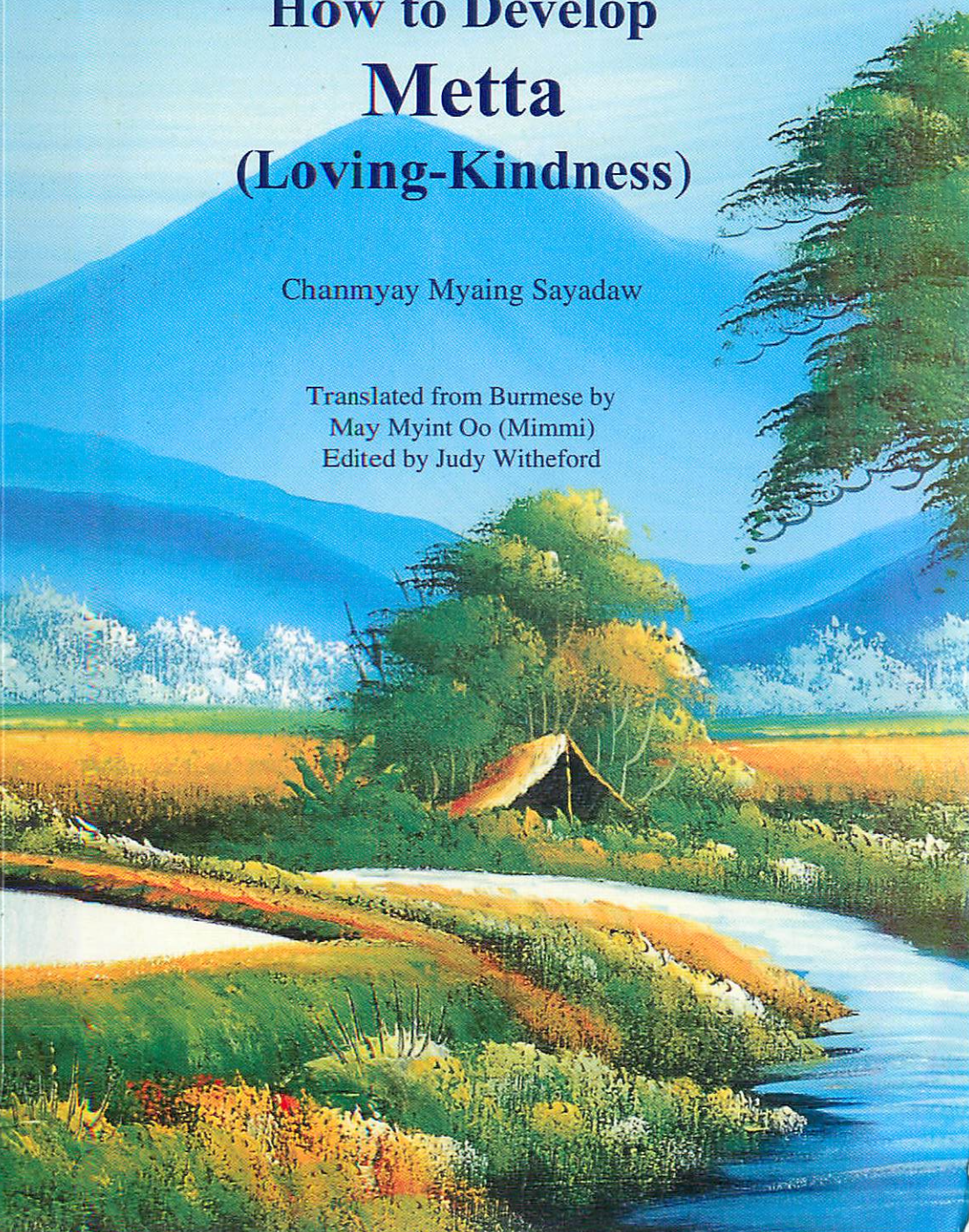
