



# B u d d h a

k n o w s

An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism by  
Monica Øien

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Published by  
Foundation of Wisdom Perfection  
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88/136 Mu 4, Charoensuk 4 Village  
Soi Senanikom 1, Paholyotin Road  
Chorakaebua Sub-District  
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ISBN: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Printed in Thailand by Rung Silp Printing

# Contents

Preface	06
Background	07
Interview	09
Rebirth & Incarnation	17
Monastic V.S. Secular Life	24
Buddhist Congregation	30
Buddhist View on Sex	33
Death & Afterlife	39
Daily Life of Buddhists Meditation	44
A Successful Marriage	49
Death and Rebirth	54
How to Meditate ?	62
About the Interviewer	76
About Luang Phaw Dhammajayo	77
Basic Meditation Practice	80
Credits	83

While Buddhism was born and has prospered in the Oriental world, blessing people with the teachings that guide them towards happy lives and both mental and physical wellbeing, people from the Occidental world have recently become increasingly more interested in Buddhist philosophy as a way to find the answers for their lives that cannot be explained by science and technology.

The book *Buddha Knows* was derived from an interview between Monica Øien, the hostess of a number of Norwegian TV programs, and Luang Phaw Dhammajayo, the abbot of the Dhammakaya Temple and president of the Dhammakaya Foundation, who sacrificed his valuable time from the duties of promoting world-peace through inner-peace, to answer all the challenging questions from western people who lack a background knowledge in Buddhism. His answers, which contain a lot of Buddhist wisdom, have given light to the interviewer who has spread this knowledge to a Norwegian audience via her television show.

The publisher considers this interview to be beneficial for all people who wish to access the Lord Buddha's teachings through simple, conversational language. For all non-Buddhists who are curious about Buddhism, this book is a quick guide that



## Background

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provides the fundamentals of Buddhist views. We have obtained permission from Luang Phaw Dhammajayo to publish this book.

A survey in Norway has revealed that there are many things people still wonder about in their lives, like human birth, how to raise children and lead a wholesome family life, the practice of a monk's celibacy, death and the afterlife, effective time management, and the Buddhist engagement in religious ceremonies. All these questions inspired the Norwegian producers from TV2, who have tried to provide some answers to these questions that will help the audience solve their problems and maximize their lives. This program is called "Gudene Vet" which means "God Knows" in Norwegian, where different religious leaders are interviewed for TV broadcast.

The presenter of this chat show is Ms. Monica Øien, a well established hostess and TV producer, who has traveled around the world in search of answers to the mysteries of life. She has met and interviewed many people from various religions, with different beliefs and from diverse backgrounds, who have given her various perspectives of their worldviews that form the foundation of her program.

The producers' team was very interested to hear the Buddhist



## Background

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worldview, so they researched the Buddhist countries and found a prominent organization that has become internationally successful in spreading the wisdom of Buddhism. The team asked for permission from the Dhammakaya temple to interview the abbot, Luang Phaw Dhammajayo (The Most Venerable Dhammajayo Bhikkhu), and record the Kathina ceremony, an annual offering of robes for Buddhist monks at the temple. After the sacred Kathina ceremony on 5th November 2006, there was an interview with the abbot the next day at the Tusita Pavilion of Dhammakaya temple. The interview ran from 2:00 – 5:30 pm. Apart from giving an interview, Luang Phaw Dhammajayo also taught the production team how to meditate, which brought each of them a unique experience of inner peace.

The program “God Knows” which is on TV2, one of Norway’s most popular channels, broadcasted the conversation between the abbot of the Dhammakaya temple and Ms. Monica Øien from 11th February to 18th March 2007. This program was on the air during Sunday prime time, from 6 pm onward.



# Interview

“If you could go further  
beyond the praying, you can  
enter into a deeper level.”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Interview

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Luang Phaw: Blessings! Beautiful bows from you. Where did you learn this?

Monica : Thank you. A wonderful laywoman here taught me. I have been practicing.

Luang Phaw: Really? Very nice! Please take your seat. I have seen pictures of beautiful Norway which motivates me to visit, but I am afraid of cold weather.

Monica : It's really cold, that's true. But in summer it goes up to 25 degrees.

Luang Phaw: Which months are in summer?

Monica : May, June, July, and August.

Luang Phaw: That's during Buddhist lent. What about Hallgrim? How many times have you been to Thailand?

Hallgrim : Same.

Luang Phaw: Oh, really? Both of you?

Monica : My friends usually go to Thailand every year, and I have been dreaming of visiting for 36 years. So, now I'm here. Phrasomsak taught me the beginning of meditation yesterday.





## Interview

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Luang Phaw : Have you ever tried meditation before?

Monica : I have been doing a little bit of yoga. I think meditation is more similar to my praying.

Luang Phaw : Yes, and there is a more advanced level of meditation as well.

Monica : You know this scares me, the deeper method. But that's probably why I should pursue it.

Luang Phaw : Meditation beyond praying occurs once it is altered into serenity.

Monica : Wow!

Luang Phaw : You already have a good background on regular praying which is a level of meditation. If you could go further beyond the praying, you can enter into a deeper level. I think it is about time. You have been praying for 36 years. This is the year that you should go further towards deeper meditation.

Monica : I can sense it. I agree with you. I am very optimistic. I have seen here at the temple that it's possible to do a quick meditation for 5 minutes a day. So we will start



## Interview

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to do meditation in Norway for 5 minutes a day, and then when we are hooked, we will not stop. Then we will do more.

Luang Phaw: Certainly, when you get hooked, nobody can stop you. It's up to you if you want to meditate. Your objective here is not just for an interview.

Monica : Not just for myself. Next time I promise to have a day off for meditation.

Luang Phaw: Don't be concerned about time. Even a few hours spent in Thailand could also lead you to that meditation level.

Monica : Well definitely, I can feel that I am really calm now because we came from New Delhi. And, well, we had such a hard trip with the traffic and we didn't sleep. So only time we could relax was when we came here to the temple yesterday.

Luang Phaw: Ah! Where did you learn about the Buddhist culture? How do you know that Buddhists place their hands in the prayer position when conversing with monks?



## Interview

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Monica : Well, they taught me here.

Luang Phaw: You took it easily then?

Monica : Once I relaxed it felt normal for me to do it. And I am a naturally curious person, so I always want to find out what people think and do wherever I go. It's kind of my hobby as well.

Luang Phaw: Excellent! How did you come up with these interesting questions?

Monica : I did it together with my researcher and director in Norway.

Luang Phaw: So, I assume these questions are derived from the issues that Norwegians are interested in, right?

