

Dhammakaya Open University, California, USA



MEDITATION TECHNIQUES FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THE DHAMMAKAYA

MD 204 E



Meditation IV

Dhammakaya Meditation Techniques

DHAMMAKAYA OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Foreword

This subject, MD 204 Meditation 4: The Dhammakaya Meditation Technique is aimed at the study of Dhammakaya Meditation techniques, which will encourage the effectiveness and success of meditation. The content is gathered information from the Buddhist Scriptures, experienced teachers and experienced practitioners who are successful in meditation so that students are encouraged to practice meditation.

Meditation subjects will require continuing education. If students have already applied knowledge learned from previous courses, you will know how much benefit you will receive. Therefore, in the Meditation 4 course, it is intended for the students to study and apply the practice in order to increase their knowledge and skills of meditation.

The Committee of the Subject of Meditation
June 2006

Details of the Subject

1. Description of the Subject

MD204 Meditation 4: Dhammakaya Meditation Technique

To study and understand the process of meditation and Dhammakaya technique to achieve Dhammakaya within such as Iddhipāda, consciousness, comfort, observation, meditation while listening to sermons, perception and equanimity, and inner experience.

2. Purposes of the Subject

1. To study and understand meditation process.
2. To learn meditation techniques in order to access Dhammakaya.
3. To apply meditation techniques in meditation.

3. List of Chapters

Chapter 1	Iddhipāda (path of accomplishment or basis for success)
Chapter 2	Principles of meditation
Chapter 3	Keys to reach Dhamma within
Chapter 4	Techniques of how to meditating during sermons
Chapter 5	Perception and Equanimity
Chapter 6	Inner Experience
Chapter 7	Examples of inner experience

How to Study This Book

1. Preparation for Self-Study

When studying each chapter of this subject, Meditation 4: Dhammakaya Meditation Technique, students should:

1. Spend one hour studying per day, and finish studying the whole book within 1-2 weeks.
2. At the beginning of each chapter, do the pre-study quiz to evaluate prior knowledge and understanding of the material in the chapter. Complete the assignments found in each chapter, focusing mostly on the specific activities described. At the end of each chapter, students should assess their degree of acquired knowledge and understanding of the contents by doing the post-study quiz.
3. Since practical experience is integral to meditation progress, focus not only on the theoretical aspects of each chapter but also on the practical exercises recommended for use on a daily basis.

2. Self-Assessment Before and After Studying a Chapter

Before starting each chapter, students should do the chapter's pre-study quiz in order to assess their knowledge of that chapter's subject matter. This will help students see the gaps in their understanding so they know on what parts of the chapter to devote particular attention. After completing each chapter, students should do the post-study quiz to see the areas where they have made improvements in their understanding. The post-study quiz can also help students know whether their knowledge is at a level sufficient to warrant starting the next chapter.

3. The Way to Study the Contents of Each Chapter

Prior to starting each chapter, students should read the chapter guidelines first. The guidelines summarize the sections of each chapter and enumerate the corresponding topics in each section. Also, the guidelines provide the key concepts and objectives of each chapter.

Upon finishing a chapter, students should complete the supplementary activities in the workbook before starting the next chapter. The workbook activities help students self-assess their degree of understanding. Since students can apply the material in each chapter to conduct themselves righteously in their daily lives and gain deep fulfillment, students should continually perform all activities by themselves.

4. Doing Activities

Students should note the main ideas in each chapter and do all the supplementary activities because doing the activities is the key to gaining a deeper understanding of meditation. Students should do all activities on their own before checking the answers.

5. Distance Learning via Satellite Broadcast and Electronic Media

With the advent of distance learning via satellite broadcast (commonly called Dhamma Media Channel or DMC) produced by Foundation for the Study of Dhamma for the Environment, students have easy access to clear and detailed teachings which they can readily put into practice. It is highly recommended that students reserve time for studying meditation via DMC and other electronic media provided by the University. Student are welcome to request further details about distance learning via DMC and related media from Dhammakaya Open University, using the address on your application form.

6. Attendance at Dream in Dream Kindergarten

To achieve a deeper understanding of meditation and study hear about meditation from highly experienced practitioners, students should attend the Dhamma program called “Dream in Dream Kindergarten”, a program broadcast on DMC. This program is broadcast from Monday to Saturday at 19.00 – 21.30 (Thailand Time) or at other specified times. Please contact your DOU office for the latest program schedule.

7. Examination

Students’ knowledge of this subject will be assessed using an examination, with both objective (multiple-choice) and subjective (descriptive) methods. Although the method for evaluating progress is a written examination, the way to determine mediation progress is each individual’s responsibility and dependent on each student’s diligence in putting the teachings into practice.

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Chapter 1

Iddhipāda (The Basis for Success)

Units in This Chapter

- 1.1 Desire (Chanda)**
- 1.2 Perseverance (Viriya)**
- 1.3 Thoughtfulness (Citta)**
- 1.4 Investigation (Vimamsa)**

Chapter at a Glance

1. Dhamma related to means to attain successes is called Iddhipāda (The Basis for Success), which has 4 components; Chanda (purpose), Viriya (perseverance), Citta (thoughtfulness) and Vīmaṃsā (investigation, examination).
2. Iddhipāda is Dhamma that we can use in working and in meditation. If we are able to understand and apply Iddhipāda in our daily lives, we will succeed in our career and reach the Dhamma within.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter should give students the knowledge and understanding to be able to:

1. Explain the meanings, causes and characteristics of Iddhipāda.
2. Apply the knowledge of Iddhipāda in meditation.

Iddhipāda

In Buddhism, Iddhipāda is the Dhamma that will lead to the success and happiness, both secularly or spiritually. Iddhipāda is a compound term composed of “power” or “potency” [*ddhi*] and “base,” “basis” or “constituency” [*pāda*]. Therefore, Iddhipāda¹ is usually translated along the lines of “the basis of power” or “the basis of spiritual power.” Iddhipāda consists of 4 components, which are as follows:

1. Chanda - Desire
2. Viriya - Perseverance
3. Citta - Thoughtfulness
4. Vīmamsā - Investigation

1.1 Chanda

Chanda² means desire. By Chanda, it means a desire to do good deeds willingly and intentionally. Examples of good deeds are - to understand universal truths and Dhamma, to earn a living, and to meditate for a peaceful and delighted mind, until one gets rid of all defilements.

1.1.1 Chanda in Working³

Chanda in working means a willingness to do your work with happiness. Having Chanda is very important in your work. When we do our job with love and joy we will easily succeed at our tasks. On the other hand, if we are forced to do our job, the result will not be the same as we are very happy to do the job. For example, there are differences between volunteer soldiers and involuntary soldiers. The performance of volunteer soldiers is better than that of involuntary ones.

¹Abhidhamma Pitaka Vibhaṅg. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 35, p. 292

²Teacher Leang Chiang. Dhamma Scholar Tri Level: Dhamma Vibhak 1, Bangkok: Leang Chiang, 2536 B.E., p. 94

³Phra Maha Dr. Somchai Thanawuttho, Iddhipāda-4 (cassettes)

1.1.2 Chanda in Meditation

Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Phaw Wat Paknam) summarized the meaning of Chanda as follows:

“One should set one’s mind.”

He explained,

“Determination to love meditation is like a man who loves a woman.”⁴We need to put our mind into meditation seriously.

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni (Luang Phaw Dhammajayo) talked about the measurement of Chanda in meditation. We have to ask ourselves,

“How much do we want to reach the Dhammakaya within?”

This is a way to review and access Chanda in ourselves. When we realize the love of attaining the Dhammakaya within, perseverance or Viriya will occur. Then, we can practice to reach the Dhammakaya within seriously.

Meditation practitioners should be aware of their desire because if they are craving to reach the Dhammakaya within too much, then happiness in meditation will not occur. It will be replaced by stress. Therefore, practitioners should be careful. Do not transform Chanda to Craving (Tanhā).

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni clarified this matter as follows:

“Chanda is the love of Meditation Practice, the desire of reaching the Dhammakaya within patiently, the love of Dhamma, the desire to achieve Inner Sphere, the desire to attain Dhammakaya, the desire to enter the center of the body (or the seventh base level of the mind) and the desire of happiness within derived from a still mind. Do not have too much desire. Then, the desire will change to ‘Craving.’ The result is that we will not have a good meditation. We will feel bored and not want to meditate anymore. Therefore, we need to have perfect amount of Chanda or Desire in order to gently reach the Dhammakaya within with a sense of ease. When Chanda occurs, Viriya will come too.”⁵

1.1.3 The Causes of Some Kinds of Chanda

There are several ways to create Chanda such as having appreciation of the value of meditation, understanding of the importance of escaping from the cycle of existence (Samsara) and the danger of living in the cycle of existence. Like the Buddha, He saw the disadvantages of sickness and death as a threat so He did not want to be reborn again. He also realized that being a Buddhist monk is one of the ways to escape the cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth.

⁴Wat Pak Nam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam Alumni Association, **Moradok Dhamma of Luang Phaw Wat Paknam** [Dhamma Heritage of Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam]. The 2nd Dhamma Sermon, Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing PCL, 2539 B.E., p. 64

⁵Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** October 3, 2536 B.E.

Once Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Moggallāna were still lay people. While they were watching a show on stage, other people enjoyed the show. On the other hand, Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Moggallāna had a thought that all performers would die and so would we. Therefore, Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Moggallāna decided to ordain and practice meditation.

And further, the following example of Venerable Milliga⁶, who had a good noble Buddhist friend or Kalyanamitta, will clarify the understanding of the benefits from escaping from the cycle of existence and the dangers of being in this cycle.

Venerable Milliga was a hunter. He killed animals for a living. One day while he was eating Bar-B-Q'd meat, he was very thirsty, and so he went to the residence of a senior monk. He opened a drinking container, which was located in the distance, near a senior monk, who was meditating. Venerable Milliga saw that there was no more water. He was very angry and said,

“You drank water that was given by the lay people and then fell asleep without putting more water back in the jar. That is not appropriate.”

The senior monk said.

“I filled up the jar with the water. I checked the water and saw that it was still full. Then, I pour water in a glass. You drank water from the glass and thought the water was gone.”

The hunter listened to the senior monk and felt so bad. Then he threw his arrows away and asked to ordain.

Later on, when Venerable Milliga was meditating, he thought about the places where he killed many animals. He felt heat in his body. He could not calm his mind down from his Kammatthāna (method of meditation focused on a particular subject) Meditation and was behaving like a mad cow. He did not know what to do so he went to see the senior monk. He told him that he could not practice Kammatthāna Meditation. The senior monk told Venerable Milliga to cut fig trees and burn them. Venerable Milliga followed the senior monk's order but he could not burn them. The senior monk told Venerable Milliga to step away. Then, he used his power to break through the ground and take fire from hell to burn the pile of fig trees. It took only few seconds until all of the wood was burnt down.

The senior monk said,

“If you would disrobe, you would be burnt like this.”

Venerable Milliga felt scared of hell as he saw the fire from hell. He was shaking and asked the senior monk,

“Is Buddhism a way to escape from all suffering?”

⁶*SārathapakathāsiniĀṭṭhakathā-samyuttanikāyaKhandhavalavagga*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 27, p. 117

The senior monk answered,
“Yes.”

Venerable Milliga responded,

“If Buddhism is a way out, I would not give it up to get out from suffering.”

Since then, Venerable Milliga meditated constantly until he became an Arahant.

We can see advantages of being free from all suffering and disadvantages of the round of existences (*Samsara*). This should encourage us to have more Chanda to do meditation. Therefore, we should increase our Chanda so we will meditate more often. Finally we will be able to achieve our meditation goal as the sun shines.

1.2 Viriya

Viriya⁷ comes from a word Vira, which means the courage to fight with difficulties. When facing obstacles, like a baby seeing snacks like ice-cream or chocolate, he or she give in and will want to eat them. One who has Viriya will be very diligent and hardworking and will not give up easily. Sometimes one may feel lazy, want to take a rest, want to play, or want to take a nap. However, one with Viriya will be able to get rid of those feelings.

Viriya is very important to mental work. Viriya is required if one wants to be successful. Thinking alone will not bring achievement. One has to take action. Thinking without doing is like building a mansion in the air. Think and then act. This will lead to success.

1.2.1 Viriya in Meditation

For Viriya in meditation, Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni defined it as “perseverance.” He explained that we have to persevere seriously.⁸ Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni has explained more about Viriya as follows:

“Viriya is diligence to meditate and still our mind, whether it’s only for one or two minutes. Constantly practice meditation whether it is for 1 minute, 2 minutes, 5 minutes or 10 minutes, whether in a car, on a boat, on an airplane, or in a bathroom. In the beginning, we may not be able to still our mind, but do not give up. If we keep doing it, we will be able to still our mind one day.”⁹

⁷Phrabhavanaviriyakhun (Ven. Dhattajeevo Bhikkhu), **Dhamma Lecture**, July 1, 2541 B.E.

⁸ Wat Pak Nam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam Alumni Association, **Moradok Dhamma of Luang Phaw Wat Paknam** [Dhamma Heritage of Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam]. The 2nd Dhamma Sermon, Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing PCL, 2539 B.E., p. 64

⁹Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** October 3, 2536 B.E.

1.2.2 The Three Levels of Viriya

We can divide Viriya into three levels.

Viriya - Basic Level: The Basic Level is when one meditates but not regularly. Some days one does meditation but some days one does not. However, it is a good start as we can increase our habit to meditate gradually and do good deeds.

Viriya - Middle Level: The Middle Level is when one mediates daily and often. One has the perseverance to do good deeds on a regular basis and one day will reach the enlightenment.

Viriya - High Level: The High Level is when Meditation is the purpose of life. One commits to meditation despite death. In Buddhism, it's called supreme perfections or Paramatthapāramā. This kind of meditation depends on each person's perfections. Some people actually died from meditation while some people survived and reached enlightenment. However, for people who died and did not reach the Dhamma within their life time, they will be able to reach enlightenment in their next life.

In Buddhist Scripture, several people are mentioned, who had attained a high level of Viriya. Here are some examples:

The Story of Seven Monks

This era called Patara Kappa¹⁰, there was a Buddha named Kassapa. He made Buddhism prosperous by guiding and helping all living beings and then He passed away along with His disciples. After that, Buddhism was almost lost. All gods and humans were very sad and moaned that the Dhamma was almost lost so they would not be able to visit respectful monks, and listen to sermons. They had less merits. When the Buddha passed away, the earth shook, the oceans evaporated, the rivers cried, and celestial beings played drums in all directions while animals groaned pathetically.

During that time, there were 7 monks who witnessed the events and felt sad about what happened. They thought that now, Buddhism still existed and they would make their own refuge before there is no Buddhism. Then, they paid respects to a Golden Pagoda and left to go to a forest. They saw one mountain so they said, "Any person who is afraid of dying, please leave and go back. For persons who aren't afraid of dying, please climb up this mountain." Once everyone with no fear of dying climbed up to the top of the mountain, they put the ladders away.

¹⁰The period, which we are now living is called **Patara Kappa**, the most fertile period of all because it has given birth to five Buddhas: 1) Kakusandha Buddha, 2) Koṇāgamana Buddha, 3) Kassapa Buddha, 4) Gautama Buddha, and 5) Meitraya Buddha.

Among the seven monks, the eldest monk achieved Arahantship after only one night. While he was cleaning his teeth in a pond, he used his power to bring food from the north continent known as Uttarakuru. He spoke to his fellow monks, “Once you clean your teeth, please eat food that I have brought.”

The other monks asked the eldest monk, “Do you have any rule that the remaining monks have to eat food that is brought from a monk who reached Arahantship first?”

The elder monk responded, “There is no such rule.”

The other monks said, “We will achieve the Dhamma and will do alms rounds for food ourselves.”

On the second day, another monk reached Anāgāmi, which means one who attained the third stage of holiness, therefore becoming a Noble One. He brought some food from his alms rounds and invited the other monks to eat. The other monks said, “We agreed to only eat food from the eldest monk. However, can we eat food from a junior monk?”

The junior monk said, “There is no such rule.”

Then the remaining monks replied, “We will wait until we are Noble Ones. Then, we will eat our own food.”

Among those monks, the monk who was the Arahant passed away. The monk who achieved Anāgāmi was reborn into a Brahmā Heaven. The other 5 monks did not reach any level of a Noble One. They passed away 7 days later due to their hunger. They were reborn into a celestial realm in the period of the Lord Gautama Buddha. Then, they were reborn many times into different families.

When the final life cycle of those monks transpired, one monk had become a King named Pukkusati. He listened Dhamma from the Lord Buddha for the first time and he attained Anāgāmi. When he died, he went to a Brahmā Heaven.

The rest of the monks were reborn as Venerable Kumarnkatsapa, Venerable Tharujira, Venerable Tappamallabut and Venerable Sapiya. All of them attained Arahantship, the very first time they listened to the Dhamma from the Lord Buddha.

From the above story, we can see that the Third Level of Viriya, the High Level, can have the fastest results. However, we have to be very diligent in order to reach our goal. In history, there were not so many people who could achieve this. In our generation, we have Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni as an example for us.

1.2.3 How to Create Persistence

We must prevent enemies that are dangerous to our Viriya. We call them “roads to ruin” or Apayamook, which are smoking, drinking, wandering, flirting, and hanging out with bad and lazy friends. One who is an alcoholic has to quit drinking because drinking harms one’s health. Once one becomes unhealthy or has hangovers, one cannot work effectively and efficiently since one’s mind is clouded. Thus, we have to avoid roads to ruin for our own sakes.

When thinking about meditation, one must act immediately. We waste a lot of time thinking about meditating for several days. Once we decide to sit down and meditate, we feel tired so we cannot meditate for long. Once we feel like we want to meditate, we just have to do it right away. Then, we enjoy it and want to meditate more. Like hard working students, they go to school and they get home and do their homework and study. They want to go to school every day to learn new things as they understand old chapters and have already studied new chapters in advance. In the classroom, they will make eye contact with their teachers as they’re not afraid to be asked questions by their teacher. They are ready for any question. Anyone who practices meditation regularly will be happy and want to meditate more and more.

1.3 Citta

Citta means concentration with no distraction. We need to have diligence with intention to finish tasks. A person who lacks Citta is like water that is dripping from a faucet, so it takes a long time for that dripping water to fill up a jar. It’s like our mind that has a lot of distractions, so it takes a long time to complete tasks. On the other hand, if we have Citta, our thoughts will be crystal clear like water that comes from a high pressure faucet and will take little time to fill up a jar.

Citta occurs when our mind is continuously working on one activity. A person with Citta will develop guidelines for such activities until completion. A repetitive nature is often a main feature of Citta.

Meditate repeatedly until it becomes your habit. This shows that a person has perfect Citta, which is different from Viriya, the courage to change. Citta emphasizes repetition of a job like hitting a rock that blocks the source of the water. You have to keep hitting the rock until it breaks. Then, you will be able to access the water. Meditation is the same. Keeping meditation with persistence and continuous practice will bring us closer to the success of our meditation.

There is an example in Buddhist scriptures that occurred during the period of Lord Buddha when He was a Bodhisattva or one who is on the path to becoming a Buddha. At that time, He was a merchant. Once his trip was across the desert, the day this story took place was the last day that He had to travel through the desert. Everybody was confident that they would be able to walk across a desert within one day.

Normally, it's better to travel in a desert during the night as it's too hot to travel during the day. They expected it would be their last day to travel so they let their cows continue to walk while all of them were sleeping on the cows. There was one person in the group who made sure they would go in the right direction.