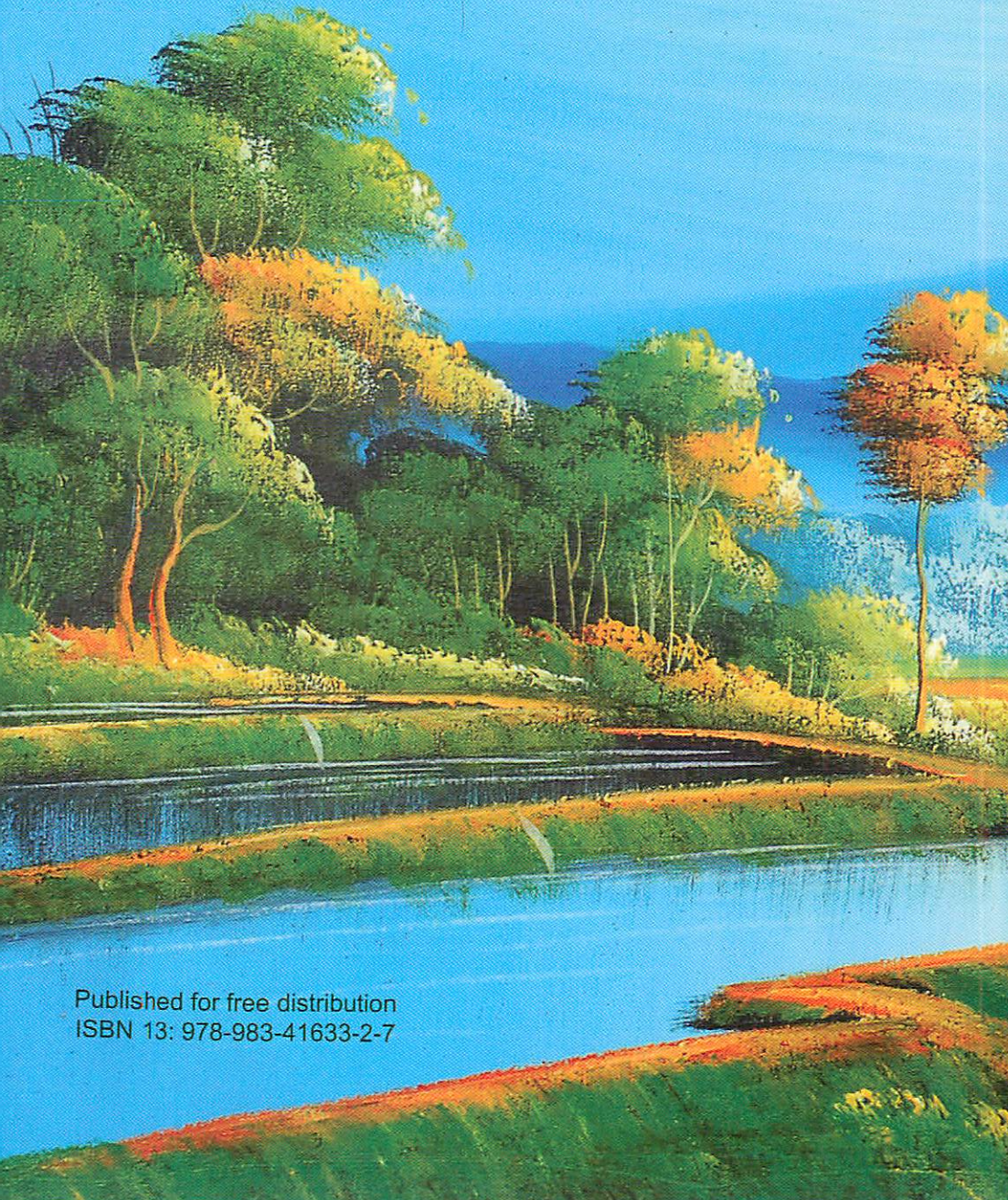