Monica : Well, I am honored to do one of the few religious programs on television in Norway. We are raising these new questions because I think the world in general is missing a lot about life, joy, happiness and love. We have been finding out how to get religion to meet materialism, so that we can be happier people in Norway. We are suffering a lot from the darkness and



## Interview

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the coldness. Those are our questions in life, and especially for me, Monica.

Luang Phaw: Monica, let's put it this way. Due to my age I might need some assistants to help answer as my health is not so robust, and I will add other things that others can also benefit from. Some questions might not be fully countered and I will gradually add to them bit by bit as we proceed. We should enjoy our conversation and share each other's experience, rather than only do an interview. I wish to make my answers as beneficial as possible.

Monica : That's great, thank you. Firstly, I would like to ask you if you believe in the economic church, if you believe that all religions are related somehow, and how they are linked to each other.

Luang Phaw: Economic Church?

Monica : Yes economic; like they are all logically promoting the same thing. All the churches, all the religions, the big religions, the main religions, are connected somehow.



## Interview

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They all have the same goal. By using the TV program we can learn much from the other religions and incorporate the wisdom into our daily lives.

Luang Phaw: Indeed, all the mainstream religions are derived from the same core of wisdom. To tell you the truth, this is my first time on Norwegian television program. You are the first Norwegian who interviews me.

Monica : I am really honored. Thank you, Tusen Takk.

Luang Phaw: Your native language sounds beautiful. If I wish to greet you in Norwegian, what should I say?

Monica : Ok, do you take the challenge? Yes, you take the challenge. “Hvordan har du det?”

Luang Phaw: Sounds beautiful, but difficult as well... “Hvordan har du det?”

Monica : Oh yes.

Luang Phaw: This means that I can go to Norway, not so?

Monica : Yes, but you will not understand the answer.

Luang Phaw: I will just smile then. We won't ever starve to death if we smile. I enjoy conversing with you, but I'm not



## Interview

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sure if the interview part will be entertaining.

Monica : So then we will reciprocate. I learn things from you, and now you learn things from me.

Luang Phaw: Right, we both meet each other halfway. I think that's fine.

Monica : This is a very beautiful room. And the temple itself is amazing. I'm very impressed. And the atmosphere you have is so peaceful, and yes... I could live here.

Luang Phaw: Really?

Monica : Well, yes. I could live here, but I have a baby... I guess this way of life would be difficult for me.

Luang Phaw: Well, simply meditate and you will enjoy the utmost satisfaction, both you and I, even for a short period of time.

Monica : Oh, thank you.

Luang Phaw: OK, please go ahead and ask your questions.



# Rebirth & Incarnation

*“Our birth is not directed by anyone, but it is the matter of karma/ retribution for or past deeds”*

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Rebirth & Incarnation

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Monica : Thank you. Ok, what does it mean for a Buddhist to give birth to a child?

Luang Phaw: Buddhism regards a birth not only as a natural process. We consider that everyone is reborn because of a cyclical drive, and as long as the driven force remains, one continues to be reborn in order to learn the truth of life that would lead to the final stage, or the end of birth, because the more often we are born, the more suffering we encounter. Birth is the origin of many other kinds of sufferings such as aging, ailments, demise, departure from loved objects, facing unpleasant things and torment from unfulfilled desire. Consequently, a human being birth is not only natural, but also with the purpose to cease birth itself. This Buddhist view is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but rather realistic. The reality is that suffering coexists with birth. Our birth is not directed by anyone, but it is the matter of karma or retribution for our past deeds. Physically, birth starts from a father and a mother who





## Rebirth & Incarnation

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have a sexual relationship, or in Dhamma terms, physical intercourse where the refined body is given an opportunity to incarnate.

Monica : Can you tell me if the Buddhists have any birth rituals, and why you do or do not have them?

Luang Phaw: Traditional Buddhists have no rites associated directly or indirectly to birth because we were taught not to force the newborn child to become a new Buddhist. However, everyone is subject to learning the ‘know-how’ in order to achieve one’s goal of ending rebirth. However, some families believe in making merits by inviting monks for food offerings on a family member’s birthday will make the day auspicious. Sometimes they request the monks to name their child. Anyway, the principle is that the parents have to raise their children with care. They are also obliged to educate their children on how to be a good person in society and achieve the goal of being born human.



## Rebirth & Incarnation

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Monica : Is it an issue what the child was in their former life? Does it any matter to the parents if they come from terrible background in a former life?

Luang Phaw: Actually, it's hard for parents to know about a past lifetime of their child. They never know where the child was from. What they do know is that they have to care for their child with love and warmth, as well as teaching the child according to the Dhamma. However, if they find out later on that their child was from an unwholesome realm such as the realm of the animals, they should simply accept the truth. Although they might feel unfortunate, it is a good opportunity for them to guide their child for improvement in the present and the future.

Monica : Do they expect their children to come from a good passed life?

Luang Phaw: Buddhist parents are similar to all other parents. They expect their child to have come from a good realm.



## Rebirth & Incarnation

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Monica : What does the Buddhist script teach parents about how they should raise or have children?

Luang Phaw: The Lord Buddha taught that parents should feed them not only with food, but they should also teach their child to abstain from misdeeds such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, consumption of alcohol and narcotics, and involvement in any other unwholesome allurements. These are the first steps. For the next step, they have to teach their child to do only good deeds including practicing generosity, observing precepts, and meditating. Thirdly, parents should support their child's education to the highest level. The fourth step is that parents should advise their child on how to choose a promising spouse. Significantly, due to their long experience in married life, the parents should help their sons and daughters to find a consort which is relevant to them in four aspects: faith, precepts, attitude, and belief, so they can live together harmoniously. Lastly, provide the children



## Rebirth & Incarnation

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with property in a timely manner so as to be invested in the future. The parents also suggest how to earn, spend and save money.

Monica : In my travels I have seen different birth traditions around the world, in different religions. I just wonder, are there any spiritual differences in having a boy or a girl for parents in Buddhism?

Luang Phaw: What do you mean by “spiritual differences”?

Monica : Spiritual, well...I don't know if that's the proper word. But I was thinking about whether they have different responsibilities, or if one sex is more important than the other, because a lot of other religions think that. I just wondered if it's something that's considered in Buddhism as well.

