concomitants. We have experience with all of these mental factors, although we may not know their name or nature. But now we’ll talk about what we’ve already experienced in our daily lives.

We have four realities: consciousness, mental factors, materiality, and *nibbāna*. Today, we’re talking about mental factors. All of these mental factors depend on consciousness. Without consciousness, they cannot arise. So, dependent on consciousness, all of these mental factors arise. And the mental factors have influence on consciousness.

Two weeks ago, one gentleman asked me which of the two—consciousness or mental factors—is more powerful. What do you think? *Mental factors* are more powerful. There are a lot of similes about consciousness and mental factors. I’ll share two now:

One family has a lot of children. Who is the father? He is the leader of the family. He takes a lot of responsibility for the family. But the mother influences the father. As she asks her husband to do something, he does it. And husbands depend on wives. What his wife asks him to do, he just does it. So, father and mother, or husband and wife, who’s more powerful? The wife, right? In this simile, consciousness is like the father and mental factors are like the mother. So, mental factors influence consciousness. That’s one simile.

In the old days it wasn’t like today, where we have modern technology and specialized equipment. In those days, most people worked in the jungle with big, ancient trees. When they cut down a tree, a man couldn’t move it. So what did he have to use? An elephant. An elephant has energy and strength to move a big tree here and there. The man cannot move it but the rider gives the orders to the elephant to move it, and then, the elephant moves the logs. So, who’s more powerful, the elephant or the rider? The rider is more powerful, right? In the same way, mental factors are more powerful than consciousness.

These mental factors have four characteristics:

- 1) They arise together with consciousness;
- 2) They perish together with consciousness. So they arise and perish together;
- 3) They share a common object with consciousness. We have six objects—visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and mental objects. If one consciousness takes

one of the six objects, such as a visible object, the mental factors also take the visible object. So they take a common object; and

- 4) They have the same bases. We have six bases. Without the bases, consciousness cannot arise. The six bases are the eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base and heart-base. What does eye-base mean? Eye-sensitivity. And ear-sensitivity is the ear-base, and so on. So we have six bases. All of these mental factors have these bases in common with consciousness.

So, they have four characteristics: They arise together, perish together, take the same objects, and have the same bases.

Now that we know the characteristics, we will go through them individually. Individually, we have 52 mental factors. Even though we have 52, don't worry about it—we've already experienced a lot of them. We already know almost all of them. We will divide them by group.

First are universal mental factors. This means that whatever type of consciousness arises, seven kinds of mental factors will be associated all the time. So, maybe wholesome consciousness or unwholesome consciousness, subtle consciousness or functional consciousness—*any* type of consciousness—arises. These seven universal mental factors will be associated with it. We call these universal mental factors, or we can call them essential mental factors.

What are they? Contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness of mind, life faculty, and attention. These seven mental factors are called universal mental factors. Let's talk about them a bit:

- 1) Contact, or mental impression. Contact furnishes the "contact" between the six sense objects, or the six sense bases, and consciousness. Without contact, no sense impression will arise. Sense impression is, for example, if you see something then you have seeing-consciousness (or eye-consciousness). So without contact, this eye-consciousness will not arise. If there's no eye-consciousness then there's no receiving or investigating or determination consciousness, and so on. So this contact is very important too. I don't want to go into detail. There are a lot of examples. For now, I just want to go to the law of causal relations. But try to remember

JUST PRACTICE

what I'm mentioning now about contact. Contact is not *rūpa*; it's mental factors. See that, right?;

- 2) Feeling. This means enjoying the taste of an object. You see something: "Ah, I like that." Or, "I don't like that." This is feeling. This pleasant feeling or unpleasant feeling I'm calling 'enjoying the taste of an object'. When we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think about something, we have this feeling. The characteristic of this feeling is enjoying the taste of an object (*javana*);
- 3) Perception. This is contemplation of an object by way of mind. So, you remember your name, your family's name, you know which one is your car, your house, your mom, your dad, your friend, you know this temple, this street, this road—this is perception. Different colors and so on, they have their function. This is perception.

When we study the five aggregates, we learn that feeling is one kind of aggregate. Perception is another kind of aggregate. The remaining 50 mental factors are called *sāṅkhāra*, which we translate as 'mental formations'.

- 4) Volition. This is intention. It determines whether any kind of action is wholesome or unwholesome. The Buddha said that volition is called *kamma*. So, based on this *kamma*, what will good or bad actions produce? Good or bad results. So when you do something with intention, you will see the good or bad consequences. But without intention, even if you hurt someone, it's not *kamma*. Volition is the dominant mental factor in mundane consciousness. For supramundane consciousness, wisdom is the dominant factor. Even nowadays, someone commits a crime and goes to court. The judge has to examine, to investigate, the man or woman to determine whether they did the act with intention. If no intention, no guilt. This is not *kamma*. We need to understand this. As another example, you drive a car and accidentally kill an animal. No intention, right? Then there's no *kamma* to give bad results. But if you intend to do it, it's your *kamma*. And as it is *kamma*, you will receive a bad result. The Buddha said that volition is *kamma*;

- 5) One-pointedness of mind. Whatever you do—good or bad—this one-pointedness of mind is always associated with consciousness. So if you go hunting or fishing, you have to have one-pointedness of mind. That’s why it’s associated with both unwholesome and wholesome consciousness. But if we develop one-pointedness of mind, we cultivate it, and we gain concentration, we can develop and strengthen the mental faculties until they become the factors of enlightenment. It can become part of the Noble Eightfold Path, so we need to develop this. We need to make it more powerful, higher and higher, stronger and stronger. From this concentration, we will produce wisdom;
- 6) Life faculty. This infuses life into consciousness and mental factors, which are associated with it. It is like a lotus. What sustains a lotus? Water. The life faculty sustains consciousness and mental factors until we die. So if someone dies, there’s no life faculty. Think about something: maybe you don’t cut a tree because the plant has life. The life of a plant is one thing but life faculty is another. The life faculty depends on *kamma*—what we have done in previous lives. But the life of a plant, what’s the cause? Heat. It’s not from *kamma*. We need to understand this. If you cut a tree or a plant, it’s not the same. Some think it is life, right? We have two kinds of life faculty: psychic life and physical life. What sustains our body? There are 28 types of materiality for us to sustain our physical life until we die. When we die, the psychic life and physical life end; and
- 7) Attention. The mental factors associate with the object. That’s why we can see, we can hear, smell, or taste—because of this contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness of mind, life faculty, and attention.

So, please remember this for knowledge. When you see something, for example, there are only these seven types of mental factors associated with eye-consciousness. No more than seven. When you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch something, in that moment of eye-consciousness (and ear-consciousness, and so on), there are these seven mental factors. We call these the seven universal mental factors.

JUST PRACTICE

The next group is occasional mental factors. There are six of these particular mental factors: initial application, sustained application, decision (or determination), energy (or effort, exertion), rapture (or interest), and will. These six occasional mental factors can associate with what we call unbeautiful consciousness and beautiful consciousness, but not with *every* consciousness—only some of them.

- 1) Initial application. This applies consciousness and mental factors to the object;
- 2) Sustained application. This refers to sustained consciousness and mental factors on the object, again and again.

These two factors have their function, their nature. Initial application applies mental factors to the object, and sustained application sustains the mental factors on the subject again and again. We need to differentiate between initial application and sustained application. For the simile here, it's like a bee that flies around in the air and then directs itself to a flower bush. That's initial application. Sustained application is like flying around the flower bush again and again.

So when you practice meditation, you focus on your primary object of meditation. This is initial application. And then, with sustained application you investigate it and stay around the object. So their nature is different. That's why the Buddha called them different things. When we practice meditation, we will experience this.

- 3) Decision, or determination. This is like a justice at the court who decides a case—decides who's wrong and who's right. Here, decision is when you see some object or hear some object and determine whether the object is good or bad.

So even though the nature of the various mental factors is different, they work together. It's like if a group of people wants to do something, everyone does their specific duty and the work gets done. In the same way, all of these mental factors have their function. They do their duty. They start to work together and they finish their job together, right? That's why their characteristic is to arise and perish together to make consciousness.

- 4) Energy, effort or exertion. This is very important. This supports, upholds and uplifts consciousness and mental factors. Energy is the root of all action. Without energy, you will not have success in anything in your life. Whatever you do—education, business, or whatever—what do you need? You need energy and effort. That’s why it’s the main root of action. I used to remind our people, what do we need for whatever we do? We need energy, knowledge, and good *kamma*—merit. With these three things working together, we don’t have to worry—we’ll find success. If you just try but don’t have knowledge, you won’t reach your goal. If you have knowledge and ability but don’t use it because you’re lazy, you won’t be successful, right? Even if you have knowledge and you try the best you can, if there’s no good *kamma* supporting you, you won’t be successful. So we need three kinds of things to be perfect. That’s why we need to try to do good things. This will protect and support us to be successful;
- 5) Rapture, or interest. This is not a kind of feeling or sensation. Rapture means creating mindful interest. It’s like applying appropriate effort to something and being happy about the results. It is happiness. When we practice meditation, there are five kinds of rapture. When you gain some concentration, one kind of rapture will arise. Sometimes other types will arise—it depends on your concentration. And sometimes it may arise for many days, or maybe just a few days, maybe just one day, or maybe just one *time*. Again, it depends on your concentration;
- 6) Desire, or will. In *Pāli*, it’s called *chanda*. It’s the will to do. *Chanda* and *lobha* are different. *Chanda* is the wish to do something, but with no attachment. See that? If you attach to something or someone, it’s *lobha*. If we have sensual desire, this is *lobha*. On the other hand, just wishing to do something without attachment is *chanda*. For example, all of you want to come here to the temple, but there’s no attachment, right? So you go. Without wishing, you can’t do anything. You want to eat, so you eat. You want to drink, so you drink. When this wish intensifies, it becomes will. Success starts from your wish to do or know something or go somewhere. As your wish

JUST PRACTICE

intensifies, it becomes will. And will leads to success. With regard to practicing meditation, you want to gain meditative absorption, you want to gain enlightenment, and you want to experience *nibbāna*. What is the essence of that—*lobha* or *chanda*? *Chanda*. It's a righteous wish. Don't be confused about that. Some people think that if you want something, it's *lobha*. It's not *lobha*, because you're not attached to anything. If you don't have a wish, you won't do or gain anything. We start from the first step, right? Then try to improve it, higher and higher. And then, it leads to success.

We've talked about the seven universal mental factors and the six occasional mental factors. So, together there are 13 of these. These 13 are called the general mental factors. They can be associated with unbeautiful consciousness and beautiful consciousness.

Next, we'll go to unwholesome mental factors. We have 14 of these. The first four include: 1) *moha*, or delusion; 2) shamelessness; 3) fearlessness of wrong doing; and 4) restlessness. These four mental factors are unwholesome universal mental factors. Why do we call them universal? Because no matter what type of unwholesome consciousness arises, these four are always associated with it.

I'll talk about them in more detail:

- 1) Delusion is very dangerous. It's the primary root of all unwholesome action and suffering in the world. Ignorance won't let you see the nature of the object—it clouds the mind and blinds the eye. You won't see the right thing. Because of delusion, *lobha* and *dosa* can arise. But if you know the nature of the object, it won't cloud the mind or blind the eye. And then, you won't have *lobha* or *dosa*. That's why *moha* is the primary root of all evil and suffering in the world. What's the purpose of practicing meditation? To see the nature of mind and matter for what they really are. We try to reduce delusion, and finally, to remove it, right?
- 2) Shamelessness means you don't feel any shame about doing something unwholesome in deed, speech or thought;
- 3) Fearlessness means you have no fear of committing unwholesome deeds. Why might someone think about

violating the five precepts? Delusion, shamelessness, and fearlessness. If we have moral shame and moral fear, we won't do any unwholesome actions by deed or speech. All of this is the cause of suffering; and

- 4) Restlessness. We may sit in meditation for one hour, but for how many of those minutes does our mind go out? This is restlessness. We have to reduce that. But how? There is no way to reduce restlessness without practicing meditation. The Buddha knew everything. He knew the nature of this consciousness and of these mental factors—good or bad. As he knew, out of compassion he tried to teach us. So we know the technique, the method, and the solution to deal with all of this restlessness. When we sit in meditation, we try to be aware of whatever kind of object appears in the moment. To do that we need initial application and sustained application to direct our attention to the object and to be aware of what happens. And then, there's no room for restlessness. Even if restlessness arises, it doesn't do so again and again. It doesn't last long. Because you try to be aware, you will know that your mind has wandered, and you will make a mental note: "wandering, wandering." And it stops. See that? Instead of wandering off for a few minutes, it maybe wanders for half a minute—and *done*. So we need to practice meditation to reduce restlessness and distraction.

Another group is greed, wrong view and conceit:

- 1) *Lobha*, or greed, is also attachment or sensual desire. We feel this all the time, right? Every day, we have greed, attachment, and sensual desire: "I want this," "I want that," "I like this" or "I like that." You want to see something, hear something, smell something, taste something, touch something, and so on. This is *lobha*;
- 2) Wrong view. This is misbelief. Personality is delusion, as an example. We have 62 kinds of wrong view; and
- 3) Conceit, or pride.

JUST PRACTICE

These three—greed, wrong view and conceit—are responsible for extending the life cycle. We have to be reborn and die, and be reborn again and again. Because of what? Because of greed, wrong view and conceit.

With regard to conceit, we have three kinds:

- 1) Equality conceit. This means you compare yourself with someone else and think you're equal to them. "As they know this, I know that too." You think you're equal;
- 2) Superiority conceit. "I am better than that person," or "I'm richer," and so on. You think you're higher than others; and
- 3) Inferiority conceit. You think you are lower than someone else. You think you're not as good as them. This is conceit.

Mostly, people fall into the second category: "I know better than them," or "I'm richer," and so on.

These three mental factors—greed, wrong view and conceit—just associate with unwholesome consciousness rooted in greed. It's not related to *dosa* and *moha*.

Another mental factor is *dosa*. We actually have hatred, envy, avarice and remorse. These four mental factors are associated with *dosa*, unwholesome consciousness rooted in hatred.

Let's talk about these mental factors:

- 1) Hatred or anger or aversion is the most destructive element in the world. Fighting, killing and outrage. What's the root? Hatred, right? So what do we need to have peace in the world? We need loving kindness. It's the opposite of anger;
- 2) Envy. So much of what we see or hear about in the world is terrible. There's so much anger and jealousy. People feel jealous about another's success or prosperity. Sometimes *you* feel jealous about these things;
- 3) Avarice is stinginess or selfishness. We have five kinds of avarice:
 - a) Stinginess with regard to one's dwelling place. You have a place but you don't want anyone to come and stay there;

- b) Stinginess with regard to the family. You don't want others to come and get involved with or talk to your family. It's not just the family either. This includes your friends or your partner too. You don't want anyone to get involved with them;
- c) Stinginess with regard to gain. You do something good with your business but you don't want anyone to gain like you, so you don't tell them how to do it, and so on;
- d) Stinginess with regard to recognition or fame, and beauty. Maybe you are a famous person but you don't want anyone to be famous like you. Or maybe you're handsome or beautiful and you don't want someone else to look as good as you; and
- e) Stinginess with regard to knowledge or wisdom. You don't want to impart your knowledge to someone else. You know everything but keep it to yourself. You don't want to tell others.

Stinginess is an unwholesome mental factor. We're not supposed to have this. So we have to study this. As we know this, we shouldn't be stingy about these things.

We should share these things with others. If we have *selflessness*, we share these things with others. We share our belongings, our dwelling place—we invite others to sit and stay with us—our family, and our friends. We want to share these relationships with others. When someone comes to talk with them, we're happy for them. If someone's very lucky, we're happy about that. If someone is famous, we're happy about that too. And whatever we have with regard to worldly knowledge or spiritual knowing—the Dhamma—we impart to others. Otherwise, it becomes unwholesome stinginess.

- 4) Remorse, or worry. Remorse in this context means grieving over the evil that you have done, and over the good that you have not done. This means you feel regret about the past—you had an opportunity to do something good but you missed it. You didn't do it, and now you feel remorse. This is an unwholesome mental factor. If you did something bad in the past based upon greed, anger,

JUST PRACTICE

delusion or jealousy, you'll think about it and reflect, "I'm not supposed to do that." You'll feel sorry and have remorse. You'll regret it. When you practice meditation and gain some concentration, you may think back to when you were very young and feel sorry about something you did. This is an unwholesome mental factor. So what do we need to do? Just be aware of it, and stop—then go back to your primary object.

These four mental factors—hatred, envy, avarice and remorse—are associated with *dosa* unwholesome consciousness rooted in hatred only.

The next mental factor is sloth and torpor. This mental factor is a sickness of the mind. Sloth means that when you sit idle, you lack effort and feel lazy. When you practice meditation, you want to give up. You don't want to continue the practice. You feel sleepy. Sloth and torpor especially come to disturb us when we practice meditation. The Buddha said this is a mental hindrance. If we don't do the right things to protect ourselves, sloth and torpor will come and disturb us while we're listening to the Dhamma, and especially when we're practicing meditation. What do we have to do? Fortunately, we have an antidote for sloth and torpor.

And the last mental factor in this group is doubt, skeptical doubt, indecision or perplexity. You can't make a decision. You're confused. In particular, you may have doubt about *kamma*, about the source of *kamma*, about past lives, about this life, and about the Four Noble Truths. As you have doubt about these things, you cannot gain concentration. You will not have energy to practice. When doubt arises, just be aware of it.

Today we have talked about the 13 general mental factors and the 14 unwholesome mental factors—so, 27 mental factors. As we know them now, what do we have to do? You know yourself; right now in this present moment, what types of unwholesome mental factors have arisen? You know that. As you know them, don't accept them. Let them go.

We study *Abhidhamma*, we study ourselves, and we study our mind. I would like all of you to try to remember the terms and their natures, and to investigate your mind—your mental factors—every day to see whether your mental factors are good or bad. Try to eliminate all unwholesome mental factors. And then, we have to improve the wholesome or beautiful mental factors, which we'll talk about another time.

For today, I just want all of you to study the seven universal mental factors, the six occasional mental factors, and most importantly, the 14 unwholesome mental factors. We need to reduce them, and to eliminate them. If you practice meditation and gain the first stage of enlightenment and become a stream-enterer, there is no longer any wrong view or doubt. See that? You can uproot these two kinds of mental factors.

I'd like all of you to be able to study this and put it into practice. By practicing meditation, I would like you to be able to uproot wrong view and doubt and gain the first stage of enlightenment and become a stream-enterer in this life.

Q: What is the difference between wrong view and delusion?

They are very close.

Delusion is *moha*. It is ignorance of the nature of an object. *Moha* is a universal mental factor that can associate with *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* consciousness. *Moha* can associate with 12 kinds of unwholesome consciousness, whereas for wrong view there are just four. If you gain the first stage of enlightenment, there's no more wrong view. But you still have *moha*. When you become an *arahant*, there's no more *moha*.

So *moha* is ignorance of the nature of an object. But wrong view is, for example, having the wrong belief about something.

Q: Thank you. I have another question, if no one else has any?

[Another student responds...]

Q: I don't ask a question because I know everything.

[A lot of laughter in the room.]

Q: In the case of perception, it's only mental, right?

Yes. Even though you use your senses to perceive physical things, it's still considered mental.

Q: What would be the Pāli term for cognition?

Saññā. Cognition and perception are the same.

JUST PRACTICE

Q: But what if I have a visual perception, versus a thought?

Cognition is a mental process, and it includes *saññā*.

Q: So, the last unwholesome mental factor is doubt, right? What consciousness group is doubt associated with?

Doubt is only associated with doubt consciousness.

Of the mental factors we talked about tonight, which arises in your mind the most? Doubt?

Q: Sloth and torpor.

Try to reduce it, and finally, remove it.

From the March 25, 2015 talk “Mental Factors, Part II”

Today we’ll talk about the beautiful mental factors. These are only, and *always*, associated with beautiful consciousness.

We have 19 beautiful universal mental factors. No matter what type of beautiful consciousness arises, these 19 beautiful universal mental factors will always be associated with it. That’s why we call them beautiful universal mental factors. What are they?

- 1) *Saddhā*. Faith, or confidence. This means that we place confidence and faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the so-called Triple Gem—and we have faith or confidence about *kamma*, or the results of *kamma*. When this faith or confidence arises, our mind becomes cool and clear. When someone performs generosity, or practices morality, concentration, or meditation, it is based on faith or confidence.

We can compare this with a hand. If you don’t have a hand, you cannot take anything. Even if you see a lot of jewelry around you, for instance, you cannot pick up even one piece. Why? Because you have no hand. And you cannot give something to someone else because you have no hand. So, confidence is compared to a hand. In the same way, whoever lacks faith will not give anything to others (because they have no ‘hand’). Nor can they take anything. They won’t perform any meritorious deeds without faith. Confidence or faith is very important. It is the leader of mental factors.

All of you come to the temple because of your confidence. If you don’t believe the teaching of the Buddha, if you don’t believe the law of *kamma*, and in the results of *kamma*, you will not come to the temple or practice any generosity. Nor will you observe morality or practice meditation. That’s why *saddhā* is the leader of mental factors. It is our good friend. Because we have confidence, we do good things, say good things, and have good thoughts. We practice generosity and try to restrain our physical and verbal actions. We practice tranquility

JUST PRACTICE

and insight *vipassanā* meditation. We do these things because of faith or confidence.

So please remember that faith is like a hand. If you have faith, it's like you have *both* hands—you can give something to others, help others, and you can take good things too. We have good opportunities to get in touch with the Buddha's teaching. We have faith, and so we accumulate a lot of meritorious deeds every day. Sometimes we use our body, sometimes our hands, our eyes, our ears, or our tongue, to perform meritorious deeds. This is because of *saddhā*. It is very important. That's why the Buddha mentioned it first;

- 2) *Sati*, or mindfulness. Mindfulness is also very important. If you lack mindfulness, you may forget something—maybe your money or your belongings, *anything*. We especially need mindfulness when we practice meditation. We need to be mindful in every single activity. This is a beautiful mental factor.

If we have confidence or faith, but lack wisdom, it's not good. If we have a lot of knowledge but lack confidence, it's not good. And some people have deep concentration but their effort is not good. If we have a lot of effort but lack concentration, it's not good. So we need to have a balance of confidence and wisdom. Effort and concentration should also be balanced. But we *always* need mindfulness. That's why we practice mindfulness meditation—to train our mind to be aware of everything. *Sati* is like a gatekeeper. It's like someone who acts as security waiting outside a gate to check people and not allow robbers to get in. In the same way, *sati* or mindfulness is aware of the six sense doors or six sense organs. Whatever you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think about, we need mindfulness. If we gain mindfulness, there's no chance for greed, anger or delusion to enter. Otherwise, whenever you see or hear something, greed or anger will arise. So we need mindfulness to be aware of the six sense organs and to see what kinds of objects appear to our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind.

Be aware of them. Don't allow these mental defilements to enter;

- 3) *Hiri*, or moral shame. This is a reflection on how very shameful it is to do unwholesome things. We may reflect on our age, for example: "I'm a young man or woman. I'm old *enough*. I'm not supposed to do, say or think like this." Or we can think about our wisdom: "I have a lot of knowledge. I study the Dhamma, so I'm not supposed to do this or say that." Think about your knowledge or education. If you do something unwholesome, you will feel a sense of shame about it. Some may think about their wealth or belongings: "I have a car, land, a house, money, and a good job. I'm not supposed to do these kinds of unwholesome things." Think about this. And some may think about their parents, their teachers, and their religion: "If I do this unwholesome thing...my parents would *never* do that. So if I do something wrong, it's not good for my parents or my teachers or my religion." We think about this, and we feel a sense of shame at doing unwholesome things. Think about yourself mostly;
- 4) *Ottappa*, or fearfulness. This is fear of wrongdoing, or moral dread. You fear the consequences of doing unwholesome things. For example, if you do something unwholesome, when you reflect on it you will think about and blame yourself. So we try to avoid doing unwholesome things. We also have to think about if we do this unwholesome deed, it's not just a matter of self-reproach—others will blame us too. You feel concerned about that. You don't want others to blame you. You can also reflect: "If I commit this evil action—this immoral action—by deed or speech, I may be punished by the law." You don't want to get in legal trouble, so you try to refrain from unwholesome actions. You may also think about retribution: "I did a bad thing. Even though no one knows or will punish me, I still have to receive the bad consequences and be reborn in a state of misery. I have to pay this back in the next life." So we should think about self-reproach, others' blame, punishment, and retribution.

JUST PRACTICE

We call these two—*hiri* and *ottappa*—the guardians of the world. If you lack *hiri* or *ottappa*—moral shame or moral dread—you may be reborn as an animal. Think about animals: they have no moral shame or moral dread. They don't think about what their mom, their sister, their brother, or their dad might think of their behaviors. They won't understand. They just do what they want to do. So human beings who lack *hiri* and *ottappa* are like animals—or maybe worse than animals. But because we have moral shame and moral dread, we know. Without *hiri* and *ottappa*, there can be no civilized society in this world. Every day we have to keep these two in our hearts. They are the guardians of the world.

We have five precepts, right? Killing, stealing, and so on. Why don't you commit these things? Because of *hiri*—you know you're not supposed to do that. And because you have fear about the consequences of doing it—that's *ottappa*. In other words, you don't violate the precepts because of *hiri* and *ottappa*. They are very important;

- 5) *Alobha*. This is non-greed, or non-attachment. As you don't attach to your belongings, you'll be able to perform generosity and share your belongings with others. This is because of non-greed and non-attachment. The Buddha said we should reflect on this. *Lobha* means greed, and 'a' means "non-"—so, *alobha* means non-greed, or non-attachment. We practice generosity because of this non-attachment.

All of these mental factors work together. See that? Confidence, mindfulness, moral shame, moral fear, and non-greed—they work together.

- 6) *Adosa*, or non-hatred. This means goodwill. Sometimes we use the word *mettā*, or loving kindness. Whenever you say *mettā*, know that its essence is *adosa*. We observe these five precepts firmly and purely—we try to refrain from killing, stealing, and so on. Why? Because of *alobha* and *adosa*—non-greed and goodwill. You don't want to harm

or hurt others. See that? You don't want to hurt someone else's life, family or business. This is *adosa*, or loving kindness;

- 7) Neutrality of mind, or equanimity. This performs the function of having an impartial view of an object. Sometimes we use the word *upekkhā*, like when we talk about *mettā*, *karunā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā*. When this mental factor is highly developed and cultivated, it becomes one of the factors of enlightenment. So we need to develop this.

Now we'll go by pairs:

- 8-9) Tranquility of the mental body (which includes *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *sankhāra*), and tranquility of consciousness. When you practice meditation, you will experience this. It can cause quietude or serenity or calmness. When you sit in meditation, you will feel tranquil and serene. You can especially feel this when you practice meditation and gain some concentration. You can know this for yourself;
- 10-11) Lightness of the mental body, and lightness of consciousness. When you practice meditation, you will feel very light. As these two arise, your body will also feel very light. And even if you don't practice meditation, when you reflect on and feel happy about some of your spiritual development—maybe you volunteer or perform meritorious deeds—you will feel very light. This is the lightness of consciousness and the mental body. You will experience this very clearly when you practice meditation and gain concentration;
- 12-13) Elasticity of the mental body, and elasticity of consciousness. Whoever possesses these mental factors can easily and properly show their respect to elders—because their mind has become flexible. Otherwise, you don't care, right? A person possessing these mental factors is very humble. They have no conceit and no pride. There's no wrong view. This is why a spiritual person will be humble. They don't think highly of themselves;
- 14-15) Adaptability of the mental body, and adaptability of consciousness. You are ready to do good things. We have talked about the different kinds of merit, right? *Dāna*, *sīla*,

JUST PRACTICE

bhāvanā, and so on. You're ready to do these things. This is because you possess the mental factors of adaptability of the mental body and consciousness;

16-17) Proficiency of the mental body, and proficiency of consciousness. Because you are used to doing good things, you've developed proficiency at it. These are all beautiful mental factors; and the last pair

18-19) Uprightness of the mental body, and uprightness of consciousness. This means you have no deceit and no treachery, because you are very straight. You do the right thing. You say the right words. You have the right thoughts.

All 19 of these beautiful universal mental factors will be associated with beautiful consciousness. Remember beautiful consciousness? We have eight kinds of great wholesome consciousness, eight kinds of great resultant consciousness, eight kinds of great functional consciousness, and so on. We have 59 types of beautiful consciousness.

Next, we have abstinence. When we study the Noble Eightfold Path, we learn about these three factors. They include right speech, right action, and right livelihood. What do they mean?

20) Right speech is refraining from lying, slandering, harsh speech, and frivolous talk. Whatever you say should be the truth. And you should only use good and beneficial words. This is right speech. We need this;

21) Right action is refraining from killing, stealing, and committing sexual misconduct; and

22) Right livelihood. With regard to your job or your means of livelihood, you're not supposed to kill someone, not supposed to steal, and so on. And with respect to trading, you're not supposed to sell weapons, poison, human beings (slaves), slaughter animals, and so on. If you sell these types of things for your livelihood, it becomes *wrong* livelihood. Our means of livelihood should not harm, hurt or cause problems for others. This means it consists of *sīla*, or morality. We need this.

And next, we have two limitless qualities:

23-24) *Karunā*, or compassion, and *muditā*, or sympathetic joy.

We have the four *brahmavihāra*, but we're mainly talking about compassion and sympathetic joy now. We already talked about the other two—*mettā*, or *adosa*, and equanimity. We should know how to practice compassion and sympathetic joy as meditations. We have 40 subjects of meditation, and so we can practice all four—*mettā*, *karunā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā*—as forms of tranquility meditation.

How do you practice *mettā*? We radiate our loving kindness: "May all beings be happy." Wish for all beings to be well and happy, again and again. We have a lot of methods to practice loving kindness meditation.

What about *karunā*? We mostly think about *mettā*, and no one talks about *karunā*. We need to practice this as a meditation too: "May all beings be free from misery." We want everyone to be free from suffering. This is how to practice compassion.

This is how to practice *muditā*: "May each person's gain be with them for a long time. May they not be deprived of their fortune duly acquired." We feel very happy about someone's prosperity or success. We need to practice *muditā* as a meditation too.

And *upekkhā*: "All beings are conditioned by their *kamma*. Everyone depends on their *kamma*, or their actions, including us too. Depending on our previous actions, or even these present actions, we have to receive the good or bad consequences associated with them." If we think about this, we are practicing *upekkhā* meditation.

We call these four things noble living. They are qualities of a noble or virtuous person. We also call these *brahmavihāra*. *Brahmā* means noble or god, higher than heaven. Practice all of these. Although we are human beings, if we practice one of these, in that moment we're a *brahmā* too.

The Buddha talked about this. In this world, we have four kinds of humans. Some people are like hell beings, some are like hungry ghosts,

JUST PRACTICE

some are like animals, and some are truly human beings, or supreme beings.

Why do we call someone a hell being? According to their bad *kamma*, they go to hell and suffer a lot. Some people have a lot of mental and physical suffering. That kind of person is like a hell person, and it's according to their *kamma*.

Some people are like a hungry ghost. They're always hungry or thirsty, with no place to live, no good food to eat, and no clothes to wear. Thirsty and hungry all the time. Even if they're a rich person, it's not enough. So they're always hungry, right? Or thirsty—never enough. This type of person is like a hungry ghost. Before they die, they're still hungry for something. It's not supposed to be like that, so we try the best we can to be satisfied with what we get—it's *enough*. If it's not enough, it means we're still hungry or thirsty—like a hungry ghost. A lot of people are like this, right?

Some people are like animals. What do animals know? Mostly, how to eat, how to sleep, and how to enjoy their lives. They don't perform any meritorious deeds. They don't understand *kamma* and the results of *kamma*. They're *animals*. Meanwhile, maybe we're human beings just eating and sleeping and enjoying sensual objects. This is like an animal. Maybe we don't practice any generosity or morality, or there's no meditation. We may have a lack of *mettā*, *karunā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā*.

The last group is human, or *supreme*, beings. They know what's good and bad. They know what should or shouldn't be done. As they know this, they put it into practice and only do good things. This means they're supreme beings.

So, there are four kinds of human beings we can classify in this world. A 'supreme being' is really a human being. But you can't find a lot of these. Who goes to the church or the temple, and who goes to the casino? Think about that.

Try to possess these *brahmavihāra*—this noble living. And if you live with loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, in that moment you are a *brahmā*.

On the other hand, if you suffer a lot and don't know how to remove physical or mental suffering—especially mental suffering—in that moment you're a hell being.

If you're still unsatisfied and hungry for something, this means in that moment you're a hungry ghost.

And if one day you just eat and sleep and enjoy your sensual objects, in that moment you're like an animal.

So, after we know this, we should try to improve ourselves to be a supreme being, or a *real* human being.

And the last one:

25) Wisdom. We can also call this reason, intellect, knowledge, insight, intelligence—or *pañña*. We perform good actions because of wisdom. We talked about the eight great wholesome consciousnesses. If whatever we do is associated with wisdom, this wholesome consciousness will be powerful and will produce great results. That's why we need to study to gain knowledge and wisdom. When we do something, it shouldn't *just* come from a place of confidence and mindfulness. We also need wisdom. Now, wisdom cannot associate with all the beautiful consciousnesses—just some of them. If we develop this wisdom higher and higher, though, it becomes the Noble Eightfold Path—right understanding. See that? This is wisdom.

Now we've talked about the beautiful mental factors. How many were there? There were 25, right? There were the 19 beautiful universal mental factors, the three abstinences, the two limitless, and the one non-delusion—so, 25 of them. And altogether we have 52 mental factors.

So, once again, which is more powerful: consciousness or mental factors? Mental factors are more powerful, because they influence consciousness. And because they inform consciousness to be wholesome or unwholesome.

As you now know the 52 mental factors, including the 14 unwholesome mental factors, you can examine your mind. What types of mental factors are present in this moment? You know whether they are good or bad. If they're good, keep at them. If they're bad, try to remove them.

The Buddha was able to classify all of these mental factors and their natures. I would like all of you to study and remember this, and put it into practice in order to remove or reduce the unwholesome mental factors and then improve the beautiful mental factors, higher and higher. You should especially work to improve your confidence, mindfulness, moral shame, moral dread, right speech, right action, right livelihood, the *brahmavihāra*, and your wisdom. These are very important.

JUST PRACTICE

As you're able to improve these factors, may all of you gain peace and happiness, be able to develop your virtue perfections higher and higher, gain concentration and wisdom, and be able to experience the Four Noble Truths and become a noble person in this life.

Any questions?

Q: In a previous talk, you were explaining about the kasiṇa meditations for attaining jhāna. You mentioned that with jhāna you're working with concepts, but with vipassanā you're working with realities. So, when you're doing samatha meditation, is it purely conceptual with no realities involved?

Mostly, just concepts.

Q: With respect to realities, how do we differentiate between sense perception and mental conceptions? Is there any mental conceptualizing in vipassanā, or is there only direct perception?

Only realities. Only direct perception.

We've talked about the four kinds of realities: consciousness, or mind; mental states; matter; and *nibbāna*. Consciousness, mental states or matter should be the objects of our meditation. We should see one of these. If we see something else, it's a concept. Sometimes, we focus on the body and feel hot or cold. It's just the five aggregates. It's *reality*.

Q: Venerable Chaiya, this might be off-topic a bit, but I'm pretty unclear about the difference between samatha and vipassanā. Can you explain it again?

Samatha means that when you practice meditation you focus your mind on one object. In doing that, you don't know its characteristics as impermanent, suffering and non-self. This is *samatha*. On the other hand, if you practice meditation and see the nature of mind and body as impermanent and so on, it's *vipassanā*. So, with *samatha*, what do we need? Mostly, concentration. But with *vipassanā* we need wisdom.

Q: Is it possible to practice both during a meditation session?

Yes. You can practice both of them at the same time.

Q: Should it be at the same time or alternating, Venerable Chaiya?

It depends on our wisdom. We mostly need concentration, but later on, it's both concentration (*samatha*) and wisdom (*vipassanā*). We'll see that in every moment.

So, as I remind people, if you are one-pointed and feel tranquil, calm, and peaceful, you need to see their characteristics in that moment. If you don't, then in that moment it is *samatha*. But when you see impermanence—arising and disappearing together, one after another—it's *samatha* and *vipassanā* working together.

Whatever type of meditation you practice, if you don't see the nature of mind and body, it is still *samatha*. For example, maybe you practice walking meditation—"right, walking" and "left, walking." You'll be able to focus your mind with every step and with every movement. But if you don't know it as impermanent, it's still *samatha*.

When you practice *vipassanā* meditation, with every step you say "walking," and you know right away that the walking movement is the air element and that the noting mind is mentality. It's just mind and body, arising and disappearing together, one after another. Then, *samatha* and *vipassanā* are working together.

From the May 10, 2015 talk “Funeral Dhamma”

Today all of you came to Chaiya Meditation Monastery to perform meritorious deeds and to dedicate the merit to your loved one who has passed away, so that she can be reborn in a good existence and lead a happy life.

As we are moral beings, when we’re still alive we have to help each other. Even though we may be of different nationalities, from different cultures, and maybe of different religions, we used to be a family in previous lives. For many, many eons we have been reborn and died, and died and been reborn again. There is no one who hasn’t before been a family member to you—maybe a brother, a sister, or some other relative. Because we used to be a family in previous lives, in this life we have come to see each other. This isn’t our first time together. We’ve been together many times. We are a big family. So we need to help each other.

As all of you want to be a good son, a good friend, or a good relative to your loved one who has passed away, what can you do today? All of you came here to offer robes and flowers to the monks, to observe the five precepts—morality—and to listen to the holy chanting. Listening to the holy chanting is one kind of meditation. This means that you came here to perform generosity, morality, and meditation. And so what you gain today by the power of your generosity, by the power of your morality, by the power of your concentration, and by the power of your loving kindness and compassion, you have to transfer a portion of that merit to your loved one who has passed away. This is what you can do.

Everyone knows their own birth date, but no one knows the date of their death. When you’ll die—no one knows. But, as a human being, one day—*for sure*—we have to part from this world. But *when* is unforeseen. For some, maybe they will die at one year of age. No one knows. What kind of disease will we have to suffer through and die from? No one knows. During the 24 hours of the day, what time will we die? Will it be morning, midday, afternoon, evening, or maybe midnight? No one knows. After we die, will our body be cremated or buried? No one knows that. Where will we be reborn again after we die? No one knows.

What can we take with us when we die? Just good *kamma*, or good action. Or, *bad kamma*. Whatever we’ve done we have to own and carry with us. It will stick with us.

Death is certain. Life is uncertain. So when we die, we want to be reborn in a good existence and in a good world. But it’s not up to our

wants. It depends on our *actions*. If we do good things in our lifetime, we have nothing to worry about after we die. We will not be reborn in a miserable state. But if we do unwholesome deeds in our lives, we will be reborn in a miserable state—maybe as a hell being, an animal, a hungry ghost, and so on. This is according to the law of nature—the law of action and reaction. So it depends on our actions.

What’s the cause of someone doing unwholesome deeds? It’s their ego, their greed, their anger, their delusion, and their jealousy. And then they do something unwholesome in line with it. No one wants to be reborn as an animal or a hell being. So what do we have to do? We have to do *good* things in our lives.

We are moral beings. We can do everything for ourselves, and for the welfare and happiness of others. This is what we should do. We need to use our belongings to be beneficial, and use our time and our lives to be meaningful. We don’t just do this for this life, but also for the next life.

We sometimes need to practice generosity. This means we try to reduce our greed and our attachment. If we attach to our belongings, we will not share with others. So instead of giving, we are attached to our belongings. But if we share our belongings and help other people, this is a way to reduce our greed.

We also have to restrain our physical and verbal actions. We should not harm or hurt others with our deeds or speech. We need to uphold our moral conduct. There are these five precepts—it is a universal law: refrain from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, and from drinking alcohol and using drugs. This means we have to *restrain* our physical and verbal actions.