# How to Develop Metta (Loving-Kindness)

Chanmyay Myaing Sayadaw

Translated from Burmese by  
May Myint Oo (Mimmi)  
Edited by Judy Witheford





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***Sabbadanam dhammadanam jinati.***  
**The Gift of Dhamma excels all gifts.**

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**Cover Design and Layout by Chan Khoon San**

This beautiful landscape painting of a stream and ponds surrounded by lush woodlands and meadows, with mountains in the background was chosen by the author and aptly depicts the refreshing qualities of *Metta* by conveying a feeling of coolness, tranquility and peace. Special thanks to Mr. Ong Tiow Eng of Buddhasassananuggaha Society Malacca for supplying the attractive photo.

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## Foreword by Author

In 2006, Mr. Chan Pooi Hoong, then president of Bodhiyarama of Kuala Kabu Baru, a town north of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, approached me with a special request. He told me that after reading my *metta* book, he became so interested in the practice of *metta* meditation that he wanted to organize a *metta* retreat. On June 2, 2007, we started the *metta* retreat at 8:00 o'clock in the evening. There were twenty yogis who wanted to practice *metta* meditation for about fifteen days. During this period, I gave a *Dhamma* talk every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, we had discussions and questions about *metta* practice. Everyone practiced *metta* quite diligently. As a result, most yogis experienced the sweet cool taste of *metta*. Some yogis even experienced quite strong feelings of *metta*. One of the twenty yogis said that after developing *metta*, when he opened his eyes, all the beings he heard and saw seemed to be so kind and lovely. He described how he was filled with love for everyone. Then he asked me to please come back and teach another *metta* retreat the following year in Malaysia.

After the *metta* retreat in Malaysia, we went to Singapore at the invitation of the Firefly Mission. Here the virtuous people of Singapore requested that I give a talk on how to practice *metta* meditation. During the ten days we stayed in Singapore, I gave several *Dhamma* talks on the topic of *metta*. On several occasions, there was also enough time for the practical application of the instructions, and so meditators had the opportunity to practice *metta*.

As a result of these experiences, I have come to the conclusion that nowadays many young people are also interested in the practice of *metta* meditation. Consequently, I decided to write a

book that describes how to develop loving-kindness, so that these young people and other interested persons will have a thorough understanding of how to develop *metta*. So, these are the reasons and circumstances that led to the writing of this book, “How to Develop Metta.” The book’s intention is to help any virtuous person who is interested in the practice of *metta* meditation. However, this book doesn’t cover all aspects of *metta* practice.

May all of you be able to understand and develop *metta*. May each of you become virtuous and be able to lead a happy and peaceful life.

Chanmyay Myaing Sayadaw

## Foreword by Translator

First of all, I would like to say that I am greatly indebted to Venerable Ariya Ñani, one of my benefactors. From the time I first met her in 1992 until the present day, she has encouraged and taught me, and as a result, my English has improved a great deal. Without her generous assistance and encouragement, I could not have become a translator at all. I am also very grateful to Judy Witheford, a Canadian meditator and English teacher, who did the editing and was incredibly patient. Actually, when these two people were at the centre in February of this year, I had not yet finished translating the book. As a consequence of both an intensive effort and their support, I worked very hard to translate the book as quickly as possible while they were both at the centre. Without their help, this book would not have come into existence.

The Bodhiyarama Meditation Centre in Kuala Kabu Baru was a very lovely place to hold the *metta* meditation retreat. During that retreat, I translated Sayadaw's *Dhamma* talks and the interviews with meditators. In my free time, I developed *metta* for all sentient beings living in the nearby trees, dwelling in the hills around the centre, and for all living beings. I also shared the merit of my practice with all living beings. This practice created so much delight and happiness in my heart. I also have a great appreciation and deep gratitude for all the supporters of the Bodhiyarama Retreat Centre and all the meditators who practiced *metta* with me.

I greatly appreciate and feel deep gratitude for all of my teachers, Saddhammaramsi Sayadaw, Chanmyay Sayadaw, Chanmyay Myaing Sayadaw, my parents (U Soe Myint and Daw Kyin May), Venerable Ariya Ñani, Judy, and all of my benefactors. I am so happy to have this opportunity to support

the *Sasana* with the work I do, and I will continue to do my best to work for the benefit of the *Sasana*. It is my sincere wish that this book will contribute to a much deeper understanding of *metta*, the genuine wish for the well-being of all sentient beings. I share all merits with all living beings. May all living beings be free from life in *samsara*.