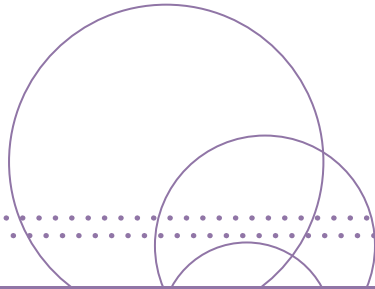
Luang Phaw: In Buddhism, we do not worry about the child's gender since it has nothing to do with the parents' spiritual progress and prosperity. Indeed, it depends on whether the parents follow the teaching of the Lord Buddha. Parents will be happy



## Rebirth & Incarnation

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if their children show gratitude towards them as a result of their teaching, and the success of their children in career, education, capability, and behaviors. The Lord Buddha also taught that children should make merit and dedicate to their parents who have already passed away.



## Monastic v.s Secular Life

“Prince Siddharta, as an example, rejected his excess royal wealth because he foresaw that they provided limited happiness whereas sufferings still existed”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Monastic v.s Secular Life

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Monica : Good, thank you. What do the monks think about family life? And do you consider family life to be a distraction from your faith?

Luang Phaw: Family life is restricted by many factors, similar to a fish swimming in a tank compared to a fish swimming in the ocean. While one is constrained in a specific area, the other enjoys the boundless space of the sea. In other words, we may also compare a married couple to caged birds who are not allowed to fly freely in the sky. So marriage is a binding of life, and family life is not easy. There are several things to worry about, and this would obstruct the path towards Arahantship, the highest attainment in Buddhism. If we wish to attain nirvana, monkhood is the only status that takes you there. For laypeople, they can attain enlightenment up to a certain level, but not the highest level. Look at Prince Siddharta who was blessed with a beautiful wife and an adorable baby boy. He had never found the utmost satisfaction in life although he



## Monastic v.s Secular Life

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had abundant wealth, dignity, power, and servants.

Finally, he renounced the world and sought to ordain since he realized that a family life does not encourage the Dhamma attainment. Is that clear to you?

Monica : It seems as if we in the west only find happiness when we buy a new car or a big house, and have a lot of material things around us. I think that you have good inspired thinking, so I wonder what gives a Buddhists life value.

Luang Phaw: What matters most to Buddhists is Dhamma attainment, because happiness obtained from external sources such as family, dignity, power, and fortune are still limited. They coexist with life's obligations. But happiness and joy from Dhamma attainment is boundless and superior to a household life. Then the value of life can be achieved through the attainment of Dhamma that exists within oneself. Having said that, I would also like to emphasize a basic need for material wealth to a certain degree, but it will never buy true





## Monastic v.s Secular Life

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happiness and the highest satisfaction in life for us.

Prince Siddharta, as an example, rejected his excess royal wealth because he foresaw that they provided limited happiness whereas sufferings still existed. His solution was to ordain until attaining enlightenment which yielded the highest satisfaction for himself.

Those who possess great wealth but never feel satisfied with their lives are still unsuccessful. But the Dhamma attainment will lead us to the highest satisfaction. We will desire for nothing more. We will be able to rely on ourselves and be independent from all external factors.

Monica : What about the tradition of going to the temple? Is it the norm that you have to go to the temple regularly as a Buddhist? Is it accepted to go just once in a while, or having to go every Sunday? I am talking about normal Buddhists, not monks.

Luang Phaw: Devout Buddhists usually go to the temple to make merits. However, as happens in other religions, non-



## Monastic v.s Secular Life

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strict Buddhists do not care to keep this trait. They do not make themselves a frequent visitor to temples.

Monica : Does the script tell about organizing the temple, and the fellowship among other Buddhists?

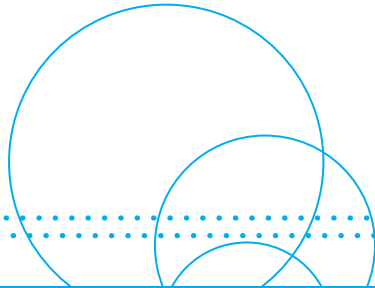
Luang Phaw: There is a teaching that Buddhists should visit temples regularly in order to learn from the wise, the sages, and especially the Buddhist monks, who prolong the Lord Buddha's teachings. This allows the new generation to understand the truth of life and to follow the path accordingly, so they can live their lives righteously towards the ultimate goal of humankind by correcting their view first. The Lord Buddha never forced anyone to become a Buddhist or to visit the temples, he just pointed out the many benefits of doing so. This raises the awareness that one should take the best care of oneself in both private and public aspect by doing only good deeds. Did I make it clear to you? Simply speaking, Buddhists do not force anyone to visit temples but provide better understanding until one



## Monastic v.s Secular Life

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is willing to come. For example, one is given guidance on how to have the right livelihood which would secure for oneself to be reborn only in the wholesome realms.



# Buddhist Congregation

*“Meditation thus is the easiest and the most effective way that directly solves any problems”*

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Buddhist Congregation

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Monica : What does it mean to a Buddhist to practice meditation in a ceremony like the Kathina Ceremony yesterday? Does it enrich the Buddhist life to meditate together with others, or can they do it just as well at home alone or somewhere else?

Luang Phaw: The reason for mass congregation is unity in meditation practice. Normally the laypeople would meditate individually at home from Monday to Saturday. So, on Sunday, it is a good chance for everyone to get together to meditate and generate strong positive mental energy to cleanse the impurity away from this world. The tradition of communal meritorious activity has been practiced since the Lord Buddha's time. People may meditate privately or as a group. The mass congregation would motivate the others to follow this good deed as well because the unity of people doing good deeds together is admirable. The moment that people join together to meditate is the moment of peace that can prosper to

become world-peace. The world has experienced spiritual drought for a long time, and the peaceful congregation will bring about change. Peace that everyone has longed for will come into a reality. All problems in this world arise from the wicked mind. As the mind is the cause, to solve the problems, we have to deal with our mind first. War is a result of evil thoughts and furious minds, while peace occurs from a calm and clear mind. Meditation thus is the easiest and the most effective way that directly solves any problems. Although people have been longing for peace, no one has ever imagined it can really take place nowadays. However, meditation will bring about this impossible thing. If everyone meditates together, the world can be changed easily as both wars and peace are the result of our mind's operating.



# Buddhist View on Sex

“Premarital sex is considered the result of a person’s weak and unhealthy mind”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Buddhist View on Sex

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Monica : What does Buddhist script say about sexual life for the Buddhists?