Because of his neglect, the person who was supposed to look for the right direction also fell asleep. Therefore, the cows then traveled in the wrong direction and went back the same way they came. When the others woke up, it was too late. They were already back to where they started. In the morning, they went berserk. The thought that they might be dead, as there was no more water. When there was no water, they could not cook. Everybody was waiting for his/her death. However, only the Bodhisattva could figure out a solution. He walked around and saw a clump of grass. He came up with an idea to dig to access to the water underground. They dug until they found a rock, which blocked the water. They were very disappointed so they went back to bed. However, the Bodhisattva did not give up. With his trained Citta, He knew that they had to destroy the rock in order to get to the water. Then He called His servant. Although His servant realized that there was no way that he could destroy the rock, he still followed his master's order. The servant hit the rock and it broke. Everyone survived because of Citta. From that example, we can see that Citta makes us have endeavor in our work. By working hard, we will see changes in a positive way and we will be able to finally reach our goals.

1.3.1 Citta in Meditation

Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni had outlined the meaning of Citta as “criticism.” He elaborated, “Criticize the performance of your practice as best as you can to make sure that you follow your teachers’ instructions.”¹¹ It means that we have to review our practice according to our master's teachings. We have to follow our master's teachings.

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni also explains more over that,

“If we have Citta, our minds will stay at the center of our bodies.”¹²

1.3.2 How to Create Citta

Citta will occur if we have a nice atmosphere. For example, when we come to the temple, we want to meditate and listen to Dhamma while, when we go to the beach, we will want to do different things. In conclusion, our surroundings affect our thoughts.

¹¹Wat Pak Nam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam Alumni Association, **Moradok Dhamma of Luang Phaw Wat Paknam** [Dhamma Heritage of Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam]. The 2nd Dhamma Sermon, Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing PCL, 2539 B.E., p. 64

¹²Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** October 3, 2536 B.E.

Therefore, in order to create Citta, if we want to do anything, we have to create an atmosphere that will be conducive to the things we want to do. For example, we have to organize a place that is suitable for meditation. That place has to be clean and comfortable for good meditation. Cleanliness is a basis of every activity in our daily life, which creates a sense of ease and a tranquil mind. Everything starts from cleanliness around us. Cleanliness is very important as it affects our thoughts, words and actions.

1.4 Vīmamsā

Vīmamsā¹³ means investigation of reasons. We have to use our wisdom to examine cause and effect. We have to examine how we use Chanda, Viriya and Citta and how to maximize them.

If we start doing any kind of work by having Chanda, Viriya and Citta, we will have good results and finally achieve our goals at a certain level. If we don't give up, we will reach higher level of success. Meditation is the same. If we have Chanda, Viriya and Citta, we will have good meditation. If we do not have Chanda, Viriya and Citta, our meditation will not be as good.

When doing any activity, success depends on investigation. The Lord Buddha said that we have to investigate ourselves.

When we have reviews our own actions, we will understand ourselves and be able to improve ourselves. We will be able to success and achieve our goals in every work we do.

1.4.1 Guidelines for Examination in our Meditation

In the custom of the Lord Buddha, He always examined His practice. He spent six years of trial and error until he became the Fully Enlightened One.

Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni explained its meaning as a “test.”¹⁴ Testing is done regularly to make sure with regards to what we are doing wrong and fixing it. For example, if we feel sleepy when meditating in a bed room we have to change the location of our meditation.

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni has expanded its meaning as follows:

“We have to investigate our meditation practice. Why can't we still our minds? Why did we have a good meditation session yesterday but not today? If we have a good meditation today then how do we maintain it? When we listen to those who

¹³Teacher Leang Chiang. **Dhamma Scholar Tri Level: Dhamma Vibhak 1**, Bangkok: Leang Chiang, 2536 B.E., p. 95-96

¹⁴Wat Pak Nam Bhasicharoen and Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam Alumni Association, **Moradok Dhamma of Luang Phaw Wat Paknam** [Dhamma Heritage of Luang Phaw Wat Pak Nam]. The 2nd Dhamma Sermon, Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing PCL, 2539 B.E., p. 64

can still their minds, feel happy and reach the Dhamma within, we have to know how they do it. Did we try too hard? Did we not try well enough? This is how Vīmaṃsā occurs.”¹⁵

Chanda, Viriya, and Citta, needs Vīmaṃsā as a helper. If we have too little Chanda, we will not like meditation. If we have too much of Chanda, we will have too much desire and our practice will not be successful. Like Chanda, if we have too little of Viriya, we will not practice meditation regularly. If we have too much Viriya, our bodies may suffer and our practice will hardly be successful.

If we have Citta but did not develop guidelines of our practice, our practice will not improve.

Here is an example of how to use Vīmaṃsā in order to achieve the Dhamma within:

Venerable Sonagolivisa was a disciple who was excellent in diligence. However, in the beginning, he had too much effort, so his body became sick and he could not reach any Dhamma. He practiced until he bled. He meditated day and night so he felt sleepy. When he felt sleepy, he did walking meditation without wearing shoes since in that period; the monks did not wear shoes. He injured his feet so he could not walk. He did not give up. He used his knees and finally he had to crawl. His dwelling filled with his blood like a slaughterhouse. He investigated and realized that he had complete Chanda, Viriya, and Citta. However, he could not attain any Dhamma. With his incomplete Vīmaṃsā, he thought that he did not have enough merits to attain the Dhamma. He felt discouraged so he wanted to disrobe. With Lord Buddha’s Kindness Perfection [Metta Parami], He came to see Venerable Sonagolivisa to help him complete his Vīmaṃsā as his Kalyāṇamitta¹⁶. The Lord Buddha used an example of 3 kinds of Indian lutes¹⁷: At once the Lord Buddha had insight into how Venerable Sonagolivisa felt. He departed from Khitchakut Forest and went to Sitawan Forest where Venerable Sonagolivisa was residing. The Lord Buddha sat on a cushion. Venerable Sonagolivisa paid homage to the Lord Buddha and Venerable Sonagolivisa sat down on the side of the Lord Buddha.

The Lord Buddha asked,

“Venerable Sonagolivisa, you live in a secluded place but you’re very upset. You have worked very hard to achieve the Dhamma. However, your mind still cannot escape from all defilements. You are not attached to all material assets. If that is not so, then you should disrobe and spend all of your assets.”

¹⁵Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** October 3, 2536 B.E.

¹⁶In Buddhist Scripture, **Kalyāṇamitta** means virtuous friends composed of faith [saddhā], precepts [sīla] and wisdom [paññā], who are able to suggest their usefulness for this world and the next and their greatest usefulness in general. The greatest Kalyāṇamitta indicated in Buddhist Scripture is the Lord Buddha; an Arahant is secondary, etc.

¹⁷*Soṇa Sutta. Aṅguttara Nikāya Chakkaniṭṭhāna*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 36, no. 326, p. 706

Venerable Sonagolivisa said,

“Yes, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha replied,

“Venerable Sonagolivisa, you used to be a lay person and an excellent Indian lute player, correct?”

Venerable Sonagolivisa said,

“Yes, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha then stated,

“Venerable Sonagolivisa, what do you think when your Indian Lute’s string is too tight, does your Indian lute sound beautiful or still work well?”

Venerable Sonagolivisa said,

“No, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha then inquired,

“Venerable Sonagolivisa, what do you think when your Indian Lute’s string is too loose, does your Indian lute sound beautiful or still work well?”

Venerable Sonagolivisa said,

“No, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha then asked,

“Venerable Sonagolivisa, what do you think when your Indian Lute’s string is not too tight or not too loose, does your Indian lute sound beautiful or still work well?”

Venerable Sonagolivisa said,

“Yes, Lord.”

So then the Lord Buddha replied,

“Venerable Sonagolivisa, so it’s the same. When there is too much perseverance, you will be distracted. When there is too little perseverance, you will be lazy. Therefore, you need to have perfect perseverance that is not too much or not too little. Be consistent.”

Venerable Sonagolivisa said,

“Yes, Lord.”

After finishing the conversation, the Lord Buddha disappeared from the forest where Venerable Sonagolivisa was dwelling and went back to Khitchakut Mountain after only a few seconds.

Later on, Venerable Sonagolivisa consistently worked hard on his practice. He did not give up and had a strong intention to attain the Dhamma. Finally, he was able to attain Arahantship.

From Venerable Sonagolivisa’s story, we should use him as a good example of having *Vīmamsā*, or investigation of reasons. We have to examine our meditation practice and make it better. Phrathepyanmahamuni once said that we always forgot how to do and tend to follow the wrong techniques when we meditate. Therefore, it takes some people longer to attain the Dhamma. For some people, it takes 5 years, 10 years or even 20 years.

Therefore, we must be committed to Iddhipāda (The Basis for Success), which consists of Chanda (Desire), Viriya (perseverance), Citta (thoughtfulness) and *Vīmamsā* (investigation). Phramongkolthepmuni summarized their meanings as determination, diligence, criticism and experiment. With these 4 elements, Iddhipāda will occur. We will be able to access true happiness within ourselves. Thus, one should possess: Chanda or the love for attaining Dhamma, Viriya or perseverance to meditate regularly, Citta or the consistent concentration in meditation practice and *Vīmamsā* or investigation and improvement of our practice.

Activities

After students have finished studying Chapter 1, Iddhipāda (The Basis for Success), please do a Self-Assessment and then the Workbook. Afterwards, continue to study Chapter 2.

Chapter 2

The Principles of Meditation

Units in This Chapter

2.1 What is Mindfulness [*Sati*]?

2.1.1 The Duties of Mindfulness

2.1.2 Metaphors for Mindfulness

2.1.3 The Benefits of Mindfulness

2.1.4 The Principles of Mindfulness Training

2.2 Comfort

2.2.1 The Characteristics of Emotional Comfort

2.2.2 The Importance of Comfort

2.2.3 Types and Levels of Comfort

2.2.4 How to Relax

2.2.5 The Benefits of Comfort From Meditation

Chapter at a Glance

1. The conscious mind is aware of good and bad. The awareness will create a desire to do good deeds and be able to control thoughts in meditation. Mindfulness is an ability to maintain emotional comfort and keep visualization continuously in meditation.
2. Comfort is a natural technique of meditation that practitioners should be able to maintain while meditating because comfort is at the heart of meditation practice. We can divide comfort into two types of comfort: comfort that we create and comfort that occurs naturally from meditation.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter should give students the knowledge and understanding to be able to:

1. Explain the meaning and nature of mindfulness correctly.
2. Explain the meaning and characteristics of comfort correctly.
3. Apply the knowledge of mindfulness and comfort in their daily meditation.

The Principles of Meditation

In meditation, mindfulness and comfort are very important to bring our mind to the center of our body at the standstill point. Both of them have to go together no matter what meditation techniques we use. However, if we are not able to have comfort and mindfulness simultaneously, it will take longer for us to be able to still our mind. Therefore, we should study the techniques of mindfulness and comfort together.

2.1 What is Mindfulness [*Sati*]?

The conscious mind should be able to distinguish what is wrong, right, good, bad or evil. It is a reminder for us to do right things and not to be reckless or be absent-minded.

The nature of the mind is that it is always thinking. A thought without mindfulness is like a muddled mind that follows emotions and becomes useless. On the other hand, a thought with mindfulness will control our thinking and action and prevent us from drifting away with our emotions.

2.1.1 The Duties of Mindfulness

1. Mindfulness enables us to be cautious of harm and prevent danger in the future.
2. Mindfulness is a deterrent that prevents us from falling on bad influences and roads to ruin. For example, if our friends invite us over to drink we have to tell ourselves not to go as it's very harmful to us.
3. Mindfulness is stimulation for doing good deeds, prevents us from being sleepy and lazy, energizes us to want to work and gives us an appetite to eat food.
4. Mindfulness is a machine that pushes on our enthusiasm. It reminds us to do good deeds seriously.
5. Mindfulness is a reminder of our duties. We are aware of things we should do and should not do as well as things we have already done and things we have not yet done.
6. Mindfulness is a machine that will create circumspection and deliberation in our work.

2.1.2 Metaphors for Mindfulness

Mindfulness is like a pillar:

When we have mindfulness, we will always put our minds into matters carefully. We will not waste our time to think about something else.

Mindfulness is like a security guard:

Mindfulness acts like a guard who watches the gates. It will watch everything that passes into our mind, ear, nose, tongue, body and emotions. If anything happens, our mindfulness will examine and decide that we should let it go, stop it or fix it.

Mindfulness is like a treasurer:

It always looks after our merit (wholesome kamma) budget, and what our merit and sin (unwholesome kamma) statement look like. It will monitor our good and evil deeds to make sure that we do not have a negative balance in the sin column.

Mindfulness is like a rudder:

It has a conscious control over our life so we will stay on the right path to the success. A rudder will direct a ship so it will not get stuck in some places. Mindfulness will prevent us from doing bad or evil things.

2.1.3 The Benefits of Mindfulness

1. Mindfulness will control and maintain our mental state that we want to achieve by investigation. It will choose what we want, and get rid of things we do not want. Mindfulness will control our thoughts and facilitate our mind to attain the faculty of concentration.

For example, with our mindfulness, we will be able to increase our focus when reading books or meditating. Whenever mindfulness exists, concentration also exists. Whenever concentration exists, mindfulness exists. It is like heat and light that always appear together.

2. Mindfulness enables our body and mind to stay in a state of our own, and not be a slave to emotions such as wrath and debauchery. Therefore, it supports our mind to feel relaxed, light and happy. Our mind will then be ready to face any circumstances and be able to resolve them with appropriate reactions.
3. Mindfulness enable sun limited ideas and perceptions to flow, and not be oppressed by any defilement. Thus, the ideas or thoughts that journey across a mindfully state will be very powerful. Like a boat rudder that controls the boat's direction, it sails a boat in a desired direction without rambling it.
4. Mindfulness enables maximum possibilities of investigation while using our wisdom. It enables our thoughts to become organized as powerful ideas emerge. It also strengthens our wisdom.

5. Mindfulness helps to purify our thoughts, speech and behavior. Because of our mindfulness, our mind will not think about sin and evil. Every action comes from wisdom or reasonable foundations.

2.1.4 The Principles of Mindfulness Training

In order to practice mindfulness or to create it, we should practice mindfulness both during everyday life and during meditation. When mindfulness occurs, it will demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Concentration– means to develop mindfulness in the present. Do not think about the past or the future. It is comparable to a man who walks holding a radiator and there is another man who walks holding a sword, walk behind the first man. The man with the sword said that if the man with the radiator spills the oil, he will cut his head off.¹Therefore, the man with the radiator would be careful and focus on his actions.
2. Determination – means to capture emotion and notice our emotion closely. It's like shooting arrows into the archery target with physical power and the arrows will not fall out of that target.
3. Continuation – means that we are in a state of mindfulness every moment. Like the rotation of a fan, it will get stronger and stronger.
4. Being Present – means to control our emotions in the present time. Do not allow absent-mindedness to occur. Remember to be mindful all times. Do not let our mind become reckless or drift away.

1) Mindfulness in Daily Life

Mindfulness training is something we should practice with every action and in all manner of things. It also allows us to do a lot of tasks and be successful with them. In addition, training mindfulness is to make us aware of ourselves. The Lord Buddha spoke in *The Maha Satipatthāna Sutta* as follows.

“When we walk, we realize that we are walking. When we stand, we realize that we are standing. When we sit, we realize that we are sitting. When we sleep, we realize that we are sleeping. As we are the owner of our body, we should realize every physical action of our body.

As a person with *sampajañña* or clear comprehension (a knowledgeable person) in an action of moving forward and backward, he would look forward, left and right with clear comprehension. He would stretch his limbs in and out with clear comprehension. He would put his robe on with clear comprehension. He would eat, drink, chew and taste with clear comprehension. He would defecate and urinate with clear comprehension. He would walk, stand, sit, sleep, get up, and speak with clear comprehension and be in stillness.”²

¹*Samyuttanikāya Mahāvālavagga*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 24, no. 364, p. 457

²*Dīgha-nikāya Mahāvagga*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 14, no. 276-277, p.212-213

When we practice mindfulness in daily life, we will live in the present, and not fall into a moment of a past or future time. Because usually when we get emotionally affected by our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, we often pay attention to those emotions and respond with our feelings exhibiting like or dislike. This causes suffering such as need, anger or worry.

2) Mindfulness in Meditation

Mindfulness practice is a continuing activity and leads to a greater degree of mindfulness in meditation. Our mind is not distracted. If we practice mindfulness by visualizing a mental object or put our mind at the center of our body, we will be able to often go to a peaceful state faster.

Mindfulness in meditation is to observe all things that come into our thoughts. We have to ignore those thoughts without adding more images or feelings. Mindfulness itself also refers to the ability to maintain a mental object with comfort and lightness continuously.

Venerable Phramongkolthepmuni recommended that a goal of mindfulness in meditation is to be able to put our mind at the 7th base of the mind. It means that if you focus your vision at the center of the body repeatedly a mental object that emerges, it may remain the same or it may change. It does not matter. The most important factor is that we are able to visual a mental object at the center of our body with the meditation technique described.

If using a mantra and visualization, do both of them simultaneously and comfortably. Do not let our mind wander. However, we must first understand that the mantra may disappear by itself. If our mantra is lost, we can still visualize a mental object. Keep the object at the center of our body. Our mindfulness does not go anywhere. Only our mind wants to naturally leave out the mantra words.

Mindfulness is coupled with clear comprehension. In meditation, clear comprehension is to be able to remain in a peaceful state comfortably and continuously. If that happens, it shows that our mind has not only awareness [*sati*] but clear awareness [*sampajañña*]. Moreover, if we are able to maintain a peaceful state of mind, our mind will feel lighter and lighter and finally reach a single-pointed state of mind.

Some people are not able to use mindfulness to focus at the center of our body due to hindrances like sleepiness. Our mindfulness gets lessened, the mental object disappears or other images or thoughts come into our mind. These will make our mind lose concentration so stillness will not occur. Therefore, our meditation skills will not be improved as we cannot reach the stillness state of mind. Therefore, training our mind to be mindful and clear is very important. We have to put our mind at the center of our body in order to maintain *sati* or mindfulness both in daily life and our meditation practice so we will succeed in our meditation.

2.2 Comfort

Comfort is a key source of inner happiness. Now we will learn more about its characteristics and how to create comfort.

2.2.1 The Characteristics of Mental Comfort

Comfort is a key source of inner happiness. Now we will learn more about its characteristics and how to create comfort.

1) The Meaning of Mental Comfort

Mental comfort is when you stop and become still without any pressure. It is like when we eat delicious food, we enjoy chewing and swallowing it. Therefore, when we can maintain our mental comfort, we will want to keep meditating. Mental comfort is when we are able to still our mind and feel happy. We are able to keep this feeling without getting bored.

2) Characteristics of Comfort in Meditation

The word “comfort” does not refer to a real comfort at first. However, continuing to repeat the mantra, *Samma Arahant*, we will definitely assist us to access true comfort.

Mental comfort is a state in which we feel perfect, and not too tight. We will be able to close our eyes gently and feel relaxed. This is the right method.

Comfort is a natural condition and a form of art. The feeling is very relaxing. When we reach that state, we will enjoy the time as “it passes so quickly”³ and will feel very happy with our meditation.

The characteristic of comfort in meditation is a contented feeling accompanied by freedom or letting go. It’s like when we cut a piece of a very light fabric and place it on a wooden circular base that has a very smooth surface. Then, we fit the smallest nail at the center of a wooden base. That fabric cloth will be able to float freely like our comfort in meditation. The nail at the center is like a still mind at the center of the body.

We may compare a wide array of comfortable fabrics to our comfort without any attachment to whether they are good or bad. Just let it be. Our job is to put our mind at the center of our body. We can visualize a crystal ball, star, flower or a Lord Buddha Image as our mental object. When mental objects disappear, do not get irritable or annoyed. When we are bored of a star, we can change it to a flower. When we feel bored of a flower, we can switch to a Buddha. We can change it back and forth but always put our mind at the center with confidence.

³Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** August 14, 2533 B.E.

For the confidence of those who are not fluent in situating the mind at the center of our body, we have to make our mind believe that what we are visualizing in our abdomens is the center of our body. At the beginning, start visualization in the stomach. Do not force, expect or understand where the center of our body is. At first we may feel like the round wooden base, mentioned above.

After practicing for a while, we will feel that a small nail that is hammered is able to expand or that the nail head changes to a clear glass nail. For some people, they will feel like a whole nail disappeared and the interest in a cloth is gone. The hole that has a nail becomes a clear tunnel deep down inside the body and the tunnel can expand and sometime it's the same size. Keep practicing without thinking about anything. Pay attention only in the center of the body. Let everything happen naturally. Soon enough the tunnel will expand and we will be able to feel it.

Once we reach the state mentioned above, the inner comfort will come from the center of the body. This is a true comfort. It's different from outside comfort. The inner and outer comfort will expand throughout the body that will affect our emotions, mind, body and health.

Yet we should not attach with the comfort. We can feel, acknowledge and utilize that comfort. When meditating, that comfort is a basis for our practice. Our mind will stay at the midst of the comfort zone. We should focus at the center of our body. The comfort will become peace. Peace will create more comfort and then it becomes brightness. After that, we will feel more stillness in comfort and peace.

At this point, you may have a lot of different inner experiences. For example, there will be a bright clear crystal ball the size of a tiny star sparkling in the midst of peace and comfort at the center of our body or a medium-sized full moon in the center of our body or a large bright sun at noon, but coolness at the center of the body.

However, whatever we experience, whether how bright or comfortable we feel, we have to be satisfied. We will be pleased to put our mind at the center of our body without feeling bored. If our inner experience is real, we will not feel lazy, uncomfortable or in a state of suffering. Because human beings have desire, we would seek to gain more happiness. Any enjoyments from the outside are not comparable with joyful, peaceful and comfortable feelings that occur within.

If you can actually feel any true inner experience, you will not run away from meditation practice. Also, the effects of meditation will influence practitioners in many positive ways such as verbally, manner wise, thought wise and conduct wise. The one who achieves inner peace will always be in a peaceful and clean environment. All comfortable surroundings would get affected from

the one who attains the comfort inside too. They become *sappāya*⁴. It is said that when solving any problem, we have to solve it from inside out because our mind has determination, indication and inspiration to make everything possible.

Meditation is sensitive and not easy. Techniques used in bringing out comfort are necessary as comfort in your mind will result in peace. Peace with comfort will be served into the state of concentration [*samādhi*]. Then, the state of meditation will spread inner comfort out, combined with external comfort becoming the new comfort. This is a foundation of meditation and this will even improve our meditation practice.

2.2.2 The Importance of Comfort

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni mentioned the importance of comfort as follows:

1. Comfort is the heart of the practice.⁵
2. Comfort is the key source of happiness within.
3. Comfort happens when practicing meditation at any level of Dhamma achievement.
4. Comfort is a source of attaining Dhamma easier.
5. Although we will not reach the inner Dhamma today, emotional comfort is a great gift to our mind. This will give us access to Dhammakaya in the future.
6. When we feel comfortable enough, the Buddha within will appear.
7. Comfort will create a joyful satisfaction to continue to practice meditation like a tasty meal, resulting in wanting to chew and swallow. These emotions will continue indefinitely. We will not feel like we forced or tried too hard.
8. Comfort is a foundation for success. Comfort will lead to inner peace. While practicing meditation, any person who possesses this emotion will feel peace and joy. Comfort is more important than perception.

⁴According to the Pali Canon, “**The four “sappāya”** (favorable conditions) for meditators are composed of: 1) A suitable dwelling conducive to calmness, undisturbed by noise, such as, a forest, the foot of a tree or an empty house, 2) Healthy food, easily obtained. For Bhikkhus (monks) it means going for alms round in villages not far away to get sufficient food, 3) A good person, a spiritual friend, or a meditation teacher who instructs the meditator always according to the Middle Way, 4) Comfortable “Dhamma,” that is a meditation exercise (*kammatthāna*) suitable for the disposition of the practitioner, tending neither to developing too much tension nor laxity. It is the Dhamma that, when practiced, can give quick results for the meditator, as it should.

⁵Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** March 24, 2535 B.E.

2.2.3 Types and Levels of Comfort

We can divide comfort into two types.

1) **Comfort That We Create:**

It's the comfort that happens when we are far away things or people that make us upset, or when we are engaged in peaceful activities such as sightseeing, bird watching, eating good food or being alone.

2) **Voluntary Comfort:**

It's the comfort from meditation and it happens by itself. Voluntary comfort has several levels. We will mention two levels of comfort for our basic understanding:

A. The Preliminary Level

B. The Insight Level

A. The Preliminary Comfort Level is when we feel no suffering, but we are still not happy. The preliminary comfort happens when people become still and feel neutral. It's like when we carry water buckets up to the mountain compared with sitting and doing nothing. We would prefer sitting and doing nothing because it's more comfortable. This is a preliminary comfort level.

B. The Insight Comfort Level is true comfort, which results from maintaining emotional comfort continuously until attaining true comfort deeply inside. Here are the highlights of insight comfort:

- 1) Our mind begins to expand and becomes more refined.
- 2) We will feel emptiness and relaxed.
- 3) We will feel like our body is as transparent as a clear translucent such as shampoo bubbles and harmonizes with nature.

Those are the true comforts of the insight comfort level.

Besides those two levels of comfort, if you maintain stillness, emptiness, transparency, weightlessness and comfort by the same method, you will feel more comfortable and lighter. The sense of spaciousness, translucency, lightness and comfort become increasingly more refined. You will feel like your body is expanding without boundaries. You will feel like your body has disappeared, harmonized as one with the environment and expanded more and more. Your mind will gently stay still.

If we can maintain this feeling regardless of darkness or brightness or seeing something or nothing, we will feel even more comfortable. Our body will become still and tranquil. The feeling of being forced to meditate will be gone. Serenity of the body and mind will still occur. Feeling like the body is fixed to the ground.

Comfort will be increasing until we are satisfied. True happiness will come and we will feel happy. We will admit that we are at peace without worrying about people,

other animals and other things. It seems like we are really alone in the world and are the center of all things. Our mind will become tender and still. We will feel truly comfortable and relaxed. It is a refined happiness.

2.2.4 How to Relax

1. Soften your mind. Leave everything behind. Forget everything. Forget all thoughts of work, study, family or any other things. Let everything else go like we have never met them or encountered them before. Imagine as if we are alone in this world. Make our mind as hollow as an empty container or as hollow as the emptiness of the air. Do not think about anything.
2. When our mind is comfortable, our body is comfortable. We can sit in our meditation posture. Have no worries, even though we feel or see nothing. We have to think that we are meditating for inner peace. If we see something, it's a gift. If we see nothing, it's OK. When we are happy with ourselves, our neck will feel no pain, we will not feel sleepy or frustrated. Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni said that if we feel stressed, sleepy or frustrated, we have to adjust our feelings to achieve a sense of ease. Do not feel like we are wasting our time.

When feeling neck pain, do not force yourselves. Open your eyes. Go wash your face, then come back to meditate. If you are in pain from sitting, adjust your posture, such as, go take a walk and then start meditating again.

After our body and mind feel comfortable, our mind will gradually be able to stay still. We will feel clear, light and more relaxed. We may stop repeating the mantra when our mind feels comfortable. Simply allow the mind to stay still. Comfort will come along with mindfulness. Sometimes we are not mindful and we still do not feel relaxed. We need to train ourselves to have comfort with mindfulness. Sometimes we feel too relaxed and we fall asleep. We have to train our mind and try to improve ourselves all the time.

3. Do not think about something that makes us sad or clouded. We have to really feel that to forgive everyone equals giving comfort to us. We have to get rid of our doubt, worry, boredom, and sleepiness. We have to let everything else go. Only think about comfortable things such as good deeds, virtue, merit, and nature. It will facilitate the comfortable feeling.
4. Make our mind joyful, delighted, clean, pure and clear.
5. When feeling comfortable, our crystal ball will be very clear at the center of the body. Although we cannot see the midpoint yet, we will feel like we do not need to force ourselves at all.
6. Try to maintain emotional comfort before we sit until we feel like meditating. Be happy with our meditation whether or not we could visualize a mental image.

7. In meditation, we must maintain the feeling of happiness and joy. From waking up until going to bed, we have to always put our mind at the center of our body without any expectations. Although we cannot sustain it, do not get frustrated. Just feel comfortable and tranquil. We will reach our destination one day.
8. Emotional comfort must be practiced all day and every day. Talk about the subjects that make us feel comfortable. Think about the things, which make us feel comfortable. Then, emotional comfort will naturally occur without force or attempt.

2.2.5 Benefits of Comfort From Meditation

First of all, the obvious benefit is that comfort makes our breath more refined. On the other hand, tension, stress and effort make our breath coarse and congested, causing hard breathing, stiff breathing and uncomfortable breathing. These are symptoms of poor breath which results in mind not being able to touch or contact the center of our body. Although we are able to touch the center of our body, it's not a real touch. It's an anxious touch. We can touch the center of the body, but we still cannot access comfort and joyfulness. In fact, the center of the body is the source of all true happiness.

Secondly, comfort makes us feel unattached to our body so we do not feel frustrated with our surroundings. We will be able to let go and feel good.

Activities

After you have studied Chapter 2: The Principles of Meditation; please do an assessment and complete The Chapter 2 Workbook. Then, continue and study Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

The Key to the Success of Attaining the Dhamma

Units in This Chapter

3.1 The Correct Technique

3.1.1 How to Observe

3.1.2 Observation and Adequacy

3.2 Continuity

3.2.1 The Importance of Continuity

3.2.2 The Effects of Continuity

3.2.3 The Problems of Continuity

3.2.4 *The BhāvanāSutta*

Chapter at a Glance

1. Observation is a method for a practitioner to review procedures to ensure adequacy in every step from body adjustment, visualization, mantra, mind adjustment to stillness of the mind.
2. The continuity of meditation is the key to access the Dhamma within. It's an accumulation of adequacy. Eventually we will have access to inner Dhamma.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter should give students the knowledge and understanding to be able to:

1. Describe observation methods and use those methods correctly.
2. Explain the importance of meditation and techniques of practicing meditation continuously.
3. Apply observation methods and knowledge of continuity of meditation to the student's meditation practice.

The Key to the Success of Attaining the Dhamma

Many people have been practicing meditation for a long time. However, they are still not successful despite their persistent efforts. In this chapter, we will guide you as to how to succeed in attaining the Dhamma. Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni or Luang Phaw Dhammajayo once said that there are two key factors to reach the inner Dhamma:

1. The Correct Technique and
2. Continuity.

3.1 The Correct Technique

In meditation, practitioners who get good results from their practice need to know how to perform it properly. In any activity, practitioners have to go through training, improve the skills and then gain experience. Meditation practice is the same. Practitioners have to adjust their technique and know the right way to do it. Practitioners can do that by observation.

Observation is a way to examine one's meditation practice at all stages. To improve their practice, practitioners should observe it to find the causes of errors and improve it.

3.1.1 How to Observe

We should observe our meditation with every step and at every time that we start our meditation and until we finish our meditation. Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni has recommended the observation method as follows

1) Adjust the Body

“When we relax, we have to observe that we are really relaxed. Our hands should be placed in a normal position. That is called the hands in a happy position. It is when our hands are relaxed and still with no stress. This time, we relax the muscles of our torso, waist, our chest, our stomach, our legs, and our toes for about a minute. Relax the whole body. This is a preparation for meditation. If we do this until it becomes our habit, the next time it will get easier. The next time it will get easier.”¹

2) Close Our Eyes

"Let's gently close our eyes as if we are going to sleep. We have to observe that we gently close our eyes as if we are going to sleep. Do not squeeze the eyes. Do not press the eye balls. In a relaxed way, let's close our eyes like we are going to sleep."²

¹Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** September 7, 2540 B.E

²Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** December 5, 2536 B.E

3) Visualization

"We have to notice ourselves what we liked or felt comfortable with when choosing mental objects. Sometimes we want to visualize mental objects. Sometimes we do not want to imagine them. We have to try them out and see which one is the most effective for us and use that one."³

There is an example in the past of a senior monk, PhraThera. He was a follower of Venerable Sāriputta. PhraThera had been practicing Kammatthāna by using a corpse as a mental object. However, his mind was not like a corpse. Therefore, his mind could not feel peace and comfort inside that corpse. He kept practicing for several months but he could not access the Dhamma within. Finally, Venerable Sāriputta decided to take him to the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha used His insight knowledge [*ñāna*] to review the situation and he realized that PhraThera had been a goldsmith for 500 lives so he became familiar with beauty. Therefore, we had to shift his attention to the beauty to create comfort. Once he felt comfortable, then he could use his Dhamma to get rid of defilements. The Lord Buddha had created a golden lotus to give to PhraThera and said to him, "Keep concentrating on the lotus." PhraThera took the lotus and his emotional state changed. He felt very comfortable as he loved the lotus because it was beautiful. Because of his relaxed mind, he was able to meditate and in only a few moments, attain the first absorption [*Paṭhama-jhāna* or *Paṭhama-magga*] and then finally a state of meditative absorption or *jhāna*.⁴ The Lord Buddha had an opportunity to preach to PhraThera. Then, PhraThera became an Arahant, meaning one who attained enlightenment.

Therefore, when we think of a mental object, "we have to think comfortably. We have to make sure that our thinking is not too tight or too loose. When it's too tight, we will have a headache. Our eyebrows will knit together so our body will feel tense and tired. We will feel the need to force our mind. That happens when we are trying too hard and it's not the correct technique. When it's too loose, we will not be able to visualize a mental object. Try to think about something else. Thus, we have to make our visualization comfortable and relaxing. Be able to imagine a clear crystal ball."⁵

4) The Use of a Mantra

"The sound of the Mantra has to come from the center of our body at the midpoint of the mental object instead of from somewhere else. Try to observe that our mantra, *Samma Arahant, Samma Arahant, Samma Arahant* comes from our brain or stomach. If it is from the brain, it is still not correct. If it is from the stomach at the center of our body, it is good. Keep doing it for 5-10 minutes and then we will be able to reach the Dhamma."⁶

³Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** May 2536 B.E

⁴*Jhāna* is a meditative state of profound stillness and concentration in which the mind becomes fully immersed and absorbed in the selected object of attention. *Jhāna* is the foundation in the development of Right Concentration.

⁵Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** January 2, 2537 B.E

⁶Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** March 3, 2528 B.E

5) Calm Our Mind

“Calm down. Observe that we do not accelerate the mental image. Keep on visualizing a mental object until the clarity gradually increases.”⁷

6) When Our Mind Is Still

“How can we observe whether our mind is still? We can observe that when our mind is still, we do not want to repeat the mantra anymore and there are no thoughts existing in our mind. We just want to put our mind at the 7th Base Level of the Mind inside the mental object, we want to stay still and forget the mantra. However once we already stop repeating the mantra and our mind is still, so we should keep practicing that way by incessantly maintaining the still mind with no mantra.”⁸When we frequently observe in all stages and know our flaws, we have to ask ourselves some questions. Why can't we still our mind? We can find solutions. Correct them and keep practicing. Soon we will be able to attain the Dhamma.

3.1.2 Observation and Adequacy

In the path of meditation, it is required that we observe for adequacy because the practice is about seeking adequacy. The adequacy is The Middle Path or The Middle Way, which is the path to attain the Dhamma within.

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni (Luang Phaw Dhammajayo) said,

“Our practice is to seek adequacy. When we sit, feel relaxed, and visualize a crystal ball in the 7th Base Level of the Mind, and keep repeating the mantra with comfort, our mind will be relaxed and will feel in no hurry. This is a true adequacy that we will feel when we are able to still our mind. When we are able to put our mind at the right position, we will meet adequacy.”⁹

When we are pleased we will want to live with this emotion for a long time, even though we do not see anything. When we feel emotional satisfaction without any force or when we meditate, we're not bored and we feel so clear and spacious. Even though we don't feel light, we are still, spacious and comfortable. This is adequacy.¹⁰

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni (Luang Phaw Dhammajayo) also talked about observation principles as follows:

Notice our satisfaction. Observe our mental object and its size, along with our mantra so we know what makes us feel calm and relaxed. Although your visualization is not clear, do not worry. Imagine a clear crystal ball. Just still your mind to the center of the crystal ball and keep repeating the mantra. Do not think that if you say it 100 times, 1,000 times, 10,000 times or 100,000 times, then you will observe any image. Just repeat the mantra *Samma Arahant* and keep that mental object. Don't worry if

⁷Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** May 2530 B.E

⁸Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** May 1, 2526 B.E

⁹Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** September 5, 2536 B.E

¹⁰Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** March 23, 2536 B.E

it's not clear or if we can't imagine it. Simply allow the mind to stay still and repeat the mantra *Samma Arahang, Samma Arahang, Samma Arahang* continuously.

Venerable Phrathepyanmahamuni (Luang Phaw Dhammajayo) has also described the result of adequacy:

"When we properly situate our mind at the right position, a light will occur. It's a clear and soothing light. The light pops up like the sun rising from a horizon that eliminates the darkness. The light will start from the dawn light and then light up. Like the sun at 6 am to 7 am and 8 am. The light is gradually increased. The more we comfortably still our mind with no thought, the lighter it will be until it's like the light from the sun at noon. The increase of stillness without thought enables us to achieve more brightness. Then, it will be brighter even more than the sun at noon. It depends upon our stillness. When we still the mind with a sense of ease inside the brightness, we will see a little star in the brightness similar to the tiny star that we saw at night, far away. It is the bright point that resembles the tip of a needle."

We feel still, light and comfortable without using force to increase our clarity. Similar to watching stars in the sky at night, we are merely looking at the stars. We have no thoughts to bring the stars closer to us or make them bigger or brighter. We are only looking at the stars in the sky with a normal state of mind. As if watching the stars, the bright light in our body is the same. We see the bright light that resembles the tip of the needle with a sense of ease without any expectation. The bright light in our body will be gradually increased and come closer to us until we see it enlarged more and more. Also, its size can grow indefinitely as big as a full moon and eventually as big as the sun at noon. It's called the first level of the Dhamma Sphere or Pathama-magga Sphere.

Phramongkolthepmuni always emphasized that, "It's superb to execute the causes, observe the results and be patient." Executing the causes means to merely stop and still our mind. After your meditation session, observe your meditation. If it's good but not good enough, you have to be patient. Keep practicing. That is an excellent trait of practitioners.

Every time we observe our meditation, we have to assess how successful it is and how much our mind is able to be still. Phrathepyanmahamuni mentioned that it is an easy principle to follow. When we meditate, we should not feel bored but we should feel happy. We should be happy every time, beginning with 1 minute, and increasing to 2 minutes. That means that we are satisfied and doing the right technique. When we meditate, and we feel very bored, we have to review why we feel bored because when following the correct meditation instruction, we should feel very happy until we do not want to stop meditating and just want to stay in that state. Therefore, every student has to observe, when meditating, that they are seeking the right method. If we can do this, we will find the way to attain the Dhamma within.

3.2 Continuity

Many practitioners often meditate for a while and then quit. Some say that they have no time or have the burden of work. Some are too tired from work. Although those people love meditation and want to reach the inner Dhamma, they will not be able to. The Dhamma exists in all humans, but they can't access it due to the absence of consistent practice. Continuity is another key to a successful practice of reaching the inner Dhamma and it affects how fast a person will attain the Dhamma.