May Myint Oo (Mimmi)  
Chanmyay Myaing Meditation Centre  
Yangon, Myanmar  
February 13, 2008



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## PART I

### **Bodhiyarama Hermitage**

Today is the second of June 2007, and we are starting our *metta* retreat at Bodhiyarama Hermitage, Malaysia. Bodhiyarama is an exceptionally lovely place for a *metta* retreat because it is quite far from any town or village, and the environment is peaceful and undisturbed. The forest and hills also offer cool shade, and clear refreshing water from a little stream flows gently down the small hill. This place is cool, and *metta* is also fresh and cool, so this place is especially suitable for this retreat.

This is the first time I've taught a long *metta* retreat. When I was here in 2005, I had just finished teaching a five-day *metta* retreat at Subang Jaya, Kuala Lumpur. At my monastery Chanmyay Myaing Yeiktha, yogis who practice *vipassana* meditation often want to do *metta* meditation, so I suggest that they practice *metta* meditation for one or two months. Everywhere in Myanmar people practice *metta*; in fact, I've never heard of a meditation centre where yogis don't practice *metta*.

### **All Living Beings Should Cultivate Metta**

Actually, *metta* is so beneficial for beings that this kind of *metta* retreat should exist everywhere. All yogis and human beings should develop *metta* because in this world, defilements such as *lobha* (greed) and *dosa* (hatred) are very powerful. This is especially true when defilements have been in existence for a

long time and have consequently become stronger and more powerful. These defilements are not only deep-seated and potent in human beings but in all living beings. When these *kilesas* (defilements) become intense, they burn with great intensity and are full of danger.

In scientific magazines, scientists and writers describe how the world is gradually heating up. In some European countries, the ice on many high mountains is melting at an astonishing rate, as the world gets hotter. Why does this condition exist? Many scientists believe the world is getting warming due to the loss of forests, especially tropical rainforests, which are being lost and destroyed at an alarming rate. Many scientists are studying and trying to understand these problems, so this is factual information.

However, I would like to suggest on the basis of my *Dhamma* experience that this situation is really the result of living beings experiencing defilements, which are becoming more intense and forceful. This is undoubtedly true! So, if we don't develop and practice *metta*, in the future the world may become unbearably hot. That's why each of us should develop *metta*. We need to turn on *metta's* air conditioning right now! Only those people who develop and live with *metta* in their hearts can live peacefully. In the future, people who live without *metta* will have to endure even greater suffering than they do now.

## The Meaning of Metta

According to the scriptures, *metta* is the wish for the welfare and happiness of all living beings. *Metta* benefits all living beings. The feeling of *metta* can be compared to the love of a mother for her own child. A caring mother wishes for the welfare and happiness of her children; just as, *metta* wishes for the welfare and happiness of all living beings. In the *Metta Sutta*, *metta* is compared to the love of a mother for her own child.

In a family, there are sometimes two kinds of children, a mother's own biological child, and perhaps an adopted child. Sometimes a mother doesn't have a child of her own, so she adopts an orphaned child and takes care of him/her as if he/she were her own child. This experience is different from a mother who carries a child in her womb for nine months and then gives birth. And the mother's love for her own child might be greater than her love for an adopted child, and her wish for his/her happiness and welfare might also not be equal. A mother's *metta* for her own child is often used as an example of *metta* love, but in fact, this is not completely pure *metta* because there is still attachment and pity rather than compassion. It's based on distinctions.

When a mother has only one child, only one son or daughter, she loves this child as dearly as her own life. Such a mother only wishes for the well-being of her precious child. The wish for the happiness of her child is boundless. She wishes for her child to be well, to have a long happy life, and a good appearance. She hopes he/she will become a wealthy, educated person, and possibly fulfil his/her ambitions to become a prime minister, president, king, or monarch. Her desires for her child's happiness may even extend into the next life when she wishes him/her a peaceful and advantageous rebirth. Until the

attainment of *Nibbana*, such wishes for her child may be endless. She ardently hopes her child will receive whatever gifts and benefits she wishes for him/her because her love for him/her depends upon the fulfilment of her expectations. This is the sort of love a mother might feel for her only child. Although this is the kind of *metta* a yogi may initially desire for the benefit of all living beings, yogis should try to develop pure *metta*, free from attachment or expectations. This is the expansiveness of *metta*.