Luang Phaw: Buddhism suggests that intercourse should be treated as a commitment rather than an entertainment. This means that a couple should have intercourse only when they wish to have offspring who will reincarnate to this world for the pursuit of perfections. This makes a human birth different from the birth of animals such as cat and bird which are driven by lust and instinct only. Moreover, this kind of relationship is regarded as a means to enhance people's roles and status. It makes husbands and wives become parents who are the first teachers, the selfless givers, and the spiritual guide for their children. Parents have to perform the duty of a good virtue-mentor by presenting the gateway leading to heaven or nirvana. They are comparable to the noble ones of the family. Thus, all couples should realize this issue and never be obsessed by sexual intercourse. They should contemplate that intercourse





## Buddhist View on Sex

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offers only temporary pleasure which also has negative effects. Therefore, intercourse should be valued and engaged in with the awareness that overindulgence could lead to suffering as well.

Monica : Is it, according to the Buddhist Laws, acceptable to have sexual relationships before marriage?

Luang Phaw: There is no direct teaching about premarital sex. However, the Lord Buddha taught that sexual relationship should take place only when a couple is ready to be husband and wife who are responsible for offspring in order to continue their clan. Premarital sex is considered the result of a person's weak and unhealthy mind. It can be compared with an unripe fruit that is taken before its time. There is no exact teaching or restriction about premarital sex, but most Buddhists regard it as a disgrace and a violation of Buddhist tradition. As a matter of fact, this kind of relationship will cause many problems. The people who have sex before marriage will devalue the



## Buddhist View on Sex

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meaning of both a sexual relationship and marriage. They will prefer sexual pleasure to a meaningful relationship with someone. The heart will lose its innocence as it is filled with passion and lust. Also, abortion is one of a series of problems caused by premarital sex. Expressing love between husbands and wives is a normal activity unless we transgress any restrictions, social values or morality. Sexual pleasure is viewed as temporary satisfaction that brings about some disadvantages if we do not know how to control anxiety and conflict are the result. Buddhism teaches people to treat it as a meaningful relationship that will have a positive effect on a complete family life. Sexual activity thus connotes the sense of sacredness, not promiscuity.

Monica : Celibacy is a norm in temples all over the world. I wonder why monks, Buddhist monks, have to live in celibacy.



## Buddhist View on Sex

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Luang Phaw: One thing you have to bear in mind is that before leading a life in priesthood, all Buddhist monks were once ordinary laypeople. But they consider the life of laypeople full of burdens and responsibilities which prevent them from gaining insight about the truth of life and Dhamma. Laypeople busy their lives with earning money, family matters and life problems. To avoid all these life fetters, one needs to get ordained which will help them achieve the goal of enlightenment. Sensual pleasure is considered temporary happiness which lasts for short period. This kind of pleasure is compared with having a meal. Our hunger will be relieved for a short while and we have to satisfy our needs again in the next meal. Buddhist monks consider happiness from meditation to exceed worldly happiness. Meditation generates true happiness which cannot be found elsewhere. For the sake of this true happiness, monks choose to turn their back on worldly pleasure and practice celibacy.



## Buddhist View on Sex

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Prince Siddharta is an example of a person who deserts all blessing in his life in order to seek the happiness of the mind. Buddhist monks follow His path in search of true happiness as well because they believe that celibacy is a means to liberate themselves from suffering and become enlightened like the Lord Buddha.



## Death & Afterlife

“Death is like a process of transformation from physical bodies to spiritual ones. The Lord also taught that death is a source of humansufferings”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Death & Afterlife

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Monica : What does Buddhist script say about death?

Luang Phaw: The Lord Buddha said death is simple and ordinary for everybody. All people, no matter who they are, the rich or the poor, are subject to death. Death is a part of our lives. As long as there is birth, death will certainly come. Even while we are still living, death still takes place in the form of cells in our bodies. Everyday, there are cells produced and eliminated. This process of birth and death in cells is not quite as explicit as the death of the person, which can be easily seen. With the Lord Buddha's teachings, Buddhists are familiar with the subject of death, viewing it as natural. Death is like a process of transformation from physical bodies to spiritual ones. The Lord also taught that death is a source of human sufferings. It causes separations from people and things we love. We are forced to depart from them although they are our beloved persons, pets and properties. Thus, death is known as suffering.



## Death & Afterlife

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People who do not face death also experience grief as their loved ones are taken away. To stop this cycle of suffering, the Lord Buddha considered there should be no death. Eventually, he found the way to stop death—to cease birth and there will be no death.

Monica : How do Buddhists relate to death? Are they afraid of it, and if not, why?

Luang Phaw: Deep down everybody certainly fears of death, but true Buddhists will be less scared as they know the fact that whether they fear or not, death is inevitable. They thus prepare themselves for death and study what they should do in order to have a good afterlife.

Monica : Do you prepare yourself for death? How do you do that?

Luang Phaw: Buddhists have been taught that death is a binary opposition of birth. To prepare ourselves for the impending death on a normal level, we must learn to purify our minds, avoid unwholesome acts, do good deeds, be helpful and generous to other people, and



## Death & Afterlife

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accumulate merits. Also, one should acknowledge the purpose of being born a human so as to cease birth and find the celestial realm as a halfway before reaching the goal of nirvana. And for those who can attain a higher level of Dhamma, their minds will be free from any emotional crash including the fear of death. More particularly, the person who can reach higher levels of meditation and gain the proper peace of the mind, death or living will be no different to them because they know the nature of death before experiencing the real death.

**Monica** : What do Buddhists expect in the afterlife?

**Luang Phaw**: A Buddhist who clearly comprehends the truth of life would expect no reincarnation in the next life like the Lord Buddha or, at least, would be in heaven, not the other way around. However, the celestial realm is not the ultimate goal as it is only a temporary asylum. When our time in the celestial world ends, we have to be reborn. In our reincarnation in the human world,





## Death & Afterlife

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we aim to eradicate all defilements which are the seed of birth.

Monica : What do they expect will happen when they are dead?

Luang Phaw: A true Buddhist would seek to end the cycle of rebirth by following the Lord Buddha's teachings, but the reckless Buddhists may live their lives aimlessly, similar to followers of many other religions. However, most of them would expect to be reborn in the celestial realm, not in the realm of punishment.



## Daily Life of Buddhists Meditation



“Before bed, again it is the time for prayer and meditation in order to free their mind from stress and all problems they have faced during the day”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Daily Life of Buddhists Meditation

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Monica : What do Buddhist's scripts say about time?