What do we need to be able to uphold moral conduct? We need loving kindness, sympathy, compassion, and honesty. We don’t like for others to harm us. This is for our happiness. In the same way, we need to consider someone else’s feelings. We need to refrain from harming or hurting others. So we need loving kindness, sympathy, compassion, and honesty—we need to be *good*. And we need to improve these qualities every day.

Where do our deeds and speech come from? They come from our mental actions. They depend on our thoughts and on our decisions. If we have good thoughts and make good decisions, we have good deeds and good speech. So, mental action is *very* important. That’s why we need to practice meditation every day.

Sometimes we need to practice loving kindness meditation. We pray for ourselves first, such as “May I be well, happy and peaceful.” So

JUST PRACTICE

we want to be well, happy and peaceful. Then, we extend our loving kindness to our family, our relatives, our coworkers, our employees, and so on. We extend our loving kindness to *everyone* in this universe. This is one kind of tranquility meditation. When we're angry, and we practice loving kindness meditation, our minds become pure.

And we especially need to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation to develop our wisdom.

We need to know how to use our life and our time to be of benefit. So what do we need to do to gain peace and happiness in this life and the next life? We need to practice generosity, restrain our physical and verbal actions, and practice meditation to purify our mind from greed, anger, delusion, and so on. If we do this every day, we accumulate spiritual development. This allows us to gain happiness.

I would like all of you to think about how our lives are uncertain but that our deaths *are* certain. We can die at any time. So before we die, we need to get ready.

What do we need to do for the welfare and happiness of not just ourselves, but for others? If we do it just for ourselves, it's not good enough. We are human beings, and so we should use our lives and our wisdom for the happiness of others. So by practicing generosity, morality, and meditation every day, we will gain a lot of merit. This involves wholesome deeds, speech, and thoughts. This good action will produce peace and happiness.

Everyone needs peace and happiness. But even though we need it, if we do the wrong things we will not gain it.

According to the Buddha's teaching, we need to refrain from unwholesome deeds, try to cultivate good things as much as we can, and purify our minds from greed, anger, and delusion.

May all of you be able to develop this virtue perfection, be free from all kinds of misery, and gain peace and happiness in this life.

So, all of you practiced generosity, morality, and meditation. You have done good things today. Now, you need to transfer a portion of that merit to your loved one to receive—for her to be happy and reduce worry. In our tradition, we use water to transfer merit to others. Why use the water? Water is very clean and very cool. It represents our heart.

Okay, make an intention...

[The monks chant the transfer of merit dedication.]

From the June 19, 2015 talk “Two Friends”

In our society, we need a good friend. A good friend will encourage us to do good things—to avoid unwholesome deeds, speech and thoughts. And a good friend will help us gain peace, happiness, and success in our life.

All of you may have a lot of friends at school or in your neighborhood, but a *good* friend is very hard to find. A person may feel like a good friend to you right now, but maybe one day you become enemies. Who knows? Some people are close friends for many, many years, and then eventually become enemies. Even husbands and wives see this. This very close friend—a *very good* friend—living together for so many years, and one day, maybe: divorce. Right? *Impermanence*.

According to the Buddha’s teachings, who’s a good friend? Well, we have two friends: a good friend in this present life, and a good friend in future lives. It is very, very important to have these good friends.

A good friend in the present life is *belief*. Belief here does not mean blind belief, or blind faith. This belief should accompany wisdom, and it can cause confidence or faith. As Buddhist people, we believe in the Triple Gem—the attributes of the Buddha, the Buddha’s doctrines, and the Buddha’s holy disciples—and also, we believe in the law of *kamma*, or the law of action and reaction.

We need to have this belief in the law of action and reaction. Not only the Buddha’s people, but *everyone* in this world needs to possess this confidence and believe in the law of nature, or the law of cause and effect. This is the law of action and reaction.

When we do unwholesome deeds, we will see this directly in the negative consequences. If we do wholesome deeds, we see the good consequences too. When we possess this belief—this faith, or this confidence—it will encourage us to do good things. That’s what the Buddha said. This is your good friend.

Today, all of you came to the temple. Who forced you to come to the temple? *No one* forced you to come here. This was your good friend—your *belief*.

And we can apply this to our daily lives. This means, because we have a good friend in our heart—and it’s not just today, but *every day*, from the time we get up in the morning until we go to bed at night—we have our good friend by our side.

Do good things. Pay respect to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*. Pay respect to your parents and teachers. If you have someone who needs help, help them. Make them happy, peaceful and comfortable.

JUST PRACTICE

This faith, in *Pāli* terms, we call *saddhā*.

Do good things *every* day. Try to avoid unwholesome deeds—refrain from killing, stealing, and so on. Possess this wholesome way of thinking: to be fearful of the bad consequences of killing someone, stealing someone’s belongings, or lying. And believing in the law of action and reaction, refrain from unwholesome deeds, speech and thoughts.

So, the Buddha said that the good friend of this present life is *saddhā*—confidence or belief.

The good friend of future lives, the Buddha said, is merit. Merit means doing good deeds, using good speech, and having good thoughts. *Merit*. In *Pāli* terms, we call it *puñña*; in Thai, we call it *boon*. It means: purifying your mind. You purify your mind from greed, anger, delusion, and so on. This merit is what makes you fulfill your wishes and desires.

Everyone has a goal. As Buddhists, we have a *special* goal. What is our special goal? Liberation. Liberation means overcoming all kinds of suffering—it is the *ultimate* goal.

Just pray, and we will not get anything.

So what do we need to do?

We need to practice *dāna* (generosity), *sīla* (morality), and make *boon* (merit) every day. This merit will fulfill your future desires.

So, always remember that our good friend in this present life is *saddhā*—confidence. And our good friend in future lives is the *puñña*—the merit—we have accumulated. If we possess these good friends in our heart, we don’t have to worry about anything in this life or in future lives. Whatever we are longing for, we will achieve.

Try to keep your good friend—*saddhā*, or belief—in your heart. Recall the attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the so-called Triple Gem—and believe in the law of nature, or the law of action and reaction. And try to accumulate merit each and every day.

May all of you gain peace, happiness and success in your lives.

From the January 1, 2016 talk “New Year Offering Ceremony”

Happy New Year, everyone. So today is the 1st of January, 2016—no more 2015. I wish all of you good luck. No more bad luck, right? From now on, good luck forever.

I know all of you are hungry, right? So, a short message—no more than a few minutes:

Coming soon is the Chinese New Year, and in April is the Buddhist New Year. So as the New Year takes place, I would like all of you to make a strong determination to elevate your human qualities, your human *wealth*. No one is perfect in this world, but you can test yourself, exam yourself, and think about the five precepts. Whoever is *really* a Buddhist has to uphold this moral conduct—these five precepts—firmly and purely. *Everyone* has to uphold this moral conduct. So make a strong determination that from today on: “I will change my bad habits to good habits.” Try to reduce or give up unwholesome deeds, speech and thoughts.

You know about yourself. Everyone knows what they should do, what they should say, and what they should think. We need self-control and self-discipline. We have these five precepts: there’s no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no lying, and no using drink, drugs or intoxicants. Commit to not violating these precepts. We need this self-control and self-discipline.

Sometimes we have greed and anger—it’s not good. We need to do good. So when we’re angry, why? Because we can’t control our mind. So what do we need? We need the five precepts—we need self-discipline. And we need to control our mind by practicing mental culture—to culture our mind. If we possess self-control and self-discipline, we will gain self-respect, because we will know whether our deeds, speech and thoughts are good or bad. We’ll become virtuous. This means we can improve our human qualities.

As moral beings, we have a good opportunity to enhance our qualities. For example, we can share our belongings with others. We can use them to be beneficial. We can try to restrain our ignoble actions to gain self-respect. And we can try to practice mental culture to be able to reduce greed, anger, delusion, and so on. Then we’ll become a spiritual person—a noble one.

So I would like all of you to use your belongings, your abilities, your loving kindness, your compassion, your understanding, and your wisdom for the welfare of yourself and others. You’re a moral being. As

JUST PRACTICE

you possess loving kindness, compassion, and wisdom, it's not just for you—it's also good for others.

So we need everyone to possess loving kindness, compassion, and wisdom in their hearts. We need to enhance our human qualities in order to be happy and peaceful for the rest of our lives.

Thank you for your attention.

Did everyone already get a raffle ticket?

[A little girl and a little boy approach Luang Por to help choose the winning tickets from a basket.]

Okay, number 384051?

[A woman responds and everyone claps. She approaches and receives her prize—a small Buddha image—from Luang Por.]

Next is number 380084.

[Everyone claps. A woman and her young daughter come up to receive their prize.]

This lady has offered lunch to the monks for ten years. Your prize is an antique *Guanyin* statue.

[Luang Por asks the two helpers to let the woman's young daughter select the next winning raffle ticket.]

Okay, number 384071?

[Clapping. A man approaches Luang Por.]

Yesterday this man's family donated \$1,500 for our new meditation rooms and dining hall. *[Luang Por hands him a Buddha figurine.]* This is a small one—easy to carry.

[One of the helpers hands Luang Por the last raffle ticket.]

Now, the main prize. Take a deep breath. Number 383979?

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

[A man yells “Bingo!” and there’s much clapping. When he approaches, Luang Por hands him a large Buddha image. Then the monks chant a blessing for the congregation.]

This morning this one lady donated money for our new dining hall, and then another family donated \$500 for our dining hall. And for a New Year donation, a family donated \$900, another person donated \$99, another person \$99, and another \$108—*sādhu, sādhu, sādhu*. And another person donated \$99, another person \$108, another \$108, another \$100, another \$108, another \$100, and another person \$99—*sādhu, sādhu, sādhu*. If I don’t have your name on the list, please forgive me.

As all of you know, we plan to build new meditation rooms and a dining hall. Hopefully the groundbreaking will be soon. Like today, with all of you here, what do we need? We need a dining room. We can’t all fit in the kitchen. A kitchen should be a kitchen—it’s not a dining room, right? That’s why we need a dining room. That way, over 500 people can sit together and eat.

If you’re interested in helping with that, you can contact our coordinator. Now, it’s time to go enjoy your lunch.

From the January 16, 2016 talk “Three Levels”

On Buddhist holidays, all of you come to Chaiya Meditation Monastery to offer lunch to the monks. You offer good food to the monks, and then the monks give you *mental food*—*Dhamma*.

In Buddhism, the mind needs wisdom—right understanding is very important. Right understanding has different levels.

The first level: we should have right understanding that our actions, that our *kamma*, is our own. So depending on our actions—good or bad—we receive good or bad consequences. If we understand this point, we won’t do unwholesome actions. Instead, we’ll try to do good actions in our daily lives, for the rest of our lives, because we believe that if we do unwholesome actions we’ll receive bad consequences.

No one wants to receive bad consequences. Everyone wants to be happy, healthy, have a long life, and so on.

So, based on your understanding, try to do good things—physically, verbally and mentally. It’s the law of action and reaction—we will receive good consequences. We need to understand that our *kamma*, our action, is our own. This action will shape our destiny.

Why do people in this world have different levels of happiness and suffering? It’s based on their previous actions.

Whoever has this right understanding, will have perfect moral conduct. The five precepts—morality—is a universal law. Whoever understands the law of *kamma* and the results will not violate the precepts. Someone violates the precepts by killing, stealing, and so on, because of their *lack* of understanding.

The Buddha said that whoever has this right understanding believes in the law of nature, the law of action and reaction. This person becomes morally perfect.

This is the first level of understanding.

Now, the second level of right understanding: we need to understand what the phenomena of this mind and body—psycho-physical phenomena—really are. We will not understand by merely reading a Dhamma book or listening to a Dhamma talk. What we need to do is practice meditation. Without practicing meditation, we will not understand the phenomena of this mind and body as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and uncontrollable.

As we learn, we need to put it into *practice*.

When we practice meditation, there are two types: tranquility and *vipassanā*. For tranquility meditation, we try to improve our

concentration. For *vipassanā* meditation, we try to improve our wisdom. We need to practice both.

We need concentration. Without concentration, no wisdom will arise. So we need tranquility meditation to be able to focus our mind on one object. After we gain concentration, we will be able to see the nature of this mind and body—what they *really* are. We need to practice *vipassanā* meditation to see mind and body for what they are.

When you practice *vipassanā* meditation, you should have a primary object of meditation. You may choose your breath—breathing in, breathing out—as your primary object of meditation. Or you may choose your abdominal movement—rising and falling—as your main object of meditation. Both of these aspects of the body, ever since we were born and until we die, are always there. That’s why the Buddha told us to be aware of breathing in, breathing out, or the rising and falling of the abdomen as our main object of meditation.

As you gain concentration, you will see, and you will understand, in every moment.

For example, as you focus your mind on your breath—breathing in, breathing out—it’s always changing. Breathing in disappears. Breathing out disappears. Breathing in, breathing out.

The rising and falling of the abdomen also keep changing, moving, all the time.

As you gain concentration, you will not see this body as a person, as an entity, or as a man or woman; in that moment, what you see is the air element that keeps changing, moving, arising, disappearing. Your mind—the knowing mind, or the noting mind—is also arising and disappearing every moment. Mind and body arise together and disappear together.

You see their nature as impermanent. It’s not a person, there’s no shape, no form, and the noting mind also has no shape, no form.

This nature—it’s just elements moving. The noting is just knowing the object.

We call this *anattā* in the *Pāli* language.

We cannot control our abdomen rising and falling. We cannot control *anything*. *Understand* this uncontrollability.

If we practice *vipassanā* meditation, we will see the characteristics of this mind and body as impermanent, as suffering, and as non-self and uncontrollable.

For this second level of understanding, we need to *practice*.

JUST PRACTICE

When we understand *this point*, we'll know everything in this world: all conditioned things are subject to change.

Then, we will not attach to them. If we attach to something or someone too much—what happens? One day we're going to suffer about it.

We *choose* this attachment. But we need to understand the nature of this mind and body, this conditioned thing.

By practicing *vipassanā* meditation—little by little, step by step—we'll be able to reduce not only attachment, but our anger, delusion, jealousy, and so on.

In *Pāli* terms, we call these things *kilesa*—mental defilements. All this mental defilement is the cause of suffering.

Through the practice of meditation, we'll be able to see the nature of this mind and body. We can reduce mental defilement (greed, anger, and so on) and gain happiness and peace.

And the third level of right understanding: the Four Noble Truths.

Just reading or listening to Dhamma, we won't understand the Four Noble Truths. We need to *practice*. When we practice meditation, we'll see that everything is subject to change; this means we'll see *dukkha*, we'll *know* suffering. We see the suffering, and then, as we see suffering, we won't attach to it. As we're able to eliminate some attachment, some greed, anger, delusion, and so on, we will gain happiness.

We practice meditation to be able to eliminate all of this mental defilement. Hour by hour, step by step, as we practice meditation we will see the true nature of things. Our *vipassanā* knowledge will increase, and eventually, we'll see the end of arising and disappearing, we'll see the end of suffering, and we'll experience the supreme peace—genuine happiness.

We need to *practice* to increase our *vipassanā* knowledge until we gain enlightenment. And then we will see the Four Noble Truths completely.

So, all of you, try to practice to gain this right understanding and then gain liberation—freedom from suffering—and experience eternal happiness in this life.

From the March 5, 2018 talk “Walking Meditation”

All of you come to the temple to perform meritorious deeds. Some of you come to the temple to observe eight precepts and practice meditation.

With regard to meditation technique, we have sitting meditation, walking meditation, standing meditation, and lying down meditation. We can meditate in *any* posture. Try to be mindful of whatever happens in this present moment.

I would like to talk specifically about walking meditation today.

All of you have gotten used to doing things by rushing, rushing, rushing. You can see that since you were young you’ve gotten used to doing something, going somewhere, and wanting to finish it *soon*. You’ve gotten used to rushing.

But when you practice meditation, you’re not supposed to rush.

So here’s what you have to do: when you’re sitting, you start to think about standing up. Then you have the intention to stand. So you make a mental note: “intending, intending, intending.” This means that you know your *intention* first. Then, when you get up, note it as “standing, standing, standing.” We do this slowly and mindfully.

Mindfully interlock your hands in front of you, or behind you, and then get ready to walk mindfully.

When you walk in daily life, at minimum note “walking, walking” while trying to focus the mind on the movement of the legs. Look about five or six feet in front of you but keep your mind focused on the movement of the legs. Every step should be mindful, and you will gain concentration.

When you go back home, or even when you walk from here to your car—maybe 50 or 100 steps—at least be aware of the movement of your legs: just ‘walking, walking, walking’. And from here to your room at the temple is maybe a few minutes, but it means you’re practicing walking meditation for a *few* minutes.

See what happens in this present moment. Try to be aware of it. This means that your mind and your body, as you’re walking, are together in this present moment.

You practice meditation to try to be in the present moment. You’re not thinking about the future or the past—you just know you’re walking. As you know you are walking—every step: ‘walking, walking, walking’—there is no greed, no craving, no attachment, no anger, no delusion, and no worry that arises. It helps your greed, anger, and delusion to practice walking meditation. It’s very useful.

JUST PRACTICE

Now, when you stay at the temple and practice walking meditation, you can mentally say “right, walking” and “left, walking.” Slow it down, in other words.

Walking meditation is very, very easy. Even at home or work, try to be mindful. As soon as you get up in the morning and go to the kitchen or the restroom, try to be mindful of at least ‘walking, walking’. You’ll gain peace of mind. You need peace of mind, otherwise your body is here and your mind is somewhere else. If you’re walking and your mind is somewhere else, it’s not right.

This is mental training. Let the mind and body be together at the present moment. And then you can reduce your greed, anger, and delusion. That’s the benefit of *vipassanā*, or mindfulness, meditation—*akālika*: you gain the benefit right away, here and now. You don’t have to wait for the next life, or next year, or even the next day. Just try to be mindful.

That’s why the Buddha taught us the four foundations of mindfulness. Try to be mindful—to be aware of every physical activity—in your daily life.

With meditation, of course, some may have excuses: “Oh, I don’t have time to go to the temple to practice meditation.” That’s fine—you can do it at home.

Or maybe it’s: “I don’t know the technique.” It’s very easy: when you’re walking, just make a mental note that you know you’re walking—“walking, walking, walking.”

On any given day you’re walking maybe over 10,000 steps. You need to try to be mindful of *all* of them. You need to have mindfulness *a lot*. You need to practice *every* day. Make a strong determination: “I will try the best I can.” Every time you walk, every *step*, try to be mindful.

Make a strong determination to train your mind.

Your first time, for example, maybe you’re walking from here to your car—just “walking, walking, walking”—but you lose it after five steps as your mind goes somewhere else. That’s fine. The next time, try again. Maybe this time you’ll increase it to six steps, 50 steps, or 100 steps.

We need to train this monkey mind to be aware of the movement of the body. This is mental training. We are trying to develop our concentration and mindfulness.

We want to be able to focus the mind on *every* step. This means that we gain great merit—*sīla*—because we don’t do anything bad or say anything bad, because we’re focused on our steps. While we’re practicing this meditation, our precepts are perfect. Our mind isn’t *wanting*, as it

usually does, and we just focus on every step, which means we gain concentration.

When we practice this many, many times, many, many hours, and many, many days, we will understand that walking is matter and the noting mind is mind—just matter and mind. Just physicality and mentality. Both arise together and disappear together.

We'll see that nothing is permanent.

While walking, we focus on the walking. The noting mind arises and disappears with it. We take another step: just 'walking', one step after another—and we see the impermanence of this mind and matter.

This is the purpose of our practice of insight meditation.

Try to be mindful of every step, gain concentration and wisdom, and be able to reduce your greed, anger, and delusion. Eventually, may all of you be able to remove some of these mental defilements and gain enlightenment in this present life.

**From the March 23, 2018 talk
“Do Good and Receive Good Results”**

In Buddhism we believe in the law of *kamma*. In this lies the fate of destiny. Our destiny does not depend only on our actions in previous lives. It also depends on our *present* actions.

Most people say “Oh, this is our fate, our destiny. We have to accept it,” and so on. But this is 50/50. We cannot depend on our fate or our destiny being 100% dictated by our actions in the distant past. In previous lives, whatever we have done, no one knows which was greater—good, or bad. Our previous lives’ actions only account for about 50% of our destiny.

In this present life, we have to try to acknowledge good things. We should try the best we can in this present life to be wholesome in deed, speech and thought. Then the power of our *kamma*—its energies—will become greater and greater. As it becomes greater and greater, the unwholesome deeds from our previous lives will have no chance to get to the source—to *us*.

We need to do good things *every* day. Our actions in this present life will shift our destiny.

So, our destiny doesn’t *only* depend on our previous lives’ actions—it also depends on our *present* actions.

What we need to do as the foundation of our spiritual development is focus on our moral conduct—the five precepts, which are the foundation of spiritual development.

There are only five precepts but they are very hard to uphold, so we need to possess loving kindness, compassion, sympathy, and so on, to help us uphold them. When we’re able to uphold this moral conduct, we will be proud of ourselves. And when we practice meditation it’ll be very easy to gain concentration, because our morality is pure.

And also, when you come to the temple to practice meditation for a longer retreat period, you don’t just practice five precepts—you practice *eight* precepts. These make your mind become pure.

We have two kinds of meditation. Sometimes we practice *samatha*, or tranquility, meditation. But mainly, we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation.

Try to be mindful of every physical activity. Whatever happens to your body, whatever happens to your feelings or sensations, and whatever happens to your thoughts—try to be aware of it.

As for tranquility meditation—such as loving kindness meditation, contemplation of the impurity of the body, contemplation of death, and so on—we just practice that to support our insight *vipassanā* meditation. When we practice tranquility meditation, we will gain peace of mind. But just practicing tranquility will not lead us to realize the true nature of mind and body. That’s why we practice *samatha* a little bit, and then try to practice mindfulness meditation.

Mindfulness meditation is not just crossing your legs and closing your eyes. We have to be mindful in every moment of every movement and of every step every time we walk. Try to be aware of every action. The method is very easy. But we need to practice to get used to it.

We can also practice mindfulness meditation while eating. That’s why I remind our community that during eating there should be no talking. Try to be mindful instead.

Before you start eating, you should radiate loving kindness for awhile, wishing for all those who made this food available to you to be happy and peaceful. After that, be mindful of every movement while eating. When you put the food in your mouth and you’re chewing, make a mental note: “chewing, chewing, chewing.” Trying to be mindful, you’ll see mind and body working together, supporting each other, interrelated, and arising and disappearing right after one another. While eating, you’ll see impermanency of mind and matter. This is wisdom. We call it insight *vipassanā* knowledge.

Everyone can do this.

Mostly people say “Oh, I don’t have time to practice meditation.” If you don’t have time to go to the temple, while eating at least try to be aware of all the physical activities—every movement, every action. This is your meditation time. See that? You eat, for example, for 30 minutes during breakfast, 30 minutes during lunch, and 30 minutes during dinner. So in one day, that’s 90 minutes of meditation.

So try to be mindful while eating. If you try to do it for 90 minutes, at minimum you’ll gain mindful concentration for *nine* minutes. So start from nine minutes and then try to increase it to 10, 15, or 20 minutes.

We need to do this *every* day.

When you’re eating, try not to think about anything. No talking. Try to be mindful. Take some food, then mentally label each movement: “taking,” “putting,” “chewing,” “swallowing.” Try to be mindful of every movement in detail.

See? Even during eating you can practice meditation.

JUST PRACTICE

So try to follow this technique. You'll gain great merit because while you're meditating on your physical activities and mental processes, there's no greed, no anger, no delusion, and no worries arising. You'll gain mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. This means that you'll activate good *kamma*.

And so *every* day you can reduce greed, anger, delusion, and so on. Doing this every day, you'll gain a lot of merit. This is good action—good *kamma*—which will shift your destiny.

You don't need to wish for anything in the future. Try to do good and you'll receive good results. These good actions will shape your future and help you achieve your spiritual goals in this life.

From the March 30, 2018 talk “Noble Treasures”

All of you came to offer lunch to the monks, nuns, and meditators. And one of you made a contribution of \$10,000 for the new meditation building. *Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu*. Another person has dedicated the merit of their generous act to their husband, grandparents, and sisters. This means that all of you are making contributions to accumulate noble treasures.

We have inner treasures and outside treasures. For outside treasures, we have things like our vehicle, our money in the bank, our house, and our jewelry. When we depart from this world, no one can take these outside treasures with them. But as for the *inner* treasures, we can take them with us. These are noble treasures.

We have seven kinds of noble treasures. We have to remember that. And we should try to accumulate them as much as we can every day. We are human beings, we are moral beings, and especially we have the great fortune to have come across the Buddha’s dispensation. We know how to use our time, our lives, and our belongings to be beneficial.

Please remember that we have seven kinds of noble treasures:

- 1) Belief (or confidence; faith). Belief should be associated with wisdom. It’s not blind faith. We should believe in the virtues of the Buddha, his doctrine, and his holy disciples. We should also believe in the law of *kamma*. When we believe in the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the so-called Triple Gem—and we believe in the law of cause and effect, we will do good things. We will have good thoughts, good speech, and do good deeds every day based on this right belief. Today all of you came to the temple because you believe that if you do good things—for example, coming to the temple to offer lunch to holy people practicing meditation—there’s great merit to be gained. Even though you may not have a chance to practice meditation yourself, you’re supporting someone who does. You gain great benefit in return. And as you believe in that way, you sacrifice your belongings and your time and come to the temple to perform this meritorious deed. This confidence, faith, or *saddhā*, is one kind of inner treasure. We should keep this right belief in our hearts;

JUST PRACTICE

- 2) *Sīla*—morality. Moral conduct consists of the five precepts, which we need to uphold firmly and purely. This is a noble, inner treasure. With regard to your speech and deeds, when you uphold this moral conduct you don't harm or hurt others. This is another kind of inner treasure;
- 3) We need knowledge. There is worldly knowledge of spiritual knowledge. We have to study the Buddha's teachings. We should possess this knowledge because the Buddha's teachings are very practical. When we study, we will gain knowledge—we will know what we should do and what we should not do. As you gain knowledge, when you come across an undesirable situation you'll be better able to let it go; otherwise, you will suffer. Whoever gains this knowledge will know that nothing is permanent, and that everything is uncontrollable. As we understand this point, we will not suffer over whatever we come across. We can let it go. That's why we need to study the Buddha's teachings;
- 4) Generosity. We need to share our belongings with others. This is using our belongings to be beneficial;
- 5) Moral shame. This means that you feel shameful when you do something that is unwholesome. We should possess this inner treasure too;
- 6) Moral fear. You fear doing unwholesome actions and having unwholesome speech or thoughts. We call these last two inner treasures *hiri* and *ottappa*. This is very important. When you possess these two—moral shame and moral fear—you will not do any unwholesome deeds or have any unwholesome speech or thoughts; and
- 7) Wisdom. We need to develop our wisdom. We have different levels of wisdom, like at school, where we have kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and so on, until we get our degrees. For the noble treasure, we need to develop all of the levels of wisdom, step by step. At minimum we should have the wisdom that understands that if we do good things we'll receive good consequences. This is one kind of wisdom. And we need to practice meditation to see the phenomena of mind and matter as impermanent, suffering, and of a non-self nature. We need to develop

our wisdom higher and higher. As you begin to see that everything is subject to change, you see that mind and matter is suffering. Where does suffering come from? What is the cause of suffering? When we practice meditation, we will gain this knowledge: the cause of suffering is attachment. Some people say “Oh, I feel sad about something, worry about something.” Where does the sadness, worry, and sorrow come from? It all comes from attachment, craving. As you practice meditation, you will see that this is the cause of suffering. As you see the impermanence of mind and matter, you can reduce your attachment. As you are able to reduce your attachment, you’ll reduce suffering too. And so you’ll see the cessation of suffering. That’s why the Buddha said that we need to practice mindfulness meditation. Try to be mindful. Try to be aware of every physical activity and all mental processes. Whatever your thoughts, whatever your sensations, feelings, or emotions—try to be aware of them. Otherwise, when some kind of external object appears—such as that perceived by the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind—there will be greed, anger, and delusion arising. When we practice mindfulness meditation, we try to be aware of every object that appears before the six sense doors. Then we can purify our minds of greed, anger, and delusion. This is the benefit of practicing mindfulness meditation. As you practice—trying to be aware of objects arising and disappearing—there’s no greed, no anger, no delusion, and no worry arising. You gain the benefit of your practice in the here and now. And as you keep practicing this mindfulness meditation, you can overcome sorrow and lamentation. You can destroy physical suffering and mental suffering. And you can gain enlightenment. You can gain *vipassanā* knowledge. You can gain supramundane knowledge, wisdom, and finally, you can realize the cessation of suffering—*nibbāna*.

All of you: try to accumulate these seven kinds of noble treasures. And may all of you be able to realize the Four Noble Truths and achieve your spiritual goals in this very life.

From the March 31, 2018 talk “Energy”

What does *sādhu* mean? It’s not the Burmese language. It’s not the Thai language. It’s the Buddhist language—the *Pāli* language. It means “well done, well done, great, great, excellent!”

Sometimes we perform meritorious deeds, and sometimes we see others perform meritorious deeds. We feel happy and proud about this. And when we say *sādhu*, we gain merit too.

To accomplish our spiritual goal in this lifetime, we need physical energy. To have a good heart, we have to eat healthy food, do some exercise, and purify our minds from greed, anger, delusion, stress, and so on. And then we’ll have physical energy.

We also need to gain mental energy, especially as we practice meditation to attain enlightenment, which is our spiritual goal. It’s not easy, but keep practicing and don’t give up. Even though we might not reach our spiritual goal today, maybe we will tomorrow. Or if not this year, then maybe next year. Keep practicing. Don’t give up.

We need physical *and* mental energy—they’re interrelated. When we have mental energy, we’ll gain physical energy too. We need to take care of them both.

But just gaining physical and mental energy is not enough. We need to add spiritual energy.

Every day has 24 hours, so we have many, many hours to practice, to gain spiritual energy. Sometimes we practice generosity, which means we gain spiritual energy by acts of giving and making contributions. And we try to observe the five precepts—morality—and we will gain spiritual energy there too. This energy from *sīla*—practicing morality—is stronger than generosity. But we need to have both. After that, we need to practice meditation. This mental development is spiritual energy at its strongest level. We need to perform all of these.

Mental development is very easy. We don’t need to invest any money. We can do it anytime. We know the techniques, the methods—we know how to develop it.

The Buddha recommended that from the time we wake up in the morning, we should try to be aware of what happens to our body, to our thoughts, to our sensations, to our feelings, and to our emotions. Try to be aware of that. We’re practicing mental training, and we can gain spiritual energy starting when we wake up. And we can do it all day long—keep practicing that.

We know how to practice this but we forget. To get used to doing this, keep practicing and practicing. We need to do this every day. If we do, we will know for ourselves if there's improvement.

Mostly, our body and mind are separate—our bodies are sitting here, but our minds are somewhere else. With this mental training, we're training the mind to be with the body in the present moment.

Try not to think about the past or the future. Try to be aware of what happens to the body in this present moment. It's not just about crossing our legs, closing our eyes, and practicing sitting meditation. Anytime, any *moment*, we can develop this mental training. It's called mindfulness meditation.

Try to be *mindful*.

For example, when you're walking, be aware of the movement of your legs and then make a mental note: "walking, walking, walking." The movement of your legs and the noting mind should be simultaneous in the present moment. So if you note "walking, walking, walking" for a few seconds, you'll gain concentration for a few seconds. During this time, your mind is free from greed, anger, and delusion for a few seconds.

If you can practice this for one *minute*, then you will gain concentration for one minute. Your mind will be free from greed, anger, worry, delusion, and so on for one minute.

Keep practicing that.

If you practice every day, you will know for yourself that since you got up in the morning and until you fall asleep in the evening, you walked many, many steps. But if you don't practice meditation, you will not be aware of even *one* step. Try to be aware of every moment, every step.

Do this *every day* to get used to it, and you'll know for yourself, you'll have awareness of almost every step. This means you'll have spiritual energy—your mind will be with your body. Just mind and body, together in the present moment.

Try the best you can.

The Buddha taught us these very simple techniques. Just be mindful, keep practicing, and you will gain spiritual energy.

So try to cultivate physical, mental, and spiritual energy, and gain your spiritual goals in this life.

From the April 10, 2018 talk “Vihāra Donations”

To all of you who donated money for the new building, your contributions are greatly appreciated. We’re going to build a new meditation building that will be for the monks, for the gentlemen, for the women—for *everyone* who comes here to perform meritorious deeds, especially those who come to practice meditation. Whoever comes to use this building performs a meritorious deed. And those who come to practice meditation will gain many kinds of benefits.

What kinds of benefits will they gain?

- 1) They will gain good health and have a long life;
- 2) They will have a good complexion;
- 3) They will gain happiness;
- 4) They will have physical and mental energy; and especially
- 5) They will gain concentration and wisdom. And eventually, they will gain their spiritual goal—enlightenment.

And all of you who donated for this new building will gain five kinds of benefits in return:

- 1) Good health. As you gain good health, you will have a long life;
- 2) A good complexion and perfect organs;
- 3) Physical and mental pleasure;
- 4) Physical and mental energy; and especially
- 5) Concentration and wisdom. And you will fulfill your goals, for sure.

According to the law of cause and effect, by allowing someone to gain these kinds of benefits, in return you will also gain these kinds of benefits.

This meditation building is useful for everyone who comes to use it and for the donors too. It’s not going to be used by just one family—many families, many people of many nationalities and many religions, for many years, will find it useful.

We came together to build Chaiya Meditation Monastery. Just look at the present building. This coming June will be the 10-year anniversary of it being built. Over that 10-year period, on any one day perhaps 100 people may come to study and listen to a Dhamma talk, observe five or eight precepts, offer lunch or breakfast to the monks, or to practice meditation. Many thousands of people have come here to

practice meditation in order to gain some kind of benefit—all because donors came together and built this building.

But this new building is for meditators only. It is for everyone to practice meditation. It's going to be a 2-story building with sleeping quarters, 22 rooms, and 9,000 square feet. Many hundreds of people can come to practice meditation together and have silent retreats. We're going to make this available to people every day for practicing noble silence, walking meditation, sitting meditation, and listening to Dhamma talks. This current building will then be used for general purposes.

The new building will be very useful for everyone. That's why I greatly appreciate your *saddhā* and all of your donations.

So by the power of your contributions, may all of you gain longevity, beauty, happiness, energy, and wisdom. And may you achieve your spiritual goals in this life.

And coming Friday and Saturday—the 13th and 14th—is the Buddhist New Year. We will celebrate according to Buddhist tradition and culture, including special chanting and prayer for those who passed away—our ancestors, our parents—and we'll also offer gold leaf, water and flowers to the Buddha statues.

So, if you have time, I invite all of you to come to participate in the Buddhist New Year. And, on Sunday, April 15, we'll have the groundbreaking ceremony for the new meditation building. So we'll have alms giving for three days (the 13-15th), and I've invited about 25-30 monks to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony. On Sunday, at 10 am we'll have alms giving, at 11 am we'll have lunch together, and after we finish lunch—at about 12:15 pm—we will start the groundbreaking ceremony.

Bring your friends and your family to attend this special event. You have done a good thing. We will transfer a portion of the merit and you will receive blessings from the monks.

From the April 23, 2018 talk “Make Use of Life”

Today is a Buddhist holy day, so all of you came to the temple to perform meritorious deeds. This is a great opportunity for all of us to develop virtue perfections—*pāramī*. The Buddha said that to be born as a human being is not easy. Maybe you should think about that.

We have four kinds of human beings: some human beings look like animals, some look like hell beings, some look like hungry ghosts, and some are spiritual beings.

The Buddha said that to be a *human* being is to be a *spiritual* being. A spiritual person is not like other kinds of beings.

As human beings, we are noble beings especially fortunate to have come across the dispensation of the Buddha. We have a great opportunity to study the Buddha’s teachings and make use of our lives to be beneficial.

Some people, when they have a vacation, for example, they don’t understand and just waste their lives: they go somewhere for fishing or hunting, or even just stay at home playing games—a waste of their time.

But all of you are not like that. Whenever you have time—maybe one hour, one day, one week, or one month—use it to improve your life and make it meaningful.

How about using your belongings to be beneficial?

You can perform meritorious deeds every day, even if you don’t have a chance to go to the temple every day. Use your home or your shrine room as your temple—as a meditation room. Pay respect to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*. Offer some fruit, some flowers, candles, incense, and so on. Do some chanting, recollect the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*. Radiate loving kindness. And practice *vipassanā* meditation. You can do this every day. This means you’re a spiritual person.

Spiritual beings can perfect their virtue higher and higher every day. This kind of human being is hard to be in this world. That’s what the Buddha said.

Since we were young, we had good parents, good teachers, good environments, and good spiritual leaders to train and teach us. So now we know how to use our time to be beneficial, and how to live peacefully, happily, blamelessly, and wisely in this world.

So we need to perform all of these kinds of merit every day. If we do so, even as we grow older and older—as our lives become shorter and shorter—we study the Buddha’s teachings, we practice meditation, and

we see the nature of mind and body, it makes us become wiser and wiser. As we become wiser, we can reduce our attachments, our anger, delusion, worry, stress, and so on.

The Buddha said that this is the right way of life. This is how to live a beneficial life.

I'd like all of you to try the best you can to perform these meritorious deeds and practice meditation. When you practice meditation, you gain great merit and great benefits.

You can practice *dāna*, *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *vipassanā* meditation too. The last of these we find in Buddhism only.

So as human beings we are fortunate to be Buddhist. I'd like all of you to make use of these opportunities and practice meditation every day. As you practice every day, you will know for yourself. You will be able to reduce craving, aversion, and delusion, little by little. All of this craving, aversion, and delusion are the causes of suffering.

So we practice meditation to see the nature of mind and body as suffering, and then to be able to abandon craving, which is the cause of suffering. Then we will reach the cessation of suffering; we will gain enlightenment.

This all depends on our practice and our *pāramī*—virtue perfection.

We need to enhance our *pāramī* every day, so that when the time comes we will gain our spiritual goals. Try the best you can. Practice some generosity and try to observe the five precepts firmly. If you have the opportunity, observe the eight precepts, the ten precepts, or even the 227 precepts [see *Pāṭimokkha*], and try to recollect the virtues of the Buddha, the Buddha's doctrine, and the Buddha's holy disciples by chanting and so on. And also practice loving kindness meditation. We need that. And don't forget to practice *vipassanā* mindfulness meditation.

By doing these—*dāna*, *sīla*, *samatha*, and *vipassanā*—may all of you be able to gain your spiritual goal in this life.

From the April 26, 2018 talk “The Twelve Bases”

Yesterday I was talking about the five aggregates. When we practice meditation, we should see physicality and mentality—matter and mind, these realities. These five aggregates are form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. We should see these five aggregates when we practice meditation. Yesterday I talked about this. So today I’d like to talk about the twelve bases.

When we practice meditation, we should know the twelve bases. We have internal bases and external bases.

We have six internal bases, or internal sources. In *Pāli*, we call this *āyatana*—bases, sources, or spheres. When consciousness and its concomitants arise, we call these bases. So with internal bases, we have our eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base, and mind-base. The eye-base, for example, means the sensitive part of the eye. The sensitive part of the ear is called the ear-base, etc. It’s easy to remember. The internal bases are eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, body-sensitivity, and mind-sensitivity.

We have six external bases too. These are visible objects, sounds, odors, tastes, tangible objects, and mental objects. We call them bases because it’s the place, or the sphere, for the mind to arise. Without having eye-sensitivity or visible objects, we would not see anything: no eye-consciousness would arise. When we have eye-sensitivity and we have visible objects, then eye-consciousness arises: we *see*.

So based on the internal and external bases, and eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc., different kinds of wholesome and unwholesome consciousness arise. We call these *āyatana* or the twelve bases.