## Pure Metta

*Metta* only wishes for the well-being of all living beings. *Metta* has no expectations and desires nothing. *Metta* is very pure, without attachment and freely given. If there is attachment and worry, this *metta* is not pure or uncontaminated. When a person developing *metta* has no expectations and is free from worry or attachment to a particular person, then the *metta* can be pure and wholesome.

At the beginning of *metta* practice, this is usually not possible. However, the longer one develops *metta*, the purer and cleaner *metta* becomes. Only *metta* that is untainted can be effective clear *metta*. That's why we need to be careful to cultivate pure *metta*. It's especially important for parents to be aware that their *metta* is genuine and wholesome. So, this feeling of *metta* needs to be practiced over and over again until we are practicing *metta* continuously. The Buddha said that *metta* is like cool refreshing clean water that never ceases to quench one's thirst.

## Metta Air-Conditioning

Sometimes it helps to understand *metta* by comparing it to air conditioning. When it's very hot outside, you turn on the air-conditioning in your room or house to prevent your body from overheating, don't you? Then as soon as the air-conditioning has been turned on, you immediately feel the cool air on your skin. The nature of air-conditioning is to spread and increase coolness. When the air-conditioning is first turned on, this coolness may not be apparent. However, when the air-conditioning has been on for sometime, you begin to feel cooler and more comfortable. Then after a longer period of time with the air-conditioning on, the room and all the heat in your body and even in the room seems to have disappeared. Over a longer period of time with the air-conditioning turned on, even more heat will dissipate and the greater will be the effect of the cool air. In this way after one or two hours, all of the heat will have vanished and your body and room will feel refreshed and completely cool. The stronger and more powerful the air-conditioning is, the greater and more intense will be the effect of coolness.

In the same way, when the mind feels anxiety, worry, grief, or longing, we need to turn on the *metta* air-conditioning to relieve this fervent burning of the mind. We need to develop *metta*. When the *metta* air-conditioning is turned on, the mind first of all becomes peaceful. When there is a diligent effort to develop *metta*, *metta* becomes stronger, and the heart-mind becomes even more calm and peaceful. When the heart becomes calm and peaceful, the blood circulates easily throughout the body, so that the body also feels calm and peaceful.

At the beginning of *metta* practice, this kind of good *metta* taste is not so obvious. However, after longer periods of *metta*

practice, one experiences greater calm and peace. After developing *metta* for one week or ten days, one can experience tranquillity and serenity in both the body and mind. When *metta* becomes strong and powerful, not only the mind, but even the environment seems more harmonious; all living beings become peaceful. If a leader develops *metta* at his house or monastery or organization, everyone becomes serene. If everyone were to live and practice *metta*, life would be more peaceful. So no matter where a being lives, he/she needs to practice *metta*.

## **The Metta of King Vessantara**

Now let me tell you about King Vessantara who was the *Bodhisatta* in one of his previous lives. He enjoyed giving *dana* as this was his natural inclination. He had a very powerful royal white elephant. At that time, people believed that if a country had a royal white elephant, the weather would be ideal for producing abundant crops and many sorts of delicious fruit. Then merchants would become prosperous selling and buying these products. With such a royal white elephant, another country would not dare to attack their country. In short, people believed the royal white elephant was so powerful that it could protect them from any disaster.

One day the country of Kalinga experienced a devastating famine. In Kalinga, people knew about the power of the elephant, so the prime minister and his cabinet members came to King Vessantara to ask for the royal white elephant. After telling King Vessantara about their suffering, they asked to borrow the royal white elephant. King Vessantara was very happy to offer it to them. However, many people in his own kingdom were dissatisfied with his decision, so they



demonstrated and demanded that King Vessantara leave the country. As a result of this lack of support, King Vessantara decided to depart peacefully and move to Mount Winkaba. Queen Maddi, his wife, and Jali and Kanhajina, his children, also accompanied him. When they reached Mount Winkaba, King Vessantara started to cultivate metta in the following way:

*'May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.  
May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.'*

As his *metta* was strong and powerful, he became cool and felt serene, and his family members also became peaceful. For thirty-six miles in every direction, to the east, west, south, and north, all the surrounding areas of Mount Winkaba became tranquil. Usually whenever a tiger or leopard meets a deer or rabbit, it catches, kills and eats the animal. That's why rabbits and deer are afraid of these predators and usually run away. But now whenever a deer or rabbit saw a tiger or leopard, it wasn't afraid; in fact, they felt love for each other. Likewise, other animals also began to love each other because of King Vessantara's *metta*.