Luang Phaw: Time management for laypeople and Buddhist monks is quite different. Laypeople have to manage their time in order to achieve both worldly and spiritual development. Every morning they will pray, meditate and share merit with all living things after they get up. All day long, they will observe their mind; work with full consciousness and wisdom while encountering problems from their work or their lives. Before bed, again it is the time for prayer and meditation in order to free their mind from stress and all problems they have faced during the day. When they go to bed, they will have a sound and peaceful sleep. All laypeople should know their life goal is that they were born to achieve nirvana, so that they can balance their material and spiritual activities. These are daily activities for general laypeople. In addition, every fortnight on the full-moon day, committed Buddhist will visit the temple and listen to



## Daily Life of Buddhists Meditation

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a sermon, meditate, and make merits. Also, on special days in Buddhism such as Visakha Puja Day, Asarnha Puja Day, Buddhist Lent Day, the end of Buddhist Lent Day, and every Buddhist Sabbath day, they will join Buddhist ceremonies at the temple and observe eight precepts.

Monica : I just wonder, the perception of Thais must be so different inside here. Can you describe an ordinary day for a Buddhist monk?

Luang Phaw: People who determine to be Buddhist monks undoubtedly want to liberate themselves from sufferings, and attain Nirvana like the Lord Buddha who terminated birth. Therefore, all days and nights Buddhist monks practice the duties of monkhood to completely eradicate their spiritual defects. Early in the morning, Buddhist monks pray and meditate. Then, they leave the temples to go on alms rounds. After that, they clean their place and study the Lord Buddha's teaching both by reading the scripture and practicing



## Daily Life of Buddhists Meditation

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meditation. In the evening, they also clean the place, say a prayer, and perform meditation to clear their mind with the goal to eradicate defilements. Every fortnight on the full-moon day, Buddhist monks give sermons to teach the people coming to the temples.

**Monica** : How much time do you spend meditating every day?

**Luang Phaw**: I meditate twice a day--when I close and open my eyes; when I inhale and exhale. In every manner even sitting, standing, lying, walking or doing anything, I can keep meditating naturally and automatically because I have practiced it this way since I got ordained. I can focus my mind on my inner peace despite my outward movement. It is like the road that lays still even when there are cars running on it, or the sky that is fixed in its place even when clouds are floating by. It became my habit to meditate by focusing my mind at the center of my body, all the time in every activity.



## Daily Life of Buddhists Meditation

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Monica : Yes ok. How does this meditating affect the rest of your day?

Luang Phaw: The benefits of twenty-four hour meditation are that it makes me happy and joyful. It gives me awareness and wisdom which enable me to extinguish my own sufferings. Consequently, I am willing to help other people every day. I use the knowledge from meditation to help people by teaching them about the causes and effects of their deeds which is called “the law of karma”. I spread this knowledge, via the DMC channel, to help people around the world find true happiness. I do all these things out of happiness, goodness of the heart, with full-conscience and wisdom.

Monica : If you don't meditate, is there any difference?

Luang Phaw: People who do not meditate lack strength of the mind. Their mind will be exposed to confusion, sadness, boredom, stress, hollowness, anxiety and any troubles because there is nothing to empower or protect their minds from everyday life's problems.



## A Successful Marriage

“One of the reasons why family members are drawn to share the same fate or belong to the same family is that they had committed similar actions in the past”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## A Successful Marriage

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Monica : We have a big problem in Norway. Many people get divorced, like 50% every year, and I don't know why that happens all the time because you can just change your man like you change your car or clothes, and so we are trying to find out how do they do it in other religious and other cultures. Hopefully we can take some of this information back home and inspire Norwegians. How is it possible to maintain a long living marriage?

Luang Phaw: Those who decide to get married need to know three important questions. Why do you want to get married? How do you find a suitable spouse? What will create a good married life? For the first question, the objectives of marriage are not only for a sexual relationship or the continuity of family lines, but also to live side by side and encourage each other to achieve the goal of being born human, like doing good deeds, avoiding bad deeds, terminating the cycle of birth or at least being reborn into a celestial realm. Moreover, it is not





## A Successful Marriage

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enough to get married just because two people love each other. Apart from love, ones need to consider other factors as well. As mentioned above, the couple should be equal to each other in four aspects: faith, precepts, attitude and belief. Buddhist couples usually take some time to learn and know each other before getting married. This means it may take months or even years. In a way, waiting is seen as a test for true love. In order to make happy marriage life, husband and wife must learn to live together and treat each other with equal consideration. What husband and wife should do in order to make a good relationship is “love simultaneously, be angry at a different time”. Also, they should always smile at each other, learn to be calm and reasonable, respect each others needs and opinions, provide each other with some degree of freedom, and sacrifice themselves for the sake of family. In order to prolong the relationship, they should learn to create some space between each



## A Successful Marriage

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other. For example, a relationship is compared with a bird in our hands. If we grasp it too tight, the bird will die and we will lose it forever. To keep it with us, we must learn to hold it gently and with great care.

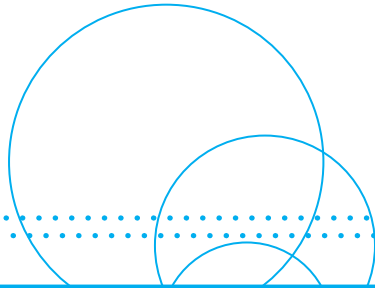
Moreover, husbands and wives should learn to please each other with sharing, sweet words and help. They should also act properly so as to learn what a wife should do for a husband and what a husband should do for a wife. There are lot more tactics which can not all be explained here. Although the advice here may be quite a good guideline for leading a married life, sometimes it does not work for some people. If it does not, the cause of the break up may be explained by the law of karma. In the Buddhist worldview, separation is a sign that the couples time to reap the fruit of their good deeds, which they had done together in the previous lifetime, is at an end. Thus, each of them is forced to separately walk their own path according to their karma. For women whose marriage life suffers



## A Successful Marriage

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from violence, hard burdens or infidelity, according to Buddhist explanation, it is the effect of their own misbehavior in the past life. The women probably used to be a man in their previous lifetime but they are re-born as women and suffer all these situations because they had committed adultery, had abandoned or abused their wives and children. One of the reasons why family members are drawn to share the same fate or belong to the same family is that they had committed similar actions in the past.



## Death & Rebirth

“For example, if one’s mind is blemished, one may be reborn in purgatory. But if one’s mind is completely dark, one may head to a deeper hell realm”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## Death & Rebirth

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Monica : Because we believe that there is a heaven, and in the Christian religion we believe that we go to heaven, which is a better place in the afterlife. So life is just a preparation for death in my religion. And I just wonder if it's different for you, and can you visualize death?