We die and are reborn in the cycle of birth and death—*samsāra*. There’s no end. Why? Because of the six internal bases and six external bases.

If, for example, we see something likeable in our daily lives, then greed, craving, and attachment arise. If we don’t like it, then anger arises. This is based on our eye-sensitivity, and based on the visible object—then, greed, anger or delusion arises.

The Buddha said that what we need to counter this is awareness, or mindfulness.

Mindfulness is like security. Try to observe what kind of external objects appear through the six sense spheres. We have to be mindful.

If we're mindful—especially for meditators—when we see something, it's just 'seeing'. Don't think more than that. It's just 'seeing, seeing'. Don't allow yourself to think, "I like it" or "I don't like it," or "It's beautiful" or "It's ugly." It's just 'seeing'.

What are we seeing? We're seeing reality—just form, just a visible object. If we see it as a person, as a man, or as a woman, and so on, greed or anger will arise.

So if we see some visible object, it's just 'seeing'. The object isn't always there—it just arises temporarily and then disappears. This means the form—the visible object—is impermanent.

How about our eye-sensitivity? This also is always arising and disappearing, as is its nature.

How about eye-consciousness, or seeing-consciousness? Just arising and disappearing, one after another.

When we understand this point—that it's just mind and matter, physicality and mentality—we won't see it as form, a shape, as a person, or as a man or woman. Then no greed, no anger and no delusion arise.

We need to understand what is reality and what is concept. So our meditation object should be *reality*—not a concept.

When we see something or hear something, for instance, greed, anger, or delusion arises. This greed, anger, or delusion is the cause of suffering. We'll suffer about that. And not just in this life—in future lives we'll have to be reborn.

In our daily lives, greed, anger and delusion arise many, many times. Just think about that. It means we accumulate bad *kamma*. And when we die, this bad *kamma* gives results—maybe we'll be reborn in an unhappy state. That's why we need to protect our internal six sense bases.

Whatever objects appear, try to use mindfulness, or awareness. If we have awareness, then wisdom will follow. They are working together. This is wholesome consciousness.

If we have effort, mindfulness and concentration, we will understand that it's all just mind and matter. This is wisdom. And there will be no room for mental defilement to arise.

That's why we need to practice mindfulness meditation.

If we see, hear, smell, taste, or touch something, it's just 'seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching'.

I'd like all of you to try the best you can to be aware of every physical activity and mental process. Whatever happens in your thoughts, in your sensations or feelings—whatever you see, hear, smell, taste,

JUST PRACTICE

touch, or think about—try to be aware of it, and you will see just mind and matter arising and disappearing, one after another. This means you see the truth. By seeing that, you'll know it's just phenomena arising and disappearing—impermanent. You will not attach to the body, to anyone, or to anything. As you don't attach to anything or anyone, there's no suffering.

So how do we reach the cessation of suffering? We need to understand mind and body as impermanent, suffering and uncontrollable. Try to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation.

May all of you understand the nature of mind and body, and eventually be able to reach the cessation of suffering and gain enlightenment in this very life.

From the April 27, 2018 talk “Noble Living”

In our lives, in our families, and in our society, we have to gain peace and happiness. We need to follow the Buddha’s teachings, because this is noble living.

In *Pāli* terms, we’re talking about *mettā*—loving kindness. We need loving kindness. The second thing we’re talking about is called *karunā*—compassion. The third thing is *muditā*—sympathetic joy. And the fourth thing is called *upekkhā*—equanimity. If we live nobly like this, there are no problems in our families or in our society.

It’s not just a practice, but a fully sublime state: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

We need to love ourselves too. How do we love ourselves? Try to do good things. Whoever does good things loves themselves. And when we do good things by deed, speech and thought, we will receive good results. This is loving kindness.

Second, compassion: we need to be compassionate to our body too, by not doing any unwholesome things. See that? In doing that, we’re compassionate to ourselves. If we do unwholesome things—*evil* things—we’ll receive bad consequences. So we need compassion for ourselves too.

The third one: we as moral beings have the great opportunity to do many kinds of good things. When we do good things, we’re proud of ourselves. Whenever we think about our life—our deeds, speech, and thoughts—we’re proud of ourselves. We gain self-esteem. And we’re always happy. So we need to do good things, reflect on that, and try to improve that. Think about this life: as human beings, we do things not only for ourselves but also for the welfare and happiness of others. We need to be proud of *ourselves* too.

And the last one: we need equanimity in our lives. We will not see, hear, or otherwise experience *only* good things. Sometimes we come across undesirable situations. We need to have equanimity—don’t allow anger to arise. Sometimes we come across desirable objects. And so, craving arises. We have to be mindful, and have *equanimity*—don’t allow craving to arise. Wherever you live, whatever you see, you hear, or you experience, try to have equanimity. Don’t allow anger or craving to arise.

We need to practice these four sublime states, or *brahmavihārā*—this noble living—in our daily lives. And then we will gain peace and happiness. These *brahmavihārā* are part of the 40 objects of meditation—*kammaṭṭhāna*. So, *mettā* or loving kindness; *karunā* or compassion;

JUST PRACTICE

muditā or sympathetic joy; and *upekkhā* or equanimity are meditation techniques to practice.

I'd like all of you to not only practice *vipassanā* insight meditation, but also sometimes practice these four sublime states—practice noble living—and may all of you gain peace and happiness.

From the May 4, 2018 talk “Three Worlds”

A doctor asked me about the three kinds of worlds. According to Buddhist cosmology, we have three worlds, with 31 planes of existence. These 31 planes are classified as the three worlds.

The first world, we call the sensual world, or *kāmaloka*. This sensual world has 11 planes: four planes of misery (hell, the animal kingdom, and the spheres of hungry ghosts and demons)—these are unhappy states; the human world; and six celestial worlds. So, these 11 planes we call the sensual world.

All living beings in the sensual world—these 11 planes of existence—enjoy visible objects, sounds, odors, tastes, and touch (as there are *five* sensual objects). Every day we enjoy seeing or hearing or smelling or tasting or touching. Enjoying these sensual objects involves craving, which is why every day our time is passed by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. In the celestial world, it's the same: they enjoy seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching, too.

So there are the four unhappy states, the human state, and the six celestial (*deva*) worlds in what we call the sensual world, or sensual sphere.

Above the sensual world, we have *rūpaloka*—form spheres. All the *brahmās* live in this form sphere world. To reach this level, we need to practice tranquility meditation to gain some kind of *jhāna*, or absorption. We have multiple levels of *jhāna*. If we gain the first level of *jhāna*, after we die we become a *brahmā* in the form sphere world. Being reborn in the *Brahmā* world depends on our *jhāna*. There are 16 spheres here.

If we practice meditation higher than *rūpajhāna*—which we call *arūpajhāna*—we'll be reborn in the formless sphere (*arūpaloka*). In this realm we have four spheres. Again, it depends on the *jhāna* we have gained.

So there are three worlds: the sensual world, the form sphere, and the formless sphere. Collectively, we call them the three worlds. We have 31 planes: 11 planes from the sensual world, 16 planes from the *Brahmā* world (*rūpabrahmā*), and four from the formless (*arūpa*) sphere.

If we don't gain the highest state of enlightenment, we have to be reborn again among the 31 planes of existence. Our realm of rebirth depends on whether we do unwholesome deeds, unwholesome actions.

If we do unwholesome deeds, we'll be reborn in a state of misery and become a hell being, an animal, a hungry ghost, or a demon. If we do good things in our lives, after we die we become a human being. We'll be

JUST PRACTICE

in this human world again. But our life will be better than this current life. And if we do a lot of merit in our life, by the power of that merit after we die we'll be reborn in the celestial world and become an angel.

See that? No one creates these conditions. It's our own *kamma* that shapes our destiny to become a human being or a celestial being. It depends on our good *kamma*.

If we practice *samatha* meditation and gain *jhāna*, according to the power of that *jhāna* after we die we go to be reborn in either the form sphere or the formless sphere.

But the Buddha said that being reborn in these three worlds—the sensual sphere, the form sphere, and the formless sphere—still means being born, decay, and death. We cannot run away from death. Even if we don't want it, one day we have to face it.

So the three worlds are like a prison. In this life, we're in a prison, and *after* this life, we change to another prison. We cannot escape birth, disease, and death—and so we have to come across suffering. But when we gain the fourth state of enlightenment, there's no more rebirth and we will end *samsāra*—the cycle of rebirth and death.

Therefore, all of us, even though we may not gain the highest state and become an *arahant*, if we do good things and practice meditation, perhaps we will gain the first stage of enlightenment and become a *sotāpanna*—a stream-enterer. Then, after we die we will not be reborn in a state of misery. We'll at least be born in the human world, a celestial world, or higher.

I would like all of you to try to do good things, and practice meditation every day to see the phenomena of mind and matter as impermanent, as unsatisfactory, and as having a non-self nature. When you see these phenomena of mind and matter as they truly are, you will not attach to your body or to your belongings. This means you'll be able to reduce your craving and attachment, which is the cause of suffering, and you will gain happiness in this life.

If you keep practicing in this way, as your *vipassanā* knowledge increases—higher and higher—you will finally be able to see the end of suffering. This means you'll gain enlightenment.

So I'd like all of you to try to do good things, practice meditation, and gain enlightenment—free from suffering, free from greed, anger, and delusion—in this life.

From the May 5, 2018 talk “Why Meditate?”

When we practice meditation, we focus our mind on our primary object—on our breath or on our abdominal movement. When we gain some extent of concentration, we can see visions appear—not to our eyes, but to our mind. We call these mental objects. This is possible because we have gained some extent of concentration. When we have *deep* concentration, we may know past lives. We call this *samatha nimitta*—the sign of concentration. It’s not strange—it’s natural.

We need to practice meditation, not just on the Buddha’s holy days, but *every* day.

Why do we need to practice meditation? Do you think about that? The purpose of practicing meditation is to get rid of our wrong view. Because of our wrong view, we suppose that these five aggregates of clinging—this concept of mind and body—is the same person, is *us*. But really, it’s not. We’re trying to reduce this wrong view. We need to practice meditation to get rid of it. What do we see when we practice meditation? We see mind and matter as the five aggregates, just arising and disappearing. We will not see them as a person.

Some people might say, “I’m not like that. I’m the same person. I have the same mind.” But it’s not the same mind. Every moment—every *second*—the mind is arising and disappearing, one right after another. It’s not the same mind. Every moment, a new mental-moment comes—the old one disappears and a new one comes. This body is also not the same as when we were born. These organs, our “self,” this function, is just arising and disappearing every moment. It keeps changing. The old one disappears and a new one comes. It’s continuously arising and disappearing, one after another. When we gain concentration and wisdom, we’ll see the nature of mind and matter. And then, we will not attach to the body. There’s no longer wrong view. We’ll know that this body—even if we say it’s “our” body—is just the four great essential elements: the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element. It’s just four essential elements. If we see it as a form, it’s just a concept. If we see a concept, we’re attached to the concept. The attachment to this concept causes suffering. But when we see its real nature, we won’t attach to it. That’s why we need to practice meditation.

When you focus your mind on your breath, in every moment you’re noting the breathing—this air element—arising and disappearing, arising and disappearing, one after another. It’s not the same breath. And then you start to realize that this is just the air element—an old one

JUST PRACTICE

disappearing and a new one arising, one after another. You'll see the impermanence of the air element. And it's not just the air element you see moving and changing, arising and disappearing. You'll realize that the noting—or *knowing*—mind also keeps arising and disappearing. Mind and body are arising together and disappearing together. They've been doing that every moment since you were born and will continue to do it every moment until you die. When you see this truth, you see the suffering. If you see the suffering, you won't attach to it. And this means that you'll be able to abandon craving, attachment. Attachment is the cause of suffering. We need to *see* this suffering.

So, why do we need to practice meditation?

1) To remove our personal wrong view; and

2) As ordinary people—as worldlings—our minds are constantly thinking about the past or the future. They keep thinking all the time. So what happens? Sometimes we like to eat a certain type of food and sometimes we don't like it. Greed and anger are always arising. Why? Because of delusion. We're not seeing the truth. Delusion is ignorance. Without practicing meditation, there's only greed, anger, and delusion arising. But when we practice meditation, we try to reduce this ignorance. We try to see what's happening with our body, our feelings, our sensations, our emotions, and our thoughts. This knowing mind leads to wisdom. When wisdom arises, there's no room for ignorance. When we have no ignorance, no greed or anger follows. So we need to practice meditation to reduce *all* kinds of mental defilements.

In our previous lives, and even in *this* life, we've had much good and bad—wholesome and unwholesome—*kamma*. One action can produce one result, or one life. As an ordinary person, we've done many kinds of unwholesome actions. If the results of these unwholesome actions get to the source—to *us*—in this present life, we will face a lot of suffering. And in the next life, it's possible to be reborn in an unhappy state too. So we try to practice meditation to gain enlightenment, to be able to reduce or remove our suffering.

Some may say, "Oh, the practice of meditation is too hard." Good things cannot be gotten easily. To get good things, you have to work hard. We have to *practice*. It's not beyond our ability, it's within our reach. Try the best you can to practice meditation to see the nature of mind and matter—what they *really* are—and thus be able to reduce greed, anger, and delusion, and finally, may all of you be able to gain your spiritual goals in this life.

From the May 11, 2018 talk “Two Kinds of Treasure”

All of you came to offer lunch to the monks, the nuns, and the meditators. Some of you come on your birthday to perform meritorious deeds. Most of you come every week. When you come to perform meritorious deeds, it's like you've come to deposit a noble treasure in the bank of *Buddhasāsana*—the dispensation of the Buddha.

We have two kinds of treasures—worldly treasures, which you can use in this life but not in the next life; and noble treasures. Whatever you deposit in the bank of the *Buddhasāsana*, you can withdraw not only in this present life but also in future lives until you gain the highest states of enlightenment and enter *nibbāna*.

With worldly treasures, we hear every day about money, gold, silver, diamonds, rubies, cars or homes being destroyed or disappearing due to fraud, earthquakes, hurricanes or fire. Right? We saw a few months ago where many houses burned down in California. We can't rely on these treasures. Even if we deposit our worldly treasures in the bank, someone could still steal them if they know some of our personal security information. These types of treasures are impermanent. They make us happy, but then we also worry about them—they make us *suffer*.

But as for noble treasures, before you even deposit them you feel very happy—no one forced you to do it. These noble treasures are mainly generosity, morality, and wisdom. So, like today, all of you came here to offer lunch, offer *saṅghadāna*, and so on. This means that you're depositing noble treasure in the bank of *Buddhasāsana*. And you also observed the five precepts. This is another kind of noble treasure. And you did morning chanting; you celebrated the glory of the Buddha, the Buddha's doctrine, and the Buddha's noble disciples. You also radiated loving kindness—another kind of noble treasure. Practicing tranquility meditation is a noble treasure. This is *samathabhāvana*. You also sit and practice mindfulness meditation—*vipassanābhāvana*. This is what we *should* do.

This noble treasure, or inner treasure, will be with you for the rest of your life. And as you have noble treasures in your heart, they will protect you. The Buddha taught that whoever performs meritorious deeds will be protected by that merit. And even though you will one day pass away, all of this noble treasure will follow you into the next life, in the same way that your shadow follows you.

As an example, whoever possesses the noble treasure of *dāna*—you make contributions, practice generosity and charity—in the next life

JUST PRACTICE

won't have to worry about a place to live, clothing, or food. Everything will be perfect because they used to practice generosity. They will be rich, and they won't have to wish for it. *Be generous.*

As you restrain your physical and verbal actions in this life, you possess morality. When you think about yourself, your deeds, and your speech—you think about the fact that you're not harming anyone—you're proud of yourself. You gain self-respect. In the next life, you will have a long life and be healthy, for sure. This is according to the law of nature.

And as you practice tranquility and *vipassanā* meditation in this life, you gain insight knowledge—wisdom. This wisdom can't be learned from school or from college. We have to learn it from mind and body. That's why we practice meditation; we're trying to see what happens to our body, our feelings, our emotions, and our thoughts. They will show us their nature. To see the nature of mind and body, we need to sit still, relax, and focus on mind and body. If we see what they really are, if we know their nature, this is wisdom. As we know their nature, we see their impermanence. We'll see that in every moment there is only arising and disappearing, changing, all the time. This means that we'll see the impermanence of mind and matter. This arising and disappearing without end—we call that *suffering*. And we can't control mind and body—it's beyond our control. We call this *anattā*—non-self.

So seeing the nature of mind and body is wisdom. As we see that nothing lasts long and that nothing is permanent in this world, we will not attach to our body, to anyone, or to anything. This means that we'll be able to reduce craving and attachment. This craving and attachment is the cause of suffering. When we're able to reduce or remove the cause of suffering, we'll gain happiness.

As we practice meditation, as our *vipassanā* knowledge becomes higher and higher, we can gain supramundane knowledge—we can gain enlightenment. Even if we don't gain enlightenment in this life, we can gain it in the next life. And as we accumulate noble treasures, even if we don't gain enlightenment in the next life, our subsequent lives will become better and better—so we won't have to worry about *samsāra*.

I would like all of you to try the best you can to accumulate all of these noble treasures and deposit them in the bank of *Buddhasāsana*—the dispensation of the Buddha. May these noble treasures protect you, may you be happy, and may you finally see the truth and gain enlightenment in this life.

From the May 13, 2018 talk “Three Kinds of Energy”

Some of you come to the temple with gratitude, thinking about your parents, especially the kindness of your moms. You come to perform meritorious deeds. And most of you have been coming here to offer lunch for almost twenty years. We need peace, happiness, and success in our lives. And we need to accomplish our spiritual goals.

So what do we need to do?

Briefly:

- 1) We need physical energy. If there’s no physical energy, we cannot do anything;
- 2) We need mental energy. Even though we may have physical energy, if we lack mental energy we will not be able to do wholesome deeds. We need to gain mental energy to deal with the vicissitudes of our daily lives, which are sometimes good and sometimes bad, right? Up and down. This is life. It isn’t always up. It isn’t always down. When we come across a situation, we should have the mental energy to face it—good or bad.

So what do we need to do? We should have positive thinking. But we should always try to have a realistic way of thinking too, using wise and proper attention. And then we will gain mental energy.

When we gain mental energy, it will support our physical energy because mind and body are interrelated. They depend on each other. But just possessing physical and mental energy is not enough;

What else do we need?

Think of a triangle. All three sides depend on each other for stability or else the whole thing easily falls down. So the critical third side of our triangle is:

- 3) Spiritual energy. This means that every day as moral beings, we have the great opportunity to develop our *pāramī* virtue perfections through our speech, thoughts, and deeds. We can do this every day. Like today, for instance, all of you

JUST PRACTICE

came to perform meritorious deeds—offering lunch and *saṅghadāna*. This is a form of spiritual energy. Also, you can work to restrain your physical and verbal actions by taking the five precepts. This also means you gain spiritual energy. And all of you can recollect the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the so-called Triple Gem—by reciting them. This means that you’re practicing *samatha*, or tranquility, meditation. That’s another kind of spiritual energy.

Also, we can close our eyes, cross our legs, and focus on our breath—in and out—or our abdominal movement—rising and falling. As we do, we’ll see the nature of the air element arising and disappearing, one after another. This means that we see the impermanency of this body. The noting mind—just knowing we’re breathing in and out, or knowing there is the rising and falling of our abdomen—also is arising and disappearing, one after another. This means that mind and matter are arising together and disappearing together, in every moment. In seeing this, we gain insight (*vipassanā*) knowledge. That’s another kind of spiritual energy.

We need to possess this spiritual energy. This spiritual energy will protect us, for sure. It’s the law of nature—if we do good things, we will see good consequence.

So to have peace, happiness, and success in both worldly and spiritual affairs, we need to possess these three kinds of energy. I’d like all of you to try the best you can to gain physical energy, mental energy, and spiritual energy. By possessing these three kinds of energy, may all of you be successful at whatever you’re longing for in this life.

From the May 18, 2018 talk “Internal Spheres”

Today all of you came as usual to offer lunch to the monks, the nuns, and the meditators. One of you donated \$540. *Sādhu*. The biggest sponsor for this meditation monastery has donated \$10,700 every year for over 20 years. She has come to the temple to make a donation every week for 28 years—amazing. Over the years she has donated about \$300,000 already. Today, another donor made a donation of over \$7,000 to the temple and to the monks. And the lady sitting next to him made a donation of \$10,000 for the new building. *Sādhu*.

In our lives we have material treasures, such as gold or silver or diamonds or jade. We have to take care of these treasures because they're very valuable. So people will put them in a safe box or a bank for safety.

Our human body has internal spheres.

What does this *mean*?

It means that we have six kinds of internal spheres, or internal bases. One of them is our eye-sensitivity, which is very important and valuable. Without having eye-sensitivity, we can't see anything. So it's very important for our human lives. We also have ear-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, body-sensitivity, and mind-sensitivity. They are also very important.

If we use our internal spheres properly—*wisely*—we will gain many kinds of benefit, not only in worldly affairs but even in our spiritual affairs. If we don't use them properly, they're very dangerous. Like our material treasures, if we use them properly we gain a lot of merit. If we use them the wrong way, they're very dangerous. Some people have a lot of money or power, and maybe they try to kill someone. They're not using their treasures properly or wisely. Very dangerous.

Just as we must protect our material treasures, we must guard our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. We have to protect them. If we don't protect these six sense spheres, it's very *dangerous*.

Why is it dangerous?

We can't forever close our eyes, or close our ears, our nose, our tongue, our body, or our mind, so we have to receive exterior objects all the time. So we see, we hear, we smell, we taste, we touch, and we think.

We need to guard these internal spheres. *How*?

If we see something, we need awareness—or mindfulness. Without mindfulness, if we see something we'll attach to it. If we see some kind of visible object that's good or beautiful, and we like it,

JUST PRACTICE

attachment arises. This is because we didn't guard our eye-sensitivity—therefore, attachment arose. And sometimes we see undesirable objects. And naturally, anger arises.

So we need to guard the six sense spheres. We need to protect them from mental defilement—greed, anger, delusion, worry, and so on. We need to practice meditation. Without practicing meditation—as an ordinary person, as a worldlying—when we see or hear some desirable object, *lobha* arises. *Lobha* means craving or attachment. When we see an undesirable object, anger arises. See that?

If we know how to use this properly, we'll gain a lot of benefit. That's why we need to practice meditation. That way, whatever we see, we hear, we smell, we taste, we touch, or we think about, it's just 'seeing', 'hearing', 'smelling', 'tasting', 'touching', or 'thinking'—just *knowing*. And then you see their nature. The external objects—visible objects, sounds, odors, tastes, touching, cognized objects—all of these external objects, just come and go. They're just temporary. Nothing lasts long. When we practice meditation, we'll see that.

Even our six sense spheres—our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind—also just arise and disappear. They're always changing. So we can see the impermanence of the six sense spheres too.

How about the knowing mind?

We see and we hear—this is just eye-consciousness and ear-consciousness. When an object disappears, the seeing- or hearing-consciousness (or whatever) also just disappears.

Everything—mind and matter, the six sense spheres, the six sense objects, and the knowing mind—is just arising and disappearing, one after another. When we see this point, there's no greed, no anger, and no delusion that arises.

That's why we need to protect our valuable internal spheres. And then, when we see, we hear, we smell, we taste, we touch, or we think about something, wisdom arises. Wisdom is associated with wholesome consciousness. This wholesome consciousness will lead us to the cessation of suffering—to enlightenment.

I would like all of you to try the best you can to practice meditation. Guard your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind without letting *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (anger), or *moha* (delusion) arise. And then, may all of you gain peace and happiness, and also achieve your spiritual goal in this present life.

From the May 20, 2018 talk “The Best Merit”

One of the ladies asked me what we should do to get the greatest benefit when we make donations. This is very important. Buddhist people like to make contributions to their temple from the time they are born, through childhood, and for the rest of their lives. To gain the greatest benefit while doing this, we should do it in three ways:

- 1) Our contribution should be accompanied by a pleasant feeling of happiness;
- 2) Our contribution should be associated with wisdom. This means that we know that making a contribution is good *kamma*—we recognize that if we do something good, we will receive good results. The Buddha said that this kind of attitude, this way of thinking, is wisdom. We should have this kind of wisdom; and
- 3) Our contribution should not come because someone forced us to do it; it should come from our heart.

If you make a contribution with an indifferent attitude—meaning, you just do it, not because it makes you happy; if you make a contribution but there’s no wisdom behind it—for instance, you just do what you see others doing without thinking about the good *kamma* in making the contribution; or if you make a contribution because someone tried to force you to do it, saying “You have to do that,” then the contribution is still meritorious but it’s not the best kind of merit.

Whatever you do, it should be done in the best way. Everyone has something to give, but the attitude, the thought behind it, is very important. The mind is very important. Even if you do a small thing, if you are happy about it and you know what you’re doing—that is, it’s accompanied by wisdom and it comes from your heart—you’ll receive a great result. So please remember, whatever you do, make contributions with happiness, with wisdom, and unprompted—no one forced you to do it. Do it from your heart. This wholesome consciousness is the greatest attitude. It’s the greatest cause. And you’ll receive the greatest consequences.

By the power of your contributions—done with happiness, with wisdom, and unprompted—may all of you receive the greatest benefit, which is *nibbāna*, the cessation of suffering, in this life.

From the May 26, 2018 talk “Act Like the Full Moon”

We are moral beings. We have to live and practice like the full moon. We should not be like the sun in summertime. The sun in summertime in Las Vegas is 120F degrees. Too hot, right? After the sun sets, how do people feel? “Oh, my goodness. Now we’re happy because the sun has set.” It’s a little cooler.

We’re not supposed to act like the sun. Instead, we should act like the full moon.

What *about* the full moon?

Everyone delights in the full moon. The light of the full moon is very cool and peaceful. Everyone enjoys full moon days.

So we should act like the full moon. When we see each other, from our hearts we should radiate loving kindness, compassion, patience, understanding, and honesty.

From the May 27, 2018 talk “Vesak Day”

The ladies asked me about Vesak Day. It’s coming on Tuesday. We’ll be commemorating the Buddha’s special events: the day he was born, the day he gained supreme enlightenment, and the day he passed away. These all occurred on the full moon day of May. All over the world we celebrate Vesak Day, or *Vesākha Pūjā* Day.

The Buddha was a prince. He was born in India in a place that today belongs to Nepal. The Buddha-to-be appeared to this world after countless lifetimes. It wasn’t easy. He had to develop his *pāramī*—his virtue perfections. To be a Buddha is *not* easy.

All of us are very fortunate to be human beings. We have a great chance to study and practice the Buddha’s teaching. The Buddha’s teaching is liberation, how to free ourselves from suffering. To be free from suffering, firstly we need to free ourselves from mental defilements—greed, anger, delusion, and so on. If we cannot get free from greed, anger, and delusion, we cannot be free from suffering. That’s why we practice meditation.

Today all of you came to offer lunch to the monks and to offer *saṅghadāna*. This is a way to reduce your attachment, your craving. Mostly, as it is human nature, we attach to our body and to our belongings. But now you’ve sacrificed some of your belongings by making offerings, to give to another. This means that you have eliminated some of your attachment. We need to practice many ways to reduce our attachment, our greed, which is the cause of suffering.

Sometimes, you come to the temple and observe the eight precepts. As part of our human nature, we are attached to our body, attached to our clothes, and attached to our food. That’s why when meditators observe the eight precepts, they wear a uniform—one uniform, one color—and there’s no dinner anymore. So, after noon and until 6 am, there’s 18 hours of fasting. This fasting means that you’re practicing to reduce your attachment to food.

And at home, you can sleep in your luxurious bed, sit in comfortable chairs, on a sofa, and so on. But when you come to observe the eight precepts at the temple, you just lie on the floor—very simple, easy. This is another way to work to reduce your attachment—little by little, step by step.

If we don’t have a chance to observe the eight precepts, we need to restrain our deeds and our speech by keeping our five precepts firmly and purely. To do this, we need loving kindness, compassion, sympathy,

honesty, and wisdom. Otherwise, we cannot restrain our physical deeds and our speech.

There are many, many ways to practice to reduce our mental defilements. The Buddha's teachings give us everything we need to free ourselves from suffering and mental defilement. When we practice generosity, for instance, it means that we're giving something to others—and we feel happy about it. This happiness is wholesome consciousness. We gain merit.

So we try to do wholesome deeds every day. This follows the Buddha's teachings.

The Buddha passed away nearly 2,600 years ago already, but his teachings remain the same. So we regard the teachings as the living Buddha. As he is our teacher, whoever follows the teachings will have a chance to gain enlightenment. That's where *Vesākha Pūjā* comes in. We celebrate it and try to follow his teachings. And we pay respect to his wisdom, his doctrine, and to his holy disciples. This coming Tuesday, as the *Buddha Pūjā*, *Dhamma Pūjā*, and *Saṅgha Pūjā*, we will pay homage to the Buddha, his teachings, and his holy disciples.

The Buddha was born on the full moon day of May. He gained supreme enlightenment on the full moon day of May. And he passed away on the full moon day of May. Even though the Buddha has already passed away, we should still remember his wisdom, his kindness, and his compassion, and we should try to follow his footprint as much as we can. This means that we pay respect to the Buddha, not only in a material way but by *practicing*—we call it *paṭipatti pūjā* or *Dhamma Pūjā*. Try to follow his teachings.

If we try the best we can to observe the five precepts firmly and purely, and we recollect the Buddha's virtues every day, we pray, we wish for everyone to be happy, and we practice loving kindness meditation, we will gain peace of mind. This means we gain concentration. And we especially need to practice to see the phenomena of mind and body for what they really are.

In this world, nothing is permanent, nothing lasts long—it's just temporary. So don't feel happy about things, don't feel sorry about things—everything's just temporary, up and down. It keeps changing all the time. We can't control it—it depends on cause and effect. If we want to control something or someone, we will suffer. So don't try to control anything, anyone, or any situation. Just accept it as it is. The Buddha's teachings say that nothing is permanent or controllable. When we accept that, we will not have mental suffering at all.

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

So I'd like all of you to think about Vesak Day and these special events in the Buddha's life. Pay respect to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the so-called Triple Gem. And I'd like all of you to try the best you can to observe the five precepts firmly and purely. Try to practice tranquility meditation to gain some degree of concentration. And practice *vipassanā* meditation to see the truth, to see suffering, and eventually, to be able to see the end of suffering—the supreme bliss of *nibbāna*—in this life.

From the May 29, 2018 talk
“As We Know, We Practice. As We Practice, We Know.”

Today is May 29, 19—...or, 2018. [Luang Por laughs.] I remembered 19... We are getting older, right? Accept it.

Today is Vesak Day, so all of you came to Chaiya Meditation Monastery to commemorate these special incidents in the life of the Buddha: on the full moon day of May, the Buddha was born, he gained enlightenment, and also, he passed away. These three incidents took place on the full moon day of May.

All over the world, we celebrate Vesak Day. It's good for all of us to pay homage to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*.

I'd like all of you to think about the virtues of the Buddha. How many do we have? The Buddha had *nine* virtuous qualities.

Among the nine, we should think of the Buddha's third quality: *vijjā-carāṇa-sampanno*—he was endowed with knowledge and conduct. The Buddha knew everything because he was omniscient. As he knew, he practiced. *Vijjā* means knowledge or wisdom, knowing everything. *Carāṇa* means conduct or practice. So as he practiced, he knew. And as he knew, he practiced.

How about all of us? We are followers of the Buddha, and as such, we need to emulate the virtues of the Buddha. We need to try to follow the Buddha's footprint. We need to study and to know, to gain knowledge and to gain wisdom.

Sometimes we need to study from the external, such as reading a Dhamma book, listening to a Dhamma talk, and discussing the Dhamma and asking questions. We will gain some knowledge and wisdom that way. But we especially need to develop our wisdom by watching *inside*. That's why we practice meditation—to gain knowledge and to realize the phenomena of mind and matter as they really are.

So we need both: sometimes listening to Dhamma and reading Dhamma books, and also practicing meditation and studying inside.

Our body and mind always show us things but we ignore them, and that's why we don't understand their nature. That's why we need to put forth the effort to practice sitting or walking meditation and be aware of what happens to our body, and what happens to our sensations, our feelings, our emotions, and our thoughts. And then we will gain wisdom—we will realize the nature of mind and matter.

As we study outside and inside, we apply this—*vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno*—to our daily lives. As we know, we need to practice; as we practice, we know. So we need both. Even if you know everything—even if you know all the Buddha’s scriptures—if you don’t put them into practice, you get nothing.

We need to emulate this virtue of the Buddha—*vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno*.

So firstly, we need to study to know. As we know, we need to practice. In *Pāli* terms, we call this *pariyatti*—studying, or learning—and *paṭipatti*—putting it into practice.

If we follow this virtue of the Buddha, we will try to gain knowledge of the phenomena of mind and matter. As we begin to know and put it into practice, we’ll be able to reduce greed, anger, delusion, and so on. And in time, we’ll gain the deepening benefits of realizing the true nature of phenomena, which we call *paṭivedha*.

So I would like all of you to remember just this one virtue of the Buddha: *vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno*—he was endowed with knowledge and conduct. We have to follow the Buddha’s footprint by trying to gain knowledge and wisdom. As we gain knowledge and wisdom and put it into practice, we’ll be able to reduce mental defilements and eventually remove greed, anger, and delusion, and attain our spiritual goals.

From the June 26, 2018 talk “Basic Meditation Instruction”

Today I would like to give instructions regarding basic meditation practice. Meditation is mental culture—to culture this monkey mind. Or we can say that it’s mental training—training this mind to be in the present moment.

We have two kinds of meditation:

One kind is called tranquility (*samatha*) meditation. With this type of meditation we try to focus our mind on one object in order to gain peace of mind. We use this kind mainly to gain concentration, and to gain *jhāna*.

The other kind is called *vipassanā* meditation, or we can call it insight or mindfulness meditation. With this type of meditation, we’re not supposed to focus our mind on one object only, but instead on our body, our sensations, our emotions, our thoughts, and on our mind. We’re trying to be aware of these phenomena in order to realize their nature.

When we practice insight *vipassanā* (or mindfulness) meditation, we should have a primary (or home) object of meditation. The primary object generally means focusing on the breath—breathing in and breathing out. You want to know that you’re breathing in and breathing out. Another primary object to focus on is abdominal movement—rising and falling. When you breathe in, the abdomen rises. When you focus on the abdomen, you make a mental note, saying in your mind the word “rising.” The rising of the abdomen and the noting mind should be simultaneous. It should be in the present moment. When you focus on the rising, you have to follow the movement from the beginning until the end of the rising. You just label it: “rising.” The rising of the abdomen and the noting mind should arise together and disappear together. When you breathe out, the abdomen falls downward. In that moment, just be aware of the movement, the falling of the abdomen, and mentally label it: “falling.” Follow this movement from the very beginning to the end of the falling.

If you keep practicing, you’ll eventually know every moment of your abdomen rising and falling. Firstly, just try to realize this rising and falling, and later on you will understand their cause and effect relationship. You’ll understand their impermanence, suffering, non-self nature, and so on. You will understand their nature.

In the beginning, we will not see this; we will not realize their nature, so we need to keep practicing. It’s like how we learned at school: our first year we went to kindergarten, the next year we went to first grade, and so on, step by step. In the same way, we practice meditation to

see—to *know* this rising and falling. For example, when you focus on the rising and falling, you will know in the present moment that your abdomen is rising and then falling. If you do it for six seconds, you will gain peace of mind for six seconds. As long as you keep noting and practicing the meditation—focusing on the rising and falling—no greed, no anger, no delusion, and no worry arise. This is how to purify our mind.

The mind is like a monkey. It's the nature of a monkey to always be running and jumping. It won't sit still. It's their nature. But if we train the monkey every day—many, many times a day—finally, he will sit still next to us. In the same way, without practicing meditation this monkey mind will jump and run and wander, thinking, all the time. This is the nature of our mind. We need this mental culture, this mental training.

This mind spends most of its time thinking about the past. Sometimes we feel sad about something, sometimes we feel happy about something, and sometimes we think about the future too. We're always worrying or feeling happy about something. But this happiness, for example, has nothing to do with spiritual happiness. Think about the nature of sensual pleasures and sensual objects. This happiness is greed. In *Pāli* terms, we call it *lobha*—greed, craving, or attachment. This is a mental defilement. It's *akusala*—or unwholesome consciousness. Sometimes we feel sorry about something. This sorrow is one aspect of anger, so sorrow is anger. And anger is like fire or poison. If we're sad about something or get mad, what happens? It's like a fire burning our heart—we feel unhappy and uncomfortable.

So what do we have to do?

If we don't practice meditation, this anger or sorrow will arise on and on. This means we'll have unwholesome consciousness—mental defilement, and no peace. But the Buddha taught us how to purify the mind from greed, anger, delusion, and so on.

So just focus your mind on your primary object. Know your abdomen is rising and falling. Keep practicing that. There'll be no room for sadness or sorrow to arise. Try not to think about the past or the future; try to stay in the present moment. Our body, our sensations, and our feelings are always manifesting their nature, so try to be mindful, to be aware. Try to observe what happens to your body. What kinds of feelings arise? Try to know them. If you feel sorry about something, just label it: "sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry." Sorrow is unwholesome consciousness. And knowing means *kusala*—or wholesome consciousness. Wholesome and unwholesome consciousness cannot arise at the same time.

JUST PRACTICE

We need to practice meditation to be aware of what happens to our body. Whether the main object of your meditation is the rising and falling of the abdomen or it's the breath—knowing you're breathing in and breathing out—either is fine. Choose one. Choose whichever is easier for you to gain concentration, whichever one makes you feel more comfortable, and just stick with that as your main object of meditation.

Even though we may try to not think about anything, still the mind thinks. This is the nature of the mind because it's used to thinking our whole lives. It keeps thinking, thinking, always thinking. Now, we have to try to stay in the present moment. If some kind of feeling arises, try to be aware of that. If you feel sorry about something, just label it: "sorry, sorry, sorry." And then return to your main object of meditation.

So we should know our main object of meditation. Whatever else appears to our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind is called a secondary object of meditation. If there's no secondary object, stay with your main object. This is the method, the technique. Training the mind is very easy, very simple, but also very effective in gaining peace of mind, in gaining our spiritual goal.

We need to keep practicing, to get used to it, every day—not just for one day or for one hour, but *always*. We should practice mindfulness meditation from the time we wake up in the morning until we go to bed and fall asleep. We can do it anytime, anywhere, and in any posture.

I would like all of you to try the best you can to focus on your main object of meditation. If something happens that is more obvious than your main object of meditation, just be aware of it and label it.

For example, you are sitting in meditation and you think about something else. (If you're thinking about something else, it means you're forgetting to focus on your main object of meditation.) As soon as you realize that your mind went out, just be aware of it and label it—"going out, going out"—and then return to your main object of meditation. If you think about something, just be aware of your thinking, and label it: "thinking, thinking, thinking." This means that whatever is happening in your thoughts or in your mind, you'll know it.

When we sit in meditation, we're trying to watch our mind, our body, our feelings, our sensations, and our emotions. There's nothing special. And stay with the main object of your meditation—abdominal movement, rising and falling, or the in- and out-breath.

Sometimes your mind still wanders a lot, thinking about this and that, and traveling all over. When you know your mind has many distractions and is wandering a lot, label it: "wandering, wandering,

wandering.” If you don’t label it, your mind keeps wandering on and on and on. That’s why you need to try to make a mental note. Get used to doing it. As you do, instead of your mind wandering for five minutes, maybe it’ll just wander for one minute. If you get used to your mind going out, you will notice it right away. You then label it and return to your main object of meditation. By doing this, instead of your mind going out 100 times, you can gradually reduce it to 99 times, 98 times, 90 times, 50 times. In time, it won’t go out at all and you’ll gain deep concentration. This is how to train your mind.