3.2.1 The Importance of Continuity

- 1) Train our mind to be still. It may be difficult at first because our normal mind would like to think and wander around. Therefore, we must train our mind to stop at the center of our body, which we are unfamiliar with. However, when we practice every day regularly, we will soon be able to stop our mind gradually.
- 2) Purify our mind by continuing meditation practice. Meditation is a way to purify our mind and be familiar with the 7th Base Level of the Mind at the center of our body.
- 3) Continuing to practice is the key to attain the Dhamma within. It's a preparation for accessing the Dhamma within. Although some days we meditate and feel sleepy or our mind is wandering, we still should do it regularly. Everyone will be able access the Dhamma within with no exception. A person who is not able to reach the Dhamma within usually does not put his/her mind at the 7th Base Level of the Mind at all times. The quickest way to reach the Dhamma Sphere within is to always put our mind at the 7th Base Level of the Mind with every activity we do.
- 4) In order to be able to still our mind in a meditation room, we have to collect purity all day from when we wake up until we go to bed. We have to purify our actions, speech and thoughts. Purification of the body, speech and mind will enhance our meditation practice.
- 5) Do it regularly. Lord Buddha said in Pali words, "*PavitaPahulita*." It means think about it often, do it often and our concentration [*samādhi*] will arise gradually. Once we have full concentration, our minds will properly stop at the right position.

3.2.2 The Effects of Continuity

If we want to have a good result from meditation, Phrathepyanmahamuni suggests that we have to do it until it becomes our habit. We have to meditate no matter what mood we are in, whether we are gloomy, irritable or cheerful. Despite being unhealthy or sick, we still need to meditate. Although we get home so late, we still have to meditate. If we do it every day, our mind will be purified every day.

Phrathepyanmahamuni also gives us some techniques. We should only be diligent and lay down our life for it or we won't make it. He also mentions about poetry. It is said,

“Neglected and overgrown land,
3 days of sadness,
Siblings don't see each other,
And they are sad.”

It means that if no one walks on the path, grass will be overgrown. If we do not walk the path of the middle way, we will not be familiar with it. Brother and sisters, if they do not see each other, they will fall apart.

We have to practice meditation frequently and make practice our habitual routine. We should practice it every moment from awakening until going to bed at night. Do it when you walk, stand, take a shower, and eat. Do it all the time. Even if the inner experience achieved disappears, do not get frustrated. Let it go and start over again.

If we can do that, we will see results. We will have emotional comfort. We will feel like our body is whole, light, expanded, and comfortable. That comfort will then expand to our mind unconsciously. We will feel happier and more comfortable. Then, our mind will be still and we will feel like we are falling over or being sucked inside the center of our body. Then, we will see the Pathama-magga Sphere or the first Dhamma Sphere the first crystal ball coming up from that center.

Our meditation will be closer to success if we are able to do constant practice in any posture.

3.2.3 The Problems of Continuity

Continuity is important to reach the Dhamma within. However, very often, here are many meditation practitioners who claim that they have no time, so their meditation does not progress. That is an excuse. It's better to think that we have a mission, and not use lack of time as an excuse not to do our meditation.

In addition, it is normal that it is hard to visualize a crystal ball, a Lord Buddha or to situate the mind at the center of our body. We have to train ourselves. In the beginning, we may have to force our mind a little bit. If we practice often, we will get used to it. Therefore, we have to keep doing it and remind ourselves of value of the meditation.

Moreover, many people worry about doing meditation in some inappropriate activities. They think that it is a sin, such as meditation in the bathroom. Phrathepyanmahamuni suggests that it is not a sin, but it is a meritorious act. We have to be able to locate our mind at the center even when we urinate or defecate.

3.2.4 *The BhāvanāSutta*

Continuity is a sponsor of Dhamma attainment, even though sometimes it seems that your inner experience is not progressing. However, every time we meditate, our mind is getting more refined respectively. The Lord Buddha once said,

“Behold monks; you do not practice meditation persistently despite desire for freedom from all defilement. Your mind can’t be liberated. For example, one hen has 8 eggs 10 eggs or 12 eggs. If the hen does not give enough warmth to hatch her eggs, her babies will not come out.

You always practice meditation although you have no desire to be free from all defilements. Yet, your mind will be free from all defilements. Like a hen, she has 8, 10 or 12 eggs and she gives enough warmth to all her eggs. She does not have any desire for her babies to come out but they will still come out anyway.

Like a carpenter, he does not know how dull he knife loses today, yesterday or 2 days ago. When a monk is able to get rid of his defilement, he will know that moment.

As a ship that is sailed in an ocean for 6 months, in winter it is parked on a shore. The rope that holds a ship on a land will be damaged from the rain and the sun. When you always meditate, you will be able to eliminate *Samyojana*¹¹ without difficulty.”¹²

From this Sutta, we will see that if we do not start doing it, we will see results. Phrabhavanaviriyakhun once said “Our desire is one thing. Success is one thing.” This means that anyone who wants to reach the Dhammakaya and be able to have true happiness, but does not meditate or regularly situate the mind at the center of the body, will not be able to fulfill his/her desires.”

Creating the causes properly will lead one to accomplishment despite no desire. If one regularly creates the causes, the results will occur without difficulty. If anyone wants to reach the Dhammakaya and true happiness and always do meditation as well as locating the mind at the center of the body, they will be able to accomplish it despite no desire.

Every time we focus on meditation consistently, our meditation will get better and better. We may not see the change. It’s like a knife that we use very often. We can see fingerprints all over it but we cannot tell how dull it is. It’s like a rope that is decayed every day. However, we cannot tell how much it decays each day. We realize it when the rope is damaged.

It is said that, "If it’s not a proper method, it means that we do not use our wisdom, we only use our emotion. If not consistent, it shows that we are not really in love in Dhamma." Therefore, we have to be students that observe our meditation technique and do our meditation daily. We will accumulate good deeds every day, because every time we meditate, it gives us an opportunity to accumulate miraculous powers

¹¹ *Samyojana* are the ten fetters or the defilements binding a living being’s mind to the cycle of rebirth [*samsara*].

¹² *Anguttara Nikāya Sattakanipāta*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 37, no. 68, p. 252

every day. Therefore every time we meditate, it's like we are accumulating our scores and waiting for the one day that we reach our fulfillment obtaining the Dhamma within.

Activities

After students have studied Chapter 3; The Key to the Success of Attaining the Dhamma, please do a Self-Assessment and workbook. Then study Chapter 4 next.

Chapter 4

Techniques of Resting Your Mind While Listening to Sermons

Units in This Chapter

4.1 The Importance of Listening to Sermons

4.2 Factors Leading to Success From Listening to Sermons

4.2.1 The Preacher Has the Ability to Preach to Audiences in Ways for Them to Understand the Dhamma

4.2.2 The Audiences Must Be Ready to Listen to the Sermons

4.2.3 Habits of the Audiences, Which Were in the Form of Retribution From Their Past Lives

4.2.4 Building New Habits in the Present

4.3 Letting the Mind Connect with the Meditation Instructor's Voice

4.3.1 What are the Benefits of the Voices of Meditation Instructors?

4.3.2 Why the Voices of Instructors are Essential

4.3.3 The Techniques of Resting our Minds through the Voices of Our Meditation Instructors

4.3.4 Benefits For Meditation Practitioners Will Be Obtained From Practicing Along With the Voices of Instructors.

Chapter at a Glance

1. Listening to sermons has significant changes in ways involving human lives because it would elevate humans' minds until we have reached Nibbana. However, listening to sermons until reaching Nibbana is very difficult to occur as there must be an existence of the Lord Buddha.
2. There are factors of success that will make listening to sermons effective. Those factors are the presence of preachers, their ability to preach, the audience's readiness and their habits.
3. Resting our mind while listening to the sound of the meditation instruction is a way to review our technique and make sure that it's correct. Also, it helps sustain the mind of practitioners to be able to place their mind sat 7th Base Level of the Mind. They will then gain peace, comfort and happiness from meditation.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter should give students the knowledge and understanding to be able to:

1. Explain the importance of listening to the Dhamma.
2. Provide the factors affecting the success of listening to sermons.
3. Explain techniques of resting our mind while listening to meditation instructions.

Techniques of Resting Your Mind While Listening to Sermons

In our daily lives, people who want to be prosperous in life and develop a moral life always tend to listen to sermons, whether they are about Dhamma for living or for meditation. We should listen to sermon seven if their topics are general. It is always useful to listen to sermons. They could change our lives in a better way. We can learn about those changes we could apply from listening to them. And we will learn about how to listen to those sermons to get the best results.

4.1 The Importance of Listening to Sermons

We acknowledge that the nature of every human being consists of a mind. Although we cannot see our mind with our eyes and don't know where it is or how it looks like, we know its processes that respond to various emotions, thoughts, and memories. Our mind can communicate with the outside world and can act through the 5 channels, which are eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.

Any mood or anything that goes through any of the five channels is important because it can change conditions of the human mind. It can be happiness, suffering, joy or sadness, including thoughts, words and actions, especially emotions coming from the ears and the eyes.¹

Here we will talk about emotions that come through our ears. The ears are the only organ within the five senses that cannot be ordered to block or choose what to accept or not accept. Unlike the ears, we can close our eyes if we do not want to accept any unsatisfied emotion. We can pinch our nose when there is undesired smell. When our tongue tastes something that is not good, we can spit it out. For our touching senses, we can choose to feel only good things. However, our ears have to listen to everything whether it is good or bad. The sound coming into our ears can transform the perception which can allow our minds to develop or degrade.

In Buddhism, listening to sermons is considered as a way to enhance the human mind up until all defilements are gone and we can then become an Arahant.

The Dhamma in this matter means good things such as virtue, good deeds, and stories that lift up our minds. Therefore, listening to sermons can uplift the listener's mind.

¹Lt Col Pin.Mutukan.Mongkoljivit III [Blessings of Life, Part III], Bangkok: Publication, 2519 B.E., p. 137

In addition, listening to sermons is not only accepting what is being preached but also absorbing peace and knowledge through the sound of the Dhamma being taught. Similar to the world of music, we listen to songs that we like without getting bored. People who are interested in the Dhamma would listen to sermons very often even though there were topics that they have already heard.

During the Buddhist era, the Lord Buddha was a great preacher. When He finished preaching, there would be a lot of people who reached the inner Dhamma at different levels. We are familiar with these words: Buddhist disciples, female disciples and Arahants. Those people had attained the inner Dhamma from listening to sermons. The word “disciple” signifies listener. Therefore, listening to sermons is very important to developing a person's quality of life, improving one's habits and one's meditation practice until reaching the inner Dhamma.

The Holy Buddhist Scriptures mentioned about one millionaire named Anathabhinthika. He had faith in Buddhism and created a lot of merits in Buddhism because of listening to sermons. A Monastic explicator (interpreter of religious texts) explained that if those men did not listen to sermons, they would not give one scoop or ladle of rice. Except for the Lord Buddha and the Pacceka Buddha², all disciples such as PhraSāriputta who could calculate the rain drops while it was raining during the kappa³ was unable to attain *Sotāpanna* level, the first stage of holiness without listening to sermons. PhraSāriputta attained the Stream-Enterer or *Sotāpanna* level after listening to sermons from Venerable Assaji. Additionally, with the Lord Buddha's Dhamma Sermon, he could attain disciple's enlightenment.⁴

Even though a person has enough merits to attain the inner Dhamma, he/she may not be able to attain the Dhamma due to the lack of *Kalyāṇamitta*⁵ or a good friend like the Lord Buddha or His disciples to show them the way.

Furthermore, it is difficult and rare to get the opportunity to hear the Lord Buddha's Teachings (Dhamma Sermons). There are the following Buddhavacanas, or the words of the Lord Buddha:

"KitchoManussapatilapoKitchangmatjanachivitang
KitchangsatdhammassavanangKitchoPuddanamuttato (Pali language)."

“It is difficult to born as a human being. It is difficult to survive.

It is difficult and rare to obtain the opportunity to hear the Lord Buddha's

Teachings. It is, indeed, rare for the birth of a Buddha to occur.”⁶

²**PaccekaBuddhas** who enlightened and attained The Four Noble Truths [*ariya-saccāni*] by themselves, the same as the Buddhas practiced their *pāramīs* for at least two tausendasankheyyakappas. The existence of PaccekaBuddhas only occurs in eras where there is no Buddha and the Buddhist teachings are lost. Lots of PaccekaBuddhas may happen at a single time. They live solitary and in silence. Unlike the Buddhas, PaccekaBuddhas will not teach Dhamma to others.

³The insight knowledge and ability resulted from *Bhāvanā-maya-paññā* or the wisdom from meditation.

⁴*Khuddaka-nikāya.Dhammapada*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 43, p. 326-327

⁵In Buddhist Scripture, *Kalyāṇamitta* means virtuous friends composed of faith [*saddhā*], precepts [*sīla*] and wisdom [*paññā*], who are able to suggest their usefulness for this world and the next and their greatest usefulness in general. The greatest *Kalyāṇamitta* indicated in Buddhist Scripture is the Lord Buddha; an Arahant is secondary, etc.

⁶*Khuddaka-nikāya.Dhammapada*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 42, p. 329

Listening to the true Dhamma, such as the statement in the above quotation, audiences can possibly eliminate all defilements and reach Nibbana. Listening to the Dhamma and reaching Nibbana only occurs when there is a Buddha. The existence of a Lord Buddha occurs rarely in our time. In some eras, there is no Buddha. Therefore, listening to the true Dhamma from the Lord Buddha Himself is an event that hardly arises.

However, listening to sermons is important to purify ourselves in order to enhance our minds and to succeed in our practice.

4.2 Factors Leading to Success From Listening to the Dhamma

We have learned that listening to the Dhamma results in elimination all defilements and eventually attainment of Nibbana. Those are key factors leading to success from listening to the Dhamma.

4.2.1 The Preacher Has the Ability to Preach to Audiences in Ways for Them to Understand the Dhamma

A preacher has to be able to lead his audiences' minds to the truth. The Lord Buddha is the greatest preacher as He accumulated His perfections in so many uncountable life times, reached enlightenment, and saved humankind by freeing them from defilements and aiding them to attain Nibbana.

Because of His perfections, He was able to preach to people and then they could become enlightened. He had a lot of characteristics that made His preaching successful. For example, He had 32 great manly characteristics, which had 80 subsidiary characteristics [*Anubyañjana* -80]. He also had 8 features of a Brahma's voice⁷:

1. An agreeable voice.
2. A voice that is easy for audiences to understand.
3. A melodic voice.
4. A pleasant voice.
5. A mellow voice.
6. A voice that is not off tone.
7. A profound voice.
8. A resonant voice.

⁷*Khuddaka-nikāya.Mahāniddeśa*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 66, no. 886, p. 531

Those were factors that made the audiences believe in the Lord Buddha and listen to His teachings with respect. When the Lord Buddha preached, His words come from the pure source of knowledge. The audiences who listened to sermons from Him were able to attain the inner Dhamma.

In addition, the Lord Buddha had a special ability to know how to preach to each person according to his or her characteristics. He knew what topic He should preach to match with his or her knowledge and understanding so it was easier for that person to attain the inner Dhamma. For example, there was one person who ordained and listened to sermons from PhraSāriputta. However, he could not achieve the inner Dhamma. PhraSāriputtasent him to the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha created a golden lotus which gradually withered. The monk saw what happened so he felt depressed. Then, the Lord Buddha preached about how to get rid of all defilements. After that, the monk reached enlightenment.⁸

Here is another example. There were 3 brothers who were ascetics, such as Uruverakassapa, etc. They worshiped fire since they thought it was a sacred element. The Lord Buddha sermonized to them about fire. He did not talk about outer fire but He talked about the fire in our inner selves, which are greed, anger, and delusion. The Lord Buddha stated that they had to extinguish the inner fires in order to end suffering.⁹ They became Arahant monks after listening to the Lord Buddha's sermon.

PhraVakkliwascategorized as a person with lustful cravings [*rāgacarita*]. He loved beauty. He liked to watch the Lord Buddha's noble appearance. When the Lord Buddha preachedto him, the Lord Buddha talked about the five aggregates known as *khandhas*-5: corporeality [*rūpa*], feeling [*vedanā*], perception [*saññā*], mental formation [*sankhāra*] and consciousness [*viññāna*], that have the three characteristics [*tilakkhana*]of impermanence, suffering and non-self. He became an Arahant monk after listening to the Lord Buddha's sermon.

4.2.2 The Audiences Must be Ready to Listen to the Sermons

There was a story about 5 Buddhist laymen [*Upasokas*] who listened to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma but, they received different results. One layman was sleeping. One was writing. One was shaking a tree. One was watching the sky. One was listening to the Dhamma with respect. The first four laymen had no results from listening to the sermons. On the other hand, the last person was able to attain *Sotāpattiphala* or the Fruition of Stream-Enterer. Therefore, readiness is very important. If audiences are not ready and have the five hindrances (the five mental states, which are 1-sensual desire, 2-ill will, 3-gloominess and sleepiness, 4-distraction and worry, 5-doubt) their mind will not be still and they will not be able to attain the Dhamma from sermons.

⁸*Khuddaka-nikāya.Dhammapada*.Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press,vol. 43, p. 128-130

⁹*VinayapiṭakaMahāvagga*.Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press,vol. 6, p. 87-106

4.2.3 Habits of the Audiences Gained in the Form of Retribution from Their Past Lives

Habits include those from one's previous lives to his/her present life. The Lord Buddha has divided habits gained in previous lives as follows¹⁰:

1) The Ugghaṭitaññū Person

It means a person who reaches enlightenment by listening only to the topic of the type of sermon that is not described in any detail. That person can understand, apply into action and reach the inner Dhamma. For example, PhraPahiya is one of the ugghaṭitaññū Persons. He went and listened to the Dhamma from the Lord Buddha while the Lord Buddha was receiving food. The Lord Buddha had stated three times that it was not the time to listen to the Dhamma yet. However, Pahiya begged the Lord Buddha to preach to him. The Lord Buddha then said to him,

"Behold Pahiya; you should learn that when we see, we know what we see. When we listen, we know what we are listening to. When we know, we realize that we know. When we attain the inner Dhamma, we know that we have attained the inner Dhamma. Behold Pahiya, at any time, when you see, you know that you see. When you listen, you know that you listen. When you know, you realize that you know. When you attain the inner Dhamma, you know that you have attained the inner Dhamma. At anytime, you will no longer exist. You will not exist anymore in this life and the afterlife. You will not exist between this life and the next. This is the end of your suffering."¹¹

After listening to the Lord Buddha, Pahiya had become an Arahant. That is an example of a person who accumulated good habits from many life times. It is similar to fire. When a fire still has fuel, it's easier to light that fire. It only needs anyone to light it or stimulate it.

2) A Vipacitaññū Person

It means a person who reaches enlightenment when listening to the Dhamma in detail and then applies it into his or her real life. For instance, the first five disciples listened to the Lord Buddha about the Five Aggregates which are considered "non-selves." In addition, He explained that if the Five Aggregates were "selves," then everyone could access them without any difficulty. After listening to His sermon, all five disciples became Arahants.¹²

3) The Neyya Person

This type of person reaches Dhamma step by step when he or she studies hard and asks questions. Then, they implement what they have learned into their lives and finally attain the inner Dhamma.

¹⁰ *ĀṅuttaranikāyaCatukanipāta*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 35, p. 350

¹¹ *Khuddaka-nikāya.Udāna*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 44, no. 49, p. 126

¹² *VinayapiṭakaMahāvagga*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 6, no. 20, p. 52

4) The Pathaparama Person

This type of person is one who listens, speaks, memorizes, and studies very frequently and still cannot attain the inner Dhamma in this present life.