Luang Phaw: What everyone in this world will face on their deathbed is the flashback of his/her doings from birth to the last day of life. Regardless of race or religion, all human beings will see the recurring pictures of their past deeds while they are dying. Either good or bad, our deeds will reappear in our mind like a movie. If the person always did good deeds, at their deathbed their mind will be filled with happiness. The picture of their goodness will appear bright and clear in their mind. This is the sign that the person will be led to heaven or reborn in good place after their death. In contrast, if the person usually committed sinful deeds like killing, stealing, or drinking alcohol,

their mind will be loaded down with the weight of unwholesomeness and thus diminished by darkness. The persons will see a black spot or gloomy picture before being drawn into a black tube which is the way leading to the realm of suffering. Indeed, there are many destinations waiting for the dead. The deceased may be reincarnated in the realm of hell, purgatory, as devil, ghost, animals, human being, nymph, or angel, depending on the state of the mind when the person is dying. The state of mind could vary based on the ratio of brightness and darkness in the mind. So, the variable mixture could lead to a different afterlife. For example, if one's mind is blemished, one may be reborn in purgatory. But if one's mind is completely dark, one may head to a deeper hell realm. If the mind is slightly dark, one could reborn as an animal. Likewise, if one's mind is bright enough, one will be reborn as a human. If the mind is very bright, one can reborn as a celestial being,



## Death & Rebirth

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ranging from earth sprite, tree sprite, air sprite, lower celestial being, and higher celestial being. Do you think that is understandable for people with a Christian background? It is somehow difficult to explain the law of karma.

Monica : Yes, somehow it reminds me of my own culture. Yes it is understandable. People are just so afraid of talking about it in Norway. And it's just as normal as being born wouldn't you say? That's why I think we need to calm people down a little bit and give them some knowledge about death. And I need a clearer picture. It's just I need more information to say, ok, can we think about it without being so fearful?

Luang Phaw: We're discussing about how to make it brief but to the point.

Monica : Yes, that's right. Would you like to know what we do something about it? When people die in Norway we usually don't see them because we're so afraid of death, and we don't want to say goodbye.



## Death & Rebirth

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The normal goodbye with dead people is just to put them in the hospital, then into the refrigerator and then put them into the earth; into the tomb. I don't know why that happens because back in the middle ages in Norway people died at home, and they used to stay at home for few days so that they could say goodbye. So now everything has become so strange and so impersonal. How do you explain it?

Luang Phaw: There is the universal procedure that happens to people from all walks of life regardless of their belief or ethic. Before people die, they will see the rewinding pictures of their past deeds. The frequent deeds would come first. For example, if one drinks liquor regularly, one would see the pictures of oneself drinking alcohol. Despite the fact that one enjoyed it so much when committing such action, one would feel regretful and uncomfortable before dying. Then, the pre-disembodiment image would appear to hint where one will head to, for example, seeing the image





## Death & Rebirth

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of hell denizens. This denotes that one will go to hell in the afterlife. If one always killed animals in the past, one would see the rewinding pictures of oneself killing animals. Then, one would feel discomfort and sorrowful and the pre-disembodiment image will appear to be animals. This means that one will have to be reborn as an animal after dying. I hope you understand, Monica? If I don't explain with illustrative words, you may not understand. Goodness and badness are universal terms which can be defined differently from religion to religion. So, it is necessary to give examples. Like the Norwegian navy men, they are reborn as earth sprites because they don't have enough merit to be reborn in the celestial realm, but they didn't have much sin to go to the realm of punishment as well. They have merit from showing support to fellow people only. This is what I want to clarify to you.



## Death & Rebirth

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Monica : So is this a thing you can achieve in meditation?

Luang Phaw: It happens on earth, but also in the astral dimension.

As there are the rich, the middle class, and the poor in this world, there are also different classes of earth sprites. For the parents of the navy man that we mentioned, they are the common earth sprite. I hope you understand this. The spirit of their son was also discharged from the body; he was dead. So the tunnel that he entered was the entrance between the two worlds.

Monica : That's very difficult to understand.

Luang Phaw: During that stage, he was already freed from the feeling of the physical body. He felt no pain.

Monica : For me personally, I think it's interesting. But it's understand all this. We need to do a documentary on this subject.



## Death & Rebirth

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Luang Phaw: Please accept it as additional universal knowledge.

If you find that it is not acceptable, it's okay. But you need to separate what is true from what you believe.

Do you want to witness this by yourself? You can do so with meditation practice.



## How to Meditate?

“Relaxing at home after taking a shower, you can practice meditation by yourself”

BUDDHA KNOWS - An interview with Abbot Dhammajayo on Buddhism  
by Monica Øien



## How to Meditate?

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Monica : Yes, by meditation, not death. I would like to use meditation to fill my body and soul with all these nice images, if it's possible in my life. Yes, that would be really nice.

Luang Phaw: Meditation allows you to gain universal insight experience that doesn't contradict any other beliefs. It is not about religion. It is merely a know-how that can be achieved together with happiness. This is something extra.

Monica : Really? Ok, thank you very much. I will do my best to try and follow this world of meditation. It's going be difficult but I respect it a lot. Thank you

Luang Phaw: Actually, meditation is not as difficult as your stereotype. Let's try. Can you imagine the face of your own son?

Monica : Yes of course.

Luang Phaw: Are you sure?

Monica : Yes I can see it.



## How to Meditate?

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Luang Phaw: Are you picturing with ease or do you need special effort?

Monica : No, I have to concentrate but I have been trying to do that before. I cannot concentrate on two things at the same time. My imagine the picture.

Luang Phaw: Simply feel as if you are at home. Forget all the surroundings. Just concentrate on the picture in your mind.

Monica: With my eyes closed?

Luang Phaw: It's up to you.

Monica : I can see his face yes.

Luang Phaw: Is the image clearer than seeing with your physical eyes, or less?

Monica : Um, it's less of course.

Luang Phaw: About how many per cent?

Monica : About twenty or something. I don't know, ten maybe.

Luang Phaw: That's great. If you can picture the face of your son in your mind, it means that you can practice meditation. Simply change the location.



## How to Meditate?

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Are you picturing your son at home or somewhere else?

Monica : Right now I have to concentrate more to visualize it really well. It's at home, yes.

Luang Phaw: So, try picturing your son clearly in your mind.

Monica : Ok. I can see his nose, eyes and mouth.

Luang Phaw: That's very good!

Monica : And his hair, and it must be less than twenty because it's in black and white. Yes... yes! So am I a good candidate? I can learn meditation?

Luang Phaw: Excellent, so you can do it. I'm not sweet-talking to you. How long did you picture the face of your son continuously?

Monica : Well, I usually don't do that, so not for long, but it feels good to do it. Can I try to imagine other things?