So when you want to develop *metta*, you should find inspiration in virtuous people who know how to live and practice *metta*. It's important to live with *metta* and take care of people by giving them a feeling of peace and security. You have to make a determination to care for people with *metta* until your *metta* becomes strong and powerful. By developing *metta* with *viriyā* or effort several times a day and practicing it continuously, it eventually becomes a compelling force.

## Living with the Noblest Intentions

A person who always lives with *metta* is a noble person or *Brahmavihari*, and the word *ariya* refers to a virtuous noble person who always lives with *metta*. Because a brahmin is a virtuous person who always lives with *metta*, when someone does this, we say that person has become a brahmin.

You can develop *metta* wherever you happen to be, sitting in the meditation hall, in a chair, or on your bed. You can develop *metta* by repeating the following phrases:

*‘May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.  
May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.’*

Whenever you are doing sitting meditation and your legs become stiff, you can practice walking meditation and cultivate *metta* by repeating these phrases:

*‘May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.  
May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.’*

When you go to the market, the monastery, or the office, you can also develop *metta*. While you are lying on your bed or having a meal, drinking or eating something, you can develop *metta*. While cooking, sweeping or washing clothes, you can cultivate *metta*. Whatever you are doing becomes an opportunity to develop *metta*. During every waking hour, you can develop *metta* in this way.

## The Eleven Benefits of Metta Meditation

Whenever a person lives with *metta*, he/she will experience the following benefits:

1. He/she will fall asleep happily.
2. He/she will have good dreams.
3. He/she will wake up feeling fresh, clear and happy.
4. He/she will be loved by humans.
5. He/she will be loved by non-humans or invisible beings such as *devas* and *brahmas*.
6. He/she will be protected by *devas*.
7. He/she will be free from harm by knives, guns, weapons, poison, fire or water and will be free from all danger.
8. He/she will be able to concentrate easily.
9. His/her facial expression will be clear and serene.
10. At the time of death, his/her mind will not be confused, but will be peaceful.
11. If he/she attains *metta jhana* (absorption concentration) just before death, he/she will be reborn in the *brahma* realm.

If you develop *metta* for only a short time, the benefits are not so obvious. However, if you develop *metta* for quite sometime, you will experience more obvious and substantial benefits. This is why you should spend as much time as possible cultivating *metta*.

## Two Ways to Practice Metta Meditation

There are basically two ways of practicing *metta*: developing *metta* without *jhana* or developing *metta* for the attainment of *jhana*. If you intend to develop *metta* without *jhana*, you can

practice *metta* in your daily life wherever or whenever you are resting or moving from one place to another. There's no need to choose a particular person or phrase or sentence or even limit the length of time you practice. Just practice whatever is appropriate in your situation. This is how you develop *metta* without *jhana*. You don't need to set a particular time, just use as much time as you have available. Most lay people who develop *metta* practice this way.

## **Developing Metta for the Attainment of the Jhana**

This method of developing *metta* is used for the attainment of the *ghanas*. To use *metta* as a *samatha* practice, there are some guidelines, which you should follow carefully. So, now I'll explain how to develop *metta* and whom you should develop *metta* for. It's important to understand how to cultivate *metta* using the following categories:

1. First of all, you need to develop *metta* for yourself. To develop *metta* for the attainment of *jhana*, you have to first develop *metta* for yourself.
2. The second category is the respected person.
3. The next category is a very dear intimate friend.
4. After that, you develop *metta* for a neutral person or acquaintance.
5. Then you develop *metta* for someone you hate or feel anger towards. However, if there is no one whom you have a strong aversion to, then you can omit this stage.
6. If you have an enemy or hostile person in your life, you can develop *metta* for this person as well.
7. The last category is the development of *metta* for all living beings.