With regard to feelings—feeling sorry about something, for instance—it’s the same. It’s just anger, arising one moment after another, and it can take up a lot of your time. Now, though, you don’t allow this anger, this fire, to burn in your heart. Try to realize it’s there and then return to your main object of meditation.

That’s the benefit of meditation. It’s very useful and wonderful. So we need to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation.

We have so many kinds of things to learn—not just mindfulness meditation. We have other things to support our meditation practice as well, to make it stronger and stronger. We also need to practice loving kindness meditation, practice recollection of the virtues of the Buddha, think about the impurity of the body, practice death meditation, and so on.

We have 40 subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). Meditation is like medication. At home, we have many kinds of medication. What kind of problem do we have? We then take the right medication. In the same way, the Buddha gave us 40 subjects of meditation we can use, depending on our mind and on the situation—it depends on what we need at that time.

So the Buddha gave us 40 subject of meditation. For instance, we may feel sorry about something and anger arises. When anger arises, sometimes we may need to practice loving kindness meditation (as an antidote). When we practice that, the anger goes away. It’s very easy. On another occasion, maybe craving or lust arises, so we may need to practice contemplation of the impurity of the body. And then the craving goes away. And so on.

We have many techniques—many *medications*. That’s why meditation is the best medication to cure mental diseases.

So I’d like all of you to try the best you can to be aware of everything that happens to your thoughts, your sensations, your feelings, your emotions, and whatever you experience through your eyes, ears,

JUST PRACTICE

nose, tongue, body, and mind. Try to be aware of it, label it, and then later you will understand their nature—arising and disappearing. Nothing lasts long. It just comes and goes, one moment after another, as part of its suffering and its non-self nature.

May all of you be able to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation, and gain *vipassanā* knowledge and freedom from greed, anger, and delusion.

From the July 14, 2018 talk “Life is Choice”

This lady asked me, “What is life?” Life is choice. We have two ways to do things in our daily lives. We can do unwholesome deeds, or we can do wholesome deeds. Which one do you want to do?

Everyone loves themselves. And so if we want to receive good consequences, we have to do good things. Avoid unwholesome deeds in this life. As human beings, we have the capacity to develop our virtue perfection *pāramī*.

So, there are two things to do, two ways to go. If we choose the right thing to do, the right way to go, then we will have a precious life, a valuable life. It depends on our decisions. Every day we have the tools that allow us to do good things: we can use our hands, use our eyes, use our ears, use our brain, use our knowledge, and use our wisdom, to improve life—to make it better and better.

Take a look at our everyday society—just here in Las Vegas, for instance—and see whether people are doing good things or doing bad things. We have two ways to go. Mostly, people just enjoy seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, gambling, and drinking. Right? This is not a good thing. It is not the good way to go.

Instead, we need to speak well, go to a temple or to a meditation center, go to pray, sit in meditation, and help others. That’s what we should do. We should do it for ourselves, as well as for others. Then our lives become valuable.

Otherwise, we’re wasting our time, wasting our lives, getting older and older, and we’ve got *nothing*. To make our lives meaningful, we need to do good things. And we need to perform meritorious deeds to develop our virtue perfection *pāramī*.

I would like all of you to have a good and beneficial life, and to do good actions, use good speech, and have good thoughts. May all of you achieve your spiritual goals.

**From the December 23, 2018 talk
“Act Like a Dumb Person”**

Some of you here today are observing the eight precepts. And some of you are observing 227 precepts. In order to gain spiritual pleasure, we need to have *sīla*, and we need concentration. The essence of Buddhism is *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom). So some of you already observe the five precepts firmly—and some of you, the eight precepts—and now you try to practice and develop your concentration. After you gain concentration, wisdom will arise. So you need to practice to gain concentration.

What is the enemy of concentration? Do you know? Talking. Talking is the greatest enemy of concentration. That’s why the Buddha advised us that whoever would like to gain concentration and wisdom—especially meditators—needs to act like a dumb person. A dumb person cannot talk, right? So we need to act like a dumb person. If it’s not necessary, don’t talk. If you talk, it’s a great enemy of concentration. If you don’t gain concentration, you shouldn’t expect to gain wisdom. For that reason, don’t talk if it’s not necessary. Just talking, talking—it’s not good.

Even when we’re having breakfast and lunch, there’s no talking. Instead, try to be mindful. This meditation is not only for when we sit in front of the Buddha statue and close our eyes and cross our legs and practice—we need to be mindful all the time. So during eating you can practice meditation. Try to be mindful while eating, especially when you come to observe the eight precepts, or to be a nun, to be a novice, or to be a monk.

Before we eat, we need to pray, or wish, for our devotees—our sponsors—to be well, happy and peaceful. We do this in the *Pāli* language, but if you don’t know *Pāli*, just do it in your own language—that’s fine too. So pray: “All of the food donors, may all of you be healthy, wealthy, happy and peaceful.” Just pray, wish this for all of them. This means you radiate loving kindness meditation. See that? Loving kindness meditation—you want the food donors to be well and happy. So we need to do that.

When you eat, try to be mindful—don’t attach to the food. We need to think that we are a medical patient who needs to take medication. Without food, we die. As a patient, we need this medication, this food. So when you eat, think about all this food as medicine. Think: “I

need to take all this medicine so that I can gain energy, and then I'll be able to practice meditation." See that? Think like that. There's no attachment at all. Then, when we eat, at least when chewing, be mindful in every moment, every second. Know you're 'chewing, chewing'. Just be mindful. And maybe you'll sense a taste. What kind of taste is it? Just try to be mindful. And then you'll see your body and mind arising together and disappearing together. The tastes are coming and going, one after another. Nothing's permanent. You'll see the truth.

If you get used to practicing like this every day, for many, many days and many, many years, you can gain enlightenment even while eating. So try to be mindful. This mindfulness meditation is very important.

According to my experience, if you practice meditation for a day—for 20 hours that day—you gain almost 100% concentration. But if you talk for just five minutes, you will lose all of your concentration. That's why talking is the enemy of concentration. So try not to talk. Be mindful.

Our daily meditation schedule here is just four times. The remaining time in the day has many, many hours. In one day we have 24 hours, and we sit in meditation together four times—that's *four* hours. So for the remaining 20 hours—maybe you're resting for five or six hours, that's enough—we need to practice walking meditation too. Walking meditation has many, many stages. So try the first stage and get familiar with that. Then try the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth stages. Then you will gain concentration. You will know for yourself as you gain concentration—you will see the nature of mind and matter for what they really are. You'll gain insight knowledge. After you gain insight knowledge and reach the top, you will gain enlightenment.

So we need the foundation of *sīla*. That's why all of you take five precepts firmly and purely, and if possible, take the eight precepts, the ten precepts, or the 227 precepts. Make your morality firm and pure and then you will gain concentration. As you gain concentration, you will see just mind and body—mind and matter—except mind and matter is nothing. You'll see.

I'll give you an example:

When you practice meditation, some of you may focus your mind on your breath, using the breath as your main object of meditation. Others of you may focus on your abdominal movement—rising and falling—as your main object of meditation. So if you focus your mind on your abdomen, you'll notice that when you breathe in, the abdomen rises. When you breathe out, the abdomen falls down, as is its nature. Try to

JUST PRACTICE

see the movement of your abdomen—rising and falling. The rising and falling is the air element—it's matter, not a person. See that? It's not a man, it's not a woman, and it's not a person. And the knowing mind has no shape and no form—it's just mind. Mind is the knower of the object. So you see that nature is just mind and matter. When you see that it's just mind and matter, you won't attach to it. Because we attach to our body and our mind, we have an ego. That's why suffering follows. With no attachment, there's no suffering.

That's why we need to be mindful and practice meditation—to see the nature of mind and matter. Ever since we were born, in every moment mind and matter have been just arising and disappearing. Since we were born, we have been breathing in and breathing out, and our abdomen has been rising and falling. It's doing it now, and it will continue to do so until we die. But although our abdominal movement is always there, our mind wanders. With no mindfulness, we don't see the nature of this air element. This is why we need to practice.

The way to practice mindfulness meditation is very simple. And it's very effective. What do we need? We need to *practice* to get used to it. For a beginner, whatever you study, learn, or try to do is very difficult. But when you get used to it, it's very, very easy. Even a four- or five-year-old kid can practice mindfulness meditation. In the time of the Buddha, even a five-year-old could gain enlightenment. See that? So we need to *practice* meditation.

Try to be mindful. Act like a blind person, a deaf person, a dumb person, *and* a very weak person. Sometimes we have to act like a *dead* person. Be patient with what happens with the body. For example, a patient goes to the hospital to have surgery. They cannot move while they're in that condition. There's nothing they can do. When we practice meditation, sometimes we come across a painful feeling—so act like a dead person, and be patient. We need patience.

There are many things we need to know, and we need to put them into practice. The teaching of the Buddha is what we call *sandiṭṭhiko*—as you practice, you'll know for yourself. It is also what we call *akāliko*—you can do it anytime, and you will gain the result right away in the here and now. I'd like all of you to try the best you can to gain spiritual pleasure, and gain enlightenment. Try to observe your *sīla* purely and firmly, and be mindful. Practice sitting, walking, standing, and lying down meditation.

May all of you gain concentration and wisdom, and gain enlightenment in this very life.

From the December 24, 2018 talk “A Very Profound Teaching”

Every year from December 24 to New Year’s Day, I used to give Dhamma talks every day and every night, but this year I have my voice problem, so I hope you understand that I won’t be talking as much.

Today, I would like to talk about what we are going to be doing with regard to the holy scriptures—specifically, the profound and highest teachings of the Buddha. We call this *Paṭṭhāna* in *Pāli*. In English, we call it the law of causal relations. When we do the *Paṭṭhāna* chanting tonight, it’s just the beginning. There are five books to it, and if we recite it non-stop, it’ll take at least four days to finish it. The five books have 2,664 pages. So when we chant today we’re just doing the first 11 pages. It’ll take one hour.

In his discourses, the Buddha explained about the condition, or the cause, of wholesome and unwholesome deeds, speech and thoughts. We’re talking about *kamma*, or action. We have physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions that can be good and bad. This *action* is the cause of good and bad consequences.

So this *Paṭṭhāna* belongs to the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The Buddha explained about the 24 causes or conditions, such as root condition, object condition, predominance condition, and so on. This is a very profound teaching of the Buddha. It talks about how mind and matter are interrelated via the law of causal relation. I used to take 107 hours to explain this in Thai. I gave Dhamma talks in Thai to explain *Paṭṭhāna* for maybe 5-6 years. So, 107 hours. In Burmese, I would explain *Paṭṭhāna* for 60 hours—all of you can listen to my CD/DVD, if you’re interested in this. In English, I used to explain about this too, taking almost 20 hours. But today, I will explain it briefly.

If we only do the chanting and don’t understand the meaning, it’s not right. I don’t like that. I would like all of you to understand the meaning. In the Buddha’s teachings, every word is meaningful. It’s not just chanting; we need to understand the meaning, follow the guidance, and practice it. The teachings have a very deep meaning.

I’ll talk about root condition.

If we do a wholesome deed, what’s the cause? It’s non-greed, non-delusion, and non-anger.

Because you don’t attach to your body and you don’t attach to your belongings—this is non-greed. That’s why you’re able to perform meritorious deeds and make contributions—because of non-greed. What we’ll recite today is about non-greed.

JUST PRACTICE

And non-anger means loving kindness. Because you have *mettā*, or loving kindness, you can sacrifice your time and your belongings for others. See that? If you have no loving kindness or compassion, you will not do anything or sacrifice anything for the welfare and happiness of others. But because you have non-anger, or loving kindness, as the condition, the cause, the root, you perform moral actions by deed, speech, and thought.

And we also have non-delusion. This is wisdom. Because you understand what is good and what is bad, what is cause and what is effect, what you should do and what you should not do, and what is a good action and what is a bad action, you understand the truth. This is wisdom. As we understand the truth and understand the realities, we try to do good things every day.

This is why the Buddha taught about non-greed, non-anger, and non-delusion as a cause or condition. Knowing this, we perform meritorious deeds and have moral conduct and moral actions.

Sometimes someone may do something immoral via physical action, verbal action, or mental action. What's the cause? What's the condition? It's because of craving, aversion, or delusion. Or you can call it greed, anger, and delusion. Because you have greed (*lobha*), for instance, you attach to your body and your belongings. You become selfish. You won't do anything for others, and there'll be no contributions or charity. Why? Because of this craving, this attachment, this greed—we are attached to our belongings. Maybe you even want something unlawful. This is greed too. And when you do something bad, unwholesome action arises. This is because of greed or craving.

What about hatred, anger, or aversion? Anger is called *dosa*. Because of *dosa*, someone does a bad thing, says a bad word, or has a bad thought. And they get angry too. See that? Anger is the cause of these unwholesome actions.

What about *moha*, or delusion? It means you don't understand the truth. As you don't understand the truth, you commit unwholesome actions by deed, speech, and thought.

All of this is why the Buddha taught about the six causes, or the six conditions; that is, we do unwholesome things because of *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*—because of craving, anger, and delusion—and we do good things because of non-greed, non-anger, and non-delusion.

So, all of us here try to practice meditation. What's the purpose? The purpose is to be able to get rid of greed, anger, and delusion as the cause of suffering. Please remember that the cause of suffering is not just

craving—not only *lobha*. It also includes *dosa* and *moha*. These three kinds of mental defilement are the greatest enemies in our lives. That's why we need to practice meditation: to be able to get rid of these three kinds of mental defilement.

Even if we're unable to get rid of them, we try to *reduce* greed, anger, and delusion. That's why all of you come to the temple, observe the eight precepts, and practice meditation. This means you're trying to reduce your greed, anger, and delusion. See that? The Buddha taught us about the causes of good and bad consequences. So we need to practice meditation. When you practice meditation, you will see the truth—you will see realities.

What are the realities here? You will see mind, the nature of the mind, and matter. Matter here is not only this body. Don't think it's the body. When we practice meditation, we see *rūpa*, or matter, as the four great essential elements—we see the truth. These elements are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element. We see only these four essential elements arising.

Among the four kinds of elements, the air element is more obvious than the others. This is why the Buddha taught us to focus on *ānāpānasati*—the air element. Or you can focus on your abdominal movement. This is also the air element. Because the air element is more obvious than the others, it is very easy to gain concentration. That's why we practice mindfulness meditation.

Some of you focus on your nose, on your breath—you know you're breathing in, and you know you're breathing out. That's fine. But when you do this, you're not supposed to see the form or shape of your nose. You need to see, to understand, that the air touching your nostrils—in and out—is the air element.

And the knowing mind is just mind. There's just mind and matter. As you practice meditation, you know you're breathing in and you know you're breathing out, and in that moment there is no man, no woman. See that? There is no "I" or "my." There's no person, no entity. There is just the air element and the noting mind—just mind and matter arising and disappearing together, one after another. This means you see the truth.

And if you practice meditation for one minute, you're purifying your mind from greed, anger, and delusion for one minute. This is how we reduce greed, anger, and delusion. So we need to practice meditation. Without practicing meditation, it's very hard to reduce our attachment, anger, and delusion because they've followed us for many, many lives.

JUST PRACTICE

Without practicing meditation, what do you think about? You think about things that cause greed and anger to arise. And if you don't understand the truth, your mind wanders. This is delusion. Greed, anger, and delusion arise, many, many, many times.

We are fortunate to be human beings, especially Buddhists. We have a great opportunity to study the Buddha's teaching. We know how to reduce greed, anger, and delusion, how to gain peace of mind, and how to gain enlightenment.

Maybe some of you focus your mind on your abdominal movement as the main object of your meditation. Either method is fine. You need to try both methods—breathing in and breathing out, and the rising and falling of the abdomen—to see which one is easier for you to gain concentration. Then take that one as your main object of meditation. Use that object and practice meditation for the rest of your life. You will see the benefit. This is *akālika*—you can practice anytime, anywhere, and in any posture, and you will gain the benefit here and now, right away.

This is a very wonderful method and teaching. We need to improve our lives and make them beneficial, and we need to practice this meditation.

So when you focus your mind on your abdominal movement, you see that the movement of your abdomen is the air element. You're not supposed to see the form of your abdomen—you need to see the moving, just the *moving* abdomen. This moving is the nature of the air element. It's very easy to understand, and that's why we should take this abdominal movement—the rising and falling—as the main object of meditation. When you focus your mind on your abdomen, see that when you breathe in the abdomen rises upward. In that moment, make a mental note—say in your mind—“rising.” Follow the movement from the very beginning until the end of the rising.

Some people may think, “Oh, this is concentration, it's *samatha*, not *vipassanā*,” and so on. Don't think about that. For the beginner, maybe you can't get away from the concept—maybe you see your abdomen as form. But when you keep practicing this, you will not see that—you will see just the air element, building up step-by-step, and then falling down. You will see this as the air element.

So when you practice meditation, focus your mind on your abdominal movement as the main object of your meditation. Follow the movement from the very beginning to the end of the rising and falling, making mental notes of the rising and falling. We do this to see the phenomena of this air element. And as long as you practice meditation

and engage in your practice, there's no greed, no anger, and no delusion arising. So if you practice meditation for a few minutes—say, five minutes—this means you purify your mind from greed, anger, and delusion during that time. That's why the Buddha told us that we need to firstly try to reduce greed, anger, and delusion as the cause of suffering.

I would like all of you to follow the Buddha's teaching. We need to use our wisdom, use our effort, use our mindfulness, and use our concentration. Try to be mindful, try to see the nature of mind and matter. You will see in every moment mind and matter arising and disappearing. This arising and disappearing is *anicca*—impermanence. If you see impermanence, you'll see suffering. The Buddha said that suffering should be understood, the cause of suffering should be abandoned, the cessation of suffering should be realized, and the way leading to the cessation of suffering should be developed.

I'd like all of you to think about this every day. Try to watch your mind. What are you thinking about? Is there greed, anger, or delusion? Or is there non-greed, loving kindness, and wisdom? You'll know for yourself—*sanditṭhiko*, whoever practices meditation will see their mind and know about themselves. So try to practice meditation.

May all of you be able to reduce your greed, anger, and delusion, and eventually be able to remove all of these mental defilements and become a noble person. May you become the Buddha's sons and daughters.

From the December 25, 2018 talk “Christmas Day”

[Afternoon talk]

None of you can understand Burmese or Thai, right?

[In English] Today is Christmas Day, and all of you came to offer lunch to the monks and the nun and the meditators. And these two ladies came to offer *saṅghadāna* and to dedicate a portion of the merit to their parents and others who have passed away. They came to show their gratitude to these loved ones.

Everyone needs to understand the kindness of their parents. We can replace things, or even people, in our lives, but our parents are irreplaceable. That’s why we need to know their kindness and have gratitude. We need to return their kindness when they’re still alive. When they pass away, we can do *dāna*, *sīla* or *bhāvanā* and dedicate a portion of the merit to them. This is how to return our parents’ kindness, but we should especially do so when they’re still alive. We should try to be good daughters or sons, and make our parents happy. This is very important.

Even if you can’t do much for your parents, as parents they feel that they don’t need anything from their children—they just want to *give*. But what *do* they need? They want their children, their son or daughter, to be a good son or daughter. If you behave as a good daughter or son, your parents will be happy and proud of you. This is how we return our parents’ kindness.

I’d like all of you to try to be a good daughter or son. What do you have to do? At minimum, you need to uphold your moral conduct—the five precepts—firmly and purely. And you need noble living—loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity—in your heart. And every day, do some chanting. Chanting means recollection of the Buddha, the Buddha’s doctrine, and the Buddha’s holy disciples. This is one kind of *bhāvanā*—tranquility meditation. And also, practice insight *vipassanā* meditation. This means we return the Buddha’s kindness by practice. By *practice*.

So, I’d like all of you to be a good daughter, a good son, and a good Buddhist. Good Buddhists try to follow the five precepts firmly. You should possess loving kindness and compassion in your heart. And don’t forget to recite the virtues of the Buddha, and so on. If possible, do the *Paritta* chanting, *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* and *Maṅgala Sutta*, and so on. And practice meditation every day. This will bring the greatest blessing to your life.

May all of you gain peace and happiness.

[Evening talk]

Good evening, everyone. Today is the second day of us reciting the holy chanting. Yesterday I was talking about root condition. We do wholesome and unwholesome deeds, and the latter is based on greed, anger, and delusion. If we do something wholesome, that's based on non-greed, non-anger, and non-delusion. These are the six roots as conditions.

Today I would like to talk briefly about object condition as it regards meditation practice. Because of the external six sense objects as conditions, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, and body-consciousness, as well as wholesome-and unwholesome-consciousness, arise. If no external objects appear, there's no consciousness that arises. So, everything has a cause. There is cause, and there is effect. No one created this. It depends on the cause, and then the effect arises. It's just mind and matter, interrelated as cause and effect.

We need to understand this truth. And then you will not see someone as a person, as a man or woman. This *Paṭṭhāna*—this holy scripture—is very important for all meditators. We cannot stop visible objects and so on from arising. But when you see something, it's just 'seeing'. Because of a visible object, we see the object: seeing-consciousness arises. If you practice meditation and a visible object arises, whether good or bad, it's just 'seeing'. When we practice meditation, it's just "seeing, seeing"—just 'seeing', not beyond that. And so no unwholesome consciousness arises. The Buddha taught us to practice this meditation. Whatever you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, it's just 'seeing', 'hearing', 'smelling', 'tasting', or 'touching'.

The last part of this reflection deals with the six sense objects and the wholesome consciousness or unwholesome consciousness, and sometimes *functional* consciousness, that arises. What we need here is the guardian: awareness, or mindfulness. If you lack awareness or mindfulness, you have no guardian. If you don't guard your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, only unwholesome consciousness will arise, for sure.

As an ordinary person, when you see some desirable object, greed arises right away. See that? "I like that, it's very beautiful." So you see something as beautiful, or you see a man or a woman and you like what you see—if you don't practice meditation or study Buddhism, you won't

JUST PRACTICE

understand. That's why people go to a concert or shows, right? Just two hours, but how much do you have to pay? \$200-300. A waste of your time and money. "Oh, I like that!" This is greed, without knowing it. But people enjoy it, right? Whenever you see or hear or smell, taste, or touch a desirable object, greed arises. This is *lobha*. *Lobha* is unwholesome consciousness.

During the holiday season, how many people come to the temple versus go to the casino? Think about that. You see that, right? It's because people don't understand how to use their time, use their life, use their money, to be meaningful. They enjoy seeing, hearing, and so on, because they don't understand that it's unwholesome consciousness. It's based on what? Based on objects. See that? Objects—these objects as condition, as the cause.

When you stay at the temple, what do you see? Just the Buddha, the monks, the meditators, you see our devotees come and perform meritorious deeds. You feel happy about this and are proud of them. See that? This is *wholesome* consciousness. But if you go to the outside world, what happens? All of you know better than me. I've never been to a casino. I've just heard, and I can guess. You've experienced this, right?

Object condition—if you use it the right way, the proper way, it's wonderful for our lives. We need to guard our eyes—don't follow your desires, don't follow your greed. We need to understand what happens to our mind. We need to study the Buddha's teaching, especially when he talks about mind. From the time you wake up in the morning until you fall asleep, what happens to your mind: wholesome thoughts or unwholesome thoughts? Which one is heavier? Think about that. Mostly, there's just *lobha*, *dosa* or *moha*—greed, anger or delusion. That's why we need to practice meditation. Try to be aware of whatever happens to our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. This is very, very important.

We've talked in detail about seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching. Just examples, right? I give these examples so that you can understand. This is not to understand the scripture—it's to understand our daily life. And then we can improve our life. Otherwise, only the unwholesome (*akusala*) will arise, many, many times—*uncountable* times.

Sometimes you see an undesirable object, you don't like it, and so you say, "Ah, I don't like that. I don't want to see that. I don't want to hear that." And so on. What happens to your mind, what happens to your thoughts, in that moment? It's anger—*dosa*. "Ah, I don't like that." See? Listen to the essence of the voice: "Ah, I don't like that!" This is anger. "Ah, I *like* that!" This is greed.

What do we need? We need mindfulness. Just be aware of whatever you see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think about. If it's an undesirable object, for instance, it's just 'seeing', 'hearing', 'smelling', 'tasting', or 'touching'. Don't go beyond that. Don't say "I don't like that" or "I like that."

If you have mindfulness, wisdom will follow, for sure. Mindfulness, concentration, wisdom—they are working together. So we need mindfulness. That's why we practice mindfulness meditation. We train our mind to see, to realize, every physical activity and mental process. Whatever happens to your thoughts, sensations, feelings, or emotions, and whatever your physical activity is, try to be aware of it.

Think about this: One day has 24 hours. You sleep for six hours, and so in the remaining 18 hours, what happens to your thoughts? Are they wholesome or unwholesome? You know yourself, right?

Try to allow wholesome consciousness to arise. From the time you wake up, try to be aware of whatever you're experiencing. Know when you're waking, know when you want to get up, know when you want to stand, know when you want to walk. So, every intention—just be aware of it. And then, every step you take, you have to know it. This is mindfulness. Otherwise, you'll be thinking about what you're going to see, what you're going to eat, what you're going to wear today—just thinking about eating and clothes and so on. See that? If you like it, it's *lobha*.

Sometimes your mind wanders and you're not really aware of anything—this is *moha*, or delusion. Delusion is when you don't realize what's happening with your mind or body. That's why we need mindfulness. That's why the Buddha taught us to practice mindfulness meditation. Try to be mindful as much as you can.

In one day, from the time you get up in the morning until you go to bed at night, how many steps do you walk? Many, many thousands of steps, right? I would like all of you to try something for *one* day. Put your cell phone away in your pocket, and for *one* day try to know how many steps you walk. How many steps will you be able to be aware of? You can test your mindfulness this way. In one day, someone walking in and out, up and down, maybe takes over 10,000 steps. But they might not even realize one step. See that? Try this and you will know for yourself: "Oh, today I'm zero." You get *nothing*.

Try to be mindful. Meditation practice is not just sitting meditation. You can practice in any posture. Everywhere you have to walk, every day, try to be mindful of every step. For example, when you walk, you say "walking, walking." The walking and the noting mind arise

JUST PRACTICE

together and disappear together, one after another—and there's no greed, anger, or delusion to arise.

We need to practice this very wonderful technique. Mindfulness meditation is how we purify our mind from greed, anger, and delusion. Every day you have to see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think about things, right? We have these six sense objects as condition.

We are Buddhists. Our goal—at *minimum*—is to gain the first stage of enlightenment and become a *sotāpanna*, or stream-enterer. If you really want to gain enlightenment, you need to practice mindfulness meditation.

Even if you don't have a chance to go to a meditation center or to a temple, you can practice this at home or at work. If you're able to be aware for one second, one moment, this means you gain one second, one moment, of wholesomeness. In that moment, no greed, no anger, and no delusion arose. Because you were able to focus on your body, your sensations, your thoughts, in that moment you gained concentration—*samādhi*. And you realize the nature of this phenomenon, so there's *paññā*, or wisdom. So in every moment you can gain concentration and wisdom.

Keep doing this every day for the rest of your life, and your life will become better and better, for sure. You won't need to ask a fortune teller, or ask someone else. You'll know for yourself, because *sanditṭhiko*—whoever practices meditation will be able to realize and know for themselves. This doesn't happen through the scriptures or a book or from listening to a Dhamma talk—it's from your *practice*.

These six sense objects as condition—we need to use this properly. We need to use this technique, this method, that the Buddha taught us. Try to be mindful. If you see, it's just 'seeing'. If you hear, it's just 'hearing'. Whether it's a desirable or undesirable object doesn't matter. If you have mindfulness and wisdom, there's no room for unwholesome consciousness to arise. We need to know this for ourselves.

Think about the many, many times unwholesome consciousness arises in one day. How many times do you think it arises over the course of a *year*? And for the rest of our lives we have to receive the bad consequences of that. And in the next life too. It's not everyone who understands this point. We are Buddhists and therefore fortunate to know how to use our lives to be meaningful and beneficial.

I would like all of you to reflect on how whatever you see, you hear, you smell, you taste, you touch, or you think about—these six sense objects, these external objects—will not last long. These things are just

arising and disappearing, only temporary. When you practice meditation, you say “seeing” or “hearing” to see their nature, to stop this *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*. When you see their nature, you’ll see that all the objects will disappear. Even our internal six sense bases—our eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, and body-sensitivity—are also just arising and disappearing. They’re impermanent. Every bit of matter is just arising and disappearing in every second, in every moment. To see this impermanence of mind and matter, we need to practice meditation.

The external objects and internal six sense bases are impermanent, but how about seeing-consciousness and so on? Your ‘seeing’, ‘hearing’, ‘smelling’, ‘tasty’, ‘touching’—all this consciousness is also impermanent, arising and disappearing, one after another.

This is why we need to practice meditation. When we gain concentration, mindfulness, and wisdom, we will see the nature of phenomena in every moment. We will see that nothing is permanent. So we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation to see the phenomena of mind and matter as impermanent, as suffering, and as of non-self nature. You cannot control these objects or phenomena. You cannot control your eyes and so on. It’s beyond your control. As you practice meditation, you will see this in detail—nothing is permanent, and nothing is controllable. When you see this through your practice, when you accept this impermanence and uncontrollability, whatever you come across in your daily life you can let go of very easily. Otherwise, as you attach to all of these objects, there’ll be *lobha*, or greed, and sometimes anger. See that? And when you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and you don’t pay attention to the object, your mind wanders—this is delusion, or *moha*.

So every day, in every moment, it’s mostly just *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*—greed, anger, and delusion—arising. That’s why the Buddha taught us everything we need to understand nature, to understand the truth, to overcome suffering, and to gain enlightenment. We need to go step-by-step. The Buddha explained about all of this in detail—how to practice, how to think about things, how to deal with thoughts, sensations, emotions, and so on.

So I would like all of you to not only do chanting, but also put into practice what the Buddha explained about the six sense objects. Be mindful of whenever you see the six sense objects; that is, be aware any time you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think about something. Even if you don’t see it with your physical eye, sometimes it’s a mental object that arises—you close your eyes, especially at night, and although you

JUST PRACTICE

don't see or hear or smell or taste anything, your mind still 'sees' some vision—and if you don't practice meditation, you'll think about it and feel sorry or happy about it. See that? Or maybe you'll get mad about it.

Try to watch your mind. Watch whatever happens to your mind, your thoughts. If you feel sorry about something, sorrow is one kind of anger. What do we need to do? If we feel sorry about something, just try to realize it. Be aware of it. Make a mental note: "sorry, sorry, sorry." Sorrow has arisen, but when you realize it, there's now wisdom. When wisdom arises, there's no longer sorrow. Sorrow or anger, and wisdom cannot arise together. This is why we need to watch our thoughts. If you feel sorry about something, it's just "sorry, sorry, sorry." Label it, and then you'll know the sorrow arising and disappearing. Sorrow is also impermanent. You'll see its nature.

Sometimes you worry about something. Worry is also a kind of anger. Mostly we worry about family, children, business, health—so many kinds of things. This worry is a kind of anger. If you don't understand that, you just keep worrying every day. If you worry about something for five minutes, it means you wasted your time and your life for five minutes. Time is very precious. Instead of doing chanting, instead of practicing meditation, and instead of there being wholesome consciousness, you felt sorry or worried about something. This is just unwholesome consciousness, arising on and on and on and on.

But it doesn't have to be like that. It's only because of the Buddha's teaching that we have a chance to understand this point. Other religions don't talk about this in detail. That's why we call this meditation "mental training." We are training our mind to reduce greed, anger, and delusion. Eventually, we can remove it.

I would like all of you to try to be mindful as much as you can. In every physical activity, try to be mindful. Try to watch your thoughts, your sensations, your emotions, and you'll see that everything just comes and goes. After you understand its nature, if you come across an undesirable situation, you can let it go easily. That's the benefit of this meditation. Try to be mindful.

May all of you gain concentration and wisdom, and be able to eliminate all of these unwholesome consciousnesses. May you improve your *pāramī* virtue perfection higher and higher, be free from greed, anger, and delusion, and be happy.

From the December 27, 2018 talk “Have Confidence”

All of us try to perform meritorious deeds, especially by practicing meditation every day. The purpose of this is to overcome all kinds of suffering and to gain enlightenment.

What do we need to do to gain enlightenment? We need to fulfill our mental faculties. We have five kinds of mental faculties: 1) *saddhā*, which is confidence or faith; 2) *virīya*, or effort; 3) *sati*, or mindfulness; 4) *samādhi*, or concentration; and 5) *paññā*, or wisdom. We need to fulfill these five kinds of mental faculties, and then we'll be able to gain enlightenment.

Among the five kinds of mental faculties, tonight I would like to talk about the first one—*saddhā*, or confidence. We need to have confidence in our omniscient Buddha, the Buddha's doctrine, and in the Buddha's holy disciples. Next, we should have confidence in the method of mindfulness meditation practice. And third, we should have confidence in ourselves.

So, we should have confidence in the Buddha. The Buddha knew everything. He knew reality, and he especially knew how to practice to overcome physical and mental suffering. I recommend all of you, before sitting in meditation, to have confidence, to entrust your body and mind—your *life*—to the Buddha. While practicing meditation, you can reflect: “May I entrust my body and mind, my life, to the Buddha.” And after you entrust your body and mind to the Buddha, while practicing meditation you may sometimes see an obstacle appear, or you may see a vision, hear a voice, or maybe you're scared about something—but if you have entrusted your body and mind to the Buddha then you can reflect upon yourself: “I entrust my body and mind to the Buddha. I am the Buddha's son or daughter. No one can harm me.” You will gain mental energy. So we need to entrust our mind and body to the Buddha.

We need to have confidence in the Buddha's teaching—the Dhamma, the truth. The Buddha said that whoever would like to can purify their mind from greed, anger, and delusion. So what do we need to do? We need to practice mindfulness meditation. Whoever practices mindfulness meditation can overcome sorrow and lamentation, as well as physical and mental suffering. And they can gain enlightenment. They can experience the supreme bliss of *nibbāna*.

We need to have confidence in the Buddha's holy disciples, the *Saṅgha*. Since the time of the Buddha, which is over 2,600 years, many generations of holy monks have practiced meditation. Some of them

JUST PRACTICE

gained the first stage of enlightenment and became a stream-enterer, some became a once-returner, some became a non-returner, and some became the highest saint, the highest noble person—an *arahant*. This was because they practiced meditation. This is evidence that *whoever* practices meditation can overcome all kinds of suffering and gain enlightenment. If we practice meditation and follow the Buddha's same path, the same road, we also will gain enlightenment.

So we should have confidence and faith, belief, in these virtues of the Buddha, the Buddha's doctrine, and the Buddha's holy disciples. In order for our Buddha to gain omniscience and supreme enlightenment, he performed *pāramī*, or the virtue perfections. For how long? For four eons and 100,000 worlds he developed his virtue perfections—so, for many, many lives, and many, many, many worlds, and finally, he gained supreme enlightenment. It's not easy to discover the truth for everyone. As we believe, as we have confidence in the glory of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*, we are the followers of the Buddha, and the sons and daughters of the Buddha. If we follow his footprint, we *also* can gain enlightenment.

Next, we should have confidence in our practice, in the method we practice. The Buddha said that whoever practices according to the Noble Eightfold Path can overcome all kinds of suffering and gain enlightenment. We need to follow the Buddha's teaching, the method, rightly and properly. It's like when we go somewhere, we should take the right freeway in order to reach our destination. If it's the wrong freeway, we won't reach our destination. That's why we have to follow the Buddha's teaching, especially with regard to mindfulness meditation. So we practice *vipassanā* meditation, or mindfulness meditation, or insight meditation—it's all the same.

What do we need to do? The Buddha said we should try to be mindful, to be aware of every physical activity and mental process. We should be aware of what happens to our body, our thoughts, our sensations, our feelings, and our emotions. We should try to be aware of these in every moment. The Buddha said that we should practice meditation as if we are a very sick person. When a very weak, sick person gets up, they get up slowly, and they sit down and walk slowly. So every action you make, slow down. Whatever you do should be done mindfully, precisely, slowly, and gently, and then you will gain concentration and wisdom. So we need to follow the technique, the method, properly and rightly.

And last, we should have confidence in ourselves. Some people think, after having just practiced meditation for one hour or for one day: “I can’t gain concentration. I don’t think I can gain any enlightenment.” They think it’s better if they just give up. This means that they have no confidence in themselves. We should have confidence in ourselves.

What do we need to do? We need to possess moral conduct, firmly and purely, and then we will gain confidence. Think about yourself: there are no secrets in this world, and so you know for yourself what happens with your mind, and you know about your actions. We need to examine ourselves.

What about our precepts? There are only five, so it’s not like a monk with 227 precepts. Every day, think about whether in your daily life you were able to possess the morality to refrain from killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct, lying, and using intoxicants and drugs. If you have, this means you have kept the five precepts firmly and purely. Then you’ll gain confidence in yourself. You’ll know: “I possess these five precepts firmly and purely.”

The Buddha said that whoever follows the Noble Eightfold Path can reach their destination, their ultimate goal. So we should have confidence in ourselves: “I have *sīla*—firmly and purely.” We try to purify our mind and observe these five precepts firmly.

And though all of you take the five precepts, some of you have also taken eight or ten, or even 227, precepts. You need to be proud of yourself. You have the self-discipline to refrain from unwholesome physical and verbal actions. As you are proud of yourself, you will gain self-esteem.

Also, think about your life since the time you were born: sometimes you got sick and sometimes you came across difficulties or dangers, but you overcame all of them and you’re still alive. What’s the reason? Think about that. It’s because you still have good *kamma* from your previous lives. And in this life you perform good *kamma* every day, and this good *kamma* supports your efforts to gain enlightenment. We’ve overcome all kinds of dangers and difficulties and obstacles because of our good *kamma*. Have confidence in yourself.

Some may think that their rebirth consciousness is not associated with wisdom, and that’s why even though they’ve been practicing meditation for years, they haven’t gained anything. In other words, maybe they doubt themselves. Don’t doubt yourself. Have *confidence* in yourself. You know what’s good and you know what’s bad. You know what you should do, say, and think. We study and listen to the Buddha’s

JUST PRACTICE

teaching, and so we understand the teaching on the truth. And as we understand the truth, we have become interested in meditation. Not everyone has become interested in meditation.

In Las Vegas, we have almost 3,000,000 people. How many are interested in meditation? See that? We are interested in meditation because we used to practice meditation in a previous life. We have good *kamma*. And as we have good *kamma*, in this life we are healthy. According to our good *kamma*, we have this noble treasure in our heart. We sit in meditation for one or two or three hours without moving. We practice meditation many hours a day. We sacrifice worldly pleasures. This means we are not normal people. And because we have good *kamma*, we are interested in meditation. This means you should have confidence in yourself. Think: “If I keep practicing meditation, step by step I will get closer and closer to my destination, my spiritual goal.”

You are not a bad person. Be proud of yourself. Reflect that you have perfect organs, good eyes, and good ears—you can see and you can hear. We have many kinds of abilities, our brains are perfect, our hearts are good—we possess everything we need. And you’re ready to help others and sacrifice your belongings for the welfare and happiness of other people. You are a spiritual person. You possess loving kindness and compassion—you don’t want to harm or hurt others. You don’t want to take things from others unlawfully. You just want to give, to share with others. This means you have a good heart. As you have a good heart, you have confidence in yourself. Think: “I am not a normal person, so if I keep practicing, keep doing good *kamma* through my physical, verbal, and mental actions every day, one day I will reach my ultimate goal, my destination.” Think about that. We should have confidence.

After you have confidence in the Buddha, the Buddha’s doctrine, and the Buddha’s holy disciples, you will have confidence in the practice and in yourself. You don’t need anything else. So just keep practicing.

As I always remind you, try to be aware in every moment of what happens to your body, your thoughts, and your sensations. If you do, you’ll see the nature of mind and matter—it’s just mind and matter arising and disappearing, one after another. So in every moment, with every noting, you get closer and closer to your destination. Just keep practicing, while you’re still alive. Our health is not guaranteed.