4.2.4 Building Habits in the Present

Collecting habits today is another way to ensure whether a person will reach the inner Dhamma or not. The Lord Buddha stated about the characteristics of Dhamma listeners that should be able to attain the Dhamma as follows¹³:

1. We should not insult a preacher of the Dhamma.
2. We should not lack appreciation in our mind and we should not have competition while listening to Dhamma.
3. We should not have any mental judgment toward our preacher.
4. We should remain wise. We should not be foolish.

The types of wisdom or foolishness can be divided into three levels¹⁴:

- (1) A person who has intelligence like an upside down pot. When listening to Dhamma, he does not care or pay any attention. Similar to an upside down pot, when we pour water into it, the upside down pot will not hold any water.
 - (2) A person who has intelligence like a lap. When listening to the Dhamma, he or she pays attention but puts something on his/her lap. However, when he/she gets up, whatever is on his/her lap will fall down.
 - (3) A person who is very intelligent like a regular pot. He/she pays attention to the Dhamma during sermons and after sermons. It is similar to pouring water into the pot and the water still remains inside that pot.
5. We should not have high opinions of ourselves. We think that we understand but actually we do not understand.

For habits of listening to sermons, we can see that a person who listens to the Dhamma from the Lord Buddha or even from any other must not show disrespect to a preacher. Instead he/she should appreciate his or her teacher. That will create a desire for listening to the Dhamma, satisfaction from listening to the Dhamma, and will increase our willingness to listen to sermons. The audience will accept, have faith and follow the preacher's teachings. Therefore, it's very important for the audience to have faith and be wise while listening to sermons.

¹³*ĀṅguttaranikāyaPañcakanipāta*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 36, no. 153, p. 322

¹⁴*ĀṅguttaranikāyaTikanipāta*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 34, p. 98

Faith typically focuses on faith towards the Lord Buddha. While listening to the Dhamma, we will see faith and wisdom working together. There are characteristics of people who listen to sermons and have good results like the Lord Buddha has listed. He or she displays mental processes as follows:

"A person with faith will find a good or worthy person and sit next to that person. Then, will listen to his/her teaching. One will examine and understand what one has heard. One will apply that knowledge to one's daily life. When one meditates, one will see meditation results with reasonable outcomes."¹⁵

From the descriptions outlined in the above process, we will find that the mental conditions of the audiences, when listening to sermons, have been adjusted and developed with 5 kinds of Dhamma principles:

1. Faith:
We have faith in the Lord Buddha's virtues, and in our preachers. We have to increase our faith until we destroy all doubt, skepticism, anger and greed respectively.
2. Persistence:
Physical courage and mental strength develops. We need to have enough to eliminate laziness, selfishness, convenience and enjoyment respectively.
3. Mindfulness:
The mind can remember and recall. We will have developed conscious awareness at all times. We therefore eliminate mindlessness, forgetfulness, and carelessness respectively.
4. Concentration:
We need to have determination and increase it until we eliminate mental distraction, agitation and the 5 hindrances according to standard procedures of meditation.
5. Wisdom:
Omniscience is required to eliminate delusion and ignorance until we have the level of knowledge to be able to see the truth. We have to get rid of our craving and misbelieve. Our wisdom will be able to protect ourselves.

These five principles are called Bala or power. They are so powerful that they can eliminate the influence of evil powers until we have psychological stability, which is called *Indriya*, the controlling faculty.¹⁶

¹⁵ *MajjhimanikāyaMajjhimaṇṇāsa*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University Press, vol. 21, no. 657, p. 352

¹⁶ Phrarajdhamanidesh (RababThitayano). **Buddhavitee Peupare PhraBuddhasartsana** [The Buddha Method of Propagating Buddhism], Bangkok: Pornsiva Printing, 2542 B.E., p. 84-85

From above, we can see that the maximum benefits from listening to sermons will occur when a preacher has integrity and is knowledgeable. Also, an audience has the ability to understand the Dhamma. While listening to sermons, if an audience can let his or her mind go along with the Dhamma, he or she may be able to reach the Dhamma within at a certain level. In addition, during sermons for meditation practice, we have to listen and follow an instructor who has a lot of experience and knows how to guide our mind towards stillness. Then, we can attain the Dhamma.

4.3 Letting the Mind Connect with the Meditation Instructor's Voice

It is very common that new practitioners cannot sustain, convince or control their minds. That is because they are not sure about the location of their mind at the 7th Base Level of the Mind. Every time they meditate, their mind is wandering and not stable. The nature of mind is that if it's not at the center of our body, it will wander around. We will get distracted from our thoughts that come through. That is a reason why sometimes we meditate for a long time, but we still think about a lot of things and cannot find peace. Sometimes we are able to bring our mind to the center of our body for a short period of time like one minute or one second. When we compare it with a whole session of meditation, it's like nothing. That is a reason why some people give up and feel discouraged about meditation. They think that meditation is very difficult and impossible.

When this happens, the voice of a leading instructor is very important for new practitioners. New practitioners like to attach, satisfy and let their mind go with outer sounds or guided imageries, especially when they close their eyes. That is because when their eyes are closed, they cannot see any image. Their ears will do the job instead by transforming sounds into thoughts and images within their minds.

The outcome is more conducive to good results, rather than letting the ears of new practitioners hear other sounds that could lead to images and ideas that are not conducive good results or results that might harm or disturb their peace. Techniques of using an instructor's voice who has more spirit and experience is very essential for mediation.

4.3.1 What are the Benefits of the Voices of Meditation Instructors?

New practitioners' minds are not stable and often distracted from the 7th Base Level of the Mind. A meditation instructor will perform the following important roles:

- 1) The instructor will act as a fence that blocks their audiences' minds from wandering around.
- 2) The instructor will lead and persuade their minds to think and follow the instructions by using a gentle voice.
- 3) In most cases, meditation instructors are Buddhist monks who are experts of meditation. They are pure in body, speech and mind. They also have moral

conduct. Therefore, their voices are very powerful as they arise from pure minds, which facilitate tender and delightful minds as well.

- 4) The instructor emits a sound from a peaceful source, which is from the 7th Base Level of the Mind. Therefore, the sound is powerful; making it easier for practitioners to put their minds at the center of their bodies.
- 5) Meditation is a matter of using our mind. The voice of a meditation instructor comes from an inner peaceful source. It is a communication between minds. The voice is only an initial aid to calm our mind. Like listening to people singing, they sing with a splendid imagination. The audiences will be able to imagine visions better than listening to singers who lack imagination.

4.3.2 Why the Voices of Instructors Are Essential

In cases of new practitioners, they are not experts yet. If they listen to guidelines, they have to apply themselves to their meditation practice. They have to think about strategies to persuade their minds to be placed at the center of the body, which is the 7th Base Level of the Mind. All these ideas will become the rope that pulls their minds out of the 7th Base. Moreover, they will use their brain in meditation. New practitioners often use their thoughts during their meditation. When they think a lot, they are trying too hard and force their minds. Therefore, they make their mind tired and sometimes they can get headaches. That is the wrong technique. We can only use our mind in our meditation.

Meditation instructions are reviews and guidelines for practitioners to start their practice. Thus, they can meditate more accurately. Practitioners can follow correct guidelines without having to worry about methods.

When people start meditation and follow instructions, eventually they will be familiar with the center of the body and get used to putting their mind in a soft and comfortable point. They will bring the mind at the 7th Base Level of the Mind naturally. They will feel peaceful, still, tender and comfortable without even realizing it.

In addition, new practitioners usually put their thoughts toward outside worlds. When they hear something, they will let their mind go with what they hear. They cannot still their mind yet. They usually let their mind go according to the sound, which is human nature. Therefore, when there is a voice leading a meditation session, it's likely that new practitioners will be happy to follow the instructions. Although they may not have good inner experiences, they at least easily feel peaceful and comfortable. They will feel their meditation time flies. They will not feel forced or feel uncomfortable so they will like meditation.

4.3.3 The Techniques of Resting our Minds through the Voices of Our Meditation Instructors

First of all, find an appropriate sitting position, a most comfortable position. Get ready mentally and physically for meditation practice, as mentioned in previous chapters. Turn on the CD volume that is not too loud or not too soft. If it's too loud, our ears will feel uncomfortable. On the contrary, if it's too soft, we will not feel comfortable or our hearing will be interrupted.

When sitting down and closing our eyes, we should let our mind go with the voice of the meditation instructor by using following techniques:

- 1) Turn on a sound that is not too loud or not too soft.
- 2) Do not disagree or have doubts with regards to meditation instructions. If they arise, ignore them and ask for an explanation later.
- 3) Keep listening, follow instructions and imagine as if you were an innocent child listening to stories and being full of imagination.
- 4) While listening, feel as if the sound flows through our ears to the 7th Base Level of the Mind.
- 5) Follow the instructions from the voice of the preacher. Be satisfied with what you have achieved. For example, let's say that the instructor told us to visualize a big and bright moon at the center of our body. We then visualize a moon, no matter how big our moon is. As long as it's a moon, do not worry if it's bright or dark. It's important to practice the visualization.
- 6) Do not worry if we will be able to do it or not or whether we can do it correctly. Just follow the instructions.

4.3.4 The Benefits of Following the Meditation Instructor's Voice

- 1) We will feel less worried that we cannot do it. At least we have already followed the instructions.
- 2) We will not worry about time as we keep listening and feel relaxed.
- 3) Even though we might not be able to follow all instructions, letting our mind go along with the instruction assists the mind to locate the inside more than if we did it ourselves.
- 4) We will feel peace and comfort from listening to the voice of the instructor as it alleviates stress from meditation practice.
- 5) Whether we succeed in meditation or not. It does not matter. We have already done our job of creating merits, since listening to meditation instructions is one of the 38 Blessings of Life.

In conclusion, meditation with listening to instructions is considered one strategy that creates a quick result. We will be able to find peace and have less stress during meditation. That is a way to attain the Dhamma within.

Activities

After students have studied Chapter 4: Techniques of Resting your Mind While Listening to Sermons please do the self-assessment and finish the workbook. Then, continue to study Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Perception and Cool Headedness

Units in This Chapter

5.1 Seeing an Image Within

- 5.1.1 Seeing With Our Own Eyes and Mind
- 5.1.2 Levels of Perception
- 5.1.3 Examples of the Buddha Images Within
- 5.1.4 An Understanding of Errors Not Seen
- 5.1.5 What Makes Perceiving Experiences Better
- 5.1.6 Observation and Seeing an Image Within
- 5.1.7 Result of Correct Observation

5.2 Cool Headedness

- 5.2.1 The Definition of Cool Headedness
- 5.2.2 Techniques to Create Cool Headedness
- 5.2.3 Remaining Cool Headed While Experiencing Inner Vision
- 5.2.4 Examples of Cool Headedness

Chapter at a Glance

1. Seeing external things in having vision with our own eyes. Those external things can be clear and we can visualize them 100%, but seeing with our minds is interior vision. Visibility will gradually and slowly clear until the mind's eye can see more vividly than our own eyes. It depends on the subtly of the individual mind.
2. Cool headedness is a way to gain peace and purity through meditation without hurries or attempts to accelerate our inner experience. We should keep doing it until our purity increase. Then, gradually and eventually we will reach the inner Dhamma.

Chapter Objective

This chapter should give students the knowledge and understanding to be able to:

1. Describe internal and external visions correctly.
2. Explain the meaning and importance of the technique of creating cool headedness.
3. Apply the techniques of cool headedness and perception to visualize your meditation practice.

Perception and Cool Headedness

Perception and cool headedness are important because a lot of people do not try to understand the matter of perception or have misconceptions, particularly in implementing PhraMongkolthepmuni's (LuangPuWatPaknam's) technique, which involves visualization. Therefore, they have problems with envisioning an image within. Moreover, in our meditation tradition, practitioners always tend to anticipate the relevance of time and inner experiences as if they could be compared to our job in the real world. We think that the more we do it or the more energy we utilize into it, the better the results. This understanding is not quite correct with regards to the matter of true practice. In this lesson we will study about perception and cool headedness.

5.1 Seeing an Image Within

5.1.1 Seeing With Our Own Eyes and Our Own Mind

In Meditation methods that utilize visualization, practitioners often have problems with that aspect of it and have the wrong understanding about it. Therefore, their practice often does not progress. And sometimes they may then feel stressed and bored with meditation. Therefore, we need to learn about the visualization aspect of it with our own eyes and our own mind.

1) Similarities

Seeing with our own eyes and seeing with our own minds have some similarities. Both of them can occur when there is a form of light involved. For example, we see external objects because of a light source, whether it's light from the sun, the moon, the stars or light bulbs. When there is light, we see people, animals and things. And like seeing with our own eyes, there is light when we are able to see with our minds. As a result, we will be able to see the inner body or the Dhamma body.

2) Differences

There are differences between seeing with our own eyes and seeing with our own minds. Seeing with our eyes is external. We will see 100% clearly when our eyes are open.

Seeing with our mind is seeing within. We have to visualize images in our own mind. When we open our eyes, we can see everything. We can recall images that we have seen. The visualization well starts slowly from what we are familiar with such as toothbrushes, bowls, dishes, and washing basins. In the beginning, it may not be as clear as seeing with our own eyes. It's like when we focus on an object in the distance. We will not be able to see as clearly as a person with near sightedness who takes off his/her glasses to see the object. Another example is, when we visualize a lotus, some people can visualize it with 5%, 10%, or 50% clarity. Only 1 in 100 people can visualize it with 100%

In conclusion, we see external objects with our eyes while a light source is present. However, when we see with our minds, we will start from a gloomy perspective; to a clear perspective less than our eyes can see, to an image that is as clear as our eyes can see, until it becomes an image that is even clearer than seeing it with our own eyes.

3) Different Methods between Seeing with Your Own Eyes and Seeing with Your Own Mind

When we observe an image within, we use a different method than we do for seeing external effects. For external pictures, when we want to see them clearly, we must stare or squint to focus our eyes. On the other hand, for seeing an image within, if we stare or squint to focus our eyes to see it, you will see nothing inside, only darkness.

Inner light that initiates inner vision will occur when our mind becomes subtle from a point of stillness. We cannot have an inner light by using a flashlight or a spotlight. We only need to tenderly and subtly still our minds in order to access our inner light.

We will envision an inner light when our mind is delicate. The inner light will get brighter and brighter like the morning sun from 5 AM to noon. The brightest one is the sun at midday. The inner light is infinite. The light can get brighter even more so than the sun at midday or than a lot of suns in the sky at one time. We can see inner light without hurting our eyes. External images are dense and coarse while internal images are delicate. We can measure that delicacy by the clarity of our mental object. The range is from less to more, from a vision of clear water, a mirror, ice or a diamond. The clarity of the inner Dhamma Sphere is more than a diamond, which only happens when we experience purity and when our mind is properly still.

5.1.2 The Levels of Perceptions in Our Minds

We can divide those perceptions into three levels:

1. It can be less clear than our eyes.
2. It can be as clear as our eyes.
3. It can be clearer than our eyes, as if we are using a magnifying glass on the object. The more expandable it is, the clearer we see.

5.1.3 Examples of the Images within the Body

If we imagine a Lord Buddha Image as our mental object, we will see a clear Lord Buddha Image in the center of our stomach. It will be as clear as glass or ice. When our mind is more subtle, our mental object will be more stable. We will start to see brightness from our mental object. It's like putting a glass or a diamond under the sun. We will see the sparking light from that object. However, the inner light will not hurt our eyes, and instead it will calm our eyes and mind. When we reach this stage, our mental object will change. At first, it will just be our imagination. But then it will become real, as if it was an external object.

5.1.4 Misunderstanding Inner Visions

Practitioners are often not familiar with inner visualization involving their minds in meditation. They often do not accept that seeing with their own minds can be less clear, as clear as or clearer than seeing with our own eyes.

Because the ability to see images within will gradually develop, a lot of people are not familiar and impatient. Therefore, they try too hard by using force, encouraging, accelerating, fixating the eyes or staring and they end up with disappointment.

In addition, some say that seeing images within is one kind of attachment. Seeing images internally and externally are alike in one regard. Both of them need lighting. Lighting is a tool so that we can see a mental object or external objects, human beings, animals or things. We should not attach to the bright light as we are to only observe the light. When there is a light source, we will see a tree. It does not mean that we should get attached to the tree. We can see cars, people, or buildings. We do not think much about them. We only feel that we see them. Seeing an image within is the same. When we are able to still our minds, we will see the bright light. The light is a tool for us to see existing images such as a Dhamma sphere, a subtle human body, an angelic body, a brahma body, a formless brahma body or a Dhammakaya body. Therefore, it is best that we observe those items without any attachment. Whatever appears, we just observe continuously and in a relaxed manner.¹

¹Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** November 5, 2538 B.E.

5.1.5 What Makes Seeing Images Within Better

- 1) Continuity: We need to situate our minds at the center of our bodies at all times and always visualize the mental object with every action we perform. We will become familiarized with our centers and eventually we will succeed in our meditation practice.
- 2) Comfort: Having a sense of comfort will facilitate the continuation of our visualization. It will help the inner image become clearer and sharper. At first, our mind is unable to be stopped, but it continually locates at the center of the body. We keep on visualizing the mental object with a sense of comfort. Our mind will go to a deeper state and become steadfast. We are able to stop our minds completely and our imagination will become a real vision or a true perception.
- 3) When it's dark, we should simply observe the darkness. If there is an opaque object, we should observe it whether it's round or in any other shape. If any light occurs, keep observing. We will then feel light, clear or hollow inside. We should continuously observe the center of our bodies with a neutral feeling. We may feel like we are going to fall down into a hole. Do not worry. Let it be. If we feel like we are falling down, let that feeling occur. Do not worry about how deep we go. Just observe it and let it be. If we feel that we are falling down into a hollow place, and come back up, do not pay any attention. If we see a sphere, we should observe it regardless of its clarity. We should keep our minds at the center of our bodies. The images within may change; for instance, the Lord Buddha Image may transform into a sphere. Or we visualize a crystal ball, and the image may transform into a Lord Buddha Image. Keep observing with joyful mind. The images may transform from impermanent to permanent.
- 4) If you see the Lord Buddha, but only see his head, just look at his head. Keep looking at it and soon you will be present inside the Lord Buddha Himself. If we only see His face, just look at His face. Do not worry. Do not think about why we only see His head not the whole Lord Buddha. Do not think. Just observe. Whatever we will see at the center of our bodies, just be happy and put our minds there. Soon we will be able to see the entire Lord Buddha within.
- 5) Some people can sustain their minds at the center of their bodies, the brightness will occur or a mental object will occur by itself without visualization. If this happens, do not get too excited or too happy. Our mind has to be neutral and has to have no feeling. Maintain the stillness. The darkness will change into brightness. Without any concern, just keep on observing the brightness. Then, the brightness will change into bright light, a small crystal ball, or large crystal ball; keep observing comfortably.
- 6) Some people see inner images and then they disappear. Do not chase after them. It's totally normal.
- 7) When we keep observing it, we will become familiar with those inner images, whether they are clear or not clear. Keep observing the unclear images to the clear images or from the less bright to the very bright. We should have no

feelings and we should not deny what happens or we should not create more imaginings. Our minds will become stop and still.

In terms of observation, LuangPhawWatPaknam (Phramongkolthepmuni) said,

“When he just started meditating, he closed his eyes and saw mountains, leaves or people. He just incessantly kept observing. The pictures kept changing. The last picture was the Dhamma sphere, bright light or inner body.”²

Phrathepyanmahamuni (LuangPhawDhammajayo) stated,

“Seeing an image means that we have reached a momentary concentration [*khanika-samādhī*]. It’s the beginning of concentration. You may see a white cloud. Our concentration will progress as we keep observing. Then, we will reach proximate concentration [*upacāra-samādhī*] and eventually, established concentration [*appanā-samādhī*]. Once we are at the level of full concentration, just keep meditating and observing with a neutral feeling. Then, your mind will be completely still and you will be able to access an inner light.”