Luang Phaw: Suppose that you are relaxing at home after taking a shower, you can practice meditation by yourself. You have practiced Yoga before, right? Then you can do it. For how long would you be able to picture the face of



## How to Meditate?

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your son? Five minutes, or ten minutes maybe?

Monica : I could probably sit for half an hour or maybe longer, I don't know. Just to keep this picture all the time? It's so hard for me to know, but you mean I must have the same picture all the time? Well, then it might be a few minutes I think. I don't know. I have to try. Can I try tonight and I will tell you tomorrow?

Luang Phaw: Let's continue. Besides of your son's face, what would be the best image that you can picture with your mind at ease?

Monica : Oh yes, it's the house where my parents live in Spain. I can see the beach clearly. It's where I read all my books and sleep a lot, and do pilates.

Luang Phaw: Very good. Can you imagine it all the time, let's say for 10 minutes?

Monica : Yes, I can if I use sound as well...just imagining the sounds and the melodies. I think I can do that.





## How to Meditate?

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Luang Phaw: You definitely can do it. Have you ever stood on the beach in front of this house and watched the sunrise or sunset?

Monica : Yes, especially sunrise in the morning.

Luang Phaw: Suppose that you picture the sunrise on the beach, how long would you be able to do it relaxing and without losing focus?

Monica : Well it's so peaceful so I could probably...I don't know. Maybe a few minutes or maybe even for ten minutes.

Luang Phaw: Excellent.

Monica : Meaning that I must not think about anything else, and I must just concentrate on this image?

Luang Phaw: Correct. See, you can do it easily! Now, imagine that you are watching the sunrise on the beach? Picture only the sun in your mind without the waves. Can you do it?

Monica : So I must just take away the other things and concentrate on the sun? It's not very strong.



## How to Meditate?

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Luang Phaw: Very good. No sand, no sea, but only the sun, not shining too strong. How come you told me that meditation was impossible for you?

Monica : I can. I can picture that!

Luang Phaw: This is the very basis of meditation. This time, please ignore the beach and the sea, and visualize only the soothing sun. Then, let's relocate it from the sky to your abdomen. Don't do it too seriously.

Monica : And since the sun is really warm I will feel it as well? Oh, there are some birds.

Luang Phaw: Don't worry about the birds. Let them pass by naturally. Simply imagine yourself on the sandy beach where you can see the sunrise, then forget everything except the sun. When your mind is focused and relaxed, relocate the sun into your abdomen.

Monica : Now it's moving bit by bit, to my tummy.

Luang Phaw: Very good. You can do it. But don't stare or force yourself to see the image. Just picture it softly in your mind.



## How to Meditate?

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Monica : Ok, to my tummy. I've got it now, I have it there.

Luang Phaw: Well, will you make it?

Monica : Yes. I think I have made it.

Luang Phaw: You can now see that meditation is not beyond our capability. It's that simple. This also reaffirms what I said; that we can meditate all the time either with closed or opened eyes, just as you have done now.

Monica : I understand.

Luang Phaw: Monica tam dai. (Monica can do it.)

Monica : Monica tam dai.

Luang Phaw: A beginner can start from a few minutes to five or ten minutes. And then we increase the time period further. Simply focus on the sun within.

Monica : So, will my happiness increase?

Luang Phaw: Certainly, if you can meditate daily. After a while, you will be able to do it effortlessly. This means that you don't have to actively visualize in your mind, but you can do it automatically. Similar to the way we breathe without any effort. We can



## How to Meditate?

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see the image in our abdomen all the time, the mind will be focused, and you will discover true happiness that never happened to you before. It is the kind of happiness that is hard to explain.

Monica : It's really a gift. I think I can identify with it.

Luang Phaw: Yes, and this is how the monks can sustain their monastic life. It all starts from here.

Monica : So it's the sun that is the love that you have?

Luang Phaw: Of course, but its universal love and goodwill towards fellow humankind.

Monica : But it's the sensation of it. Yes, that's the most important part.

Luang Phaw: Starting from this, if we keep practicing and improving our meditation experience, we will be able to learn about the pre-disembodiment image.

Monica : Now I do understand one of your norms. You don't need entertainment or to go out to exhibitions or concerts because you can make your own.



## How to Meditate?

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Luang Phaw: Yes, you are correct. One can rely on oneself to be happy. In other words, one will fall in love with oneself.

Monica : Without being selfish?

Luang Phaw: Right, falling in love with oneself means discovering the source of true happiness within.

Monica : Well, now I understand everything, I think. I understand why we search for happiness all the time, but cannot find it externally. You have to look inside.

Luang Phaw: Correct! Happiness from shopping doesn't last long. Soon, we will forget about it, and we tend to seek for happiness furthermore. Then, we struggle throughout our lives for it. Material happiness is not worthwhile. The happiness we obtain from it is so small, compared to the abundant sufferings that coexist. But meditation requires a minimal effort, and the return of happiness is boundless. Moreover, we can teach how a person can welcome death fearlessly. It's due to their internal happiness. If one's mind remains calm and happy,



## How to Meditate?

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despite the pain and suffering, one can overcome fear totally.

Monica : But you know when you're really stressed and you have too much to do, like organizing the kids, and work and everything, and your mind goes wild. I don't know, but if you visualize the sun or the thing that's personal for you, and you cannot think about two things at the same time, how do you get there so it will take away the stress? Intellectually, I can understand it. It's just for me to try and practice it and to see if I can live with it.

Luang Phaw: This is just the normal perception of most people. They believe that meditation can not go hand in hand with their daily living. This is the case for those who don't practice earnestly. Let me ask you first if you can breathe, talk, look, and listen while driving a car? You use both hands and feet for driving too, right? How do you do it?



## How to Meditate?

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Monica : Yes, I understand. But I have no pictures and I don't meditate.

Luang Phaw: Not really, because when you pick up your son, you would have the picture of your son in your mind.

Monica : No not necessarily. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't.

Luang Phaw: If you can meditate along with your daily activities, your daily life will be filled with happiness and enhanced with better efficiency.

Monica : Ok, I will go back to the sun festival and tell you of my experience.

Luang Phaw: Tonight, after taking a shower, please try meditation and then take it back home to Norway.

Monica : I will. I have already decided to do this again. Even on the plane.

Luang Phaw: That's fantastic. Please also send me your homework until we meet again, from today until The Light of Peace Ceremony. By the way, do not force yourself too much while practicing meditation. It's okay if you cannot visualize anything, but don't skip a single day



## How to Meditate?

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without meditation. Also, every hour of your day, take a minute to practice visualization.