No one knows what will happen in the future. Now we are still strong and healthy, so use this opportunity to try to be mindful and have confidence in the practice. As you practice, you’ll see the phenomena of mind and matter, and you’ll see the truth. As you see the truth, even

though you sometimes come across undesirable situations and worldly conditions, you can let them go easily. They won't hurt you. You won't feel sorry about it, because you accept the truth. You'll understand that nothing is permanent and nothing is controllable. As you understand the truth and keep practicing, one day you can overcome all kinds of suffering. You can gain your spiritual goal of enlightenment.

I would like all of you to fulfill your five kinds of mental faculties. Possess confidence, and then use your effort and try to practice mindfulness meditation. May all of you gain concentration and wisdom, be free from greed, anger, and delusion, and gain enlightenment.

From the December 28, 2018 talk “Effort”

Today I would like to talk about effort, or energy. When we practice meditation, we need *viriyā*, or energy. Think about when we were young: we went to school many, many hours a day, and used our energy a lot—maybe more than ten hours a day. For how many years did we do that? For some of you, maybe 15 or 20, or maybe even more, years, right? You’ve used your time and your effort for education. And after you finish your education and start your career, how many hours do you work? Sometimes there’s no time to sleep and no time to eat, right? How many hours a day do you work? What about someone who has already finished their education and has since retired—no more business—how many hours of their lives have they used to do these things?

But what else do we need to use our energy for? For mental culture, mental development, mental training. For worldly affairs, we use a lot of our time—sometimes more than ten hours a day. Sometimes we study the whole night or do business the whole night, right? Sometimes we have no opportunity to sleep. But how about for mental training? How many hours in one day do you use for that? Think about and examine this for yourself.

We need to use our effort, especially when we practice sitting meditation, to focus on directing our mind on our primary object of meditation. If you focus your mind on your nostrils—inhaling and exhaling—try to see the nature of this air element—in and out—from the very beginning of the breath, through the middle, and until the end. Aim your mind to your primary object of meditation. Use your effort the right way. Those who choose abdominal movement as their main object of meditation do the same thing. Try to focus your mind to see from the very beginning of the rising, through the middle, and until the end. So we use our effort, use our energy, to direct our mind to our primary object of meditation. By doing this, there’s no room for greed, anger, or delusion to arise.

The Buddha taught us how to purify our mind and how to use our *effort* to eliminate greed, anger, delusion, and so on.

When we practice walking meditation, we have six stages:

- 1) “Walking left, walking right”
- 2) “Lifting, dropping”
- 3) “Lifting, pushing, dropping”
- 4) “Heal up, lifting, pushing, dropping”

- 5) “Heal up, lifting, pushing, lowering, treading”
- 6) “Heal up, lifting, pushing, lowering, touching, pressing”

We need to use our effort to focus our mind, to *direct* our mind, on the movement of our legs—the *movement*, not the form, of our legs. It’s the *movement*.

Most of you use only three or four stages: “lifting, pushing, dropping” or “heal up, lifting, pushing, dropping.” When you lift your leg, just make a mental note: “lifting.” The lifting of your leg and the noting mind should be together in the present moment. Follow the lifting from the beginning until the end of it. Use your effort to try to see the movement, just the lifting, of your leg. Then when you push forward, you say “pushing” and focus your mind from the time you start to push forward until the end. We need to use our effort. When you drop your leg, just say “dropping” and follow the movement from the start of the dropping until the end of the dropping.

When we practice this meditation, the movement of the lifting, pushing and dropping and the noting mind should be simultaneous in the present moment. We have to use our effort. If we do that and practice walking meditation for, say, one or two hours, there’s no room for greed, anger or delusion to arise. This is how we purify our mind.

I would like all of you to use your effort, your energy, as much as you can to try to focus your mind on your primary object of sitting meditation—rising, falling, or breathing in and out—from the very beginning, through the middle, and to the end. When you practice walking meditation, try to focus your mind on the lifting, pushing, dropping, seeing the nature of the movement of your legs and the noting mind—both mind and matter—arising together and disappearing together, one after another. Keep practicing for one hour or two hours.

Before you practice sitting meditation, you should practice walking meditation. Having established concentration during your walking meditation, you can carry it into your sitting meditation—you won’t need to try hard, you’ll gain concentration easily.

So I’d like all of you to use your energy in the proper way and keep practicing. May all of you be free from greed, anger, and delusion, and gain peace of mind and happiness in this very life.

From the December 31, 2018 talk “A Wonderful Vacation”

All of you came to Chaiya Meditation Monastery for a wonderful vacation—you came to collect noble treasures. These noble treasures mean that all of you believe—have confidence in—the Buddha’s omniscience, that you have confidence and belief in the Buddha’s teachings, and that you have confidence and faith in the virtues of the Buddha’s holy disciples. And all of you believe, or have confidence in, the law of cause and effect. This belief is associated with wisdom. This is one kind of noble treasure that you possess.

It’s not only about having this belief. All of you observe precepts too. Some of you observe five precepts, but most of you observe eight precepts. And this new monk here, he observes 227 precepts. This means you possess *sīla*—morality. This is a kind of noble treasure.

As for the next kind of noble treasure, you came here to the meditation monastery for, some of you, ten days or nine days or eight days—and you learn a lot, I think. I try to give Dhamma talks twice a day—after lunch and in the evening. I give this noble treasure to all of you so you may learn something, so you can understand the Buddha’s teachings and how they relate to our lives. So if you want to hear these teachings, it means you have another kind of noble treasure in your heart.

Another kind of noble treasure is generosity. All of you came here to observe the precepts, and some of you became novices or monks or nuns, and others came just to meditate. And you’ve offered breakfast and lunch to the monks and the meditators—your Dhamma friends, maybe 50 or 60 people a day. This is a noble treasure you gain.

And it’s not just offering breakfast and lunch and juice to the monks. You also make contributions for the new meditation building. Today someone made a contribution of \$500 for the new building. I’d like all of you to say *sādhu*—*sadhu, sadhu, sādhu*. Normally she donates a lot of money—maybe \$1,000, and today, \$500. And another lady from Texas made a \$300 contribution for the new building. I’d like all of you to say *sādhu* again—*sādhu, sādhu, sādhu*. So everyone, all of you, offered breakfast or lunch for 50 or 60 people, and make contributions to this meditation building. This means you possess another kind of noble treasure.

During the eight or nine or ten days that you’ve come to practice meditation, you possess moral shame and moral dread—you never do any unwholesome actions, you never say bad things, and you don’t have bad

thoughts—because you try to be mindful and practice meditation. This means you possess a noble treasure.

And because you've come here to practice meditation, you gain some extent of wisdom. Wisdom has different levels. Recently, someone asked me about the difference between those who study and gain higher education but don't practice and those who have low education but do practice. We call this *saññā* and *paññā*—they are different. *Saññā* means memorization. *Paññā* means wisdom. Someone may be a doctor—they have higher education—but maybe they don't understand what is wholesome and what is unwholesome. As an example, one of my doctors, my dentist, takes a vacation once a year. He said to me, "I won't see you this month." So I said, "Where are you going, doctor?" He said, "I am going to Alaska." For what? "For fishing." See that? He has a doctor degree but he doesn't know what's good or bad, wholesome or unwholesome.

So now, all of us try to practice meditation. We try to watch our minds, study our minds, and purify our minds. We all came to practice meditation. We follow the Buddha's teaching exactly. It is the nature of Buddhism to avoid unwholesome deeds, speech and thoughts. So as all of you try to avoid unwholesome deeds, speech and thoughts, you follow the Buddha's teaching exactly.

We try to cultivate good things, so all of you practice generosity, observe morality—moral conduct—and we do morning and evening chanting, and especially *Paṭṭhāna* chanting. *Paṭṭhāna* is the highest teaching of the Buddha. It is a profound teaching of the Buddha: the law of causal relations. We have a great opportunity to recite this teaching, but we should know the meaning. I try to explain to all of you how to apply these teachings in our daily lives.

In order to gain wisdom as we practice meditation, we try to be mindful of what happens to our body, so we practice sitting, walking, standing, and lying down meditation. Try to be mindful in your general activities too. As we try to be mindful in every action, we realize that it's just mind and matter, except mind and matter are *nothing*—this is *wisdom*. We differentiate mind and matter—it's just nature. Mind and matter are interrelated as cause and effect, arising and disappearing. As we practice *vipassanā* meditation, we understand this. This is a higher wisdom. As we practice and try to focus our mind on our primary object, in every moment we see just arising and disappearing, just coming and going—nothing lasts long. And so we experience and realize this highest wisdom through our practice. See that?

JUST PRACTICE

So this eight or nine or ten days is a very precious vacation for all of you because you possess these noble and precious treasures in your heart. In worldly affairs, some people may possess millions or even billions of dollars, but when they have to part from this world, they can't take even \$1 with them. But these noble treasures will be with you all the time. There are seven kinds of noble treasures that exist in your heart. Wherever you go, they will be with you, will follow you, will protect you, will allow you to gain peace and happiness, and will support you to be successful in whatever you're longing for. These are wonderful noble treasures. See that? I want all of you to be happy about this and proud of yourself.

Some people are very rich, they have millions or billions of dollars, but if they don't know how to use their treasure, it's very dangerous. If you're attached—this is *lobha*. *Lobha* is the cause of suffering. If you're attached to something—such as your belongings—before you die, what happens? In the next life you become a hungry ghost or maybe an animal. It's very dangerous if you don't know how to use your treasures to be meaningful. And before people die, maybe they think about their treasures—they have a lot of businesses, a lot of money—and they worry about that. Worry is one kind of anger. Just thinking about their belongings, worry and anger arise many times. See that? But if we have nothing, we don't have to worry about anything, right?

So all of you possess noble treasure—you don't have to worry because you don't attach to it. This noble treasure will support you all the time. Even when you have to depart from this world, this noble treasure will follow you like a shadow into a future life. It will allow you to be reborn in a good existence, have a comfortable life, and have a long life. When all of you came to the temple, you were just a normal person, right? But when you go back home, you're not a normal person anymore—you're a *rich* person. Think about this: "I'm a rich person now because I possess these noble treasures in my heart." No one can steal them from you. This is your own treasure. You can use it in this life as well as in the next life.

This is a wonderful vacation. You came to collect these noble treasures. I would like all of you to carry this noble treasure with you for the rest of your lives. Don't leave it anywhere, okay? Just carry it with you all the time. You have *saddhā* (confidence or faith) in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the Triple Gem. You try to observe the five precepts firmly and purely. You study the Buddha's teachings to gain knowledge to use in your daily lives in order to gain peace and happiness.

You practice generosity and try to avoid unwholesome deeds, speech and thoughts. And especially, you try to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation to gain wisdom. As you develop these noble treasures, they become greater and greater, and then you will know for yourself the Buddha's *sandiṭṭhiko*—as you do good things, you will experience the benefits for yourself.

This is why we are Buddhists. We understand how to use our belongings to be meaningful and we know how to use our time, our lives, to be beneficial. So try to develop these noble treasures, bigger and bigger. This noble treasure is what you have to depend on. You cannot depend on someone else—not your parents, your children, your relatives, or your friends. We have to depend on our noble treasures. No one can give these noble treasures to you. You have to do it yourself—collect them and put them in your heart. Wherever you go, they'll be with you all the time.

So I'd like all of you to think about how you came to the meditation monastery—even if for just a short period of time—to collect these noble treasures. Try to keep them in your heart every day for the rest of your life. Try to improve them. Make them bigger and bigger. And you'll become a rich person because you have noble treasures in your heart, right? Then try to practice meditation.

May all of you be a rich person, possess these noble treasures, gain peace and happiness, and also try to practice insight *vipassanā* meditation the best you can. May all of you understand the Four Noble Truths—understand suffering, be able to abandon the cause of suffering, and be able to realize the supreme bliss of *nibbāna* in this very life.

Are there any questions? This is a good opportunity to ask questions. No questions?

Okay, come here again at 10:30 pm and we'll recite the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the virtues of the Triple Gem—108 times, and we will radiate loving kindness—wish for all living beings to be happy—and then we will welcome the New Year after midnight.

From the January 25, 2019 talk “The Monkey Mind”

All of you came to offer lunch to the monks, the meditators, and to your Dhamma friends. And a devotee from California made a \$10,000 donation for the new meditation building. I would like all of you to say “*sādhu.*” *Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu.* In addition to making the donation for the new building, this morning she offered breakfast to the monks and meditators, *and* she came to observe the eight precepts and practice meditation. This year, you all are gaining *dāna*, *sīla*, and *bhāvanā*—or generosity, morality, and wisdom.

In particular, all of you came to the temple to learn about and practice meditation. We have sitting meditation, walking meditation, standing meditation, and lying down meditation. We can practice meditation in any posture. And we can classify meditation into two kinds: tranquility meditation and insight *vipassanā* meditation.

The purpose of tranquility meditation is to gain peace of mind and concentration. Some of you may be used to practicing yoga and so on. This is tranquility meditation. You’re trying to focus on one object to gain concentration. But for insight *vipassanā* meditation, we are trying to develop our wisdom in order to see the nature of mind and body for what they really are. We should try to be mindful of every physical activity and mental process. It’s very useful for everyone. Even a five-year-old kid can practice this.

Buddhism is not a kind of religion—it’s not a system of worship. Buddhism is the art of living and dying. The Buddha’s teaching is to let us know how to live in this world peacefully, happily, wisely, and blamelessly. And when we die, we should know how to die, otherwise it’s very dangerous. For example, before we die, we may attach to something. Attachment is *lobha*, or greed. It’s one kind of mental defilement. If you attach to your dog or your cat, it’s possible to be reborn as a dog or a cat. If you are attached to your belongings, such as your house or your car, it’s possible to be reborn as a hungry ghost. So we should know how to die. That’s why we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation: to know how to live peacefully, and how to die peacefully and wisely.

In particular, we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation to overcome suffering. We have many, many kinds of suffering, so the Buddha guided us in how to practice to overcome suffering. Sometimes we may come across physical suffering, but if you know how to practice meditation, even though you may feel physical suffering there’s no mental suffering.

And we don't just practice meditation today so that we will receive the consequences in the next life—it's not like that. We will receive the results here and now. We need to practice to train our mind. That's why we call it *bhāvanā*, or mental training. We need to train our mind to see, to gain concentration, to gain wisdom, to gain knowledge, and to understand reality.

When we practice meditation, we should have a primary object of meditation. We don't just sit and think about something—that's not right. Some people come here and say that they've been practicing meditation for over ten years. I ask them, "Where do you focus your mind when you sit in meditation?" Most of them say, "I just sit and empty my mind." That's impossible. Just sitting and emptying your mind is impossible. Even if you try hard to focus on one object, your mind still wanders because there are so many distractions. How will you empty your mind? It's *impossible*. I've been practicing meditation for over 50 years, so I understand this. Emptying your mind is impossible. So what we need to do is have a primary object.

You should begin by sitting in the right position. Make yourself comfortable—any position is fine, but your upper body should be straight and not tense. It should be natural, so relax your mind and body and your muscles. And breathe as usual. Don't force your breath and make it faster or longer. Your breath should be natural. And then you can gain peace of mind. If you force yourself to breathe faster or longer, you will get tired. So breathe as usual.

Close your eyes when you sit in meditation, and try not to think about anything. We've thought about so many kinds of things for many years, so during the time we practice meditation we should try not to think about anything. And then, focus your mind on your abdominal movement. When you breathe in, your abdomen rises upward. When you breathe out, the abdomen falls downward. Try to focus your mind on this abdominal movement. When you feel the abdomen rising, try to focus on the movement, not on the shape of your abdomen—the *movement*. And make a mental note, saying in your mind as it rises: "rising." Follow the rising of the abdomen from the very beginning until the end of the rising. The rising abdomen and the noting mind should be simultaneous in the present moment. Mind and matter, or mind and body—that is, the noting mind and the rising abdomen—should be together in the present moment. When you feel the abdomen fall down, just make a mental note: "falling." So, "rising...falling." After about six seconds, if you don't think

JUST PRACTICE

about anything, no greed, no anger, no delusion, and no worry arise in the mind—you gain peace of mind right away.

Keep practicing. Maybe after a few minutes—perhaps five minutes—the mind goes out. Then, try to watch your mind. You'll know your mind is not on your abdominal movement—it's gone out. What do we do about that? Just label it: "go out, go out, go out." And then return to your abdominal movement, noting the rising and falling as usual. Again, your mind thinks about something. This is the tendency of our monkey mind to think about things. This means you forgot to focus on your abdominal movement. Try to observe it, be aware of it, and label it: "thinking, thinking, thinking." Label it a few times then return to the rising and falling as usual. And again, your mind starts to wander, it goes here and there. You realize this, you know your mind has wandered. It's not just focused on the rising and falling of the abdomen. And then try to be aware of the wandering mind, and label it. Realize that your mind has wandered then label it as "wandering, wandering, wandering." Then stop, and return to your main object of meditation.

And sometimes you talk to someone in your thoughts. What do we have to do about that? When you know you're talking to someone in your thoughts instead of focusing on the rising and falling, try to be aware of it and make a mental note: "talking, talking, talking." Label it a few times and then come back to your abdominal movement, rising and falling. This is how to train this monkey mind to be in the present moment.

Mostly, our mind is thinking about the past or worrying about the future. It's not supposed to be like that. Try to observe the main object of your meditation. By training your mind, many times, many hours, many days, for the rest of your life, continuing to practice this every day, on and on, you'll eventually know that your mind is not like before. You can reduce your distractions. Instead of your mind going out 100 times, it just goes out 99 or 90 or 50 times. And sometimes it doesn't go out at all. You'll know for yourself. You'll experience this.

We need this mental training—this mental culture—to culture this monkey mind to be in the present moment.

By practicing meditation, we understand that nothing lasts long—it's just temporary. For example, we focus on the rising and falling of the abdomen. From the time we were born until we die, the abdomen is always rising and disappearing, one after another. Some of you are used to practicing by focusing on your breath, breathing in and breathing out.

Try to focus your mind and know that you're breathing in and know that you're breathing out. Either method is fine.

So we practice meditation to see the nature of mind and matter as impermanent. You realize this by practice, not from the book, not from listening. You'll know for yourself. You will know about your life, you will know that mind and body are impermanent—and uncontrollable. You cannot control your body, or your breath, or the rising and falling of your abdomen. They go by their own nature, every second, every moment. We cannot control them.

To see this impermanence and uncontrollability is wisdom—we gain wisdom. When we gain wisdom, it's not just when we sit in meditation that we gain the good results. Even in our daily lives in the outside world, or when we're at home or at work, wherever we go, we'll experience the good results. Maybe sometimes you'll come across an undesirable situation. But you can let it go easily.

But often, you come across desirable situations and you feel happy. This happiness comes in two kinds: happiness regarding worldly affairs, and happiness regarding spiritual practice. You may feel happy about seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching something. This is greed—it's unwholesome consciousness. But if you feel happy about generosity, about morality, concentration, and wisdom, this is wholesome consciousness. See? Two kinds of happiness.

For example, you watch TV or you go to a concert or see someone dancing or singing, and you like it and feel happy about it—this is greed. See? But few people know this. They think: "Oh, it's very good." They pay \$100 or \$200 and spend two or three hours—happy, happy. This is just unwholesome consciousness. See that?

When you come to the temple, there's nothing here. You can't see anything—no movies, no songs, there's nothing here. But you come and practice meditation, you offer something, you try to observe your five or eight precepts, you do chanting, you practice loving kindness meditation, you share a portion of the merit with others, and you try to be mindful and practice insight *vipassanā* meditation. And when you come to perform these meritorious deeds, how do you feel? Happy, right? This happiness is wholesome consciousness.

Sometimes you think about something, worry about something, or feel sad about something. You have to understand yourself that this sadness or this worry is a kind of anger. Anger is like fire. It's like a fire burning your heart. This is the Buddha's teaching. We have to live peacefully and happily, not sadly. We need to let these go.

JUST PRACTICE

How do we let them go? Sometimes when we practice meditation we need to change the object, so instead of thinking about something that makes you feel unhappy, think about something that makes you happy. The best way, though, is to observe your meditation object—rising and falling, or breathing in and breathing out. Then, there's no more sadness or worry.

We should also have proper or wise attention. We should think about time and this life. Life is time. And time is very important. Our life is very important, and in every moment, our lives become shorter and shorter. Time flies very quickly, so why would we let our time, our lives, pass by unmeaningfully? It's not supposed to be like that.

Our lives should be used rightly and meaningfully. By loving ourselves, we should think, "I should not let my time pass by in vain, so I need to do something—even as my life is getting shorter and shorter in every moment—to develop wholesome deeds." We especially need to develop our wisdom by *practicing* meditation.

Sometimes you listen to a Dhamma talk, and some of you read books. By doing these things you get some knowledge or some guidance. You'll learn something. But what you learn from the book or from listening should be applied to your daily life. Just listening or reading, you'll gain a lot of knowledge, but if you don't use it rightly, you'll get nothing. So we should put it into *practice*.

We know anger is not good. It's like a fire. It's like a poison. Why would we keep it in our heart? Don't keep it in your heart—let it go. If you keep it in your heart, it means you don't love yourself. *Let it go*. To let it go, you need to understand that nothing lasts long, nothing is permanent. If we understand this fact, we can let it go easily. That's why we need to practice meditation.

When you practice meditation and focus on rising and falling or breathing in and breathing out, you'll see that in every moment, mind and matter are just arising and disappearing, one after another, non-stop. Everything else is the same—nothing is permanent. Don't try to control any situation, or anyone. If you try to control something or someone, you will suffer about it because it's uncontrollable. We cannot control anything in this world. The Buddha said we need to try to tame our mind but we should not try to control others. Even with our mind, everyone knows anger is not good but we still get mad sometimes. This shows how you cannot control your mind. So if we can't even control our own mind, how can we control others? Think about that. And then you can let it go.

Good situations don't last forever, and bad situations are the same. This is just the nature of our world. It's impermanent and it's uncontrollable. Accept this fact, and then you can let it go. Then there's no worry, no sadness, no depression, and you'll feel happy. In every moment you will be happy. We need to gain this happiness.

So, there are two kinds of happiness. Worldly happiness is unwholesome because it is based upon attachment, which is the cause of suffering. Instead, we need to gain spiritual happiness. To gain spiritual happiness, you need to understand the truth. To understand the truth, we need to practice meditation.

That's why I'd like all of you to try the best you can to culture this monkey mind. Whatever happens to your thoughts, try to be aware of it and label it, then come back to your primary object. If you feel sad about something or sorry about something, don't let it arise on and on. Try to be aware of it. If you feel sorry about something, just label it: "sorry, sorry, sorry." Label it a few times and then return to your main object of meditation. By doing this, instead of worrying about something for one hour, it's just one *minute*—and DONE.

This is the benefit of practicing meditation. This is why the Buddha taught us how to live peacefully and blamelessly. When we're able to control our mind, our mental actions, we can control our physical and verbal actions too. As we mainly focus on our mental actions in practicing mental culture, we train our mind to be in the present moment, and to be free from greed, anger, and delusion.

I would like all of you to try to practice both tranquility and insight *vipassanā* meditation to be able to be free from suffering, and free from greed, anger, and delusion.

From the February 2, 2019 talk “Nothing Lasts”

[Luang Por addresses a little boy.] Have you been here before? Ah, okay. You’re welcome here. What’s your name? It’s very nice to meet you.

Today all of you came to Chaiya Meditation Monastery to offer lunch and *saṅghadāna* to the monks, the community, and the meditators. It’s not only that you gave *dāna*, or generosity, in offering lunch to the monks, but all of you also took the five precepts, and some of you took the eight precepts. This is one kind of merit—by restraining your physical and verbal actions, by practicing morality.

All of you also did morning chanting. Whenever you recite the holy scriptures for 15 or 20 minutes, you gain concentration because you focus on the chanting. You know the meaning, so your mind just focuses on the virtues of the Buddha, the Buddha’s doctrine, and the Buddha’s holy disciples. This is a kind of tranquility meditation. We call it recollection of the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the so-called Triple Gem.

And also, all of you came to practice sitting meditation—*bhāvanā*, or mental training, mental development. This is the greatest merit.

All of you came to perform meritorious deeds, and it’s based on your belief and wisdom. Whatever you do, you should have the right belief and wisdom. Not blind faith. Whatever you’re doing should be associated with wisdom, so you came to perform meritorious deeds because you believe the law of action—that if you do a good thing, you will receive good consequences, for sure. That’s why if we want to *receive* good things we should *do* good things.

So today you came to the temple to do good things. You came to practice generosity, you share your belongings with others—we call this *dāna*, or generosity. In performing an act of giving, *dāna*, generosity, there are many levels of receiver. For instance, sometimes you may give to homeless people or to a beggar. But today you came to the temple and performed an act of giving to the monks—the holy monks—the nun, and the meditators. They possess morality, concentration, and wisdom. This means you’re giving something to a holy person—a good field of merit. So as you offer something to good people—*holy people*—you will receive the greatest results. This is according to the law of action. And the good results are not only had in this life but also in many lives in the future. Whatever person offers something—generosity, performs *dāna*—will be prosperous.

And you also observed the precepts. We have five precepts, eight precepts, ten precepts, and even 227 precepts. We call these *sīla*. Whoever observes *sīla* tries to restrain their physical and verbal actions—they don't do anything bad to others, they don't say any bad words to others. This means they restrain their physical and verbal actions. There's no killing, no stealing, no committing sexual misconduct, no speaking lies, no intoxicants or drugs, and so on. Whoever observes these five precepts firmly and purely will not only in this life but also in the next life have a long life and good health, for sure. As you don't hurt or kill others, so you too will have a good life, a long life, and good health. This is the law of action, the law of *kamma*.

And also, you practice meditation. We practice meditation to see the phenomena of mind and body for what they really are. We try to practice to gain concentration to see the truth. Our body will show us its nature. And our feelings, our sensations, our emotions, and our thoughts will let us know *their* nature. What's the nature of mind and matter? In *Pāli*, it's called *anicca*—impermanence. As you practice meditation, you will see this body—you will know that sometimes you feel hot and sometimes cold, sometimes you feel something hard and sometimes something feels soft, sometimes it's moving, and sometimes you feel support. Everything is changing, moving, in motion—everything is *always* changing. So when you observe the body, you will see the nature of the body—nothing lasts forever, every moment, every second, it keeps changing and changing. This is *anicca*, or impermanence.

To see the impermanence of the body, we focus on our breath—in and out—or on our abdominal movement—rising and falling. As some of you focus on your breathing in and out, you see that in every moment it's just the air element—and it's not the same one. The previous one arose and disappeared, and then a new one came into existence. So in every moment it's just a new thing—the old one disappears and a new one comes, they come and go, arising and disappearing—you'll see that. Others focus their mind on their abdominal movement. The rising and falling of the abdomen is the air element. We're not observing the form or the shape of our body—we should see the nature of the *movement*. You see the movement element in every moment just arising and disappearing, one after another. This means you see the impermanence of this body.

Sometimes you think about the past, and when you gain some extent of concentration, you can recall previous experiences going back many years—since you were young—and you see that sometimes you felt

JUST PRACTICE

sad about something and sometimes you felt happy about something. You see that what you feel is not *always* sad or sorry or happy about something; instead, it's that *sometimes* you feel sorry, *sometimes* you feel happy, and so on. This means that your sensations, your feelings, and your emotions are just arising and disappearing, one after another. Our sensations, our feelings, and our emotions do not last long. So we see the impermanence of our feelings and sensations.

With regard to the mind, when you practice meditation you try to focus on your primary object of meditation. But even though you try not to think about anything, it's the tendency of our mind to think about many kinds of things. It keeps thinking about the past, imagining the future—sometimes there's a good thought, and sometimes there's a bad thought. You see for yourself that these thoughts also—this *mind* also—is arising and disappearing. There are many, many thoughts, and many, many consciousnesses. This means you see the impermanence of this mind and your thoughts.

And also, sometimes you close your eyes: you don't see or hear or smell or taste anything, you don't feel any touching, but in your thoughts there are a lot of visions, a lot of things appearing. We think about so many kinds of things. We watch a movie, for instance. One picture image is arising and disappearing, then another one is coming—they keep arising and disappearing. Our thoughts are also. These mental objects appear to our mind in many ways.

All of this means that when you practice meditation you will see that nothing lasts forever. Every moment, every second, there is just arising and disappearing. The main purpose of us sitting in meditation is to see the phenomena of mind and matter as impermanent. We practice meditation to develop our wisdom. When we gain wisdom as we practice meditation, we see, we realize by ourselves, that nothing is permanent or controllable. If you come across a very difficult situation, you can let it go easily. Why? Because you know that nothing lasts forever. Even undesirable situations are just temporary. Just be patient and let it go—you'll get past it. Otherwise, you'll feel sorry or sad about it and eventually become depressed.

So this is why we practice meditation: to see the nature of mind and body as impermanent and uncontrollable. When you gain this wisdom, whatever kind of worldly affairs you have to face, you will not feel sorry about them because you understand that nothing is permanent—you can let it go easily.

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

This is the benefit of meditation. That's why we try to develop our wisdom. What do we need to gain wisdom? We need concentration, so we practice and try to be mindful. Focus on what happens to the eyes, the ears, the body, and the mind. It's nothing special. Focus on your primary object—breathing in and breathing out, or the rising and falling of the abdomen. And then you will gain wisdom. Whoever gains wisdom will gain peace and happiness because they understand the truth.

I would like all of you to try the best you can to practice generosity, observe the five precepts firmly and purely, and practice meditation, or mental culture. May all of you be freed from greed, anger, and delusion, and be happy.

From the February 17, 2019 talk “Three Essences”

I’d like to talk today about three essences. The essence of our property is generosity. The essence of this body is *sīla*, or morality. And the essence of our life is wisdom.

Even if you are a millionaire, a very rich person, if there’s no generosity your property has no meaning, no value. That’s why we should convert our property to become inner treasure—in other words, practice generosity—as much as we can.

As for this body, even if you are very handsome or pretty, and healthy, if there’s no *sīla*, it’s meaningless. We need to uphold our moral conduct, firmly and purely, and let this body have value.

And as for our lives, even if we have a long life—100 years or more—if there’s no wisdom, it’s nothing, it’s meaningless. To gain wisdom, we need to practice meditation. Wisdom means knowing reality—knowing the nature of mind and matter as impermanent, and so on. We call this wisdom. When you practice meditation, you will gain wisdom. And as your *vipassanā* knowledge increases, one day you can gain enlightenment. You can gain supramundane wisdom. So, the essence of our lives is wisdom.

The Buddha said that even if you live in this world for 100 years, if there’s no *sīla* and no wisdom, it’s meaningless. That’s why we should try our best to share our belongings with others by practicing generosity, try to observe the five precepts firmly and purely, and if possible, try to observe eight or ten precepts when you can. And every day, we need to practice meditation to gain real wisdom.

If we develop these three essences, our lives become valuable. Then, if we have a long life, maybe 100 years, it’s good—because we have accumulated all of these precious treasures. But even if we don’t live 100 years, it doesn’t matter. We don’t have to worry about it, because we already accumulated good *kamma*.

I would like all of you to try the best you can to possess these three essences and make your lives meaningful. May all of you be able to gain enlightenment in this life.

From the February 19, 2019 talk “Māgha Pūjā”

Today is *Māgha Pūjā* Day. It’s a very important day in Buddhism. About two years after the Buddha gained supreme enlightenment, 1,250 of his monks—all of them *arahants*, or the highest saints—without having an appointment assembled before him. On that day the Buddha gave an admonition that is very important. It is the essence of Buddhism, and it can be summarized in three short phrases:

- 1) Avoid all kinds of unwholesome actions;
- 2) Try to cultivate good things completely; and
- 3) Purify your own mind.

These three things are the admonitions of all Buddhas. It is very important to not do any unwholesome actions, to cultivate the good, and to purify our minds. I’ll talk a little bit about each of them:

The first one—not to do any unwholesome actions—means not to do anything unwholesome by any deed, speech, or thought. Why do we need to avoid unwholesome actions? Because if we do unwholesome actions by deed, speech, or thought, we will receive bad consequences as a matter of nature. That’s why the Buddha through his compassion reminds us to avoid unwholesome actions.

The second one: to cultivate the good. We need to do good things as much as we can. We need to practice *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*. Sometimes we can use our belongings to be meaningful. Sometimes we can use our physical energy—our bodies—to be beneficial. And sometimes we need to observe the eight or ten precepts, and so on. We need to do good in everything we do. This means that everything we do must be good. Today some of you offered lunch to the monks, and you offered other food, robes, money—many kinds of stuff—for the temple, the pagoda, the new meditation building, for the *Kaṭhina* robe offering, and so on. We need to do these good things as much as we can.

And the third one—to purify our mind—is very important. How do we purify our mind? We need to practice meditation to purify our mind. This means we are purifying our mind from greed, anger, and delusion—all kinds of mental defilement. Without practicing meditation, our minds are always thinking about something and wandering a lot. As that happens, there is greed, anger, delusion, worry, jealousy, and so on, arising. When we practice meditation, we use our effort to try to be mindful, to concentrate our mind on our object of meditation—and then,

JUST PRACTICE

there's no room for greed, anger, or delusion to arise. We need to purify our mind from all kinds of defilement. And so we need to practice meditation.

As we are able to purify our mind, and there's no greed, anger, or delusion, we will not do any unwholesome actions at all because these things come from minds that have greed, anger, and delusion. Otherwise, we end up doing bad things and saying bad things. But when we use our effort, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding of what's good and what's bad, we will not do any unwholesome actions. We will do only good things, every day.

We have to follow the Buddha's teaching in our daily lives: try to avoid unwholesome actions; do good things as much as we can; and every day, we need to purify our mind, little by little. Gradually, we'll be able to purify our mind completely. That's why we are Buddhists. Think about these three things in your daily lives. If you do no unwholesome actions, do good things, and practice meditation to purify your mind, you won't have anything to worry about. You'll see good consequences in this present life *and* in the next life.

I'd like all of you to follow the Buddha's teaching by avoiding unwholesome actions, cultivating good things, and purifying your mind. May all of you be able to be free from greed, anger, and delusion, and attain *nibbāna* in this life.

From the March 10, 2019 talk “Doing Good Things”

This month on the 24th I'd like all of you to come participate in my birthday ceremony. And also, our new meditation building will be finished next month. We're going to have a grand opening on June 9. And we have a group ordination on June 8, so whoever would like to become a temporary nun or a *sāmanera*—a novice monk—you can let me know. The temple will take care of everything—it won't cost you anything. And especially, from June 10-19—for ten days—we'll have a noble silence intensive meditation retreat. There'll be no talking—just practicing walking and sitting meditation, and listening to Dhamma talks. So we're going to start that June 10 and go through the 19th. Whoever would like to come and practice this noble silence intensive meditation retreat, just let me know. This is good news for all of you. And as usual, on the last Sunday of every month we have a food fair. This month it will be on the 31st.

Some of you come every Sunday to offer lunch to the monks and the meditators, and today some of you dedicated a portion of the merit to your loved ones who have passed away. You came to offer *saṅghadāna*. One gentleman came for his birthday today and offered lunch, *saṅghadāna*, and some money for the new building. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

We need to use our belongings meaningfully by practicing generosity and sharing them with others. It's good to do that. Every day, we, as moral beings, have a great opportunity to develop our virtue perfections—*every* day. That's why we do morning and evening chanting. As you come to know the meaning of the chants in your own language, you are recollecting the Buddha, the Buddha's teaching, and the Buddha's holy disciples. This is one kind of meditation. We call it tranquility meditation—or in *Pāli*, *samatha*. And also, all of you here sit and practice meditation to watch your mind, your thoughts, your feelings, your sensations, your body, and what happens to your body. This means you're trying to be aware of whatever happens to your body, your sensations, your feelings, your emotions, and your thoughts. We're practicing insight *vipassanā* meditation and gaining merit. So we practice generosity, observe five or eight precepts, and by recollecting the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—the so-called Triple Gem—we gain *samatha*. This is merit.

JUST PRACTICE

And we also practice insight *vipassanā* meditation, which is very important, to develop our wisdom. Wisdom here cannot be learned from outside; rather, we learn from *inside*. Inside means your body and mind—they will tell us the truth. They will tell us their nature, so we practice insight *vipassanā* meditation to see the phenomena of mind and matter for what they really are. They show us as they manifest their impermanence and uncontrollability. When we see the nature of mind and matter as impermanent and so on, we can reduce our attachment—because we gain wisdom. That’s why we need to practice meditation: to gain wisdom. We practice meditation by looking inside.

I would like all of you to try the best you can to make your lives beneficial—to do *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā* every day. Elevate these virtue perfections higher and higher. May all of you be able to reach your spiritual goals and attain *nibbāna* in this very life.

From the July 7, 2019 talk “Three Kinds of Merit”

Today all of you came to offer lunch to the monks, the *sāmanera*, the nun, and the meditators. And also, some of you came to offer *saṅghadāna* to the *Saṅgha* communities. So every day we perform these meritorious deeds. This merit is *kusala* or *puñña*. This merit will give rise to happiness, and everyone wants happiness. And as we want happiness, we need to do some good things, like these meritorious deeds. This is what we have to depend on. In our lives we have to depend on merit.

We have three kinds of merit:

- 1) We perform meritorious deeds, the act of giving—*dāna*, which is one kind of merit;
- 2) The second one is when you observe the five precepts, the eight precepts, the ten precepts, or the 227 precepts. This other kind of merit is called *sīla*. The power of *sīla*—morality—is greater than *dāna*, the act of giving; and
- 3) The third one is *bhāvanā*—mental culture, or mental development. If you practice *samatha* tranquility meditation, this kind of merit is greater than *sīla*. We have two kinds of mental development—*samatha* and *vipassanā*. If we practice *vipassanā*, this type of mental culture is more powerful and greater than *samatha* tranquility meditation.

The Buddha said we have to practice all kinds of merit completely—we need *dāna*, *sīla*, *samatha*, and *vipassanā* in our lives.

Just having physical energy and mental energy is not enough. We need spiritual energy also. And that’s why we do good actions, good things, good deeds, good speech, and have good thoughts every day—to increase spiritual energy. If you do that every day, the power of your energy will increase every day. This spiritual energy will protect the donor as the law of Dhamma, the law of nature.

According to the Buddha’s teaching, we don’t depend on any super-being. We don’t depend on anyone, or any god. We depend on our actions: our good deeds, good speech, and good thoughts. These good deeds, good speech, and good thoughts—we can do these any day, any time, anywhere, and in any posture.

JUST PRACTICE

As we are moral beings, we have a great opportunity to develop virtue perfections, spiritual energy, and make our lives beneficial and valuable. That's why we follow the Buddha's teaching—because we strongly believe that we have only our good *kamma*, or good actions, and our spiritual energy to depend on. We need this spiritual energy for our lives, our businesses, our health—for everything.

Dāna is very easy to do. Even though you may not have a chance to go to the temple to perform some kind of meritorious deed, you can do *dāna* at home. Every Buddhist family has a Buddha statue. This is to remind us to recollect—to think about—the virtues of the Buddha. So you offer flowers, water, food, fruit, and so on. You're not offering this stuff to the statue. Look beyond the statue and think about the virtues of the Buddha, as if you're offering these things to the living Buddha. So we should have the right attitude. It's not the statue—it's the living Buddha. This means *dāna*. *Dāna* is giving.

And regarding *sīla*, even though you may not have a chance to be a monk, a novice, a nun, or even a meditator, or observe the eight precepts, at home you can try to uphold your moral conduct by keeping the five precepts, firmly and purely. This means you gain *sīla*. You can observe this *sīla* any time, anywhere, any day. Especially being Buddhists, we should keep the five precepts firmly and purely. This is a kind of merit—spiritual energy.