Before starting *metta* meditation, you should take a shower and put on clean comfortable clothes. Your clothes should not be too tight, so loosen them if necessary, so that you are comfortable. After that, find a quiet place. Before *metta* meditation, establish a good foundation of *sila* or wholesome conduct by reminding yourself of the five or eight precepts. Then sit in a comfortable position, relaxing your body in a cross-legged position or if this is not comfortable, just sit in a chair. You should sit in an upright posture, so you can support your body easily. Keep your head aligned with your spine, and rest both hands in your lap, with the left hand supporting the right hand and with both palms facing up. Take several long relaxed breaths and release any bodily or mental tension.

Now let's talk about how and when to develop *metta*. The yogi should divide the hour into two thirty-minute practice periods. Then develop *metta* for yourself for the first half hour, and develop *metta* for a respected person during the last thirty minutes.

Now when you start to develop *metta* for yourself, gently focus the attention on yourself. Then develop *metta* by softly repeating these phrases in the mind: '*May I be well, happy and peaceful. May I be well, happy and peaceful.*' Let's begin now by repeating this phrase continuously first for one minute, then two minutes, five minutes, ten minutes until you can maintain this caring gentle attention for thirty minutes. I will recite: '*May I be well, happy and peaceful*' aloud for the first five minutes and then each of you should continue reciting the phrase quietly in your minds.

Developing *metta* for yourself is wishing for your own happiness and well-being. You can also develop *metta* in your heart and mind by wishing all living beings good health and happiness. If you only develop *metta* for yourself, you will not

be able to establish strong concentration. So, now let's start to develop *metta* for a respected person. In your mind, visualize your teacher or a person of strong integrity, or just have a felt sense of his/her presence. The teacher should be living and should be the same sex as you. Practice *metta* for this category of person like this: '*May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful. May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful.*' Once again, you have to repeat this phrase over and over again, first ten times, then one hundred times, one thousand times, ten thousand times, one hundred thousand times or even a million times. So let's begin by reciting the phrases together for a few minutes, and then you should continue reciting them quietly in your mind.

When you are reciting each phrase, avoid doing this mechanically. Be aware of the meaning of phrase and your genuine desire for this person to be happy and free from suffering. For instance, the phrase '*May you be well*' refers to freedom from any kind of physical illness. '*May you be happy and peaceful*' refers to freedom from mental suffering such as fear, anxiety or worry. You should develop *metta* in this way while you are sitting. While walking, you can also divide the hour into two thirty-minute segments: first developing *metta* for yourself and then for your teacher. Standing or lying down is also an opportunity to develop *metta*. While eating a meal, you can wish for your teacher to be well, happy and peaceful. Just cultivate *metta* over and over again, trying to do this as continuously as possible.

Any ordinary activity is an opportunity to develop *metta*. While drinking coffee or water, sweeping, cooking or washing clothes, you can develop *metta*. No matter what activity you are engaged in, use it as an opportunity to develop *metta* by repeating: '*May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful. May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful.*' When you are

practicing *metta* for the teacher, it doesn't matter whether or not a mental picture of the teacher arises in the mind. Don't be concerned or worried about the lack of a clear image because this is not an important part of the practice, just focus on your clear desire for the other person's happiness and welfare. What is most important is the development of a genuine and strong wish for the teacher's good health and peace of mind. So, repeat the phrases carefully, over and over again. In the beginning, the feeling of *metta* may not be noticeable. It may take some time before you experience this feeling of *metta*. After you have practiced *metta* for a longer period of time, your concentration will become stronger. Then you will experience how fresh and cool the taste of *metta* is.

So in the beginning, you need to recite the phrases continuously and focus the mind on the meaning of the phrases. When you are practicing *metta* in the meditation hall, don't recite out loud; just repeat the words in your mind. However, when you are alone in your room or moving or travelling from one place to another, you can focus the mind on the practice by repeating the phrases aloud.

The *metta* practitioner doesn't need to move slowly, just practice normally. When you are eating a meal or drinking something, develop *metta* in a natural way. It's important to understand that *metta* meditation is different from *vipassana*. You don't need to note thinking, imagining or mental states, just focus on one object (the meaning of the phrases) and try to develop *metta* continuously. When you feel numbness, stiffness or aching, don't note or pay attention to these sensations, simply relax the body and mind and attune the mind to the *metta* phrases and the feeling of loving-kindness.