5.1.6 Observation and Seeing an Image Within

Once we know how to visualize an inner image, the next step is to learn more about meditation techniques to completely still our minds.

1) Do not to focus on clarity. Just observe. Whatever it is, just keep observing. Act as an audience and not a director that tries to make it clear, bright, big and sustainable. That’s not our duty. Our job is to observe. Keep observing no matter what popsup in our center with a sense of ease without thought. That is the formula for success.

2) Act like we are just walking. As we walk we see things along our way. Just observe them. Do not think. When we close our eyes, we expect to see darkness. Then we will not feel disappointed as we have no expectations. As a result we will feel disappointed when we do not practice meditation.

3) When it’s dark, we should simply observe the darkness. If there is an opaque object, we should observe it whether it’s round or in any other shape. If any light occurs, keep observing. We will then feel light, clear or hollow inside. We should continuously observe the center of our bodies with a neutral feeling. We may feel like we are going to fall down into a hole. Do not worry. Let it be. If we feel like we are falling down let that feeling occur. Do not worry about how deep we go. Just observe it and let it be. If we feel that we are falling down into a hollow place, and come back up, do not pay any attention. If we see a sphere, we should observe it regardless of its clarity. We should keep our minds at the center of our bodies. The images within may change. For instance, the Lord Buddha Image may transform into a sphere. Or we visualize a crystal ball, and the image may transform into a Lord Buddha Image. Keep observing with joyful mind. The images may transform from impermanent to permanent.

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7) When we keep observing it, we will become familiar with those inner images, whether they are clear or not clear. Keep observing the unclear images to the clear images or from the less bright to the very bright. We should have no feelings and we should not deny what happens or we should not create more imaginings. Our minds will become stop and still.

In terms of observation, Luang Phaw Wat Paknam (Phramongkolthepmuni) said,

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“Seeing an image means that we have reached a momentary concentration [*khaṇika-samādhi*]. It's the beginning of concentration. You may see a white cloud. Our concentration will progress as we keep observing. Then, we will reach proximate concentration [*upacāra-samādhi*] and eventually, established concentration [*appanā-samādhi*]. Once we are at the level of full concentration, just keep meditating and observing with a neutral feeling. Then, your mind will be completely still and you will be able to access an inner light.”

5.1.7 Effects of Correct Observation

During Luang Phaw Wat Paknam's time, he taught an ordinand named Nāgain the chapel. He asked the ordinand,

“Do you remember your hair that has been removed?”

³Ibid.

The ordinand sat in a squatted position, closed his eyes and answered,

“Yes, I remember.”

LuangPhawWatPaknam inquired,

“Imagine that you put your hair at the 7th Base Level of your Mind. Can you think about that? Do you know which direction its root is pointing to and its end is pointing to?”

The ordinand answered LuangPhawWatPaknam.

LuangPhawWatPaknam then taught the ordinand,

"Allow your mind to stay still at the center of your hair. You will see a lot of hair. Just keep observing until your mind comes to a point of stillness."

The ordinand continued to sit cross legged. LuangPhaw continually asked him,

“What do you see?”

The ordinand said,

“The hair color has changed from black to white.”

LuangPhaw then replied,

“Keep stilling your mind.”

The ordinand reported to LuangPhaw,

“The white hair color has changed to a clear color. I keep observing it. I feel so light and I see the Dhamma sphere the same size as a lime.”

He also stated that he had observed for about one and a half hours. He sat in a squatted position among the monks. Once he attained Pathama Magga, the first level of the Dhamma sphere, LuangPhaw said,

“This is the initial path leading to the Paths and Fruitions of Nirvana [*Magga, Phala and Nibbana*]. Remember that your ordination contains a lot of merits for you, your parents and your relatives. The goal of this ordination is to reach *Magga, Phala and Nibbana*. Now you can have a saffron robe.”⁴

That is an example of the right observation. Regardless of any mental object you start to visualize, ultimately, you will be able to access the Dhamma Sphere through the right method of observation and comprehension.

⁴Ibid.

5.2 Cool Headedness

Many practitioners are fearful that they are wasting their time on meditation. They're afraid that they will not be able to access the inner Dhamma or have an inner experience. Therefore, they usually have conditions in their mind about time and inner experiences. That makes their practice unsuccessful and difficult to see results. Practitioners should pay attention to cool headedness.

5.2.1 The Definition of Cool Headedness

Phrathepyanmahayamuni has provided its meaning as follows:

Cool headedness is the feeling that occurs in our mind that our task is to continue meditating. We have no worries or no suffering. We should keep saying the mantra, "*Samma Arahang*." We should have no concerns about if we will be able to see the Dhamma Sphere or not. We should not be worried about when we're going to vividly see our crystal sphere. It may take one hundred years or a thousand years. We still should not worry. Although, we are unable to visualize our mental object clearly, we should not feel upset, anxious, frustrated, or annoyed. This is called cool headedness.⁵

Cool headedness means that the mind is careful, mindful, powerful and insightful. In addition, our minds are joyful without stress, boredom or anxiety. Our minds should be very calm in every action when we sit, sleep, stand or walk.⁶

5.2.2 Techniques to Create Cool Headedness

- 1) Phrathepyanmahayamuni has provided us with how we should notice cool headedness. We should not feel rushed, hastened or hurried. He taught us to understand that purity will gradually develop. Stay in a comfortable place. Do not think about if you will be able to keep up with other people or not. If we are afraid, our minds will become stuck and coarse. We should not compete with anybody. If we can follow this method, our minds will be well-suited to access the Inner Dhamma.
- 2) We should be mindful that we are accumulating merits, comfort and happiness from meditation. Do not worry about results, similar to watering a plant.⁷ If we will not feel hastened, our mind will gradually and happily become developed. Then, we will have understood all of our experiences and finally attain stability.
- 3) In order to reach the Inner Dhammakaya, we must train ourselves to be calm and relaxed. We should not rush. We should not concentrate too much on our meditation although deep down in our heart, we really want to access the Inner Dhammakaya. We heard a lot of people talking about how happy

⁵Phrathepyanmahayamuni. **Meditation Teaching** September 2, 2533 B.E

⁶Phrathepyanmahayamuni. **Meditation Teaching** March 6, 2536 B.E

⁷Phrathepyanmahayamuni. **Meditation Teaching** March 19, 2536 B.E

they were once they reached the Dhammakaya within. We have to suppress this feeling. We should not think about achieving quick results. We have to realize that it's like the growth rate of all living beings. It will take time. For example, when we plant a seed, our job is to water it every day. The seed is responsible for its growth. One day, we will get rewards from our hard work. The plant will give us produce. Another example is the growth rate of human beings. We eat food and then we will grow up progressively. We do not know how many centimeters our body will grow after one meal. However, even if we do not realize it, we grow from babies into adolescents and finally into adults.

Our meditation practice is the same. We cannot rush the process like that of tree growth or our body's development. Mentally when we practice meditation every day, we repeatedly still our minds at the center of our body in order to accumulate numerous hours of peaceful time. It's similar to a pilot accumulating his/her flying hours. Our minds will change from a rough condition to a subtle condition. Our minds will be purified slowly until they become pure and refined. One day our goals will be fulfilled.⁸

- 4) Phrathepyanmahayamuni suggested us to neutrally and naturally situate our mind at the center of the body. Then, we will feel comfortable and our mind will be refined. Remember that feeling, the indifferent or neutral feeling. All things will pass through. According to LuangPhaw, he normally observed that whatever appears in the mind without being opposed will remain until a comfortable feeling emerges. The mind would then achieve refinement and automatically be united.
- 5) When there are thoughts that come through our minds, ignore those thoughts. Do not resist those ideas. We want fish when we go to cast a net to catch our dinner but we get a snake instead. We want to see the inner Dhamma sphere but we see a tree instead. We want to see the Buddha Image but we see people instead. Just be cool no matter what we see.
- 6) We should be satisfied with every experience. Allow the mind to feel at ease. If our minds wander, just bring our awareness back to the center and start repeating the mantra again. It's very normal for our minds to think all the time. If our happiness disappears, do not worry. We can start it over as if we haven't encountered that. Our minds will easily feel comfortable, joyful and neutral as well as weightless. Do not attach to the previous inner experiences.⁹

If the mind is clear, even if we are alone, we won't feel lonely.

If we live in a lonely place, we won't feel lonely.

If we live in a busy place, we won't feel distracted.

If we feel slammed, we won't feel hit.

If we feel affected, we won't feel the impact.

⁸Phrathepyanmahayamuni. **Meditation Teaching** June 6, 2536 B.E

⁹Phrathepyanmahayamuni. **Meditation Teaching** March 19, 2536 B.E

5.2.3 Remaining Cool Headed While Experiencing Inner Vision

To perceive an image within, practitioners will develop perception slowly. Therefore, in order to get good results, practitioners must have a sense of calm. Our duty is to keep meditating. We can visualize or not visualize, we can see or not see. It does not matter. Although we can visualize a crystal sphere, do not worry about when it's going to be as clear as when we begin to open our real vision. It may take 100 years or 1,000 years. We should not be concerned, anxious or frustrated. Soon when our minds will achieve a sense of ease and neutrality, it will become still from within.

To create a relaxed mind, a mind at a standstill, and a mind that is pure, you accomplish it by allowing the mind to come to a standstill with a sense of ease and by letting the sound of the mantra, "*Samma Arahang, Samma Arahang, Samma Arahang*" come from our abdomen. We should not worry about a mental object. We should just stay still and not think about what's going to happen next. Do not think. Just stay still. If a crystal sphere is not clear, it's alright. Just observe. Do not think. Let it be. Although we see millions of crystal spheres, we should just observe them. Let it be. It doesn't matter if our mental object disappears, merely still the mind. If there are millions of crystal spheres, simply allow the mind to stay still and stop. Notice our comfort and tranquility levels. Do not force our minds since that is not the correct method. Allow the mind to be continuously still, comfortable and cool. Keep repeating the mantra, "*Samma Arahang.*" Sometimes, if we do not feel relaxed enough to visualize any mental object, and then just allow the mind to stay still. Soon we will see a bright light and a crystal sphere.

Do not discard these words, stay comfortable and keep cool. The mind needs to be cool in order to perceive an image within. If we are not cool-headed, we will not see an image within. If we are in a hurry and want to see an image quickly, we will not see it. That is the wrong method. We will feel stressed as we force our bodies and minds too hard. We have to take it easy, step by step.

5.2.4 Examples of Cool Headedness

Phrathepyanmahayamuni told us that at first when he sat and meditated, he did not see anything. He thought he did not have enough merits so he saw nothing. He complained to Master NunKhunYai Chand. Master Nun KhunYai told him that he needed to be calm. Then, he would see an image within. After that, he tried again and followed Master Nun's instructions. He felt calm but only temporarily, as he still had a desire to see. He went and complained to Master Nun KhunYai again. She said the same thing. There was only one way to do it. The only thing you need to do is to keep your mind cool. Master Nun KhunYai instructed,

"If you would love to achieve inner happiness, love to train your mind to be still just like KhunYai, love to access the Dhammakaya within, love to study Vija Dhammakaya or love to be free from suffering, you need to be calm. That is the only correct way that you need to practice."

He went back to meditate. His mind started to slowly cool down. His mind was able to become calm because he accepted his situation. When he was in a hurry, it did not

work. Instead, he developed a headache or felt depressed at why he had no new inner experiences and felt no inner happiness. Moreover, he had the wrong idea and had doubts about other peoples' experiences. He did not see anything so he did not want to believe what other people said about their inner experiences. That was the wrong view to have. Finally, he went to see Master Nun KhunYai Chand again. She told him the same thing that he needed to hear, which was to keep his mind cool, since internal perception was different from external perception. Images would start to develop little by little. She told him to stay cool and create a good temper and a sense of ease. For meditation, we must search for a good temper and a sense of ease. We should not meditate with an angry temperament or moodiness. It's the wrong technique.

LuangPhaw told us that he finally sat down and kept meditating. He believed Master Nun KhunYai Chand, but sometimes he did not believe her. However, because he respected Master Nun KhunYai Chand, he kept doing it. One day, he sat and meditated without any expectations. He did not think of a crystal ball or a Lord Buddha Image, since they did not appear by forcing them. At the start, he kept repeating *Samma Arahang*. Then, he did not want to repeat the mantra, therefore, he just sat in silence. Consequently, his mind had a high degree of wandering and then a low degree of wandering. Later, his mind became still.

He did not do anything. His mind was still and not clouded. Now he felt emptiness and had goose bumps. He felt like his body became vacant, transparent, and weightless and comfortable and he stayed still since he did not know what would occur. So, he ignored what happened. It's an amazing thing about inner experiences. Once, when you do not pay attention to it, the inner experience emerges, but if you pay attention to it, the inner experience will not arise. After he ignored everything, he felt vacant, transparent, weightless and comfortable and the light appeared. He saw the bright light appear inside, where it was not in the abdomen, but it arose inside the vacancy and spaciousness. The light got brighter and brighter. He did not know what to do, so he kept staying still. Then, he saw the Inner Dhamma Sphere followed by the Lord Buddha Image.¹⁰

It can be noted that Inner Vision and Keeping the Mind Cool is the method of meditation practice that one should always examine and follow every time one meditates. As a result, we will be able to realize true happiness and will be able to attain the Inner Dhamma.

Activity

After students have studied and completed Chapter 5: Perception and Cool Headedness, please do a self-assessment and finish the Workbook for Chapter 5. Then, continue to study Chapter 6.

¹⁰Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** November 6, 2538 B.E

Chapter 6

Inner Experiences

Units in This Chapter

6.1 The Meaning and Nature of Inner Experiences

6.2 The Success of Accessing the Inner Dhamma

6.3 Types of Inner Experiences

6.4 Sustaining and Developing Inner Experiences

Chapter at a Glance

1. An inner experience is something that happens within from meditation. It has a lot of levels. We will study inner experiences before accessing the first level of the Dhamma Sphere. It's a process. Our mind will feel comfortable, still and it will expand without boundaries. And finally we'll see the brightness within.
2. Every inner experience that occurs each time we meditate, whether good or bad is valuable. It is an indicator of the mind's condition. As we gain experiences we eventually will be able to access the Dhamma within.
3. Inner experiences in meditation can be divided into 4 levels:
 - A) There is experience when our mind starts to become still,
 - B) There is experience when our mind moves down into the center,
 - C) There is experience when we completely still our mind and,
 - D) There is extraordinary experience.
4. How to sustain and develop inner experiences so we can enjoy meditation and be happy and satisfied with every inner experience.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter should give students the knowledge and understanding to be able to:

1. Explain the meaning and nature of inner experiences correctly.
2. Explain the value of inner experiences and the processes of attaining the inner Dhamma.
3. Identify different types of inner experiences.
4. Explain how to sustain and develop inner experiences.

Inner Experiences

It's very common that travelers often experience new and unusual occurrences, landscapes, forests, mountains and people. Those encounters make travelers excited and sometimes they experience thrilling and scary adventures. No matter what travelers have experienced along their journeys, all travelers must still travel to their destination.

The journey to the Middle Way through meditation is similar to traveling. We will find new experiences that arise from meditation. Some encounters can be ones we may have never had before in our daily lives. Maybe we might think that our experiences are abnormal. In fact, those events are steps of adjusting the subtleness of the mind until it reaches its destination, the Triple Gem. Therefore, practitioners should learn about inner experiences so they can apply them to their practices. Also, they can build confidence in their meditation practices. Students can learn about those inner experiences in meditation from this chapter.

6.1 The Meaning and Nature of Inner Experiences

6.1.1 The Definition of an Inner Experience

An inner experience means something that appears during meditation. It can be an emotional state or a Dhamma state in each level. Inner experiences can be divided into three levels:

1. The first level is the phenomenon of experience before accessing Pathama Magga, the primary Dhamma Sphere.
2. The second level is the experience from Pathama Magga to the 18 Dhamma bodies.
3. The third level is the experience from the study of Vijja Dhammakaya.

This chapter will focus on the first level of inner experiences.

6.1.2 Characteristics of Inner Experiences

In meditation, we try to train our minds until they become still. One's inner experience will gradually occur as follows:

When we can train our minds to be continuously still and comfortable, our bodies and minds will be subtle, light, and airy like we are floating in space. We feel so comfortable that some people even forget to breathe. That frightens them as they

think they will die. However, the truth is that because of the comfort of the mind, it guides our breathing slowly and delicately with happiness and pleasure. That comfort makes us blend together with our atmosphere.

When we meditate and have a relaxed feeling, we want to keep meditating for a long time. That means that we are using right meditation techniques.

If maintaining stillness, comfort, light, emptiness, and airy feelings, the comfort will gradually increase until we reach a true comfort that we have never experienced before. We will feel that our body is so delicate, our mind is so expansive and our body feels like it expands infinitely.

The word, “infinity” is the feeling we have when we sense that our body no longer consists of flesh. We feel as if we have no body. We harmonize with the surrounding atmosphere as if our minds and our atmosphere are one, and we cannot tell where our bodies end and the atmosphere begins. Our mind still remains at the center of our body.

A mind at an internal standstill is a mind at a time when we can observe it all from the center of our body.

An internal standstill is different from an external standstill. The more we still our mind, the brighter and clearer the images will be from within. It's like cars. Cars have gas pedals to increase speed. Standstill has a factor to make our mind more subtle and observant.

If we continue to still our minds, we will feel more relaxed and comfortable. Our body and mind will remain calm. The serenities of our minds and our bodies will blend together. The stillness is as if our body is fixed to the ground. It's the stillness that we feel neither uncomfortable nor forced, but we will feel light and more comfortable. Even though our bodies are very still, our minds will be joyful and will keep expanding. We will feel satisfied and overwhelmed by the true happiness that we have never experienced before. That happiness is a blissful feeling without worries and disturbances from people, animals or belongings. It's like we are sitting alone in this world and we are the center of everything but attached to none of it. That happiness is so delicate and unavailable from anywhere else in the world.

After that, we will let our mind enjoy true happiness with neutral feelings. Then, our mind will gradually adjust and become united as one-pointedness, and remain in that stillness without thoughts. There is no thought that flows into our minds. We will be able to stop our thoughts without any force. The stillness is tender and weightless. This will be a new and unusual happiness because our perceptions, memories, thinking, and cognition are combined at one point naturally. Our mind will go into a deeper state. As our perceptions, memories, thinking, and cognition encounter more stillness, our minds will become more relaxed and expanded.

When we are able to still our minds, we will see the light at the center of our bodies. The light will start from as bright as the sunrise until it is as bright as the midday sun. The brightness that comes with comfort and happiness will get brighter according to the depth of our stillness. These joyful, happy, new feelings will be new experiences that we have never encountered before since it's an inner light that only comes when our mind is refined and completely still.

When we are able to achieve more stillness, our perceptions, memories, thoughts, and cognitions will properly and firmly converge at the same spot until the still mind has fallen into the 7th Base Level of the Mind. It's a similar feeling to falling from a high place into an abyss. Then, the initial purity appears in the mind. We will see a crystal sphere from a small size like stars in the sky to a middle size like a full moon and finally to a big size like the sun.

The crystal sphere is called a *Pathama Magga*, or a Dhamma Sphere or a first-level crystal sphere that is the initial path leading to the Paths and Fruition of Nibbana [*Magga, Phala and Nibbāna*]. From now on, if we are able to still our minds, we will be mindful at all times. That is true awareness. We do not have to try hard when meditating but we have both mindfulness [*sati*] and clear comprehension [*sampajañña*] at the center of the Dhamma sphere.