And every day you think about the power of the Buddha, the Buddha's teaching, and the Buddha's holy disciples. As all of you know, you can recite the reflection every day, and just by knowing the meaning it means you gain spiritual energy. We call this *samatha* meditation. If you don't want to recite this, you can do something else, like radiate your loving kindness—practice loving kindness meditation: “May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.” Radiate your loving kindness to all beings living in this universe. This means you develop these virtue perfections—this spiritual energy. This is *samatha* meditation.

And the best thing to do: try to be mindful, and practice mindfulness meditation. Try to be aware of what happens to your body, what happens to your feelings, your sensations, your emotions, your thoughts, and your mind. Try to be aware of this. And then you will know the nature of mind and matter as impermanent, suffering, uncontrollable, impure, and so on. Thus, you'll gain spiritual energy.

I would like all of you to think about your lives. They are very precious and valuable, so make use of your time and your lives by

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

following the Buddha's teaching. Try to do some *dāna*, *sīla*, *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

May all of you be free from all kinds of physical suffering as well as mental suffering. May all of you gain peace of mind and happiness.

From the November 8, 2019 talk “Inner Treasure”

The Friday lunch donors came to offer lunch to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the *Saṅgha*, the nuns, and the meditators, as usual. And today, especially, two people have birthdays. Happy birthday! They also came to offer lunch and perform meritorious deeds, and especially to dedicate a portion of the merit to their parents, particularly to their moms.

So, we are Buddhists. We’ve had great opportunities to perform meritorious deeds ever since we were born. When we were just one month old, our parents took us to the temple to receive blessings. And we do *dāna*. Once a month or once a year—*every* year—especially when we celebrate our birthday, we extend our merit and we extend our lives.

In Thai, we call merit *boon*. In *Pāli*, we call it *puñña*. We’ve come to be here now as human beings, because of what? Because of this *boon*—this *puñña*, or merit. It has brought us to live in this world. One day the merit we accumulated will expire and we will die. That’s why we need to extend this merit. We don’t have to depend on someone else. We have to depend on our merit. Some people think we depend on our health, our life, our business, on *everything*, but we have to depend on our merit. So do good things.

Merit is not just making offerings—we call this *dāna*, and it’s one kind of merit. We also need *sīla*—this is great merit. *Sīla* is where we restrain our physical and verbal actions firmly and purely through our moral conduct. This is another kind of merit. And another kind of merit is *bhāvanā*—mental culture, or mental development. We practice *samatha* (or tranquility) and *vipassanā* (or insight) meditation. This is the greatest merit. So we need that.

This merit—*dāna*, *sīla*, *bhāvanā*—is noble treasure. Those who become noble ones accumulate all kinds of these treasures—they have *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*. So sometimes we do some *dāna*, we observe *sīla*, and we practice *bhāvanā*, and so we accumulate all this merit and they become inner treasure or noble treasure. Whoever develops these noble treasures will one day become a noble one—free from greed, anger, and delusion, and free from all kinds of suffering. They will gain enlightenment. That’s why *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā* are called noble treasure, or inner treasure.

Why do we call it *inner* treasure? We cannot carry external treasures with us; they won’t follow us, even when we’re still alive. If you have a big house, you can’t carry it with you. If you have a big car, you cannot carry it with you all the time. But for *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*—you

can carry these inner treasures with you all the time. And not just in this life, but in the next life too. This inner treasure follows us like a shadow, and it allows us to fulfill our desires. We call it *puñña* because it fulfills our desires. Whoever would like to fulfill their desires needs merit. That's why we perform *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā* every day. It's what we have to depend on.

Just now, all of you chanted "*Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.*" Here, "Dhamma" does not just mean the scriptures. *Dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā* are also included in this. So we have to depend on the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—and *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*—as our refuge. We *have to* depend on these.

So think about your generosity, think about your morality, and think about your meditation—and you'll feel very happy. See that? *Peaceful*. That's why we call it inner treasure. This will provide us the means to gain peace and happiness. We need this. If we don't do anything, we won't get anything. But as we perform meritorious deeds, we extend our life span, and we extend our merit to become greater and greater.

Today all of you came here to donate, to offer lunch, to observe the five precepts, to do morning chanting, and to meditate: this means you performed meritorious deeds—*dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*. So by the power of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha*—and also by the power of your *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*—may all of you who came to perform meritorious deeds today be wealthy, healthy, happy, peaceful, and successful in whatever you're longing for.

**From the November 11, 2019 talk
“Life is Time, Time is Life”**

Today is a special day, right? Today is the full moon day of November, and in Thailand today is *Wan Loy Kratong*. Today Nun Medhavi made a donation for the temple: \$400 for November and December, and \$200 a month for January, February and March of next year—a total of \$1,000. And she also donated \$50 for the newsletter. That’s a total donation of \$1,050—*sādhu*. One of the monks donated \$500 toward an ordination hall for the Buddhist Society of Idaho. *Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu*. And today some of you have a birthday and came to offer lunch and *saṅghadāna*—all this stuff—to the *Saṅgha* community.

So today is a special day. It’s the full moon day, and we have the lotus floating this evening at 6:30 pm. This is our tradition, once a year. Whoever has a chance, I’d like to invite all of you to come and participate, practice meditation, and do a special chanting this evening from 5-6:15 pm. After that, we’ll have the lotus floating ceremony outside.

This is a good opportunity for all of you—for some it’s your birthday, some of you came to practice meditation, and we have another group who is having a silent meditation retreat in the new building—to do something every day that makes our lives beneficial. These are our lives—and life is time, time is life. Time passes by very fast, so we need to use our time—our lives—to be meaningful. We need to perform meritorious deeds, try to restrain our physical and verbal actions, pray, and practice meditation every day.

Even though we are getting older and older, our virtue perfections and wisdom are getting higher and higher. We are fortunate to be human beings, especially ones that have come across the Buddha’s teaching. We have many kinds of opportunities to develop inner treasures. We can do it anytime, anywhere, and in any posture. We especially need to practice meditation. And everyone should pray every day. Praying is not to the Buddha. Praying means that we wish everyone to be happy, including ourselves and our family, and all living beings in this universe. We wish for all of them to be well and happy. When you wish someone to be happy and peaceful, in that moment wholesome consciousness arises in you. And if you spend five minutes wishing for someone to be well and happy—radiating loving kindness—you gain this merit for five minutes. So everyone can do that.

But we especially need to practice mindfulness meditation. It's very simple. In the time of the Buddha, even a seven year old novice could gain enlightenment and become an *arahant*—the highest saint—because the method is so very simple. Try to be mindful. Even if you don't have a chance to sit, cross your legs, and close your eyes, from the time you get up in the morning until you go to bed and fall asleep you can practice mindfulness meditation.

You have a primary object of meditation. You can focus your mind on your breath—you know you're breathing in and you know you're breathing out—or some of you may focus on your abdominal movement—rising and falling: either one is fine. From the time we are born until we die, we are breathing in and breathing out, all the time. We don't need to find a primary object anywhere else. So try to be mindful of this.

If you're able to be mindful of your breathing—you know you're breathing in and breathing out—for a few seconds, then you'll gain peace of mind for a few seconds. If you do it for a few minutes, you'll gain peace of mind for a few minutes. We need this mindfulness. If you have mindfulness—awareness of what happens to yourself, of what happens to your breath, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind—you will see their nature. The nature of mind and matter is impermanence—nothing lasts forever. See? “Breathing in...” and it disappears. And “breathing out...” and it disappears. In and out, in and out, on and on. Watch your breath, watch your mind, watch your sensations, your feelings, your emotions, and you will see that nothing is permanent. It just comes and goes, arising and disappearing. You will gain wisdom.

You can learn from your body, you can learn from your sensations, and you can learn from your thoughts. But mostly we just learn outside, by watching outside. But meditators who would like to gain enlightenment have to watch inside. Why inside? Because your mind, your sensations, your feelings, your emotions, and all six sense objects, are always appearing and disappearing.

So the Buddha said we need to practice mindfulness meditation to gain wisdom. As you gain wisdom, you will be able to reduce your greed, anger, delusion, worry, and so on. That's why meditation is very wonderful—we do it to purify our mind from greed, anger, delusion, and so on.

Without practicing meditation, it's very hard to purify your mind. You have a lot of responsibilities—you have kids, you have grandkids, you have a house, you have a business. And you have to worry about these

JUST PRACTICE

things. Worry is one kind of anger. If you think about the past, you might feel sorry about something. Sorrow is also a kind of anger. And your mind starts to wander, like a monkey mind—it wanders a lot. This wandering mind is delusion. There's always greed, anger, and delusion arising, on and on.

But if we practice mindfulness meditation, we will see, we will realize the intrinsic nature of mind and matter, and we can remove some of these mental defilements. Eventually, you can gain enlightenment—you can see the end of suffering. You will experience the supreme bliss of *nibbāna*.

I'd like all of you to try the best you can to use your time, your life, to be beneficial. Try to develop your virtue perfections and gain wisdom, higher and higher. And eventually, may all of you be able to attain *nibbāna*—supreme bliss—in this very life.

From the February 14, 2020 talk “A Bit of Abhidhamma”

Today is the sixth day of your silent meditation retreat. Last night I was talking about eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Today I would like to continue by talking about the law of dependent origination. I typically just talk about one link a night, so it's easy to understand.

So, because of these six sense bases, contact arises. Here we have to know them one by one. Think about when we see something, for example. We call this eye-sensitivity. And with the other sense bases, there is ear-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, and so on. Now, because we have eye-sensitivity as the cause, we can see visible objects. If you're blind, you cannot see them. Or if you close your eyes, you cannot see them. And even having eye-sensitivity, our eye-sensitivity should be good. If it's not good, you cannot see. And even if your eye-sensitivity is good, if there's no visible object, then you cannot see.

So, a visible object is one matter, or *rūpa*. Eye-sensitivity is also *rūpa*. They are both *rūpa*—matter. They are the cause. Then, seeing-consciousness, or we can call it eye-consciousness, arises—and you see. This means that eye-sensitivity and visible objects are the cause, and eye-consciousness (or seeing-consciousness) is the effect. There's no being here—it's just mind and matter. We need to understand this point. The Buddha said that there is no being, no man, no woman. You cannot say your eye-sensitivity is mine, or that it's a man or a woman, or it's you, right? Eye-sensitivity is just one kind of matter, or *rūpa*.

As for visible objects, we usually think of them as a person, a being, as man or woman, etc. But this is just a concept. In reality, visible objects are just *rūpa*. Visible objects are just one kind of matter.

And then, seeing-consciousness is the effect. The seeing-consciousness is not a being, it's not a person, it's not a man, and it's not a woman. It's just seeing-consciousness—one consciousness—it's *nāma*. See that? Because the two kinds of *rūpa* are the cause or condition, eye-consciousness, or *nāma*, as an effect arises.

Our eye-sensitivity in every moment is just arising and disappearing. Visible objects are just arising and disappearing. And eye-consciousness is also just arising and disappearing—17 times faster than the *rūpa*. That's why when we practice meditation, whatever you see is just 'seeing'. And if you keep practicing this, you'll see that it's just mind and matter, interrelated, arising and disappearing—you'll see the nature of mind and matter.

Eye-consciousness arises when four conditions have been met:

JUST PRACTICE

- 1) Eye-sensitivity must be good;
- 2) A visible object must be present, and prominent;
- 3) Light must be present. If there's no light, seeing-consciousness will not arise. For example, even if you have good eye-sensitivity and the object is big, if you're in the dark you'll not see it. That's why this is one of the requirements; and
- 4) We need attention. For example, while you're sitting here, your eye-sensitivity is good and you have light too. And maybe someone walks next to you or around you. But if you have no attention, you will not see the person. So we need attention. Attention must be present.

Please remember that for seeing-consciousness (or eye-consciousness) to arise, these four conditions must be met. If you understand this point, the remainder is very simple, very easy. It's similar.

For hearing-consciousness to arise, four conditions must be met:

- 1) Our ear-sensitivity must be good. If you're deaf, you won't hear. If you close your ears, you will not hear anything;
- 2) Sound must be present. If there's no sound, you won't hear anything;
- 3) We need space, for the passing of the sound. See that? I'm sitting here talking to all of you, but if we have no space between us, you won't hear what I'm talking about; and
- 4) We need attention. If there's no attention, you will not know what I'm talking about. Attention must be present.

So, in this case, ear-sensitivity is *rūpa*—one kind of matter. Sound is one kind of matter. And space is one kind of matter. Attention is *nāma*.

For nose-consciousness to arise, we have four conditions that must be met:

- 1) Our nose-sensitivity must be good. Someone without good nose-sensitivity can't smell anything;
- 2) Smell must be present. If there's no smell, you won't sense anything;
- 3) The air element, which carries the smell, must be present. For example, I may be sitting here but if the air element does

not carry the smell to my nose, I won't smell anything;
and

- 4) We need attention. If you're doing something, or you're talking, even if someone's cooking in the kitchen, you won't smell anything—because there's no attention.

For tongue-consciousness to arise, four conditions must be met:

- 1) Our tongue-sensitivity must be good;
- 2) Taste must be present;
- 3) The liquid element, such as saliva, must be present. If your tongue is dry—there's no liquid element, such as saliva—you won't sense the taste; and
- 4) We need attention, right? If you're eating but thinking about something else and someone asks you if the food is good, you won't know—because you didn't notice. So we need attention.

Tongue-sensitivity is one kind of matter—*rūpa*. Taste is one kind of matter. The liquid element is one kind of *rūpa*. Attention is *nāma*.

Four conditions must be met for body-consciousness to arise:

- 1) Our body-sensitivity must be good;
- 2) Touch must be present. A tangible object must be present;
- 3) Firmness and solidness of the touch must be present. If something is very soft, you cannot feel the touch; and
- 4) We need attention. If there's no attention, you won't know you've been touched.

I would like all of you to know that when tangible objects come into contact with our body, there are only *three* kinds of matter: 1) the air element, 2) the earth element, and 3) the fire element. There is no water element. There are only three kinds of *rūpa*. For example, when you feel something: "Oh, I feel something hard (or soft)"—hardness (or softness) is the earth element. Or: "Oh, I feel very cold (or very warm)"—this is the fire element. And if you feel pushing, stiffness or tension, this is the air element. See that? There are three kinds of essential elements—and no water element.

I'll elaborate: When you wash your hands, what do you feel? You feel cold, warm or hot. What element is this? It's the fire element. If it

feels hard or soft, this is the earth element. If you feel the water pushing on you, this is the air element. But you cannot feel the nature of the water element. You know it is water because of your mind, but you can't sense it by touch. What is the nature of the water element? Fluidity and cohesion. You know the water is fluid. It's just flowing, right? You know this fluidity by your mind but you can't touch that fluidity. How about cohesion? You cannot feel that.

So please remember that tangible objects have only three kinds of matter in existence—there's no water element.

As for mind-consciousness, we have sense impression consciousness—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. We call this the five sense impression consciousness. And we still have the mind element. So if we study *Abhidhamma*, we will know that the mind element has three kinds of consciousness. We call the three kinds of consciousness *manodhātu*—*mano* is mind and *dhātu* means element—so, mind element.

We have 'mental impression consciousness'. For the 76 kinds of mental impression consciousness to arise, what do we need? We need:

- 1) The mind-door;
- 2) A mental object;
- 3) The heart base. If there's no heart, this consciousness cannot arise; and
- 4) Attention.

We need these four kinds of conditions. So it's just mind and matter.

Some of you who learn *Abhidhamma* will know that we have unwholesome consciousness, wholesome consciousness, the resultant consciousness, and functional consciousness. They arise because of four conditions. The Buddha said that contact arises because of the six sense bases. Contact means, as I just mentioned, that we have four conditions. Because of these four conditions, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness (and so on) arises. And this eye- and ear-consciousness has seven kinds of mental associates. Among the seven kinds of mental associates, *phassa* also arises. It's not only *phassa*—there are others too.

I would like all of you to understand about this *phassa*. The Buddha explained about this. *Phassa* means the combination of three factors—in this case we use the example of eye-sensitivity, visible objects, and eye-consciousness. See that? Three kinds of things arising together, we call *phassa*. We need to understand this.

As we study the six sense bases, the six objects, and the consciousnesses, we see it's not a being, right? It's not a man or a woman, just mind and matter—*nāma* and *rūpa*. They are interrelated as cause and effect, arising and disappearing. That's why we practice meditation—to see this reality as mind and matter. As you see mind and matter arising, why do they arise? Because of the cause. If we have a cause, we have an effect. With no cause, there is no effect. Once they arise, they won't last long. Nothing lasts long. Every moment, every second, arising and disappearing. We need to use our effort to see that. Try to be mindful. Concentrate on that, and then you will see wisdom arise. You will see their nature.

I would like all of you to try the best you can, not only at the temple, but even at work or at home. Try to remember the Buddha's teaching: when you see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think about something, it's just mind and matter, cause and effect, interrelated, arising and disappearing. By seeing this, it means you see the truth: you see the phenomena of mind and matter as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and of a non-self nature. Then you will be able to reduce your greed, anger, delusion, worry, and so on. And you will gain peace and happiness.

Try the best you can and follow the guidance of the Buddha to see the phenomena of mind and matter and to see the arising and disappearing. This means you see the truth: you see suffering. It's just suffering, just arising and disappearing, on and on, incessantly. If you do not see suffering, you will not see the end of suffering. So the first thing we need to see is suffering. After you see suffering, eventually you will see the end of suffering. We call the end of suffering *nibbāna*—the cessation of suffering.

May all of you be able to gain this supramundane wisdom, see the cessation of suffering, and be a noble one in this life.

Now we'll practice meditation.

It's mainly mindfulness meditation that we practice. We need mindfulness. The Buddha said this is the only way to overcome all kinds of suffering, to gain enlightenment. So we need to practice mindfulness meditation. And we don't only practice this at the temple or at a meditation center. We can also practice it at home or at work. This is a very wonderful technique, or method. We need to practice it. We can practice it anywhere, anytime, and in any posture, so try to make a strong determination: "I will practice meditation every day." Commit yourself so that it becomes a part of your daily life. We eat every day, right? So we

JUST PRACTICE

should practice every day so that it becomes a part of our life. One day has 24 hours, so don't say, "I don't have time. I'm very busy." Don't lie to yourself.

As I remind all of you, try to be aware of every step you take. At least as you walk, just know: "walking, walking, walking, walking." Try to be aware of the movement of your legs. You know you're walking. This means mind and body are together in every moment. This means you're practicing mindfulness meditation. So everyone can do this.

From the moment you wake up in the morning, you can start practicing meditation. Whatever you do, every physical activity, try to be mindful. Be aware of it. Whatever happens with your thoughts, your sensations, your feelings, your emotions, try to be aware of it. And then you will see that nothing lasts long, it just arises and disappears, incessantly. So try to do that.

When we sit in meditation, we need *saddhā*—confidence, or faith. If we lack confidence, there's no effort. So we *practice* meditation—it's the greatest merit. We also do some *dāna* to reduce our greed and attachment. We observe eight precepts, including fasting, no cosmetics, no singing, no dancing, no music, no concerts, no perfume, and so on. This means we're trying to reduce our attachment and greed. And we practice meditation. See that? In every moment we're trying to reduce our greed, anger, and delusion. That's why the greatest merit is mental culture. We need to culture our mind. If we do not culture our mind, only greed, anger and delusion arise. They are the cause of suffering.

When we practice meditation, we need patience. If we have no patience, we will not gain concentration—we will not see the nature of mind and matter. So we need patience. When we sit in meditation, we have to sit still and our upper body should be straight. If it's not straight, it's very easy to fall asleep. That's not practicing meditation—it's sleeping meditation. So we need a straight upper body. We should use our effort to sit still like a statue, right? We need that patience.

And you'll feel pain. As I remind you, pain is your good friend. *Welcome* your good friend. Stay with the pain as much as you can. The Buddha said that sometimes we feel pain, but we're just feeling *physical* pain—don't allow mental pain to arise. Why did the Buddha say that even though we have physical pain, don't allow mental pain to arise? Because mental pain means anger. Don't allow anger to arise. So how do we not allow mental pain to arise? Don't attach to the body. The Buddha said that if we attach to our body, we will have mental pain—anger will arise. If we're not attached to our body, there's no mental pain anymore. As

sentient beings, for many, many lives we have been attached to our bodies. It's very hard to get rid of that, but we try our best, right?

So try to follow the Buddha's teaching. Just sit still, and try to be patient with whatever happens with your body. See its nature. If it's beyond your patience, you can move—you can change position—that's fine for the beginner. Later on, maybe you won't need to change your position. But for beginners, try the best you can. If it's beyond your patience, you may change your position. Sometimes, if possible, don't change it.

So be patient, be mindful, use effort, and have confidence. And then you will see what happens with your body, your sensations, your feelings, your emotions, and your thoughts. You'll see that. That's why we need patience—it's right effort. Try to do that.

When you go back home after the retreat, practice every day. Make a resolution: "One day has 24 hours, and I've done something else for many, many years already, but now I have to practice meditation every day as part of my life." So make a strong determination: to sit in meditation for ten minutes a day—at least ten minutes. If you have time, practice for 15 minutes or 20 minutes, whatever—but at least 10 minutes. So, in one day you practice for ten minutes. But how about after one year? That's 3,650 minutes. See that? And then on your birthday: "Oh, today's my birthday," and then you'll think about how one year has 365 days and you sat in meditation every day for at least ten minutes—you'll be proud of yourself.

So we need to do that. *You* need to do that. "Oh, I'm busy-busy—I don't have time to practice." Don't make excuses, okay? At least ten minutes—on and *on*, not on and *off*. Promise? Okay, *sādhu, sādhu, sādhu*.

Any questions?

No questions?

Q: Thank you, Luang Por.

You don't need to say thank you. I'm proud of all of you. You sacrifice your time to come and practice meditation. So I'm proud of all of you.

Okay, now it's 6:30 pm. Today I'll make an exception—instead of more meditation, go and rest. Happy? [*Luang Por laughs.*]

Appendix: Paṭṭhāna Chanting

Paṭṭhāna, which means “a system of relations,” is the seventh (and final) part of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. Consisting of five books covering more than 2,500 pages, it is a profound and detailed examination that can take more than 100 hours to explain. In this highest teaching, the Buddha explained the law of causal relations; specifically, how mind and matter are interrelated via 24 causes or conditions.

In the fourth week immediately following his supreme enlightenment, the Buddha contemplated *Abhidhamma*, step by step. But it was only as he contemplated *Paṭṭhāna* that an aura of six rays (including indigo, golden, red, white, tawny and dazzling) began to emanate from his body.

[These six rays are symbolized in the six colored bands of the Buddhist flag—blue (representing universal compassion); yellow (the Middle Way); red (the achievement, wisdom, virtue, fortune and dignity of practice); white (the purity of the Dhamma); orange (the wisdom of the teachings); and a combination of those five, which represents the truth of the Dhamma.]

Seven years after his enlightenment, the Buddha spent the Rains Retreat in *Tāvātimsa* heaven, where he taught *Abhidhamma* to his mother, who had died and been reborn in *Tusitā* heaven. Word spread quickly amongst the beings of the *brahmā* and *deva* realms, who gathered to receive the teachings. Many of those gathered beings gained enlightenment, including the Buddha’s mother, who became a stream-enterer.

When—indeed, as they are subject to *anicca*—the Buddha’s teachings eventually disappear, it will be the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* that disappears first, beginning with *Paṭṭhāna*, as it is so difficult to understand.

On every Observance Day (as well as every evening from December 24 to January 1 each year), monastery residents, retreatants and evening visitors to Chaiya Meditation Monastery chant the first pages of *Paṭṭhāna*. It takes about an hour. The *Paṭṭhāna* chanting is done to honor this highest teaching of the Buddha, and in the case of the year-end chanting, to welcome in the New Year.

Luang Por Chaiya reminds us that if we do the chanting but don’t understand the meaning, it’s insufficient. Every word of the Buddha’s teaching is meaningful. We should understand the meaning.

The text that follows is the introduction to *Paṭṭhāna*, which first enumerates the 24 causes or conditions mentioned above, followed by a brief analytical exposition of those 24 causes or conditions.

The 24 Modes of Conditionality

1. *Hetu paccayo* (Root condition)
2. *Ārammaṇa paccayo* (Object condition)
3. *Adhipati paccayo* (Predominance condition)
4. *Anantara paccayo* (Contiguity condition)
5. *Samanantara paccayo* (Immediacy condition)
6. *Sahajāta paccayo* (Co-nascence condition)
7. *Aññamañña paccayo* (Mutuality condition)
8. *Nissaya paccayo* (Dependence condition)
9. *Upanissaya paccayo* (Powerful Dependence condition)
10. *Purejāta paccayo* (Pre-nascence condition)
11. *Pacchājāta paccayo* (Post-nascence condition)
12. *Āsevana paccayo* (Repetition condition)
13. *Kamma paccayo* (Kamma condition)
14. *Vipāka paccayo* (Kamma-result condition)
15. *Āhāra paccayo* (Nutriment condition)
16. *Indriya paccayo* (Faculty condition)
17. *Jhāna paccayo* (Jhāna condition)
18. *Magga paccayo* (Path condition)
19. *Sampayutta paccayo* (Association condition)
20. *Vippayutta paccayo* (Dissociation condition)
21. *Atthi paccayo* (Presence condition)
22. *Natthi paccayo* (Absence condition)
23. *Vigata paccayo* (Disappearance condition)
24. *Avigata paccayo* (Non-disappearance condition)

1. Hetu paccayo (Root condition)

Hetupaccayo'ti:

*Hetu hetusampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhānānañca rūpānaṃ
hetu paccayena paccayo*

JUST PRACTICE

The six roots (*lobha* or greed; *dosa* or anger; *moha* or ignorance; *alobha* or non-greed; *adosa* or non-anger; and *amoha* or non-ignorance) are related to the states (*cittas* or consciousnesses; and *cetasikas* or mental factors) associated with the roots and to the matter produced thereby by root (origin) condition.

2. Ārammaṇa paccayo (Object condition)

Ārammaṇapaccayo'ti:

(1) *Rūpāyatanaṃ cakkhaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by object (sense-object/stimulative) condition.

(2) *Saddāyatanaṃ sotaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

Sound is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by object condition.

(3) *Gandhāyatanaṃ ghānaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

Smell is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by object condition.

(4) *Rasāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

Taste is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by object condition.

(5) *Phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

Tangible object is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by object condition.

*(6) Rūpāyatanaṃ saddāyatanaṃ
gandhāyatanaṃ rasāyatanaṃ
phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object, sound, smell, taste and tangible object are related to mind-element and its associated states by object condition.

*(7) Sabbe dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

All *dhammas* are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by object condition.

*(8) Yaṃ yaṃ dhammaṃ ārabha
ye ye dhammā uppajjanti cittacetasikā dhammā.*

*Te te dhammā tesam tesam dhammānaṃ
ārammaṇa paccayena paccayo.*

Grasping any *dhamma* as object, these *dhammas* arise: consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*).

The former *dhamma* is related to the latter *dhamma* by object condition.

3. Adhipati paccayo (Predominance condition)

Adhipatipaccayo'ti:

*(1) Chandādhipati chandasampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhanānañca rūpānaṃ
adhipati paccayena paccayo.*

Predominant wish (*chanda*) is related to its associated states and to the matter produced thereby by predominance (dominant) condition.

JUST PRACTICE

(2) *Vīriyādhīpati vīriyasampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhanānañca rūpānaṃ
adhīpati paccayena paccayo.*

Predominant effort (*vīriya*) is related to its associated states and to the matter produced thereby by predominance condition.

(3) *Cittādhīpati cittasampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhanānañca rūpānaṃ
adhīpati paccayena paccayo.*

Predominant consciousness (*citta*) is related to its associated states and to the matter produced thereby by predominance condition.

(4) *Vīmaṃsādhīpati vīmaṃsasampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhanānañca rūpānaṃ
adhīpati paccayena paccayo.*

Predominant investigating wisdom (*vīmaṃsa*) is related to its associated states and to the matter produced thereby by predominance condition.

(5) *Yaṃ yaṃ dhammaṃ garuṃ katvā
ye ye dhammā uppajjanti cittacetāsikādhammā.*

*Te te dhammā tesāṃ tesāṃ dhammānaṃ
adhīpati paccayena paccayo.*

Grasping any *dhamma* as an outstanding object, these latter *dhammas* arise: consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*).

The former *dhamma* is related to the latter *dhammas* by predominance condition.

4. Anantara paccayo (Contiguity condition)

Anantarapaccayo'ti:

(1) *Cakkhuvīññāṇadhātu
taṃsāmpayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Manodhātu

*taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states are related to mind-element and associated states by contiguity (subsequent or adjoining) condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by contiguity condition.

(2) Sotaviññāṇadhātu

*taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Manodhātu

*taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by contiguity condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by contiguity condition.

(3) Ghānaviññāṇadhātu

*taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Manodhātu

*taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by contiguity condition.

JUST PRACTICE

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by contiguity condition.

(4) Jivhāviññāḍadhātu

*taṃsāpāyuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsāpāyuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Manodhātu

*taṃsāpāyuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāḍadhātuyā
taṃsāpāyuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by contiguity condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by contiguity condition.

(5) Kāyaviññāḍadhātu

*taṃsāpāyuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsāpāyuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Manodhātu

*taṃsāpāyuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāḍadhātuyā
taṃsāpāyuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by contiguity condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by contiguity condition.

(6) Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā

*pacchīmānaṃ pacchīmānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding wholesome states are related to subsequent wholesome states by contiguity condition.

*(7) Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding wholesome states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by contiguity condition.

*(8) Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding unwholesome states are related to subsequent unwholesome states by contiguity condition.

*(9) Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding unwholesome states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by contiguity condition.

*(10) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by contiguity condition.

*(11) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent wholesome states by contiguity condition.

*(12) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

JUST PRACTICE

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent unwholesome states by contiguity condition.

*(13) Yesaṃ yesaṃ dhammānaṃ anantarā
ye ye dhammā uppajjanti cittacetāsikā dhammā.*

*Te te dhammā tesāṃ tesāṃ dhammānaṃ
anantara paccayena paccayo.*

In contiguity to any (preceding) state, these (subsequent) states arise: *citta* (consciousness) and *cetasikas* (mental factors).

Those (preceding) states are related to those (subsequent) states by contiguity condition.

5. Samanantara paccayo (Immediacy condition)

Samanantarapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Cakkhuvīññādhātu
taṃsāmpayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

*Manodhātu
taṃsāmpayuttakā ca dhammā manovīññādhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by immediacy (nearest or continuous) condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by immediacy condition.

*(2) Sotavīññādhātu
taṃsāmpayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Manodhātu

*taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by immediacy condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by immediacy condition.

*(3) Ghānaviññāṇadhātu
taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

*Manodhātu
taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by immediacy condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by immediacy condition.

*(4) Jivhāviññāṇadhātu
taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

*Manodhātu
taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by immediacy condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by immediacy condition.

(5) *Kāyaviññāṇadhātu*
taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.

Manodhātu
taṃsampayuttakā ca dhammā manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.

Body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states are related to mind-element and its associated states by immediacy condition.

Mind-element and its associated states are related to mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by immediacy condition.

(6) *Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā*
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.

Preceding wholesome states are related to subsequent wholesome states by immediacy condition.

(7) *Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā*
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.

Preceding wholesome states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by immediacy condition.

(8) *Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā*
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.

Preceding unwholesome states are related to subsequent unwholesome states by immediacy condition.

(9) *Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā*
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.

Preceding unwholesome states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by immediacy condition.

*(10) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by immediacy condition.

*(11) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent wholesome states by immediacy condition.

*(12) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent unwholesome states by immediacy condition.

*(13) Yesaṃ yesaṃ dhammānaṃ samanantarā
ye ye dhammā uppajjanti cittacetāsikā dhammā.*

*Te te dhammā tesaṃ tesaṃ dhammānaṃ
samanantara paccayena paccayo.*

In immediacy to any (preceding) state, these (subsequent) states arise: *citta* (consciousness) and *cetasikas* (mental factors).

Those (preceding) states are related to those (subsequent) states by immediacy condition.

6. Sahajāta paccayo (Co-nascence condition)

Sahajātapaccayo'ti:

JUST PRACTICE

(1) *Cattāro khandhā arūpino aññamaññaṃ
sahajāta paccayena paccayo.*

The four immaterial (i.e. mental) aggregates are mutually related to one another by co-nascence (born together or simultaneous) condition.

(2) *Cattāro mahābhūtā aññamaññaṃ
sahajāta paccayena paccayo.*

The four great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are mutually related to one another by co-nascence condition.

(3) *Okkantikkhaṇe nāmarūpaṃ aññamaññaṃ
sahajāta paccayena paccayo.*

At the moment of conception, mind and matter are mutually related to each other by co-nascence condition.

(4) *Cittacetāsikā dhammā cittasamuṭṭhānānaṃ rūpānaṃ
sahajāta paccayena paccayo.*

Consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*) are related to mind-produced matter by co-nascence condition.

(5) *Mahābhūtā upādārūpānaṃ
sahajāta paccayena paccayo.*

The (four) great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are related to derived matter (*upādā-rupa*) by co-nascence condition.

(6) *Rūpino dhammā arūpinaṃ dhammānaṃ
kiñci kale sahajāta paccayena paccayo.*

Kiñci kale na sahajāta paccayena paccayo.

Material phenomena are sometimes related to immaterial (i.e. mental) phenomena by co-nascence condition.

Sometimes they are not related by co-nascence condition.

7. Aññamañña paccayo (Mutuality condition)

Aññamañña paccayo'ti:

*(1) Cattāro khandhā arūpino
aññamañña paccayena paccayo.*

The four immaterial (i.e. mental) aggregates are related to one another by mutuality (inter-supportive) condition.

*(2) Cattāro mahābhūtā
aññamañña paccayena paccayo.*

The four great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are related to one another by mutuality condition.

*(3) Okkantikkhaṇe nāmarūpaṃ
aññamañña paccayena paccayo.*

At the time of conception, mind and matter are related to each other by mutuality condition.

8. Nissaya paccayo (Dependence condition)

Nissayapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Cattāro khandhā arūpino aññamaññaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

The four immaterial (i.e. mental) aggregates are mutually related to one another by dependence (support or responsible) condition.

*(2) Cattāro mahābhūtā aññamaññaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

The four great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are mutually related to one another by dependence condition.

*(3) Okkantikkhaṇe nāmarūpaṃ aññamaññaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

JUST PRACTICE

At the moment of conception, mind and matter are mutually related to each other by dependence condition.

*(4) Cittacetāsikā dhammā cittasamuṭṭhānānaṃ rūpānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*) are related to mind-produced matter by dependence condition.

*(5) Mahābhūtā upādārūpānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

The (four) great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are related to derived matter by dependence condition.

*(6) Cakkhāyatanaṃ cakkhaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Eye-base (the eye) is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by dependence condition.

*(7) Sotāyatanaṃ sotaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Ear-base (the ear) is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by dependence condition.

*(8) Ghānāyatanaṃ ghānaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Nose-base (the nose) is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by dependence condition.

*(9) Jivhāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Tongue-base (the tongue) is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by dependence condition.

*(10) Kāyāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Body-base (the body) is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by dependence condition.

(11) Yaṃ rūpaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññāṇadhātu ca vattanti.

*Taṃ rūpaṃ manodhātuyā ca manoviññāṇadhātuyā ca
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
nissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Depending on this matter, mind-element and mind-consciousness (discerning) arise.

That matter is related to the mind-element, the mind-consciousness (discerning) and their associated states by dependence condition.

9. Upanissaya paccayo (Powerful Dependence condition)

Upanissayapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding wholesome states are related to subsequent wholesome states by powerful dependence condition.

*(2) Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
kesañci upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding wholesome states are sometimes related to subsequent unwholesome states by powerful dependence condition.

(3) Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā

JUST PRACTICE

*pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding wholesome states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by powerful dependence condition.

*(4) Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding unwholesome states are related to subsequent unwholesome states by powerful dependence condition.

*(5) Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
kesaṅci upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding unwholesome states are sometimes related to subsequent wholesome states by powerful dependence condition.

*(6) Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding unwholesome states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by powerful dependence condition.

*(7) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ abyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent indeterminate states by powerful dependence condition.

*(8) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent wholesome states by powerful dependence condition.

*(9) Purimā purimā abyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
upanissaya paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding indeterminate states are related to subsequent unwholesome states by powerful dependence condition.

(10) Utubhojanaṃ'pi upanissaya paccayena paccayo.

Puggalo'pi upanissaya paccayena paccayo.

Senāsanaṃ'pi upanissaya paccayena paccayo.

Weather and food are also related [to beings] by powerful dependence condition.

A person is also related [to beings] by powerful dependence condition.

The lodging-place is also related [to beings] by powerful dependence condition.

10. Purejāta paccayo (Pre-nascence condition)

Purejātapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Cakkhāyatanaṃ cakkhaviññādhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Eye-base (the eye) is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by pre-nascence (born beforehand) condition.

*(2) Sotāyatanaṃ sotaviññādhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Ear-base (the ear) is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(3) Ghānāyatanaṃ ghānaviññādhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

JUST PRACTICE

Nose-base (the nose) is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(4) Jivhāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Tongue-base (the tongue) is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(5) Kāyāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Body-base (the body) is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(6) Rūpāyatanaṃ cakkhaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(7) Saddāyatanaṃ sotaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Sound is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(8) Gandhāyatanaṃ ghānaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Smell is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(9) Rasāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Taste is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(10) Phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Tangible object is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(11) Rūpāyatanaṃ saddāyatanaṃ
gandhāyatanaṃ rasāyatanaṃ
phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object, sound, smell, taste and tangible object are related to mind-element and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

(12) Yaṃ rūpaṃ nissayā manodhātu ca manoviññāṇadhātu ca vattanti.

*Taṃ rūpaṃ manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Depending on this matter, mind-element and mind-consciousness (discerning) arise.

That matter is related to mind-element and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

*(13) Manoviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
kiñci kale purejāta paccayena paccayo.*

Kiñci kale na purejāta paccayena paccayo.

That matter is sometimes related to the mind-consciousness (discerning) and its associated states by pre-nascence condition.

Sometimes it is not related by pre-nascence condition.

11. Pacchājāta paccayo (Post-nascence condition)

Pacchājātapaccayo'ti:

*Pacchājātā cittacetāsikā dhammā
purejātassa imassa kāyassa
pacchājāta paccayena paccayo.*

The post-nascent consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*) are related to this pre-nascent matter by post-nascence (born afterward) condition.

12. Āsevana paccayo (Repetition condition)

Āsevanapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Purimā purimā kusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
āsevana paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding wholesome states are related to subsequent wholesome states by repetition condition.

*(2) Purimā purimā akusalā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ
āsevana paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding unwholesome states are related to subsequent unwholesome states by repetition condition.

*(3) Purimā purimā kiriyābyākatā dhammā
pacchimānaṃ pacchimānaṃ kiriyābyākatānaṃ dhammānaṃ
āsevana paccayena paccayo.*

Preceding functional indeterminate states are related to subsequent functional indeterminate states by repetition condition.

13. Kamma paccayo (Kamma condition)

Kammapaccayo'ti:

(1) *Kusalākusalaṃ kammaṃ vipākanaṃ khandhānaṃ
kaṭattā ca rūpānaṃ
kamma paccayena paccayo.*

Wholesome and unwholesome *kammās* are related to their resultant aggregates and *kamma*-produced matter by *kamma* condition.

(2) *Cetanā sampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhānānañca rūpānaṃ
kamma paccayena paccayo.*

Motivation (*cetanā*) is related to the states associated with it and to the matter produced thereby by *kamma* condition.

14. Vipāka paccayo (Kamma-result condition)

Vipākapaccayo'ti:

*Vipāka cattāro khandhā arūpino aññamaññaṃ
vipāka paccayena paccayo.*

The four immaterial (i.e. mental) aggregates are mutually related to one another by *kamma*-result condition.