Monica : I have really been looking for something new to fill up my life with. I didn't plan this, but it has come to me now. I think it's worth the effort.

Luang Phaw: So, your mission here is not just for an interview, but also to reconnect your life to the missing. I believe you can do it and Hallgrim too. This is a good opportunity. Many newcomers have the same idea as you do, that too many errands will prevent them from meditation practice. Indeed, they can do both at the same time automatically. Meditation will become a part of your life, like another organ in your body. However, whenever you feel that you put too much effort into meditation, simply imagine that you are standing on a beach where you can observe the sea and the sun. This will help you to relax and restart with ease. You see, meditation is not hard at all. It is such a simple thing that everyone can put into practice.





## How to Meditate?

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Thailand is not cold like Norway and you may feel that it is hard to meditate here. But after you return to the low temperature climate, you will be able to meditate well. Don't forget to introduce meditation to your parents and your son. Children can do meditation very well and learn faster than an adult like you.

Monica : Thank you!

## About the Interviewer

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Monica Øien has degrees in Spanish, Latin and mass media. She is an art teacher and an accomplished painter, and enjoys photography and graphic design. In her free time, she also writes scripts and makes short films.

She has various job experiences in the mass media and television. Monica is the director and script writer for many TV programs. She also hosts the Etterlyst (hunt after) on TV3 and is the producer of Stjernetreff (meeting stars) on TV Norge. She was also the host of Absolutt underholdning on TV2 for a year, and is a columnist for ELLE and other art magazines.



## About Luang Phaw Dhammajayo

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Luang Phaw Dhammajayo (The Most Venerable Dhammajayo Bhikkhu) was born in Singburi Province, Central Thailand, on April 22, 1944. He has followed and been self-educated in Buddhism since his childhood. He received his bachelor's degree in Economics from Kasetsart University, Bangkok in 1969. In the same year as his graduation, he was ordained at Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen temple with His Holiness Somdet Phra Maharatchamongkhalachan, the present abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen, as his preceptor. Upon his ordination into the Sangha order, he was given the name 'Dhammajayo' which means 'Victory through Dhamma'. In 1970, he became the abbot of the new meditation centre which later developed to be the Dhammakaya Temple, Pathum Thani province, Thailand. Under his management the temple has served tens of thousands of people who join in the Buddhist ceremonies and meditation practices on a regular basis. He is also the founder and the president of the Dhammakaya Foundation ([www.dhammakaya.or.th](http://www.dhammakaya.or.th)), an NGO member of the United Nations, which is very influential in both social and religious activities. Right now, the foundation has many branches in Thailand and in 60 countries all over the world.

## About Luang Phaw Dhammajayo

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In the pursuit of his perfection, Luang Phaw Dhammajayo has devoted himself over many decades to the practice of meditation, Dhamma study, and the promotion of world peace through inner peace. He focuses his teachings on the attainment of the Dhammakaya- the true nature of peace that everyone can attain within. To propagate Buddhism, he also hosts the Inner Dreams Kindergarten Program through the DMC channel which is broadcasted daily worldwide via satellite and the internet ([www.dmc.tv/en](http://www.dmc.tv/en)). The program is rich in Buddhist philosophy and is aimed at providing knowledge and understanding of the truth of life.

The Venerable has received an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Buddhist Studies from the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the most famous and largest Buddhist educational institution in Thailand. In recognition of his work, the Venerable received the World No Tobacco Day Award in 2004 from the World Health Organization for his successful smoke-free campaign among hundreds of Buddhist temples in Thailand. He was the first Thai Buddhist monk to receive the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award from the All Gandhian Worker Society, India, in 2005. He also received the Universal Peace Award from the World Buddhist Sangha Youth, Sri Lanka in 2006; Atish Dipankar Peace

## About Luang Phaw Dhammajayo

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Gold Award from Bangladesh Buddha Kristi Prachar Sangha in 2007;  
and the Telly Awards for his creative Dhamma Media Channel in 2007.



## Basic Meditation Practice

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You can start meditating by sitting cross-legged, placing your right leg over your left leg and your right hand over your left hand. If you cannot sit in this position, you can sit on a chair or sofa. Have the tip of your right index finger touch the tip of your left thumb. Rest your hands in your lap. Sit upright with a straight body and head. Adjust your position until you find one that allows the blood to circulate freely. Close your eyes as if you are going to sleep. Then take a deep breath two or three times, allowing the breath to reach as far as it will go inside. Then breathe out slowly. When you breathe in, feel as if all the cells in your body are receiving happiness and joy. When you breathe out, you should release all the worry and sorrow at the same time. Take your time to let go of all your thoughts and then return to regular breath. Relax every part of your body from head to toe. Ensure that there is no sign of tension or stress. Evoke a feeling of happiness, cleanliness, purity, and emptiness in your mind. Free yourself from all thought. Feel as though you are sitting alone in a space filled with peace, void of all stress. Feel as if your body is an empty space without organs like a hollow body. You may feel your

## Basic Meditation Practice

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body grow lighter and gradually disappear into the atmosphere. Then gently rest your focus in the center of your body at a point two finger-widths above the navel. Do not worry about the exact location of the center of body. Keep your mind in the area near the stomach. At the same time, relax your body and mind.

Once you are relaxed in body and mind, gently imagine an object as a focus of attention. Imagine a shining sun of any size. It may be as bright as the sun at noon. Its light may be as soft the moonlight on a full moon day. Use the subtlest of efforts to visualize it. Do not force yourself. It is okay to not see it clearly. Imagine it as best as you can. Allow your mind to come to rest. Continue imagining the shining sun. If you find that your mind wanders, you can bring your mind back by repeating the mantra “Samma Arahang” along with visualizing the sun. Repeat the mantra slowly and silently, as if the sound of the mantra is coming from the center of the crystal ball inside your stomach. “Samma Arahang” means if you purify your mind, you will be freed from suffering in this life. Or you can repeat the phrase “clear and bright.” Keep repeating and visualizing it until your mind comes to a standstill. Eventually, the sound of the words will die away.

## Basic Meditation Practice

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If you have an experience that differs from just seeing the shining sun, do not get excited or emotional. Treat it as though it is normal. Observe the image without emotions. Eventually, your mind will become more refined and seated more firmly at the center of the body. It may move further inside to a place which is clean, pure, and bright. You will access deeper happiness and more profound knowledge, going further into a succession of increasingly purer knowledge. Eventually you will reach the purest form, a universal form, which is inside every human being in this world.



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