At this point we should be able to still our minds daily at any time and anywhere no matter what we are doing, whether our eyes are open or closed. We should always visualize the clear Dhamma Sphere in a relaxed way. The more we feel comfortable the more we can perform visualization in a natural manner. We should practice until we are master at it. Every time we breathe, we have to always do visualization. We have to do it until it becomes automatic and becomes our daily habit. It's like when we open our eyes we will see the sky, trees, people, animals and other objects.

If we are able to further still our minds, our bright lights will keep expanding. Our inner bright lights will become a full moon or midday sun. The bigger the Dhamma sphere gets, the happier and purer we feel. We will feel as if our minds and bodies are pure both internally and externally. We will feel that our inner light at the center of the body and our body become one. It's the true purity of mind. It is the purity that comes along with happiness, translucency and brightness that will generate cheerfulness, freshness and endless energy.

Finally, we can sense the source that enhances our minds' qualities. We can recognize the differences between our newly inspired current minds and our minds that are filled with sensual desire, ill will, gloominess and sleepiness, distraction and worry, and uncertainty.

That purity makes us realize that we cannot access inner happiness with our obsessed minds. Our obsessions only bring chaos and confusion with no quality to them.

The Dhamma sphere also helps us purify our minds to substantially receive true happiness. The more comfortable mind will enable more mental stillness and purity. The still mind will slowly enter the center of the body or the 7th Base Level of the Mind more and more. That is similar to singing lullabies to a baby. At that point our minds will be pure, clear and bright and we will be tireless and full of joy. We will appreciate the value of accessing the Dhamma and will deeply love the Dhamma. That will facilitate mental stillness, enable the mind to go inside the center and eventually enhance our inner experiences. That is the way to increase the quality of our lives, uplift our minds and achieve true happiness in our lives through the inner Dhamma Sphere.

6.2 The Success of Accessing the Inner Dhamma

Inner experience indicates the success of the Dhamma within. Therefore, with every experience that occurs, we should be focused and interested in order to be able to access the Dhamma within.

6.2.1 The Value of Inner Experiences

Every experience that occurs in our practice is valuable, whether it's good or bad. In the beginning, we will be distracted, sleepy, and tired. Then, we will start to still our minds and we will feel light, calm and bright. Every experience is important as they are a measurement of the practitioner's mind. Venerable Phra thepyanmahayamuni said, "Every experience is valuable no matter whether we felt like we had a good meditation session today or not. Today's meditation is as good as, worse than or better than yesterday's. Every experience is precious. It's like a mirror of our mind displaying the degree of purity of mind, high or low. Whenever the mind achieves a high degree of purity, the inner experience must be good."¹

6.2.2 The Process of Accessing the Dhamma Within

In meditation practice, many people think that we need to have great results in order to succeed in meditation, such as seeing the inner Dhamma sphere or inner bodies. However, in reality, success in meditation occurs when we are thinking of meditating. Venerable Phra thepyanmahayamuni has explained the process of accessing the Dhamma within as follows:

Step One:

It is the thought to want to meditate and access the Dhammakaya within. That is the success in step one because there are several billion people in the world who do not think like this and do not know this. Even in Thailand where there are a lot of Buddhists, the minority of Thai people think to meditate. That thought comes from our pure inner source.

Step Two:

Think and then act. Meditate from when you wake up until you go to meditate in the meditation room.

Step Three:

When we are in the meditation room, sit down in the cross-legged, half lotus position. Close your eyes and start meditating.

Step Four:

Close your eyes and think of the mantra, "Samma Araham" or visualize a mental object. Allow the mind to come to a standstill. We are another step ahead as our bodies; minds and speech incessantly become purified as soon as we close our eyes to meditate.

¹Phra thepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** July 9, 2540 B.E

Step Five:

When our mind is still and we keep meditating, sometimes, our mind may get distracted. Sometimes, we repeat the mantra, “SammaAraham” or visualize a mental object. Sometimes, we are able to be still or sometimes we get distracted.

Step Six:

Keep meditating. Our minds will become less distracted. We will feel less sleepy, less stiff, and less discouraged. We are another step closer to success.

Step Seven:

We have no distractions, sleepiness or discouragement. However, our still mind remains in the midst of darkness. We see nothing but darkness. Yet we are another step closer to success.

Step Eight:

If we keep meditating in the midst of darkness, our bodies will begin expanding and will become lighter. We will be able to breathe comfortably without any uncomfortable feelings. We will feel so light and clear. We are another step closer to success.

Step Nine:

Although we have not seen anything, we will feel light and we will feel our bodies expanding gradually. We will feel ourselves enlarge from side to side, higher up, smaller to the ground or sway from side to side. We may experience goose bumps.

Step Ten:

We then continue meditating until we feel like our bodies have disappeared. We will feel like we are in an outer space. We will still see nothing. Here is another step of success.

Step Eleven:

As we continue to still our mind, we will still practice it the same way. Continue to still your minds. Do not doubt any images that you see inside. If we have doubts the first time, the images will disappear. Do not let it happen again. The inner brightness will start to come. Sometimes, the brightness may arise and sometimes, it may disappear. Here is another step of success.

Step Twelve:

The brightness will stay for a longer period of time. We will like how the time passes by so quickly. We no longer have to force ourselves to meditate. We will feel like meditating. Here is another step of success.

Step Thirteen:

The brightness will gradually increase. Until the light goes out, we will feel true happiness. Here is another step of success.

Step Fourteen:

We should continue to practice meditation like this. Success exists step by step. We will see a small bright light. It will be very bright. We can achieve success in each step.

Therefore, from the moment we wake up until the moment we begin to meditate, we are considered successful. We are successful without realizing it. Our minds are more purified until they transform into the streamer inside of us.²

We should be proud of ourselves every time we think about meditation and then start meditating. It indicates that we are closer to accessing the inner Dhamma.

6.3 Types of Inner Experiences

In meditation, we will experience a great many types of inner experiences depending on our mental status. Our mental states will change gradually to stillness, which occurs when the states of perception, memory, thought, and cognition are firmly united as one-pointedness. Here are some examples of inner experiences:

6.3.1 Inner Experiences When Our Minds Begin to Become Still

1. When our minds can be still at the 7th Base Level of the Mind, our minds will expand. That experience is called bliss. The results of mental enlargement are happiness and delight. We will feel comfortable and fresh both physically and mentally. That results from primary stillness. We will see nothing at that point.
2. When our minds become more increasingly still, we will develop goose bumps. Our tears may flow. We may feel numbness in our coccyges, knees, or legs. Those experiences may frighten us. We may feel like our lower bodies have disappeared. It indicates that our minds are going to be stilled and we are getting closer to the center of our bodies.
3. Our bodies will sway back and forth or from side to side. It's like we are sitting in a boat on a wave or we are sleeping in a hammock. It is because the mind is close to the center of our body. It indicates that the mind is adjusting from a coarse mind to a subtle mind.
4. We may feel uncomfortable due to the lack of breath. It is due to changing the rhythm of breathing from nasal breathing to breathing throughout our entire body. Or it may be due to changing from breathing coarse air to breathing subtle air. The breathing is not going to stop, but the mind's going to stop.
5. Our bodies will expand or shrink because of the purity of our minds. Our bodies will act according to the source of that purity. If there is more purity towards the top, our bodies will expand in the direction of the top so we will feel enlarged on top. If there is more purity towards the bottom, our bodies will

²Ibid.

shrink below. If there is more purity on the sides, our whole bodies will expand and harmonize with the surroundings.

6. We will feel transparent, as if we have no organs within. For example, we will feel like our body is a hole with emptiness. We will feel like our bodies are getting bigger and grander like we are in outer space. We feel wide and vast. It shows that our mind begins to become large and free. It is as if we have moved from a narrow space to wide and open space. The surrounding areas will expand in correlation to the expansion of our bodies. Our feelings will also expand. When we are able to maintain our comfortable feelings and have no worry about seeing or not seeing, soon we will be able to access the center of our bodies.
7. As our minds are able to remain in the stillness continuously, our minds will be still even more deeply. We will see brightness like the light of the sun from 6AM to 7AM and then to 8AM respectively.³

6.3.2 Inner Experiences When Our Minds Fall into the Center of the Body

When we are able to maintain our mental comfort at a point of stillness and not let our minds wander, our minds will eventually fall into the center of our bodies. That feeling is quite similar to falling from a high place into an abyss. Those may frighten some people off. However, some people fall into the center of their bodies gently. It's similar to when one is falling from a high place into an abyss. That happens because our minds have changed from a coarse state to a subtle state. We're moving fast so we feel like we are diving down off of a diving board. That experience is considered a positive experience and steers our minds in the right direction towards The Triple Gem. We probably heard about the Threefold Refuge or the Tisaranagamana. Ti means three. Saraṇa means refuge. Gamana means moving toward. We are moving forward toward The Triple Gem.

Some people are attracted to the center very quickly. It feels like our bodies are being squeezed into tiny ants or the tip of a needle. It shows that our minds are able to become still without consciousness. Our minds are able to properly locate itself at the right position. The purer the mind achieves, the more the mind will be attracted. The invisible purity within will attract the same pure thing inside to it. It's like a magnet that attracts the same type of material.

6.3.3 Inner Experiences That Occur When Our Minds are Completely Still

When our minds are properly still at the right location, we will reach Pathama Magga, the primary Dhamma Sphere. It will appear at the 7th Base Level of the Mind. It's a bright spot like a star, a full moon or a midday sun. When our minds access Pathama Magga, we have reached the true pathway to Nibbana. We will be able to go into deeper states of mind by allowing the mind to go inside the center of Pathama

³Phra thepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** July 5, 2535 B.E

Magga. The inner bodies will appear when the minds will be able to properly bestill at the right position.

First we will access inner physical human bodies that look like ourselves. They are hidden inside the middle of our own human bodies. The refined human bodies (more advanced) are in the middle of our inner physical human bodies. Inside the refined human bodies are Celestial bodies. Inside Celestial bodies are Form Brahma Bodies. Inside Form Brahma Bodies are Formless Brahma Bodies. Inside Formless Brahma Bodies are Gotrabhu Dhammakaya. Inside Gotrabhu Dhammakaya are Sotāpanna (Stream Enterer) Dhammakaya. Inside Sotāpanna Dhammakaya are Sakadagami (Once-Returner) Dhammakaya. Inside Sakadagami Dhammakaya are Anagami (Non-Returner) Dhammakaya. Inside Anagami Dhammakaya are Arahant Dhammakaya.

As for the inner bodies, they are Dhamma States that occur according to the depth of our mental subtleness respectively. We will not go into details of that particular matter. However, we would like students to keep practicing until they have their own inner experiences.

6.3.4 Extraordinary Inner Experiences

In meditation, sometimes we may have unusual experiences that are different from the previously mentioned experiences. Some of them are correct but some of them are diverted from the Middle Way. Therefore, we should learn examples of extraordinary inner experiences for the betterment of our practice:

1. In meditation, we might see a ghost image, a skull image, or an object of divinity such as a God or Goddess. Venerable Phra thepyanmahayamuni said,

“If one is not truly at the center of the body, one will see a skull or a ghost. Seeing angels is not strange either, they have been seen in many eras too but they, along with skulls and ghosts are not true perceptions. Some people see them clearly while some people see them unclearly. It’s like a test. If we do not pass, we will attach to those images and we have bad feelings toward those images. If we see good images, we will feel happy. If we see bad images, we will feel unhappy or upset. We may think that those entities have come to ask for our merits. In reality, it’s a seed of perception deep down inside of us. When there is an opportunity, it will reveal as the images.”

2. Some people meditate and their refined human body comes out and crashes into their bed. Sometimes there is an angel that might ask us to stay with her/him. We should not attach to that. Venerable Phra thepyanmahamuni suggested that we,

“Just observe it with a still mind without thought. Whatever the visible bodies say to us just remains still. Only observe them with a still mind. We have really seen them, but what he or she saw was not real.”

3. Some people may see a lot of ghosts or devils.
Venerable Phrathepyanmahamunisaid,

“Fear is not part of the Middle Way path. If we have fear, we are not on the path of the Middle Way. However, we think that we are on the Middle Way. When we see a Dhamma sphere or Buddha, we are on the path of the Middle Way. If we are not on the path of the Middle Way, we will see something else. It’s like driving on a road. On the sides of the road we will see electrical wire posts, trees and buffalos. Those things are not in the middle of the road. Similarly, the Middle Way is the path of noble monks. We will see only noble monks. That is Ariyamagga (the Noble Eightfold Path); there will be only Noble Ones.”⁴

When we have unusual experiences, we have to fix them by ignoring them. Just keep focusing your minds at the center of your bodies, which is the path to the Middle Way. If we cannot fix it, we should consult with our mentor and ask for advice.

6.4 Sustaining and Developing Inner Experiences

Those are extremely important to improve our meditation. Practitioners must maintain our inner experiences for even greater development or at least learn how not to go back and start all over again. We will discuss those techniques for sustaining and developing inner experiences.

6.4.1 Sustaining Inner Experiences

- 1) Meditation is one form of art. Art means knowing how to act, create or apply skills, such as a chef. The art of cooking is to be able to cook tasty food. Our minds are the same. We have to adjust the center of our bodies and make sure that our minds are close to the center of our bodies as much as we can get our minds there. Then, our minds and bodies will get used to being at this spot. Do not worry about seeing a light, a crystal sphere or Lord Buddha, even though we have desires to see them.
- 2) When we see the path, we should put our minds there. We have to allow the mind to go inside the center with a sense of ease. Do not rush it as our breathing will be too tense. When our minds are attracted to the center, we need to have mindfulness. If we are not mindful, we will lose the mental object. We should be confident about good things. Confidence will create thinking power and we will make it happen. For instance, when we see a crystal ball or the inner light, we might be doubtful. The crystal ball or light may then disappear. On the other hand, if we think that it is real and it belongs to us and makes us feel happy. The Lord Buddha once said that the Dhamma makes us happy. If we continue accumulating confidence, just think of it, it will arise, lively, accurate and touchable. Confidence generates great results.

⁴Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** September 25, 2537 B.E

- 3) When we see the inner Lord Buddha, we should not be displeased about it. We have to let it be. We should observe Him with calmness. Later, He will let us do what we want to do. Practice the meditation method this way first. LuangPhaw Dhammajayo practiced this way before. LuangPhaw was displeased because he wanted to see a more beautiful Lord Buddha image, such as a diamond one. However, he did not see it. Sometimes he only saw the Lord Buddha's head, legs, and hands. So, just let it be. Do not crave for more.⁵
- 4) "Therefore, with every experience our minds have to be still. We should not allow ourselves to get distracted. We should try to remain very still. For example, if we hold a glass of water and talk while walking on a road, we will not spill the water, however, we will fall down into a hole in the road. We have to be able to do this. Then, we will see a clear and luminous mental image at the center of the body."⁶
- 5) When we have to change our sitting position, our minds may become detached from our deep meditation state. We mustn't worry. We should just let it be. Let's simply restart again. If we practice the right method, soon we will be in that state again.⁷

6.4.2 Developing Inner Experiences

1. "Bring up the latest inner experience as our starting point. It means that we have to memorize the methods that lead to good results. When did we do to gain the best inner experience? We should memorize those and then apply them to our current practice. We don't have to restart our meditation from the beginning, but continue from the point that we correctly practiced and gained very good and impressive inner experiences from."⁸
2. "If our mind is wandering, we should just keep observing it and don't think more than that. We should not pose any question in our mind, for instance, what is it, what is it composed of, how did it happen and where is it. Continue observing without thought and don't deny the images as they appear. Let the images change continuously. It won't last long. Our minds will get used to inner images whether they are clear or unclear. Keep observing them. The image will develop from a little clearness to high clearness. Just keep on observing until the image becomes very evident. If light appears it will develop from little light to very bright light. When we let them be and just observe them with no thought, our minds will begin to come to a standstill."
3. "We have to be able to remain consistently comfortable and calm. We do not need to worry about what we see or not see or what it is. Soon the mind will properly achieve the right position. While the mind can properly attain the

⁵Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** July 9, 2540 B.E

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** October 19, 2537 B.E

right position, our mind will be stopped. Once the mind stops, it will fall inside the center of the body and the Dhamma Sphere will arise.”

4. We have to practice with ease. We should practice all the time whether we are in a meditation room or not. It’s our job to do it. We need to behave like we are a Dhamma soldier. We need to study Vijja Dhammakaya within and search for the utmost Dhamma. It’s really our duty both inside and outside the meditation room. Additionally, it is a full time duty. The reason why our inner experiences inside and outside the meditation room are different is because sometimes we achieve a better practice due to relaxation when we’re outside a meditation room. We take it too seriously when we practice in the meditation room.⁹
5. We shouldn’t worry about anything when we meditate. We should just let everything go. We have to be happy with our inner experiences. When we are satisfied with each inner experience, then any occurrences that develop will create good experiences for us. It will increasingly improve our experience to progressively attain more refinement. We should only be satisfied with our inner experience. What will happen if we feel satisfied? Our mind won’t get anxiety. It won’t feel like we have a competitor. Thus, the mind will feel at ease. When the mind becomes comfortable, it will attain more refinement respectively. It constantly develops little by little.

Inner experiences are topics that we should study so we can recognize which practice is the correct one. However, do not remember it as a theory or memorize it, like we do for a test. The most important point is that all experiences only occur when we practice meditation.

The Lord Buddha once said,

“Patjangtang Vethitappo.”

It means that we only know it when it happens to ourselves. Thus, we should apply the knowledge to our own practice. Allow the mind to stay still no matter what inner experience happens. If we can do this, our practice will consistently improve.

⁹Phrathepyanmahamuni. **Meditation Teaching** August 4, 2537 B.E

Activities

After students have finished studying Chapter 6, Inner Experiences, please complete the Self-Assessment and finish the Chapter 6 workbook. Then, continue to study Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Examples of Inner Experiences

Units in This Chapter

- 7.1 Use a Cuspidor as a Mental Object**
- 7.2 Set up a Time for Your Meditation Practice. It is Impossible in This World to Not Have Time**
- 7.3 A Hen is a Teacher**
- 7.4 A Child Who Could Meditate for a Long Time**
- 7.5 Meditation is not limited by Time and Place.**
- 7.6 A Four Year Old Child Taught Her Five Year Old Sister to Meditate**
- 7.7 Do Anything except Think**
- 7.8 An Old Boxer**
- 7.9 A Mother Taught Her Child to Meditate**
- 7.10 Teaching a Mother How to Meditate**
- 7.11 Experiences from Different Religions**

Chapter at a Glance

1. Attaining the Dhamma within can happen to anybody no matter what their nationality, religion, or race may be. Children, adults and seniors can attain the inner Dhamma if they take it seriously and practice meditation regularly. The Dhamma is in everyone as expressed in some examples mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter should give students the knowledge and understanding to be able to:

1. Give some examples of successful meditation practice.
2. Apply techniques and ideas from examples listed into their daily meditations.

Examples of Inner Experiences

Some people may think that attaining the inner Dhamma is difficult. However, a lot of people have attained the Dhamma within or the Dhammakaya within by using the meditation method discovered by Phramongkolthepmuni (Sodh Candasaro or Luang Phaw Wat Paknam). If we look at these people, they are normal people and they are not clairvoyant. They are not different from us. They had to go through the same experience such as darkness, sleepiness, distraction, and tiredness. They practiced very hard so that one day they were able to reach Lord Buddha's Dhamma. In this chapter, we will talk about examples of people who attained Dhamma within, including their backgrounds and practice. We will use the examples for your inspiration to access the inner Dhamma.