15. Āhāra paccayo (Nutriment condition)

Āhārapaccayo'ti:

(1) *Kabalīnkāro āhāro imassa kāyassa
āhāra paccayena paccayo.*

Edible food is related to this body by nutriment condition.

(2) *Arūpino āhārā sampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhānānañca rūpānaṃ
āhāra paccayena paccayo.*

The immaterial nutriments (*phassa* or contact, *viññāṇa* or consciousness, and *cetanā* or intention/motivation) are related to the states associated with them and to the matter produced thereby by nutriment condition.

16. Indriya paccayo (Faculty condition)

Indriyapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Cakkhundriyaṃ cakkhuvīññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
indriya paccayena paccayo.*

Eye-faculty (vision) is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by faculty (sense) condition.

*(2) Sotindriyaṃ sotavīññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
indriya paccayena paccayo.*

Ear-faculty (hearing) is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by faculty condition.

*(3) Ghānindriyaṃ ghānavīññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
indriya paccayena paccayo.*

Nose-faculty (smell) is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by faculty condition.

*(4) Jivhindriyaṃ jivhāvīññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
indriya paccayena paccayo.*

Tongue-faculty (taste) is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by faculty condition.

*(5) Kāyindriyaṃ kāyavīññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
indriya paccayena paccayo.*

Body-faculty (touch) is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by faculty condition.

(6) Rūpajīvitindriyaṃ kaṭattārūpānaṃ

indriya paccayena paccayo.

Physical life-faculty is related to *kamma*-produced matter by faculty condition.

*(7) Arūpino indriyā sampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhānānañca rūpānaṃ
indriya paccayena paccayo.*

The immaterial faculties (*jīvita* or life span; *citta* or mind; *vedanā* or feeling; *saddhā* or faith; *virīya* or energy; *sati* or mindfulness; *ekaggatā* or one-pointedness; and *paññā* or wisdom) are related to the states associated with them and to the matter produced thereby by faculty condition.

17. Jhāna paccayo (Jhāna condition)

Jhānapaccayo'ti:

*Jhānaṅgāti jhānasampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhānānañca rūpānaṃ
jhāna paccayena paccayo.*

The *jhāna*-factors (*vitakka* or initial application; *vicāra* or sustained application; *pīti* or rapture; *sukha* or happiness; and *ekaggatā* or one-pointedness) are related to the states associated with the *jhānas* and to the matter produced thereby by *jhāna* condition.

18. Magga paccayo (Path condition)

Maggapaccayo'ti:

*Maggaṅgāti maggasampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ
taṃsamuṭṭhānānañca rūpānaṃ
magga paccayena paccayo.*

The path-factors are related to the states associated with path and to the matter produced thereby by path condition.

19. Sampayutta paccayo (Association condition)

Sampayuttapaccayo'ti:

*Cattāro khandhā arūpino aññamaññaṃ
sappayutta paccayena paccayo.*

The four immaterial (i.e. mental) aggregates are mutually related to one another by association (connected) condition.

20. Vippayutta paccayo (Dissociation condition)

Vippayuttapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Rūpino dhammā arūpīnaṃ dhammānaṃ
vippayutta paccayena paccayo.*

Material phenomena are related to mental states (*cittas* and *cetasikas*) by dissociation (separated) condition.

*(2) Arūpino dhammā rūpīnaṃ dhammānaṃ
vippayutta paccayena paccayo.*

Mental states (*cittas* and *cetasikas*) are related to material phenomena by dissociation condition.

21. Atthi paccayo (Presence condition)

Atthipaccayo'ti:

*(1) Cattāro khandhā arūpino aññamaññaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

The four immaterial (i.e. mental) aggregates are mutually related to one another by presence (existing) condition.

*(2) Cattāro mahābhūtā aññamaññaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

The four great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are mutually related to one another by presence condition.

*(3) Okkantikkhaṇe nāmarūpaṃ aññamaññaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

At conception, mind and matter are mutually related to each other by presence condition.

*(4) Cittacetāsikā dhammā cittasamuṭṭhānānaṃ rūpānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Consciousness (*citta*) and its mental factors (*cetasikas*) are related to mind-born matter by presence condition.

*(5) Mahābhūtā upādārūpānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

The (four) great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are related to derived matter by presence condition.

*(6) Cakkhāyatanaṃ cakkhaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Eye-base (the eye) is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(7) Sotāyatanaṃ sotaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Ear-base (the ear) is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(8) Ghānāyatanaṃ ghānaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Nose-base (the nose) is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(9) Jivhāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

JUST PRACTICE

Tongue-base (the tongue) is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(10) Kāyāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Body-base (the body) is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(11) Rūpāyatanaṃ cakkhaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(12) Saddāyatanaṃ sotaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Sound is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(13) Gandhāyatanaṃ ghānaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Smell is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(14) Rasāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Taste is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(15) Phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsāmpayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Tangible object is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by presence condition.

*(16) Rūpāyatanaṃ saddāyatanaṃ
gandhāyatanaṃ rasāyatanaṃ
phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object, sound, smell, taste and tangible object are related to mind-element and its associated states by presence condition.

(17) Yaṃ rūpaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññāṇadhātu ca vattanti.

*Taṃ rūpaṃ manodhātuyā ca manoviññāṇadhātuyā ca
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
atthi paccayena paccayo.*

Depending on this matter, mind-element and mind-consciousness (discerning) arise.

That matter is related to mind-element, mind-consciousness (discerning) and their associated states by presence condition.

22. Natthi paccayo (Absence condition)

Natthipaccayo'ti:

*Samanantara-niruddhā cittacetāsikā dhammā
paṭuppanānaṃ cittacetāsikānaṃ dhammānaṃ
natthi paccayena paccayo.*

Just ceased consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*) are related to present consciousness and mental factors by absence (not present) condition.

23. Vigata paccayo (Disappearance condition)

Vigatapaccayo'ti:

Samanantara-vigatā cittacetāsikā dhammā

*paṭuppannānaṃ cittacetāsikānaṃ dhammānaṃ
vigata paccayena paccayo.*

Just disappeared consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*) are related to present consciousness and mental factors by disappearance condition.

24. Avigata paccayo (Non-disappearance condition)

Avigatapaccayo'ti:

*(1) Cattāro khandhā arūpino aññamaññaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

The four immaterial (i.e. mental) aggregates are mutually related to one another by non-disappearance condition.

*(2) Cattāro mahābhūtā aññamaññaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

The four great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are mutually related to one another by non-disappearance condition.

*(3) Okkantikkhaṇe nāmarūpaṃ aññamaññaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

At conception, mind and matter are mutually related by non-disappearance condition.

*(4) Cittacetāsikā dhammā cittasamuṭṭhānānaṃ rūpānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Consciousness (*citta*) and its mental factors (*cetasikas*) are related to mind-born matter by non-disappearance condition.

*(5) Mahābhūtā upādārūpānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

The (four) great essentials (earth-element, water-element, fire-element and air-element) are related to derived matter by non-disappearance condition.

(6) Cakkhāyatanaṃ cakkhuvīññādhātuyā

*taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Eye-base (the eye) is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

*(7) Sotāyatanaṃ sotaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Ear-base (the ear) is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

*(8) Ghānāyatanaṃ ghānaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Nose-base (the nose) is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

*(9) Jivhāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Tongue-base (the tongue) is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

*(10) Kāyāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Body-base (the body) is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

*(11) Rūpāyatanaṃ cakkhaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object is related to eye-consciousness (seeing) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

JUST PRACTICE

(12) *Saddāyatanaṃ sotaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Sound is related to ear-consciousness (hearing) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

(13) *Gandhāyatanaṃ ghānaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Smell is related to nose-consciousness (smelling) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

(14) *Rasāyatanaṃ jivhāviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Taste is related to tongue-consciousness (tasting) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

(15) *Phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ kāyaviññāṇadhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Tangible object is related to body-consciousness (touching) and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

(16) *Rūpāyatanaṃ saddāyatanaṃ
gandhāyatanaṃ rasāyatanaṃ
phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ manodhātuyā
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ
avigata paccayena paccayo.*

Visible object, sound, smell, taste and tangible object are related to mind-element and its associated states by non-disappearance condition.

(17) *Yaṃ rūpaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññāṇadhātu ca vattanti.*

*Taṃ rūpaṃ manodhātuyā ca manoviññāṇadhātuyā ca
taṃsampayuttakānañca dhammānaṃ*

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

avigata paccayena paccayo.

Depending on this matter, mind-element and mind-consciousness (discerning) arise.

That matter is related to mind-element, mind-consciousness (discerning) and their associated states by non-disappearance condition.

Glossary

- Abhidhamma*: Buddhist analysis of consciousness.
- Abhidhamma Piṭaka*: See *Pāli Canon*.
- Access concentration: See *Upacāra bhāvanā*.
- Adhiṭṭhāna*: Determination.
- Adosa*: The absence of anger or hatred.
- Ajahn*: (Pāli: *ācariya*) Thai word literally meaning 'teacher'. In the Thai Forest Tradition, it is commonly used as a title for senior monks or nuns of more than ten years' seniority in a monastery.
- Ajahn Chah: (1918-1992) A highly venerated Thai *Mahā nikāya* monk of the Thai Forest Tradition. He was a direct disciple of Luang Pu Mun. Ajahn Chah was widely considered to be an *arahant*.
- Ajahn Jayasaro: (1958-) An English *Mahā nikāya* monk of the Ajahn Chah lineage of the Thai Forest Tradition. He was a direct disciple of Ajahn Chah. He is the author of *Stillness Flowing: The Life and Teachings of Ajahn Chah*. He currently resides at Janamāra Hermitage in Thailand.
- Ajahn Panyavaro: The abbot of Wat Buddhabhavana in Las Vegas, Nevada until his death in 1992. Luang Por Chaiya served as abbot of Wat Buddhabhavana from the time of Ajahn Panyavaro's death until 1995.
- Ajahn Sarayut: A contemporary monk from northern Thailand of the *Mahā nikāya* order of *Theravāda* Buddhism. He is the founder and abbot of Wat Buddhometta in Tucson, Arizona.
- Akālika*: One of the six qualities of the Dhamma frequently reflected upon during chanting in *Theravāda* monasteries. *Akālika* means timeless or immediate. The other five qualities are *svākkhāto*—well-told; *sandiṭṭhiko*—to be seen here and now, visible, or belonging to this life; *ehi-passiko*—inviting all to come and see; *opanayiko*—pertinent or conducive; and *paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*—to be seen by the observant for themselves.

<i>Akusala:</i>	Demerit; bad action; unskillful.
Alms round:	The means by which mendicant monks receive food for their daily meal. Walking through an inhabited area with eyes downcast, monks and novices accept offerings from any donors along their path. They are forbidden from begging for food.
<i>Alobha:</i>	The absence of greed or covetousness.
<i>Anāgāmi:</i>	See Enlightenment.
<i>Ānāpāna:</i>	Inhaled or exhaled breath.
<i>Ānāpānasati:</i>	Mindfulness of breathing.
<i>Anattā:</i>	Literally: ‘not-self’. The Buddha’s foundational insight that there is no permanent agent or self that lies behind or within experience. <i>Anattā</i> is one of the three characteristics of existence—along with impermanence (<i>anicca</i>) and unsatisfactoriness (<i>dukkha</i>).
<i>Anicca:</i>	Impermanence: one of the three characteristics of existence along with not-self (<i>anattā</i>) and unsatisfactoriness (<i>dukkha</i>).
<i>Appanā bhāvanā:</i>	Concentrative mental culture.
<i>Arahant:</i>	Literally: a ‘worthy one’. One who has attained the fourth and highest level of enlightenment—the culmination of the Buddha’s training—through penetration of the Four Noble Truths and the abandonment of all mental fetters. Such an enlightened being will never be reborn again.
<i>Arūpa:</i>	Formless; incorporeal; non-substantial.
<i>Arūpajhāna:</i>	The four formless (higher) <i>jhānas</i> . They include sixth <i>jhāna</i> (infinite space); seventh <i>jhāna</i> (infinite consciousness); eighth <i>jhāna</i> (infinite nothingness); and ninth <i>jhāna</i> (neither perception nor non-perception). These four levels of <i>jhāna</i> can also be characterized as the fifth through eighth (rather than the sixth through ninth) levels of <i>jhāna</i> . (See also <i>Rūpajhāna</i> .)
<i>Arūpaloka:</i>	The formless world.
<i>Āsāḷhā Pūjā:</i>	The commemoration of the Buddha’s giving of his first discourse— <i>Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta</i> —given shortly after his

JUST PRACTICE

supreme enlightenment to the five ascetics with whom he had previously practiced meditation. While the discourse was being given, one of the five ascetics—Venerable Koṇḍañña—attained the first stage of enlightenment. As such, the day is also commemorated as the coming-together of the Triple Gem—the Buddha, his doctrine, and the order of noble ones. *Āsāḥā Pūjā* is sometimes called *Dhamma Day*. It is celebrated on the full moon day of the month of *Āsāḥā*, which is in June or July.

<i>Asubha</i> :	Unpleasant; ugly.
<i>Atta</i> :	Soul; oneself.
<i>Avalokitesvara</i> :	See <i>Chenrezig</i> .
<i>Āyatana</i> :	Position; sense-organ; sphere.
<i>Bhāvanā</i> :	Cultivation. The <i>Pāli</i> word most often translated as ‘meditation’ or ‘mental development’. In fact, the meaning of <i>bhāvanā</i> extends beyond the application of a meditation technique and may be applied to all elements of the Noble Eightfold Path.
<i>Bhavaṅga</i> :	Sub-consciousness; ground of becoming.
<i>Bhikkhu</i> :	A fully ordained Buddhist monk. A male over the age of twenty who has taken full ordination to become a member of the <i>Bhikkhu Saṅgha</i> .
<i>Bhikkhunī</i> :	A fully ordained Buddhist nun. A female practitioner who has taken full ordination to become a member of the <i>Bhikkhunī Saṅgha</i> .
<i>Bodhisatta</i> :	(Sanskrit: <i>Bodhisattva</i>) A being striving for Awakening. In the <i>Theravāda</i> tradition, this term is used almost exclusively to describe the Buddha from the moment that he made his vow to become a Buddha until his enlightenment.
<i>Boon</i> :	(Thai) See <i>Puñña</i> .
<i>Brahmā</i> :	A type of divine realm where there is mind, but no matter.
<i>Brahmavihārā</i> :	Sublime state of mind; a name collectively given to <i>mettā</i> , <i>karunā</i> , <i>muditā</i> , and <i>upekkhā</i> .
<i>Budai</i> :	See Happy Buddha.

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

- Buddha:* One who is awakened. Historically, this term refers to the prince Siddhattha Gotama, who lived in Nepal and Northern India 2,500 years ago and attained enlightenment through his own striving and taught the path to others. He was not the first Buddha. A long line of Buddhas stretches back into the unimaginably distant past.
- Buddhānussati:* Recollection of the virtues of the Buddha.
- Buddhasāsana:* The teaching of the Buddha.
- Buddha Day: See Vesak Day.
- Buddhi:* Knowledge, intelligence, understanding.
- Buddhist Lent: (Pāli: *vassa*; also called Rains Retreat) A period of monastic retreat instituted by the Buddha, in which monks must refrain from all but the most necessary journeys for the whole of the Indian monsoon season (from the full moon of July through the full moon of October).
- Buddhist Society of Idaho:
Also known as Chaiya Meditation Monastery 2, Buddhist Society of Idaho was established in 2017 as Luang Por Chaiya’s first branch monastery. The monastery had its grand opening in 2019. Currently, there is one monk—Venerable U Mageinda—in residence. Chaiya Meditation Monastery 2 is located in Nampa, Idaho.
- Buddho: A variation on “Buddha.” “*Buddho*” is widely taught and used as a meditation mantra, often being combined with the breath: internally reciting ‘BUD-’ on the inhalation, and ‘-DHO’ on the exhalation.
- Cāga:* Abandoning; giving up; generosity.
- Carita:* Character; temperament; behavior.
- Cātummahāra* heaven: See *Tusitā* heaven.
- Chaiya Meditation Monastery:
The meditation monastery and Buddhist temple where Luang Por Chaiya is the abbot and head monk. Although it fluctuates, there are typically about eight monks and one *maechee* in residence at any given time. The monastery was established in 1995 but settled in its current location a

JUST PRACTICE

number of years later. The monastery property consists of a large meditation or ceremonial hall, an ordination building, several residential and retreat buildings—including a new retreat building which had its grand opening in June 2019—a large community kitchen, and a *stupa*. Chaiya Meditation Monastery is primarily supported by the Thai, Burmese, and Lao communities. The monastery is located in Las Vegas, Nevada. It is open year-round to visitors and meditators.

Chaiya Meditation Monastery 2:

See Buddhist Society of Idaho.

Chanda: Will; wish.

Chedi: (Thai) See *Stupa*.

Chenrezig: Also called *Avalokitesvara*, *Guanyin* and *Kannon*. A central figure in *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayana* Buddhism, *Chenrezig* is a *bodhisattva* embodying the compassion of all Buddhas.

Citta: The mind, heart, consciousness, state of consciousness.

Commentaries, the: Traditional interpretations given of the *Pāli Canon*. The commentaries were largely compiled since the fourth century CE; however, they were based on earlier ones, now lost, which were written down at the same time as the *Canon* itself in the last century BCE.

Dalai Lama: The foremost spiritual leader of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. The 14th and current Dalai Lama is Tenzin Gyatso (1935-). He is believed to be an incarnation of *Avalokitesvara*.

Dāna: The meritorious act of giving. The Buddha said that *dāna* is the first practice to be undertaken by those who want to diminish the force of craving as part of their spiritual development.

Death (meditation): (Pāli: *marāṇasati*) A meditation practice that uses a variety of visualization and contemplation techniques to reflect on the nature of death.

Defilement: (Pāli: *kilesa*) Mental qualities which obscure the radiance of the mind. The three root defilements

are greed, hatred and delusion. These manifest in various ways including passion, malevolence, anger, rancor, hypocrisy, arrogance, envy, miserliness, dishonesty, boastfulness, obstinacy, pride, conceit and complacency.

Dependent Origination: The Buddha's analysis of conditionality, Dependent Origination traces how ignorance leads to suffering and, in turn, how insight leads to its cessation.

Deva: Literally: 'shining one'—an inhabitant of one of the heavenly realms, sometimes translated as 'god' or 'angel'.

Dhamma: 1) The truth of the way things are, and the path leading to the realization of that truth. 2) The teachings of the Buddha based upon these natural laws and summarized in the Four Noble Truths. Alternatively, when presented in the lower case—*dhamma*—it refers to: 1) A phenomenon in and of itself. 2) A mental state.

Dhamma-cakkappavattana Sutta:

See *Āsāḥhā Pūjā*.

Dhammacariyā: Religious life, piety.

Dhammānupassanā: Contemplation of mental objects; the last of the four foundations of mindfulness.

Dhammānusati: Reflection on the virtues of the Buddha's doctrine.

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi:

A refrain commonly chanted by *Therāvada* Buddhists when they 'take refuge' in the Triple Gem—or Buddha, Dhamma, *Saṅgha*. The refrain means "I go to the Dhamma for refuge."

Dhammaramana: Mind objects.

Dhammayut nikāya: Literally, 'the order bound with Dhamma' or 'the righteous order'. The more recent of the two major sects of the Thai monastic *Saṅgha*. The *Dhammayut Order* was established by King Mongkut in the 1830s, during his period in the monkhood prior to ascending the throne, and with the intention of being a regenerative force within the *Mahā (great or greater) nikāya*.

JUST PRACTICE

- Dhamma Day:** See *Āsājhā Pūjā*.
- Dhutaṅga:** Literally, 'to wear away'. Voluntary ascetic practices, made allowable by the Buddha, that practitioners may undertake from time to time or as a long-term commitment in order to cultivate renunciation and contentment, and to stir up energy. Thirteen such practices are identified in the *Pāli Canon Commentaries*: 1) using only patched-up robes, 2) using only one set of three robes, 3) going for alms, 4) not-passing-by any donors on one's alms-round, 5) eating no more than one meal a day, 6) eating only from the alms-bowl, 7) refusing any food offered after the alms-round, 8) living in the forest, 9) living under a tree, 10) living under the open sky, 11) living in a cremation forest, 12) being content with whatever dwelling one has, and 13) not lying down.
- Dosa:** Anger or aversion; the mind's shying away from an unpleasant experience. With *lobha* and *moha*, *dosa* is one of the three forces which keep the minds of beings in darkness.
- Dukkha:** The quality of unsatisfactoriness, suffering, inherent stress and dis-ease in all conditioned phenomena. One of the three characteristics of existence along with not-self (*anattā*) and impermanence (*anicca*).
- Eight precepts:** These precepts consist of refraining from: 1) killing, 2) stealing, 3) all sexual activity, 4) lying, 5) the use of intoxicants, 6) eating after midday, 7) entertainment, beautification and adornment, and 8) using a high or luxurious bed. These training rules are commonly adopted by lay Buddhists on Observance Days and are also referred to as the 'Eight *Upāsikā* (laywoman) / *Upāsaka* (layman) Precepts'.
- Ekaggatā:** One-pointedness.
- Enlightenment:** *Nibbānic* attainment, which comes in four stages: *sotāpanna*, stream-entry; *sakadāgāmi*, once-returner; *anāgāmi*, non-returner; *arahant*. A

sotāpanna is one who has attained the first stage of enlightenment by experiencing *nibbāna* for the first time. Such a person uproots illusion of self as well as doubt in the efficacy of meditation practice; will not be reborn as an animal or in hell due to the weakening of his or her defilements; and ceases to believe that any rite or ritual can bring about liberation. A *sakadāgāmi* is one who has attained the second stage of enlightenment. Because of weakened craving and anger, this being will be reborn in only one more plane of existence. An *anāgāmi* is one who has attained the third stage of enlightenment by experiencing *nibbāna* at its third level of depth. This person will experience no more rebirths in sensual and material realms, but will attain final enlightenment from the *Brahmā* realm, where there is mind, but no matter. An *anāgāmi* has uprooted the defilements of greed and anger, but may still experience subtle defilements such as restlessness. An *arahant* is one who has uprooted all the defilements and experiences no more mental suffering. Having attained the fourth and final stage of enlightenment, he or she will not be reborn again in any form, passing entirely into the unconditioned state upon death.

Fat Buddha:

See Happy Buddha.

Fifty two mental states:

Also known as the 52 mental factors (*cetasikas*). They include: seven universal mental factors (contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, life faculty, and attention); six occasional mental factors (application of thought, examining, decision, energy, rapture, and desire to act); fourteen unwholesome mental factors (delusion, lack of shame, disregard for consequence, restlessness, greed, wrong view, conceit, hatred, envy, miserliness, regret, sloth and torpor, and doubt); and twenty five beautiful mental factors (faith, mindfulness, shame at

JUST PRACTICE

doing evil, regard for consequence, lack of greed, lack of hatred, neutrality of mind, tranquility of mental body, tranquility of consciousness, lightness of mental body, lightness of consciousness, softness of mental body, softness of consciousness, wieldiness of mental body, wieldiness of consciousness, proficiency of mental body, proficiency of consciousness, rectitude of mental body, rectitude of consciousness, right speech, right action, right livelihood, compassion, sympathetic joy, and wisdom).

Five Aggregates:

(Pāli: *khandhapañcaka*) Literally, five ‘heaps; groups’. The physical and mental components of experience, which act as the bases of attachment (*upādāna*) and thus an illusory sense of self, namely: 1) form (*rūpa*), 2) feeling (*vedanā*), 3) perception (*saññā*), 4) mental formations (*saṅkhāra*), and 5) consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

Five basic meditation topics:

Five objects of meditation given during the ordination ceremony, namely: 1) hair of the head, 2) hair of the body, 3) nails, 4) teeth, and 5) skin. Meditation on these parts of the body (the first five of the 32 parts of the body; see ‘impurity of the body—meditation’) is meant to engender disenchantment with, and non-attachment toward, the body.

Five hindrances:

Mental states that obstruct meditation, in the presence of which mindfulness is weakened or absent. These five states—desire, aversion, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt—arise in the absence of the respective five factors of the first *jhāna*. As such, the antidote to desire is concentration; the antidote to aversion is rapture; the antidote to sloth and torpor is aim; the antidote to restlessness is happiness; and the antidote to doubt is continuous attention.

Five mental faculties:

Faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. These faculties are qualities to be developed.

- Five mental powers: Faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. Although the same in terminology and number as the five mental faculties, the five spiritual powers refers to the ability of the faculties, when well developed, to oppose the factors that otherwise oppose or control them. As powers, faith opposes doubt; effort opposes laziness; mindfulness opposes heedlessness; concentration opposes distraction; and wisdom opposes ignorance.
- Five precepts: Refraining from: 1) killing, 2) stealing, 3) sexual misconduct, 4) lying, and 5) the use of intoxicants. The five precepts constitute the fundamental objects for mindfulness in daily life.
- Four bases of mental power: Desire to act, effort, mind, and investigation.
- Four elements: (Pāli: *mahā bhūtū*). The classes of physical phenomena; the types of sensations which can be experienced directly. They include: earth, or hardness and softness; water, or fluidity and cohesion; fire, or heat and cold; and air, or movement and such sensations as tautness, stiffness and piercing.
- Four foundations of mindfulness: (Pāli: *Satipaṭṭhāna*) Four foundations for establishing mindfulness—body, feelings, mind and mind objects—viewed in and of themselves as they occur.
- Four kinds of realities: 1) consciousness, or mind; 2) mental states; 3) matter; and 4) *nibbāna*.
- Four Noble Truths: The distinctive, foundational and all-encompassing teaching of the Buddha: 1) suffering (in all its physical and mental manifestations), 2) its origin (i.e. craving for sensuality, becoming, or not becoming), 3) its cessation, and 4) the path leading toward its cessation (the Noble Eightfold Path). Full comprehension of suffering, the abandonment of its cause, and the realization of its cessation

JUST PRACTICE

- through full development of the Noble Eightfold Path is equivalent to the attainment of *nibbāna*.
- Going Forth: Novice ordination. During the ceremony, the postulant requests to ‘go forth from home to homelessness’, formally takes refuge in the Triple Gem, undertakes the ten precepts and asks to live in dependence upon his teacher who will instruct him in the five basic meditation topics.
- Gold leaf: Gold that has been hammered into thin sheets. In *Theravāda* countries like Myanmar and Thailand, gold leaf is used to decorate Buddha statues, thus earning the doer merit, or *puñña*.
- Guanyin*: See *Chenrezig*.
- Guardian meditations: Loving kindness meditation; contemplation of the impurity of the body; contemplation of death; contemplation of the virtues of the Buddha.
- Happy Buddha: A semi-historical Chinese monk venerated in some *Mahāyāna* traditions as Metteyya Buddha. He is also sometimes called *Budai*, *Hotei*, Laughing Buddha, and Fat Buddha.
- Hiri*: A wise and healthy shame toward performing evil actions; an inner conscience that restrains one from doing deeds that would jeopardize their own self-respect.
- Holy day: See Observance Day.
- Hotei*: See Happy Buddha.
- Hungry ghost: (Pāli: *peta*) One of a class of beings in the lower realms, sometimes capable of appearing to human beings.
- Impurity of the body (meditation): (Pāli: *kāyagatā-sati-bhāvanā*) Mindfulness centered on the body; specifically, a meditation theme recommended by the Buddha for countering lust in which 32 parts of the body are investigated in terms of the *three characteristics* and their unattractive (*asubha*) nature. These parts are: hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, spleen, heart, liver, membranes, kidneys, lungs, bowels, entrails, undigested food, excrement,

- Insight knowledges: brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucus, oil in the joints, and urine. Truths about reality which are not accessible to ordinary consciousness. These meditative insights tend to occur in a specific order regardless of personality type or one's level of intelligence, and they deepen successively along with the concentration and purity of mind that result from proper practice of meditation. The insight knowledges include: 1) insight into mind and matter; 2) insight into cause and effect; 3) insights into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and absence of self; 4) insight into arising and passing away; 5) insight into path and not-path; 6) insight into dissolution; 7) insight into fear; 8) insight into disgust; 9) insight into the wish for liberation; 10) insight into equanimity regarding all objects; and 11) insight into *nibbāna*, the happiness of peace. The insight knowledges are sometimes characterized a bit differently: 1) knowledge of defining mind and matter; 2) knowledge of discerning causes; 3) knowledge of comprehension; 4) knowledge of rising and falling; 5) knowledge of falling only; 6) knowledge of fearfulness; 7) knowledge of faultiness; 8) knowledge of disgust; 9) knowledge of the desire for freedom; 10) knowledge of re-comprehension; 11) knowledge of equanimity about formations; 12) knowledge of conformity; 13) knowledge of changed lineage; 14) knowledge of path; 15) knowledge of fruits; and 16) knowledge of reviewing, or knowledge of reflection.
- Insight meditation: See *Vipassanā*.
- Jhāna*: Mental absorption. Eight (sometimes described as nine; see *arūpajhāna* and *rūpajhāna*) successively more refined states of strong concentration.
- Kāmaloka*: The world of pleasures.

JUST PRACTICE

- Kamma*: Action that bears results; volitional action as expressed through body, speech, and mind; the results of action.
- Kammaṭṭhāna*: Forty subjects of meditation that can be suggested for a student at a specific point in time, especially by one's spiritual teacher, depending upon the student's character, temperament (*carita*), personality and current state of mind. The forty include: things that one can behold directly, or *kaṣiṇa* (earth, water, fire, air or wind, blue, yellow, red, white, bright light, and enclosed space); objects of repulsion, which are called *asubha* (a swollen corpse, a discolored and bluish corpse, a festering corpse, a fissured corpse, a gnawed corpse, a dismembered corpse, a hacked and scattered corpse, a bleeding corpse, a worm-eaten corpse, and a skeleton); recollections of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, and *San̄gha*); recollections of the virtues of morality (*sīla*), generosity (*cāga*), and the wholesome attributes of *devas*; recollections of the body (*kāya*), death, the breath or breathing, and peace; the *brahmavihārās* (goodwill, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity); the *arūpajhānas* (infinite space; infinite consciousness; infinite nothingness; and neither perception nor non-perception); perception of the disgusting nature of food; and an analysis of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air).
- Kannon*: See *Chenrezig*.
- Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta*: The Discourse on Goodwill.
- Karunā*: Compassion.
- Kaṣiṇa*: See *Kammaṭṭhāna*.
- Kaṭhina*: A ceremony, held in the fourth month of the rainy season (October, sometimes November), in which a *San̄gha* of monks receives offerings of cloth from lay supporters, makes a robe from the cloth and offers it to one of its members considered to be a fitting recipient. In Thailand, the annual *Kaṭhina* ceremony has also become the major

	occasion for offering financial support to monasteries.
<i>Kāya:</i>	A heap; a collection; the body.
<i>Khanti:</i>	Patience.
<i>Kilesa:</i>	See Defilement.
<i>Kusala:</i>	Good action; meritorious; virtuous; wholesome; skillful.
Laughing Buddha:	See Happy Buddha.
<i>Lobha:</i>	Greed; covetousness. The mind's grasping onto a pleasant or desirable experience. With <i>dosa</i> and <i>moha</i> , <i>lobha</i> is one of the three forces which keep the minds of beings in darkness.
Loving kindness:	(Pāli: <i>mettā</i>) The wish that other beings should enjoy internal and external safety, mental and physical happiness, and ease of well-being.
<i>Luang Por:</i>	Thai word literally meaning 'venerable father'. A term of address for senior monks that is both affectionate and respectful.
<i>Luang Pu:</i>	Thai word literally meaning 'venerable paternal-grandfather'. A term of address for elderly senior monks that is both affectionate and respectful.
Luang Pu Mun:	(1870-1949) A member of the <i>Dhammayut nikāya</i> order of <i>Theravāda</i> Buddhism, Luang Pu Mun was the greatest Thai monk of his generation. The co-founder (with Luang Pu Sao) of the Thai Forest Tradition. He was well known for emphasizing strict adherence to the <i>Vinaya</i> , regular observance of the <i>dhutaṅgas</i> , and intensive meditation practice. Luang Pu Mun was widely considered to be an <i>arahant</i> .
Luang Pu Sao:	(1861-1942) A Thai <i>Dhammayut nikāya</i> monk and the co-founder (with Luang Pu Mun) of the Thai Forest Tradition. He was Luang Pu Mun's teacher. He was believed to be an <i>arahant</i> .
<i>Maechee:</i>	(Thai) A brown-robed nun (white-robed in Thai culture) who formally takes the eight precepts at her ordination. In some monasteries, <i>maechee</i> are expected to keep many of the same ascetic practices and monastic regulations as the monks,

JUST PRACTICE

- in order to maximize the supporting conditions for their practice.
- Magga:* A road or way.
- Maggayāna:* Traveling the path (to enlightenment).
- Māgha Pūjā:* The commemoration of an occasion in which 1,250 of the Buddha's fully enlightened disciples gathered before him without being summoned. On the occasion, the Buddha admonished all of his followers to do no evil, cultivate the good, and to purify their minds. *Māgha Pūjā*, which is sometimes called *Saṅgha Day*, is celebrated on the full moon day of the third lunar month, *Māgha*.
- Mahāsi Sayādaw: (1904-1982) A highly venerated Burmese monk who had a significant impact on the teaching of *vipassanā* meditation throughout Asia and in the West. He was believed to have attained the stage of *anāgāmi*, or perhaps even *arahantship*.
- Mahāyāna:* Literally: 'the great vehicle'. One of the three major schools of Buddhism (the other two being *Theravāda* and *Vajrayana*). *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, which includes the traditions of Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren, emphasizes practicing the path of the *Bodhisattva* which seeks the attainment of full Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is prevalent in many countries in Northern Asia, such as China, Japan and Korea.
- Mahā nikāya:* Literally, 'the greater order'. The older and larger of the two major orders of the Thai monastic *Saṅgha*.
- Maṅgala Sutta:* The Discourse on Blessings.
- Manodhātu:* The ideational faculty.
- Maraṇasatī:* See Death (meditation).
- Medicine Buddha: The Buddha of healing and medicine in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.
- Mental fetters: A group of ten defilements that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth. The realization of the four stages of enlightenment is explained in terms of the progressive abandonment of fetters. These

are as follows: 1) self-identification views, 2) uncertainty, 3) grasping at precepts and practices, 4) sensual passion, 5) aversion, 6) passion for form, 7) passion for formless phenomena, 8) conceit, 9) restlessness, and 10) unawareness.

Mettā:

Friendliness; good will; benevolence.

Metteyya Buddha:

The successor to the current Buddha—Gotama Buddha. The future Metteyya Buddha currently resides in the *Tusitā* heaven. He will attain enlightenment and become the next Buddha in the distant future, during a time when the Dhamma has been lost to the world.

Middle Way, The:
Mindfulness:

See Noble Eightfold Path.

See *Sati*.

Moha:

Delusion. The inability of the mind to recognize an experience. This is especially seen when the experience is a neutral one. With *lobha* and *dosa*, *moha* is one of the three forces which keep the minds of beings in darkness.

Muditā:

Sympathy for other's welfare.

Nāma:

Name; the immaterial factors such as consciousness and perception.

Neighborhood concentration:

See *Upacāra bhāvanā*.

Nekkhamma:

Renunciation.

Nibbāna:

Enlightenment—the goal of Buddhist practice. The final liberation of the mind from all suffering; the elimination of all mental taints and defilements; escape from the round of rebirth.

Nicca:

Constant; continuous; permanent.

Nimitta:

A mental 'sign', usually (but not exclusively) a visual image, that may arise as meditation deepens. If attended to skillfully and without attachment, a *nimitta* can enhance the movement toward deeper concentration and penetrative insight.

Nimmānarati heaven:

See *Tusitā* heaven.

Nirodha:

Cessation.

Nirodha-samāpatti:

The cessation attainment.

JUST PRACTICE

- Noble Eightfold Path:** The fourth of the Four Noble Truths, also known as the Eightfold Path, is the way of practice described by the Buddha leading to the cessation of suffering. It consists of: 1) Right View, 2) Right Intention, or Right Thinking; 3) Right Speech; 4) Right Action; 5) Right Livelihood; 6) Right Effort, 7) Right Mindfulness; and 8) Right Concentration.
- Noble Silence:** The practice, used especially during intensive meditation retreats, of limiting speech to only what is absolutely necessary or practical.
- Non-returner:** (Pāli: *anāgāmi*) See Enlightenment.
- Novice:** (Pāli: *sāmanera*) One who has formally undergone the Going Forth ceremony and thus avowed to live by the ten precepts. As full monks' ordination requires the candidate to be at least twenty years old, novice ordination has traditionally been the province of boys (at least 'old enough to scare crows') and teenagers. In some traditions, however, novice ordination is used as a probationary period before full ordination, irrespective of the age of the postulant.
- Nun Medhavi:** The resident nun, or *maechee*, at Chaiya Meditation Monastery. To the editor's understanding, she has been a disciple of Luang Por Chaiya for more than 25 years.
- Observance Day:** The half moon, full moon and dark moon days of the lunar calendar. Since the time of the Buddha, it has been customary for lay people to gather together at the local monastery on these days to chant, observe the eight precepts, and listen to the Dhamma.
- Once-returned:** (Pāli: *sakadāgāmi*) See Enlightenment.
- Ordination:** The ceremony of acceptance or initiation into the *Saṅgha*.
- Ottappa:** A wise and healthy fear of the consequences of evil actions. Often paired with wise shame (*hiri*).
- Pagoda:** See *Stupa*.
- Pāli:** The language in which the *Therāvada* Buddhist canon (*Tipiṭaka*) is preserved. As Pāli had no written script, 'Pāli' texts preserved throughout

- the *Therāvada* world are generally written in the native script of each country (e.g. in Sri Lanka, the ‘*Pāli*’ texts are preserved in Sinhala script; in Thailand, they are in Thai script; in European countries, they are in Roman script; etc.). Most of the words in this glossary are of the *Pāli* language.
- Pāli Canon*: Also called *Tipiṭaka*, which literally means ‘three baskets’. The threefold corpus upon which *Theravāda* Buddhism is based: 1) the *Vinaya Piṭaka*—dealing with the monastic Discipline; 2) the *Sutta Piṭaka*—containing the teachings in narrative and verse; and 3) the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*—a systematization of the teachings.
- Paññā*: Wisdom; discernment; insight. The third aspect of the Threefold Training, *paññā* consists in ‘seeing things as they are’, that is, observing the impermanent, unsatisfactory and not-self nature of all conditioned phenomena. *Paññā* can also be described as insight into the Four Noble Truths or into Dependent Origination. Of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right View and Right Intention are aspects of *paññā*.
- Pāramī*: Perfections of character. A list of ten qualities believed to have been developed over many lifetimes by the *bodhisatta*. More broadly speaking, these are essential virtues for all spiritual practitioners to develop. They are listed in the commentarial texts as: 1) generosity (*dāna*), 2) virtue (*sīla*), 3) renunciation (*nekkhamma*), 4) wisdom (*paññā*), 5) effort (*virīya*), 6) patience (*khanti*), 7) truthfulness (*sacca*), 8) determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*), 9) loving kindness (*mettā*), and 10) equanimity (*upekkhā*).
- Paranimmita-vasavattī* heaven:
See *Tusitā* heaven.
- Parikamma bhāvanā*: The preliminaries of mental culture.
- Parikamma nimitta*: Preliminary image.
- Parinibbāna*: The passing out of conditioned existence by a fully enlightened being at the time of physical death.

JUST PRACTICE

<i>Paritta:</i>	Protective verses chanted in order to ward off ill and create blessings. Such protective chants, comprising passages from the <i>Pāli Canon</i> and traditional verses in praise of the Triple Gem, are frequently chanted by monastics and lay Buddhists in <i>Theravāda</i> Buddhist countries on auspicious occasions.
<i>Pariyatti:</i>	The theoretical understanding of Dhamma obtained through listening, reading and studying. Ideally, it provides the foundation for putting the teachings into practice (<i>paṭipatti</i>), and penetrating their profound truth (<i>paṭivedha</i>).
<i>Patibhāga nimitta:</i>	Conceptualized image.
<i>Pāṭimokkha:</i>	The basic code of monastic discipline recited fortnightly in the <i>Pāli</i> original in monasteries with a quorum of four monks. The <i>Pāṭimokkha</i> consists of 227 training rules.
<i>Paṭipatti:</i>	Putting the teachings of the Buddha into practice.
<i>Paṭivedha:</i>	Penetrating the profound truth of the Dhamma.
<i>Paṭṭhāna:</i>	A detail examination of causal conditioning found in the <i>Abhidhamma Piṭaka</i> .
<i>Phala:</i>	A result or consequence; the moment of consciousness just after <i>magga</i> , which continues to perceive <i>nibbāna</i> , and during which the defilements are cooled.
<i>Phassa:</i>	Touch; contact.
<i>Pīti:</i>	Rapture; bliss; delight. The fourth factor of enlightenment. The third factor of the first <i>jhāna</i> .
<i>Pūjā:</i>	Veneration; homage; devotional offering.
<i>Puñña:</i>	Merit. Merit refers to actions of body, speech and mind that have a spiritually uplifting or purifying effect. The three activities productive of merit are 1) acts of generosity, 2) keeping precepts, and 3) the inner cultivation of peace and wisdom.
Pure Land Buddhism:	A branch of <i>Mahāyāna</i> Buddhism widely practiced in East Asia. (See also <i>Mahāyāna</i> .)
<i>Rāga:</i>	Lust.
Rains Retreat:	See Buddhist Lent.
<i>Rūpa:</i>	Form; figure; image; a material composition.
<i>Rūpabrahmā:</i>	The <i>Brahmā</i> worlds.

<i>Rūpajhāna:</i>	The form (lower) <i>jhānas</i> . These can be characterized as either a fourfold system or a fivefold system, depending on the way an individual abandons certain mental factors as they develop the levels of <i>jhāna</i> .
<i>Rūpaloka:</i>	The world of form (fine-material world).
<i>Sacca:</i>	Truthfulness.
<i>Saddhā:</i>	Trust, confidence, faith.
<i>Sādhu:</i>	Literally, 'It is well'. A common <i>Pāli</i> exclamation expressive of appreciation or agreement.
<i>Sakadāgāmi:</i>	A once-returner. (See also Enlightenment.)
<i>Samādhi:</i>	One-pointedness of mind; concentration; mental stability. As the title of the second training of the Threefold Training, <i>samādhi</i> is an umbrella term covering the whole realm of effort for the purpose of abandoning the unwholesome and cultivating the wholesome. Of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are aspects of <i>samādhi</i> . <i>Samādhi</i> is the sixth factor of enlightenment.
<i>Sāmanera:</i>	A novice <i>bhikkhu</i> .
<i>Samatha:</i>	Tranquility, the state of lucid calm. 'Samatha meditation' refers to those meditation techniques which focus on stilling and pacifying the mind rather than on reflecting and investigating phenomena (i.e. insight meditation, or <i>vipassanā</i>).
<i>Samathabhāvana:</i>	Tranquility meditation. (See <i>Samatha</i> .)
<i>Samatha nimitta:</i>	Sign of concentration. (See <i>Nimitta</i> .)
<i>Sammā diṭṭhi:</i>	Right or complete view.
<i>Sammā sati:</i>	Right or complete mindfulness.
<i>Sammā vāyāma:</i>	Right or complete exertion or effort.
<i>Samsāra:</i>	Literally: 'perpetual wandering'. 1) The cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death and rebirth, which is without knowable beginning and will not come to an end until, through practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, one attains <i>nibbāna</i> . 2) The world of all conditioned phenomena—mental and material.
<i>Sandiṭṭhiko:</i>	See <i>Akālika</i> .

JUST PRACTICE

- Saṅgha:** The community of Buddhist monks (*bhikkhus*) and nuns (*bhikkhunīs*). *Saṅgha* can refer either to the global institution of Buddhist monasticism or to individual monastic communities. In a higher sense, *Saṅgha* refers to the ‘community’ of enlightened disciples of the Buddha—lay and ordained—who have attained at least stream-entry (*sotāpanna*), the first of the transcendent paths culminating in *nibbāna*.
- Saṅghadāna:** The offering of requisites (clothing, food, lodging and medicines) and other materials to Buddhist monastics.
- Saṅghānusati:** Recollection of the virtues of the *Saṅgha*.
- Saṅgha Day:** See *Māgha Pūjā*.
- Saṅkhāra;** A conditioned thing.
- Saññā:** Perception; recognition.
- Sati:** Mindfulness, recollection, bearing in mind. A mental factor inseparably associated with all *kammically* wholesome (*kusala*) states of consciousness. In its most developed form, Right Mindfulness is the seventh factor of the Noble Eightfold Path and thus a requisite for the attainment of enlightenment.
- Satipaṭṭhāna:** See Four foundations of mindfulness.
- Sattā:** Existence; a word that refers to whoever delights in sensual objects.
- Sayādaw:** Burmese word meaning great teacher; a monk who teaches meditation, or an abbot of a monastery.
- Sayādaw U Paṇḍitā:** (1921-2016) A highly venerated Burmese monk and a student of Mahāsi Sayādaw. He was the successor to Mahāsi Sayādaw after the latter’s death in 1982. Sayādaw U Paṇḍitā was the author of *In This Very Life*. He was believed to have been an *arahant*.
- Seven Factors of Enlightenment:** Seven wholesome mental states listed as antidotes to the five hindrances and qualities to be developed in order to give rise to knowledge and liberation: mindfulness, investigation, energy,

rapture or joy, tranquility, concentration, equanimity.

Seven types of suitability:

Seven suitabilities which support meditation practice: suitability of place, of resort, of speech, of person (teacher and community), of food, of weather, and of posture.

Seven Stages of Purification:

1) Purification of Virtue; 2) Purification of Mind; 3) Purification of View; 4) Purification of Overcoming Doubt; 5) Purification of Knowledge and Vision of What is Path and Not-Path; 6) Purification of Knowledge and Vision of the Way; and 7) Purification of Knowledge and Vision. Each purity is needed to attain the next.

Sikkhā:

Training; study; discipline.

Sīla:

Virtue, morality. The first aspect of the Threefold Training, *sīla* is the quality of ethical and moral purity that prevents unskillful actions. The term also includes the training precepts, recollection of which restrains performance of such unskillful actions. Of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are aspects of *sīla*.

Six sense doors:

Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Sotāpanna:

Stream-enterer. One who has attained the first level of enlightenment through abandoning the first three mental fetters and has thus entered the 'stream' flowing inexorably to *nibbāna*. As the first stage of enlightenment, stream-entry is the point at which one is no longer subject to the possibility of birth in a lower realm and will realize the fourth and final stage of *arahantship* within seven lifetimes at most.

Stream-enterer:

See *Sotāpanna*.

Stupa:

A mound-like or hemispherical structure traditionally used to enshrine relics of the Buddha or those of his enlightened disciples. Also called a *chedi* or pagoda.

JUST PRACTICE

Sukha: Happiness, contentment, pleasant feeling. The fourth factor of the first *jhāna*. As a meditative mental quality, *sukha* reaches full maturity in the third *jhāna*, where it is usually rendered as 'bliss'. The ultimate *sukha* is *nibbāna*.

Supernormal knowledge:

Six types of higher knowledge. The first five may be attained after mastery of at least the four *jhānas*. The sixth knowledge is supramundane and attainable only through the practice of *vipassanā* meditation. Although indicative of spiritual progress, the Buddha discouraged indulgence in the first five knowledges, as they could distract one from the higher goal of enlightenment. The six knowledges include: 1) 'higher powers' (such as walking on water or through walls, flying through the air, touching the sun or moon, creating mind-made bodies, projecting replicas of oneself, becoming invisible, and ascending to the highest level of heaven); 2) 'divine ear' (the ability to hear earthly and heavenly sounds near and far); 3) 'mind-penetrating knowledge' (the ability to know the thoughts and mental states of others); 4) 'remembering one's former abodes' (recalling one's past lives); 5) 'divine eye' (knowing others' *kammic* destinations); and 6) 'extinction of mental intoxicants' (the attainment of *arahantship*). These six knowledges can be viewed as an elaboration of the three knowledges attained by the Buddha on the night of his awakening: 1) recollection of past lives, 2) divine eye, and 3) the attainment of enlightenment upon complete comprehension of the Four Noble Truths.

Supramundane knowledge:

Knowledge of that which transcends the world; that is, the nine supramundane states: *nibbāna*, the four noble paths (*magga*) leading to *nibbāna*,

and their corresponding fruits (*phala*) which experience the bliss of *nibbāna*.

Sutta:

Literally: 'a thread'. A discourse or sermon attributed to the Buddha or one of his contemporary disciples. After the Buddha's death, the *suttas* were passed down in the *Pāli* language by means of oral tradition, and were eventually committed to the written form in Sri Lanka sometime before the Common Era. More than 10,000 *suttas* are collected in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, the main repository for such texts in the *Pāli Canon*. These discourses are widely regarded as the earliest record of the Buddha's teachings.

Sutta Piṭaka:

See *Pāli Canon*.

Tāvātimsa heaven:

See *Tusitā* heaven.

Ten precepts:

The ten novice (*sāmanera*) training precepts, i.e. refraining from: 1) killing other beings, 2) stealing, 3) any sexual activity, 4) lying, 5) the use of intoxicants, 6) eating after midday, 7) entertainment, 8) bodily beautification and adornment, 9) using a high or luxurious bed, and 10) the use of money.

Thai Forest Tradition:

The teachers and forest monasteries, primarily situated in Northeast Thailand, that trace their lineage to Luang Pu Mun and Luang Pu Sao. The tradition is characterized by a devotion to traditional meditation practices accompanied by a strict adherence to the *Vinaya* and the adoption of various *dhutaṅga* practices.

Theravāda:

Literally, 'the speech of the elders'. The dominant form of Buddhism in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos), *Theravāda* takes the *Pāli Canon (Tipiṭaka)* as its primary text and the *arahant* as its ideal and working goal of practice.

Thirty Seven Factors of Enlightenment:

Also known as the 37 requisites of enlightenment, these are the requisites or qualities related to awakening. They include: the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases

JUST PRACTICE

- of mental power, the five mental faculties, the five mental powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Threefold training: The cultivation of 1) morality (*sīla*), 2) concentration (*samādhi*), and 3) wisdom (*paññā*). An abbreviated form of the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Three characteristics (of existence): A foundational teaching of the Buddha; the insight that all conditioned phenomena are: 1) impermanent (*anicca*), 2) unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and 3) empty of self (*anattā*). Deep meditative contemplation of these characteristics can lead to *nibbāna*.
- Three knowledges: See Supernormal knowledge.
- Three refuges: 1) The Buddha, 2) the Dhamma, and 3) the *Saṅgha*. Formal commitment to these refuges, or places of safety, is commonly expressed outwardly in the formula, ‘I go for refuge to the Buddha ... the Dhamma ... the *Saṅgha*’. On an inner level, these refuges can be understood as follows: the Buddha refers to inner awakening, the Dhamma to the ‘way things are’, and the *Saṅgha* to the right practice leading to awakening.
- Tipiṭaka*: See *Pāli Canon*.
- Transfer merit: The practice of dedicating one’s good deeds to deceased relatives. This “transfer” of merit is done mentally, and it is believed that the intended recipient can often receive merit if they rejoice in the giver’s act of giving. Transferring of merit is seen as a better alternative than mourning.
- Triple Gem: (Pāli: *tiratana*) An abbreviated, poetic designation for the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Saṅgha* in their aspect of being jewel-like in extreme preciousness, value and beauty. (See also Three Refuges.)
- Tusitā* heaven: The fourth of the six sensual heavens of Buddhist cosmology. The next Buddha—Metteyya

- Buddha—currently resides in *Tusitā* heaven. The other five sensual heavens include:
1) *Cātummahāra*, 2) *Tāvatisā*, 3) *Yāma*,
5) *Nimmānarati*, and 6) *Paranimmīta-vasavattī*.
- Uggaha nimitta*: Visualized image.
- Upacāra bhāvanā*: Proximate mental culture; the state of lucid calm in which the mind has abandoned the five hindrances but has not yet reached absorption (*jhāna*). Also called access or neighborhood concentration.
- Upādāna*: Clinging. The grasping of the mind onto an object and refusing to let it go.
- Upāsaka*: A male lay-follower of the Buddha.
- Upekkhā*: Equanimity.
- Vajrayana*: Sanskrit word literally meaning: ‘the diamond vehicle’. One of the three major schools of Buddhism (the other two being *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna*). The form of Buddhism primarily found in Bhutan, Tibet, and Mongolia.
- Vārāṇasi*: A holy city in northern India. In the context of this book, *Vārāṇasi* was the location near where the Buddha gave his first teaching—*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, or The Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion.
- Vassa*: See Buddhist Lent.
- Vedanā*: A feeling or sensation.
- Venerable Koṇḍañña: See *Āsāḥā Pūjā*.
- Venerable Moggallāna: One of the Buddha’s two chief disciples. The other chief disciple was Venerable Sāriputta. Venerable Moggallāna was considered to be foremost in psychic powers among all the Buddha’s disciples.
- Venerable Sāriputta: One of the Buddha’s two chief disciples. The other chief disciple was Venerable Moggallāna. Venerable Sāriputta was considered to be foremost in wisdom among all the Buddha’s disciples.
- Venerable U Mageinda: A Burmese monk who is Luang Por Chaiya’s most senior monastic disciple. He is the abbot of Chaiya Meditation Monastery 2 in Nampa, Idaho.

JUST PRACTICE

- Vesak Day:** (Pāli: *Vesākha Pūjā*) The memorial of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away, celebrated on the full moon day of the fifth lunar month, *Vesākha*. Vesak Day is sometimes called Buddha Day.
- Vesākha Pūjā*:** See Vesak Day.
- Vicāra*:** Sustained evaluation or appreciation. In meditation, it is the mental factor that dwells upon the chosen meditation object. It is the second factor of the first *jhāna* and is closely associated with *vitakka*, the mental factor by which the mind takes up the object. *Vicāra* is commonly translated as 'sustained thought'.
- Vihāra*:** Literally: 'abode'. A dwelling place, particularly a monastic residence, i.e., a monastery.
- Vijjā*:** Knowledge; wisdom.
- Vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno*:** The third of the nine qualities of the Buddha frequently reflected upon during chanting in *Theravāda* monasteries. *Vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno* means "consummate in knowledge and conduct." The other eight qualities are *araham*—worthy; *sammā-sambuddho*—rightly self-awakened; *sugato*—one who has gone the good way; *lokavidū*—knower of the cosmos; *anuttaro purisa-damma sārathi*—unexcelled trainer of those who can be tamed; *sattā deva-manussānam*—teacher of devas and human beings; *buddho*—awakened; and *bhagavā*—blessed.
- Vinaya*:** (See also *Pāli Canon*.) Literally, that which 'leads out' of suffering. Broadly, *Vinaya* refers to all the rules, regulations, observances and traditions designed to facilitate the practice of *Dhamma*. *Vinaya* finds its apotheosis in the monastic discipline and is most commonly used as a synonym for it.
- Viññāṇa*:** Consciousness.
- Vipassanā*:** Literally: 'clear seeing'. Insight into physical and mental phenomena as they arise and disappear,

	seeing them for what they actually are—in and of themselves—in terms of the three characteristics and in terms of suffering (<i>dukkha</i>), its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation.
<i>Vipassanābhāvana</i> :	Insight meditation.
<i>Viriya</i> :	The energy or effort expended in order to direct the mind continuously toward an object. <i>Viriya</i> is the third factor of enlightenment.
Virtue perfections:	See <i>Pāramī</i> .
<i>Vitakka</i> :	Directed thought. In meditation, <i>vitakka</i> is the mental factor by which attention is applied to the chosen meditation object. The first factor of the first <i>jhāna</i> .
<i>Wan Loy Kratong</i> :	(Thai) A “floating basket” festival celebrated annually in Thailand. During the festival, buoyant, decorated baskets are floated on a river or a lake.
<i>Wat</i> :	Thai word meaning Buddhist monastery or temple.
<i>Yāma</i> heaven:	See <i>Tusitā</i> heaven.
<i>Yāna</i> :	Vehicle; going.
<i>Yogi</i> :	A person who practices meditation.

Index

- Abhidhamma 13, 111, 233, 245,
316, 362, 365, 369, 401,
418-419
- Ācariya 401
- Access concentration 401
- Adhiṭṭhāna 401, 418
- Adosa 251-252, 254, 371, 401
- Ajahn 8, 11-14, 103, 401
- Ajahn Chah 8, 11, 401
- Ajahn Jayasaro 8, 401
- Ajahn Panyavaro 13, 401
- Ajahn Sarayut 12, 401
- Akālika 199, 271, 315, 319, 401,
420
- Akusala 308, 323, 402
- Alms round 53, 402
- Alobha 251, 371, 402
- Amoha 371
- Anāgāmi 33, 36, 47, 203-205, 402,
407-408, 415, 417
- Ānāpāna 84, 402
- Ānāpānasati 58, 82, 95, 318, 402
- Anattā 147, 174, 202, 222, 228,
268, 295, 402, 407, 425
- Anicca 202, 320, 346, 369, 402,
407, 425
- Appanā bhāvanā 91, 402
- Arahant 20, 24, 32-33, 35-36, 47,
53, 63-64, 68-69, 85, 93,
96, 175, 178, 200-206, 208,
224, 246, 291, 329, 350,
360, 401-402, 407-408,
414-415, 421-424
- Arūpa 82, 290, 402
- Arūpajhāna 34, 50, 60, 82, 96,
155, 205-206, 290, 402,
412-413
- Arūpaloka 290, 402
- Āsāḷhā Pūjā 226, 402-403, 406-
407, 426
- Asikkhā 204
- Asubha 51, 82, 92-94, 403, 411,
413
- Atta 173-174, 403
- Avalokitesvara 403, 405
- Āyatana 285, 403
- Bhāvanā 49, 55-56, 63, 72, 91-
92, 94-97, 253, 294, 321,
339-340, 345, 350, 353-
354, 357-358, 401-403,
411, 416, 418, 420, 426,
428
- Bhavaṅga 39, 403
- Bhikkhu 403, 420-421
- Bhikkhunī 403, 421
- Bodhisatta 54, 208, 403, 418
- Boon 263, 357, 403
- Brahmā 21, 33, 36-37, 54, 57, 63,
66-67, 71, 108, 155, 204,
224, 231, 254-255, 290,
369, 403, 408, 413, 419
- Brahmavihārā 58, 62, 254-256,
288, 403, 413
- Budai 403, 411
- Buddhānussati 54-55, 404
- Buddhasāsana 294-295, 404
- Buddha Day 404, 427
- Buddhi 76, 81
- Buddhist Lent 14, 404, 419, 426
- Buddhist New Year 264, 282
- Buddhist Society of Idaho 359,
404-405
- Buddho 18, 404, 427
- Cāga 57, 404, 413
- Carita 76-81, 84, 91-92, 404, 413
- Cātummahāra heaven 404, 426
- Cetanā 390
- Cetasika 372-373, 377, 380-381,
383, 389, 393-394, 396-
397, 408
- Chaiya Meditation Monastery
8, 14-15, 115, 233-234,

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

- 259, 267, 281, 305, 335,
345, 369, 404-405, 417
- Chaiya Meditation Monastery 2
404-405, 426
- Chanda 240-241, 372, 405
- Chedi 405, 422
- Chenrezig 33, 403, 405, 411, 413
- Citta 145, 371-373, 377, 380-381,
383, 389, 392-394, 396-
397, 405
- Commentaries, the 202, 405, 407
- Compassion 17, 59, 62-64, 82,
104-105, 160, 211, 213,
242, 254-255, 259-260,
264, 273, 288, 301-303,
317, 321, 331, 350, 369,
405, 409, 413
- Dalai Lama 43-44, 405
- Dāna 15, 20, 231, 252, 263, 284,
294, 321, 339, 345, 350,
353-358, 367, 405, 418
- Death 21, 27, 44-45, 53, 57-58,
62, 82-83, 94, 97, 102-104,
106, 108-109, 113, 164,
173, 193, 204, 213, 224-
225, 259, 261, 274, 285,
291, 310, 401, 405, 408,
411, 413, 415, 418, 420-
421, 424
- Dependent origination 21-22,
61, 83, 183, 201, 362, 406,
418
- Deva 65, 290, 369, 406, 413, 427
- Dhamma-cakkappavattana Sutta
226, 402, 406, 426
- Dhammacariyā 13, 406
- Dhammānupassanā 145-146,
406
- Dhammānusati 55-56, 406
- Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
358, 406
- Dhammaramana 146, 406
- Dhammayut nikāya 11-12, 406,
414
- Dhamma Day 403, 407
- Dhutaṅga 407, 414, 424
- Dosa 76, 78, 84, 92, 95, 241, 243,
245-246, 299, 317-318,
323, 326, 371, 407, 414,
416
- Dukkha 83-84, 269, 402, 407,
425, 428
- Eating 43, 78-81, 89, 98-99, 109,
111, 113, 140, 143, 148,
150, 161, 168, 255, 274,
313-314, 324, 364, 407,
424
- Eight precepts 16, 110, 148-150,
220, 270, 273, 281, 284,
301, 313-314, 318, 335,
339, 342, 345-346, 352,
354-355, 367, 407, 414,
417
- Ekaggatā 49, 93, 392, 407
- Enlightenment 20, 23, 29, 31-33,
35-37, 44-48, 53-56, 61,
64-65, 68, 71, 83-88, 104-
105, 108-109, 118, 121,
143, 146, 148-149, 151,
155, 172, 178, 180-181,
183, 190, 197-198, 200-
205, 207, 221, 226, 231,
238, 241, 246, 252, 269,
272, 278-279, 281, 284,
287, 290-291, 293-295,
299, 302-303, 305, 314-
315, 319, 325-326, 328-
330, 332, 349-350, 357,
360-361, 366, 369, 402-
404, 407-408, 415-417,
419-425, 427-428
- Equanimity 59, 62-64, 82, 95, 177,
188, 190, 195-196, 198,
208-209, 252, 254-255,
288-289, 321, 412-413,
418, 422, 426
- Fat Buddha 408, 411

JUST PRACTICE

- Fifty two mental states 61, 145-146, 189, 235-236, 256, 408
- Five aggregates 64, 83, 146, 173, 182-185, 237, 257, 285, 292, 381-382, 390, 393, 397, 409
- Five basic meditation topics 409, 411
- Five hindrances 146, 409, 421, 426
- Five mental faculties 61, 409-410, 425
- Five mental powers 410, 425
- Five precepts 16, 19, 74, 109, 148, 201, 220, 233, 242, 251, 259-260, 264, 267, 273, 277, 279, 284, 294, 297, 302-303, 313-314, 321, 330, 335, 337, 345-346, 348-349, 354-355, 358, 410
- Food 59, 71, 78-83, 86, 89, 94-95, 97-98, 100-102, 105, 110, 112-113, 140-141, 143, 149-150, 161, 168, 185, 224, 255, 267, 274, 279, 293, 295, 302, 313, 350, 352, 355, 364, 386, 390, 402, 407, 411, 413, 421-422
- Four bases of mental power 410, 424
- Four elements 59-61, 82-83, 95-96, 146, 156-157, 159, 182-183, 268, 292, 318, 364, 381-383, 393-394, 397, 410, 413
- Four foundations of mindfulness 35, 83, 115, 117-118, 146, 159, 271, 406, 410, 421, 424
- Four Noble Truths 27, 32, 54, 83, 102, 105, 116, 126-127, 146-147, 173, 183, 198-199, 226, 228-229, 245, 257, 269, 278, 338, 402, 406, 410, 417-418, 423
- Gatinimitta 45
- Going Forth 411, 417
- Gold leaf 282, 411
- Guanyin 265, 405, 411
- Guardian meditations 62, 93-94, 104, 106, 109, 113, 411
- Happy Buddha 43, 403, 408, 411, 414
- Hiri 250-251, 277, 411, 417
- Holy day 220, 283, 292, 411
- Hotei 411
- Hungry ghost 56, 225, 254-255, 260, 283, 290, 337, 339, 411
- Impurity of the body 33, 51-53, 62, 82, 92-94, 97, 99-100, 102-104, 109, 111, 139, 233, 274, 310, 409, 411
- Insight knowledges 16, 35, 47, 126, 148, 151-152, 158-159, 173, 184, 187-188, 190-197, 199, 201, 205, 208, 216, 295, 314, 412
- Javana 237
- Jhāna 33, 44, 47, 49-53, 55, 58-60, 65, 70-73, 83-85, 91-97, 151, 155, 158, 205-206, 209, 224, 257, 290-291, 307, 370, 392, 402, 409, 412-413, 419-420, 423, 426-428
- Jīvita 392
- Kāmaloka 290, 412
- Kamma 15, 21-23, 26, 44, 59, 61, 63-66, 80, 164-168, 175, 210-211, 220, 224-225, 237-238, 240, 245, 248, 254-255, 259, 262, 267, 273, 275-276, 286, 291, 293, 300, 316, 330-331,

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

- 346, 349, 355, 370, 389-390, 392, 413
- Kammanimitta 45
- Kammaṭṭhāna 9, 33, 49, 53, 62, 76, 288, 310, 413
- Kannon 405, 413
- Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta 67-68, 321, 413
- Karunā 59, 62, 64, 82, 95, 252, 254-255, 288, 403, 413
- Kasiṇa 33, 49-51, 82-83, 91-92, 257, 413
- Kaṭhina 350, 413
- Kāya 145-146, 371, 375, 379, 384, 387-388, 391, 395, 398-399, 411, 413-414
- Khandhapañcaka 409
- Khanti 414, 418
- Kilesa 269, 405, 414
- Kusala 308, 354, 375-376, 379-380, 384-385, 389-390, 414, 421
- Laughing Buddha 411, 414
- Lesser stream-enterer 48, 171-172
- Lobha 158, 240-242, 246, 251, 299, 308, 317-318, 323-324, 326, 337, 339, 371, 407, 414, 416
- Loving kindness 16-17, 28, 41-43, 49, 53, 55, 62-68, 70-74, 82, 93, 103-104, 109, 113, 211, 215, 233, 243, 251, 254-255, 259-261, 264-265, 273-274, 283-284, 288, 294, 301-303, 310, 313, 316-317, 320-321, 331, 338, 342, 355, 359, 411, 414, 418
- Luang Por 8, 12-13, 35, 39, 49, 53, 77, 79, 90, 95, 101, 141, 230, 265-266, 305, 345, 368-369, 401, 404, 414, 417, 426
- Luang Pu 401, 414, 424
- Luang Pu Mun 401, 414, 424
- Luang Pu Sao 414, 424
- Lying down (meditation) 34, 57, 89-90, 120, 136-138, 142, 154, 162, 164, 195, 219, 270, 315, 336, 339, 407
- Maechee 404, 414, 417
- Magga 27, 31-33, 181, 198-200, 370, 392, 415, 419, 423
- Maggayāna 31, 199, 415
- Māgha Pūjā 350, 415, 421
- Mahāsi Sayādaw 12, 415, 421
- Mahāyāna 43-44, 405, 411, 415, 419, 426
- Mahā nikāya 11, 401, 415
- Maṅgala Sutta 106, 321, 415
- Manodhātu 365, 372-375, 377-379, 384, 388, 396, 399, 415
- Maraṇasati 57, 405, 415
- Medicine Buddha 43, 415
- Mental factors 45-47, 187, 189, 206, 235-243, 245-248, 251-253, 256, 371-373, 377, 380-381, 383, 389, 394, 396-397, 408, 420
- Mental fetters 402, 415, 422
- Mettā 49, 58-59, 61-64, 67-68, 70, 72-74, 82, 95, 145, 251-252, 254-255, 288, 317, 321, 403, 413-414, 416, 418
- Metteyya Buddha 411, 416, 425
- Middle Way, the 31, 189, 227-228, 369, 416
- Moha 39-40, 76, 79-80, 84, 95, 241, 243, 246, 299, 317-318, 323-324, 326, 371, 407, 414, 416
- Monk 11-13, 18, 20, 28, 35-36, 38, 43-44, 51, 53, 56, 67-68, 70, 74, 76-77, 84-86, 93, 105, 206, 220, 224-225,

JUST PRACTICE

- 231, 259, 261, 265-267,
276, 281-282, 294, 298,
302, 313, 321, 323, 328,
330, 335, 339, 345, 350,
352, 354-355, 359, 401-
404, 411, 413-415, 417,
419, 421, 426
- Monkey mind 10, 16, 18, 38-39,
271, 307-308, 339, 341,
344, 361
- Muditā 59, 62, 82, 95, 252, 254-
255, 288-289, 403, 416
- Nāma 362-364, 366, 381-382,
393, 397, 416
- Nekkhamma 416, 418
- Neighborhood concentration
416, 426
- Nibbāna 11, 27, 30-32, 40, 45-
47, 54-58, 94, 115, 145-
147, 189, 199-206, 208,
217, 222-223, 226, 229,
232, 235, 241, 257, 278,
294, 300, 304, 328, 338,
351, 353, 361, 366, 408,
410-412, 416, 419-425
- Nicca 147, 416
- Nimitta 44-45, 91-92, 94-96, 292,
416, 418-420, 426
- Nimmānarati heaven 416, 426
- Nirodha 47, 96, 205-206, 228, 416
- Nirodha-samāpatti 47, 96, 205-
206, 416
- Noble Silence 282, 352, 417
- Non-returner 20, 33, 36, 64, 69,
96, 175, 200, 203-206, 329,
407, 417
- Novice 12-13, 36, 313, 335, 352,
355, 360, 402, 411, 417,
420, 424
- Nun Medhavi 359, 417
- Observance Day 369, 407, 411,
417
- Once-returner 20, 32, 64, 69,
175, 200, 202-204, 329,
417, 420
- Ordination 352, 359, 403, 405,
409, 411, 414, 417
- Ottappa 250-251, 277, 417
- Pagoda 231-232, 350, 417, 422
- Pāli 27, 37, 43, 49, 63, 66, 76,
144, 174, 233, 240, 246,
263, 268-269, 274, 285,
288, 306, 308, 313, 316,
346, 352, 357, 401, 403-
405, 407, 409-411, 414,
417-420, 424-425, 427
- Pāli Canon 401, 405, 407, 418-
419, 424-425, 427
- Paññā 27, 31-32, 37, 122, 145,
158, 189, 256, 313, 325,
328, 336, 392, 418, 425
- Pāramī 207-208, 283-284, 296,
302, 312, 327, 329, 418,
428
- Paranimmita-vasavattī heaven
418, 426
- Parikamma bhāvanā 91, 418
- Parikamma nimitta 91, 418
- Parinibbāna 175, 203-205, 418
- Paritta 321, 419
- Pariyatti 37, 183, 306, 419
- Patibhāga nimitta 92, 419
- Pāṭimokkha 284, 419
- Paṭipatti 37, 183, 303, 306, 419
- Paṭivedha 37, 183, 306, 419
- Paṭṭhāna 10, 233, 316, 322, 336,
369-370, 419
- Peta 411
- Phala 33, 199-200, 205, 208, 419,
424
- Phassa 365, 390, 419
- Pīti 41, 49, 93, 178, 392, 419
- Pūjā 189, 226, 302-303, 350, 402-
403, 406-407, 415, 419,
421, 426-427

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

- Puñña 263, 354, 357-358, 403, 411, 419
- Pure Land Buddhism 35, 415, 419
- Rāga 76-78, 419
- Rains Retreat 369, 404, 419
- Realities 45, 55, 58, 61, 89, 94, 142, 144-147, 151, 154-155, 183-185, 188-189, 228, 235, 257, 285-286, 317-318, 410
- Rebirth 21, 23, 164, 204, 290-291, 330, 408, 415-416, 420
- Right Effort 27-29, 31, 214, 220-222, 229, 368, 417, 420, 424
- Rūpa 45, 47, 61, 237, 318, 362-364, 366, 370, 372-373, 381-384, 388, 390, 392-394, 396-397, 399, 409, 419
- Rūpabrahmā 290, 419
- Rūpajhāna 50, 96, 155, 205, 290, 402, 412, 420
- Rūpaloka 290, 420
- Sacca 418, 420
- Saddhā 57, 76, 81, 248-249, 263, 276, 282, 328, 337, 367, 392, 420
- Sādhu 8, 220, 266, 276, 279, 298, 335, 339, 359, 368, 420
- Sakadāgāmi 32, 36, 202, 407-408, 417, 420
- Samādhi 27, 31-32, 122, 189, 284, 313, 325, 328, 420, 425
- Sāmanera 12-13, 36, 352, 354, 417, 420, 424
- Samatha 33, 49, 53, 56, 83, 91, 93, 95-96, 155-156, 158, 257-258, 273-274, 284, 291-292, 294, 297, 307, 319, 352, 354-357, 420
- Samathabhāvana 294, 420
- Samatha nimitta 292, 420
- Sammā ditṭhi 27-28, 31, 420
- Sammā sati 29, 420
- Sammā vāyāma 29, 420
- Saṃsāra 164, 285, 291, 295, 420
- Sanditṭhiko 315, 320, 325, 338, 401, 420
- Saṅgha 20, 36, 38, 58, 82, 94, 114, 220, 248, 262-263, 276, 283, 297, 303-305, 328-329, 337-338, 345, 352, 354, 357-359, 403, 406, 413, 415, 417, 421, 425
- Saṅghadāna 20, 220, 224, 231, 233, 294, 297, 302, 321, 345, 352, 354, 359, 421
- Saṅghānusati 56, 421
- Saṅgha Day 415, 421
- Saṅkhāra 196, 199, 237, 252, 409, 421
- Sañña 37, 82, 246-247, 252, 336, 409, 421
- Satipaṭṭhāna 83, 93, 117, 410, 421
- Sattā 63, 421
- Sayādaw 8, 12-13, 415, 421
- Sayādaw U Paṇḍitā 8, 421
- Seven Factors of Enlightenment 83, 146, 421, 425
- Seven Stages of Purification 148, 151, 158, 164, 198-199, 422
- Seven types of suitabilities 86-90, 114, 117, 422
- Sikkhā 204, 422
- Sīla 15, 18, 27, 31-32, 36, 56-57, 122, 189, 231, 252-253, 263, 271, 277, 279, 284, 313-315, 321, 330, 335, 339, 346, 349-350, 353-358, 413, 418, 422, 425
- Six Sense Doors 44, 109-110, 146, 148-149, 151, 169, 175,

JUST PRACTICE

- 177, 182, 186, 198, 236,
246, 249, 278, 285-286,
298-299, 326, 362, 365-
366, 403, 422
- Sleeping 39, 79, 109, 112, 149,
220, 224, 255, 367
- Sotāpanna 23, 32, 36, 85, 200,
208, 291, 325, 407-408,
421-422
- Sotāpattimagga 200
- Standing (meditation) 34, 89-90,
130-131, 134-138, 142,
153-154, 162, 270, 315,
336, 339
- Stream-enterer 20, 23, 32, 48,
55, 64, 69, 108, 116, 127,
171-172, 175, 178, 200-
201, 203-204, 208, 226,
246, 291, 325, 329, 422
- Stupa 405, 417, 422
- Sukha 49, 93, 147, 392, 423
- Supernormal knowledge 49-50,
67, 85, 96, 423, 425
- Supramundane knowledge
46-47, 115, 117, 237, 278,
295, 345, 366, 423
- Sutta 67-68, 106, 226, 321, 402,
406, 413, 415, 418, 424,
426
- Sutta Piṭaka 418, 424
- Talking 39, 81, 87, 112, 116, 126,
138, 274, 313-314, 341,
352, 364
- Tāvātimsa heaven 369, 424, 426
- Temperament 76-86, 90-96,
170, 202, 404, 413
- Ten precepts 36, 284, 314, 346,
349-350, 354, 411, 417,
424
- Thai Forest Tradition 11, 401,
414, 424
- Theravāda 11, 43-44, 210, 401,
403, 406, 411, 414-415,
417-419, 424, 426-427
- Thirty seven factors of
enlightenment 61, 198,
424
- Threefold training 418, 420, 422,
425
- Three knowledges 423, 425
- Three refuges 425
- Tipiṭaka 417-418, 424-425
- Tiratana 425
- Triple Gem 15, 56, 226, 248,
262-263, 276, 297, 304,
337-338, 345, 352, 403,
406, 411, 413, 419, 425
- Tusitā heaven 369, 404, 416, 418,
424-426, 428
- Uggaha nimitta 91, 426
- Upacāra bhāvanā 91, 401, 416,
426
- Upādāna 409, 426
- Upādā-rupa 381
- Upāsaka 407, 426
- Upāsikā 407
- Upekkhā 47, 59, 62-63, 82, 95,
252, 254-255, 288-289,
403, 418, 426
- Vajrayana 405, 415, 426
- Vārāṇasi 226, 426
- Vassa 68, 404, 426
- Vedanā 44, 83, 144-146, 153,
208, 252, 392, 409, 426
- Venerable Koṇḍañña 403, 426
- Venerable Moggallāna 426
- Venerable Sāriputta 84, 426
- Venerable U Mageinda 404, 426
- Vesak Day 10, 231, 302, 304-305,
404, 427
- Vesākha Pūjā 189, 302-303, 427
- Vicāra 49, 93, 392, 427
- Vihāra 281, 427
- Vijjā 158, 305, 427
- Vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno 305-
306, 427
- Vīmaṃsa 373
- Vinaya 414, 418, 424, 427

The Collected Teachings of Luang Por Chaiya

- Viññāṇa 371-375, 377-379, 383-
384, 386-388, 390-391,
394-399, 409, 427
- Vipassanābhāvana 294, 428
- Viriya 328, 333, 373, 389, 392,
418, 428
- Virtue perfections 105, 122, 144,
208, 220, 229-231, 257,
261, 283-284, 296, 302,
312, 327, 329, 352-353,
355, 359, 361, 428
- Vitakka 49, 76, 81, 84, 93-95,
392, 427-428
- Walking (meditation) 10, 34, 41,
89-90, 106, 130-140, 142-
143, 154, 157, 159, 162,
164, 176, 179, 192, 194,
221, 258, 270-272, 274,
280, 282, 305, 314-315,
324, 329, 333-334, 336,
339, 352, 367, 402
- Wan Loy Kratong 359, 428
- Wat 12-13, 401, 428
- Yāma heaven 426, 428
- Yāna 31, 33, 199, 415, 428
- Yoga 339
- Yogi 40-41, 427

The initial printing of this book (Nov. 2020; 300 copies) was generously sponsored by:

Venerable Ajahn Chaiya and devotees (\$1,800)
Nun Medhavi (\$100)
Darin Zimmerman (\$100)

The second printing of this book (Jan. 2022; 500 copies) was generously sponsored by:

Somkid Drusendahl (\$100)
Samruay Chaisri (\$100)
Supang Bassey & Pakjira Wajitra (\$1,000)
Suphansa Leeka (\$21)
Thongbai Saisaeng (\$105)
Marchima Pradumdusdepron (\$105)
Benjamin, Somchai, Montira Khemthong (\$105)
Narumol Phatranirundra (\$70)
Sermsri Suangka (\$105)
Anonymous (\$26)
MC Supavadee Nualsri (\$90)
John & Suda Thongnoi (\$500)
Savarod Foosupniran (\$105)
Kat—Good Thai Spa (\$50)
Orawan Boobkham family (\$60)
Pimnapa Watcharaseranee (\$100)
Nowarat Watacheng (\$200)
Jumnian Noppagit (\$100)
Sahataya Saiyasombat (\$100)
Noy. L.B. (\$50)
Petcharawat Maneevong (\$100)