7.1 Use a Cuspidor as a Mental Object

Khun Yai Ajarn Maha Ratana Upasika Thongsuk Sumdangpun¹ was a merchant. She had two children and her husband had passed away. She worked very hard in order to support her family. Her children were very mischievous so she had to pay them to go to the theater to see movies. Then, she would have time to meditate. However, she still could not access the Dhamma within because she really wanted to achieve it. When she meditated, she felt frustrated, stressed out, tired, sleepy, distracted and discouraged. She also felt hurt. She thought that she did not have enough merits. She felt displeased while she meditated.

One day she went to the temple. She saw a lot of monks' cuspidors. She said to herself that she had a lot of defilements like the stains on those cuspidors. She went and washed all of those cuspidors for the monks. She washed a hundred of them. While she was cleaning them, she told herself that she hoped her defilements would go away from scrubbing them. She felt pretty good afterwards. Then, she went and meditated. She tried to visualize the Lord Buddha but she could not. The only image that she saw was a cuspidor. It changed from one to another cuspidor. Many cuspidor images arose one by one in her mind. Finally, the cuspidors she visualized changed to clear and transparent ones. One of the cuspidors became quite still, so she observed it continuously and it became clearer and clearer. The top of the cuspidor had a round shape. She looked inside the crystal cuspidor. Her mind became clear and at ease.

Once she finished meditating, she went out to have lunch. While she walked up the stairs, her mind became focused. She saw a crystal cuspidor shining brightly and she reached the Dhammakaya within at that very moment. She still continued to sustain the Dhammakaya. She saw the Lord Buddha inside all the time. She didn't quite understand her inner experience. She was afraid that when she ate, the food would drop on the Lord Buddha's head. She was afraid that that would be sinful. She only took 2 bites of her food. She went and met and talked to her teacher. Her teacher told her that she should stay overnight at the temple and keep meditating all night. She responded that she could not stay because she

¹ The Master Nun Thongsuk Sumdangpun

was worried about her two children. Her teacher said that if she died now, her children would still survive. She decided to stay and made a wish to protect her children. She meditated until she was an expert at accessing the inner Dhamma.

That is an example of a person who did not use the Lord Buddha or Crystal ball image as a mental object. According to the meditation technique, “whatever shows up, just continuously observe it with a sense of ease.” She did not oppose whatever arose in her mind. She saw the cuspidor and used it as a mental object. Eventually, her mind came to a standstill and she was able to reach the inner Dhamma.

7.2 Set up a Time for Your Meditation Practice. It is Impossible in this World to not Have Time.

Khun Yai Ajarn Maha Rattana Upasika ChandraKhonnokyoong² decided to leave her home and seek a way to reach the inner Dhamma when she was 26 years old. She left all of her assets to her family. Her mom cried and gave her one Baht. She accepted it. Her mind was sound and normal. Typically, she felt neutral. At that moment, she felt nothing. Usually when a daughter saw her mom cry, she would feel sensitive. However, this time she felt so strong and she really loved the Dhamma. She thought that one day she would be able to help her mom once she reached the Dhamma within.

At that moment, her mind felt neutral without thought, but was set only to seek the inner Dhamma. Her goal was more important. She heard about one wealthy woman who was a lay supporter of Wat Paknam, Bhasicharoen. She felt so happy when she heard that news. She made a decision to work at that woman’s house. She did not care if she had to work very hard. She decided to work for that wealthy woman for the purpose that the lady could bring her to Wat Pak Nam. She thought that she could do any kind of work. She did not think that she would be a maid, but to help the owner clean the house and take care of the owner’s assets. She thought that wherever she resided, that place had to be clean and organized. She had to take good care of the homeowner’s assets.

When the Khun Yai made a decision, she acted immediately. That was her habit. She did not care how much work she had to do or how hard she had to do it. She did not think that it was hard work. She was still young so once she rested, she gained her energy back. She worked until her lady relied on her and let her take care of all of her assets and money. Only the owner and Khun Yai Chandra were allowed in the safe room (the room in which all money and precious assets are stored and tightly and safely secured) to clean and she took care of all assets. Other persons could not get in there, even her children, niece or nephew. The owner of the house loved her very much because she was well behaved and trustworthy.

At that time, Khun Yai Thongsuk had attained the Dhammakaya, but did not ordain as a nun yet. She was a laywoman from the temple. The wealthy lady was a student of Khun YaiThongsuk and she invited Khun YaiThongsuk to teach the Dhamma at her house. When Khun Yai Chandrasaw Khun YaiThongsuk, she felt very happy. That was because Khun Yai Thongsuk could teach the Dhamma and how to access it.

² The Master Nun Chandra Khonnokyoong

Khun Yai Chandra took care of Khun Yai Thongsuk when Khun Yai Thongsuk came and stayed at the wealthy lady's house. Khun Yai Chandrawashed and ironed Khun Yai Thongsuk's clothes, and took good care of her while Khun Yai Thongsuk stayed at that wealthy lady's house. Then, Khun Yai Thongsuktaught Khun Yai Chandra how to meditate and how to access the Inner Dhamma. Khun Yai Thongsuktold Khun Yai Chandrato placeher mind at the 7th Base Level of the Mind and to keep repeating the mantra, "Samma Arahang." Khun Yai Chandra was so delighted.

Khun Yai Chandra practiced meditation in the meditation room and on the house deck. The wealthy lady allowed Khun Yai Chandra to attend meditation. Khun Yai Chandra would hurry and finish all her work so she could go and meditate. She worked perfectly and had enough time to practice meditation. She wouldn't make the house's owner feel uncomfortable. She was able to manage her work and meditation very well. She practiced meditation in a hidden place. It was hard for her to calm her mind as she was afraid about the home owner watching her meditating. However, one day Khun Yai Chandra saw a small little spot at the 7th Base Level of the Mind. It was like a little star. It was very difficult for Khun Yai Chandrato find time to meditate as she had a lot of work to do. However, one day when meditating on the deck, she reached the Inner Dhammakaya.

That is an example of Khun YaiChandra. She's an idol for us. She was a meditation practitioner whose goal was to access the Dhamma within, no matter what it took. She had a lot of work to do but she always found herself time to practice meditation. Finally, she reached the Dhamma within because she loved meditation so much. She's a good example that we should follow.

7.3 A Hen is a Teacher

Khun Yai Puk Muyprasert³ started going to Wat Paknam when she was thirty-eightyears old. She was a gardener. She had two teachers, which were LuangPhawWatPaknam and a hen. She said that on every Buddhist Holy day and every Thursday, when she went to the temple to meditate, she had no inner experience.

Until one day, she went to her farmhouse. She smelt something burning. She found out that the fire from the stove blew out and burnt her hen's tail. Her tail was smoking. However, the hen still sat here. It did not move at all. She took a closer look and found out that the hen was hatching her eggs. She thought that it was so amazing at how this hen was willing to die for its babies and it was just an animal. She thought about her meditation practice, and that she was not trying hard enough.

Luang Phaw Wat Paknam always said that we should meditate like a hen hatching its eggs. She did not understand it back then but now she understood. She made up her mind that she would meditate that night. She would sit to death if she couldn't reach the Dhamma within. She was not afraid of mosquitoes biting her. She started meditating in the evening. There were so many mosquitoes and they bit her everywhere. However, she did not move a bit. She felt itchy and uncomfortable all through her body. Her body felt cramped and fatigued. She still could not see anything but darkness. In the morning, she felt like she was almost going to die because of the pain. Finally, she was able to access the Pathama

³ The Master Nun PukMuyprasert

Magga, the primary crystal sphere, which was so bright and clear. Then, all her pain was gone. She also reached the Dhammakaya within.

Khun Yai Puk is an example of a person who practiced earnestly and would not give up and then reached the Dhamma within. Phramongkolthepmuni (Luang Phaw Wat Paknam) once said,

“Laying down one’s life enables everyone to attain the Dhammakaya within.”

7.4 A Child Who Could Meditate for a Long Time

A child named Ton, when he was 11-12 years old, made up his mind that he would meditate until he reached the Dhamma within. He meditated under the sun and on the top of an ant nest. Thus, he was bitten by ants all over his body. He felt so hot and full of pain.

He took his meditation practice so seriously that he reached the Dhamma within. Attaining the Dhamma was a gift given to him as he was strong and willing to defeat every obstacle. His Dhamma Sphere within became so bright. He felt so cheerful and happy. The moment that the brightness arose, the darkness disappeared. The minute that the bliss existed, suffering vanished. As soon as the strength appeared, the weakness disappeared.

Since then, he had high willpower as he had laid down his life. His story was told so many times. Everyone was happy for him and wanted to be like him.

That is an example of building your spirit and being a fighter. A fighter will not give up when he/she has pain. We have to be like the little boy, Ton. He was only 11-12 years old but he had decided to lay down his life. Thus, he was able to succeed in meditation.

7.5 Meditation is Not Limited by Time and Place

One day there was a man that wanted to give a massage to LuangPhaw. Luang Phaw looked at him. He was not very neat looking so LuangPhaw said no. Then, he asked LuangPhaw to teach him how to how to meditate. Luang Phaw taught him to allow his mind to come to a standstill in the abdomen. Then, the man left. LuangPhaw, later on, opened the window looking for him and saw him sitting in the mortar at a pillar. After an hour and a half, he came back and said that he saw nothing except for a bright Lord Buddha.

Another person was a worker at the Dhammakaya Temple. One day it rained so hard that he could not work. Then, he resided in a cottage. He came and told Luang Phaw that it rained and he could not work. So, he meditated by repeating the mantra Samma Arahang and he saw a bright cloud at the center of his body.

Those two stories are examples of the Lord Buddha’s teaching, “Akaliko,” which means timeless. The Dhamma is not limited by time. If we can still our minds no matter where we are or when it is, we are able to attain the Dhamma.

7.6 A Four Year Old Child Taught Her Five Year Old Sister to Meditate

One teaching monk taught 2 children to meditate. One was a four year old boy and the other one was his five year old sister. The monk guided them with easy instructions. He told them to visualize a crystal ball. After a while, the monk asked them if they saw a crystal ball or not. The sister said no while the brother said yes. The monk thought that his age and their ages were different. He let the brother gave some meditation advice to his sister. The brother told his sister to just say yes. The teaching monk asked the sister again if she saw a bright and clear crystal ball. The sister then replied yes. Then, she saw a very clear and bright crystal ball. The monk followed with wanting to know how long those two children could meditate for. He was surprised that they could meditate for a long time like the adults since they saw the clear crystal sphere in side of them.

That is an example of children who normally do not think of anything because they do not have the experiences of earning a livelihood or meeting so many people. Therefore, their minds are innocent and pure. You only need to tell them to think about a crystal ball. They can do it. On the other hand, teaching adults to meditate and asking them if they saw a crystal ball or not, most people will say “no” since they think too much. Meditation should be easy. We should act like a child, and just think more clearly and just keep maintaining the mental object. One day we will be able to reach the Dhamma within like those two children.

7.7 Do Anything Except Think

One Korean student came to learn meditation with Eric Levine. Eric uses simple methods of teaching. He told the Korean student that you can do anything except think. The Korean student followed his instruction because it was not hard. The simple technique is not to think. It took only a few minutes. The student came and told Eric that he saw a crystal sphere in his stomach. He kept meditating for the next few days. He saw more light and finally he saw the Lord Buddha at the center of his body. Eric did not tell him what was inside.

The student told Eric that his life was like staying in a dark cave. He only knew darkness. One day someone told him to go out from the cave. He did that. He saw the light outside and the world was so big. His inner experience was similar to the story he told. He said that inner light always exists. It’s always there. It’s like when he walked outside; he would see clouds, the sky, the sun, the moon and the stars. The inner experience already exists. We only enter inside and then we will find that.

That is an example of not thinking while meditating. The best way to meditate is to gently still your mind and not think. We should use that technique in our meditation. We should just follow the simple method, which is not to think. Then, we will have the same inner experience like that Korean student.

7.8 An Old Boxer

There was one monk who used to be a boxer. His boxing skills were pretty good. When it came to meditation, he could not observe anything. Luang Phaw recommended to him that he should lay down his life for meditation and sit until death. The monk went and meditated under a tree. He was in a lot of pain but he did not move. His body was tired at first and then he was in pain. He felt hurt throughout his body, especially in his knees. He felt so anxious. However, he tried to let the pain go. Finally, his mind became united and all his pain was gone. He saw the Lord Buddha within. Since then, he could meditate for days without any pain or fatigue.

That is an example of being patient. The ones who easily get discouraged or always feel pain or sleepiness will then stop meditating. If we would like to attain the Dhamma, sometimes we have to let those emotions go and sacrifice our lives for meditation once. Then we will be successful.

7.9 A Mother Taught Her Child to Meditate

One mother taught her 9 year old child to meditate. She learned how to meditate at the temple. Then, she taught her child to allow his mind to be still at the center of his abdomen. He followed her instructions. She asked her son what he saw. He said that he saw a crystal sphere. It was very clear and bright. She asked her son how clear, bright and crystalline it was. He said that it was as clear as his visual eyes, as bright as the midday sun and as crystalline as ice. She asked him again to make sure that he really saw it that way and he said yes, he did see it that way.

He explained that at first, he only saw darkness but he kept practicing his meditation. Then, he felt like his body was expanding until his body was as big as a room. He felt so light and comfortable. He saw a tiny spot. It was not very clear at first. He kept observing it. Then, the spot kept getting bigger and brighter until it was as bright as the midday sun, as clear as the ice like seeing with his visual eyes.

Therefore, all practitioners have to practice according to the instructions that the mother told her son. We will have the same results as her son. Phrathepyanmahayamuni once stated that we have to still our minds and then we will be able to attain the Inner Dhamma.

7.10 Teaching a Mother How to Meditate

One of the lay male followers who worked at the temple missed his mother. He went home to see his mom and teach her how to meditate. However, he did not attain the Dhamma. She asked him,

“You have stayed at the temple for a long time and you slowly sculpt (artist sculpting) the Lord Buddha Images. Why don’t you speedily complete the sculpture of the Buddha Images? Others can sculpt lots of the Lord Buddha Images.”

He said,

“Mom, it is because you did not help me.”

She asked him,

“How can I help you? I don’t know how to sculpt.”

He said,

“Mom, close your eyes and observe the Lord Buddha Image. Please tell me what the Lord Buddha Image looks like.”

She closed her eyes and said,

“I saw the Inner Lord Buddha.”

He was surprised that she could see it so quickly. Then, he told her to visualize it as big as the temple. She did it. He told her to make it small. She did it.

He asked his mom,

“See inside the Inner Lord Buddha.”

She said,

“There is nothing except the Lord Buddha and the crystal sphere. Sometimes I see the crystal Lord Buddha. Sometimes I see the crystal sphere. What do you want me to see? I see only the crystal sphere and the Lord Buddha within. There is nothing more. So, what did you see? I see only those.”

He replied,

“Mom, we will talk about this later.”

On the next day, she asked him,

“How was your inner experience?”

He replied,

“I still did not see anything.”

She said,

“You pay homage to the Lord Buddha Image every day. Didn’t you see the Lord Buddha within? Can’t you really visualize the Inner Lord Buddha?”

He replied,

“I can’t visualize the Inner Lord Buddha Image.”

Then, his mom taught him,

“Can you visualize my face?”

He replied,

“I still cannot do it.”

Later, the male layperson had a chance to join a meditation course. Luang Phaw advised him to close his eyes and imagine candlelight. He was able to visualize it but it seemed far away by about ten meters and it was not clear. Luang Phaw told him not to worry and to let it be. He kept doing it although it was not clear. He observed it without any doubt until his mind could properly be still at the right position and be united. The candlelight was united as a whole candle. He observed the top of the candle light until the candlelight disappeared and a bright and clear Pathama Magga arose. Luang Phaw told him to meditate all day and all night and not to stop. He did it. He meditated for 24 hours and finally he attained the Dhammakaya within.

The mother of this layperson was another example of a person who made meditation simple and easy. Her son was also a good example. Although his meditation was not good yet, he was able to teach his mom to attain the Inner Dhamma. Finally, with his hard work, he was able to attain the Inner Dhamma himself.

7.11 Experiences From Different Religions

One of the female lay followers was born into a non-Buddhist family. She received an invitation to practice meditation for seven days. Her friend explained that she did not have to convert to a religion or change her belief system in order to practice meditation. It was just a way to access inner happiness. Meditation is not about a belief system. It’s only meant for people who want to seek truth and happiness.

She attended a meditation retreat. She believed in her religion and was not familiar with Buddhist traditions. She did not pay respects to the teaching monk as she was not taught to pay respects to any Lord Buddha or monks. The teaching monk understood her. He understood where she came from. She practiced meditation by not using the mantra Samma Arahang. In her mind, she was afraid to do it as she thought it might be sinful. Instead she used a sacred word from her religion. She kept saying her words and she saw the crystal sphere and Inner Dhammakaya. She denied it and did not want to see it. However, she kept seeing the Inner Lord Buddha and felt so much happiness that she had never felt before. She left the room. She went outside and started to cry with joy. The teaching monk asked why she was crying. She told him that she found what was inside herself even though she did not utilize the mantra Samma Arahang. And she found the Inner Dhammakaya soon afterwards. She found true happiness within. She felt so happy.

There was another person who was a Muslim man. He had a chance to meet Luang Phaw. Luang Phaw told him,

“What I would like you to focus on are the things that are neutral in this world. They are similar to the sun, the moon and the stars that can be seen by everybody regardless of nationality or language. In addition, they can appear within your body. Therefore, it won’t be opposed to your belief. You’d better start meditating now.”

Luang Phaw further stated,

“What can you easily visualize that makes you feel happy and peaceful?”

The gentleman replied,

“I would like to use an Islamic symbol, which is a crescent moon.”

Luang Phaw advised him by saying,

“You can use that as a mental object to rest your mind in.”

Luang Phaw asked him,

“Which word do you think of that makes you feel happy and generates the energy to do good deeds?”

He responded with,

“I would like to use the name Allah, as I respect Allah.”

Then, Luang Phaw instructed him,

“Put the crescent moon symbol at your 7th Base Level of the Mind and repeat the name Allah with ease. You have to visualize correctly. Visualize with a sense of ease in the center of your abdomen and repeat the mantra. Just do it. Whatever happens, you’ll see it. Then, tell me what you see and I’ll listen to you.”

He meditated the way that Luang Phaw advised him to. He continuously repeated the name of his God with respect until his mind was properly still in the right position. Then, bright light appeared. Then happiness burst out. He saw a clear crystal sphere. He incessantly observed it without knowing anything about meditation. He observed it and he saw the Lord Buddha within. He opened his eyes and refused to see the Lord Buddha Image. He said, “No, No.” However, he felt sorry that he lost the inner experience and the happiness. He felt so happy and calm seeing bright light and the Dhamma Sphere. He closed his eyes again. When his mind was properly still, he saw the Dhamma Sphere and the Lord Buddha again. But that time, numerous images of them appeared. He opened his eyes because he did not want to see the Lord Buddha. Again he could not resist the happiness she felt, so he started to close his eyes again. The Lord Buddha arose one by one and then, he saw a lot of Lord Buddha came out from his center. He felt so much happiness that the gentleman cried. He then commented that what he saw was really within the body

and he felt so happy. He did not repeat the mantra Samma Arahang, but repeated the name Allah with great respect to his religion. His mind ultimately could be still.

Those two examples are of practitioners who were not Buddhists but could still access the Dhamma within. The Dhammakaya is inside everyone but no one can do it for you, only you can do it for yourself.

All stories mentioned in this Chapter are examples of people who attained the Inner Dhamma. We should apply these experiences and methods to our own practice.

Activities

After students have finished studying Chapter 7, “Examples of Inner Experiences,” please complete the self- assessment and finish your Chapter 7 workbook.