Another thing to remember when you are using *metta* to attain *jhana* is not to use too many words, just focus on simple short

phrases, so your *metta* can become powerful. You shouldn't develop *metta* superficially; you have to develop *metta* in a precise careful way. Then you will experience genuine *metta* and concentration quickly. Use language you understand, and translate any phrases into a language you are very familiar with. Try not to think too much or analyse things; just develop a genuine and strong wish for your teacher to be healthy and peaceful over and over again. While sitting, walking, standing, lying down, or performing any daily activity, you can develop *metta* by wishing that your teacher be well, happy and peaceful. So, let's finish with these instructions for today, and then each of you can begin exploring the qualities of *metta* on your own.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



## PART II

### The Second Day of the Metta Retreat

Today is Sunday, 3 June 2007, the second day of the *metta* retreat, so I will introduce you to the third group of people you should develop *metta* for. Actually, you should continue cultivating *metta* for your teacher until your *metta* is well developed in order to attain *jhana*. After the *metta* for the teacher and yourself gains strength and momentum, establish *jhana*, and then change to a person who is very dear and close to you. However, since this retreat is relatively short, only fourteen days, we will begin working with the next *metta* category, the dear person.

Yesterday I asked you to develop *metta* for one hour by dividing the hour into two thirty-minute sections. Today I would like you to divide the hour into three sections: fifteen minutes, fifteen minutes, and thirty minutes. First of all, begin by developing *metta* for yourself by repeating the phrase, '*May I be well, happy and peaceful*' continuously. For fifteen minutes, just develop *metta* for yourself.

Then during the second fifteen-minute period, develop *metta* for your respected and venerated teacher by repeating the phrase: '*May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful*' continuously for fifteen minutes. Then during the remaining thirty minutes develop *metta* for a very dear friend by repeating: '*May my very dear friend be well, happy and peaceful.*' In the meditation hall, the clock rings every fifteen minutes, so it's really very simple for you to keep track of the time. Again it's important to repeat the phrases silently in your mind. By repeating the phrases continuously in this way, your mind will not be preoccupied with thinking at all, and

sleepiness or laziness will not arise. In this way, you can develop *samadhi* or concentration quickly.

When you practice *metta* meditation while walking, you can again divide the hour into three periods just like you did during the sitting meditation. When you develop *metta* for your very dear friend, you should pay attention to one thing. If you are a man, you should develop *metta* for someone who is male. You should not develop *metta* for a woman at this stage. And also if you are a woman, you should develop *metta* for a very dear person who is also female. In this way, sensual desire or lust will not arise in the mind and the feeling of *metta* will become established quickly.

For all of Monday and Tuesday, continue developing *metta* in this way. Then on Tuesday night, when I give the *Dhamma* talk, we will develop *metta* for a person in the next category.

## **Metta (Loving-kindness) and Dosa (Anger)**

Today, let's look more carefully at the nature of *metta* and *dosa*. When you develop *metta*, you should reflect on *metta* as well as its opposite, *dosa* or anger. *Metta* can be compared to cool, clear refreshing water while *dosa* can be likened to a burning fire. When you drink cool water, you feel cool in the same way you experience becoming cool and fresh from developing *metta*. When a person touches a fire, the burning sensation of heat is similar to the way an angry person experiences himself and his inner world becoming hot. So if a person has *dosa*, he or she feels this burning sensation of heat in both the body and mind, and the stronger the anger, the more intense the experience of heat will be. That's why a person

should remain peaceful by removing this *dosa* and developing *metta*.

Let's consider this analogy for a moment. Think of *metta* as the mathematical sign plus (+) and think of *dosa* as the mathematical sign minus (-). Whenever you see the minus sign in mathematics, all the numbers decrease. In the same way, when *dosa* exists in the mind, everything decreases. Let's consider for a moment what sorts of things might be reduced. Obviously, the peacefulness of both the body and mind will be diminished. If you have a lot of *dosa*, all of the profits and benefits of your business will decrease. Many or all of your friends will leave you. Because of *dosa*, your wealth may be lost or destroyed. You may have many enemies, and people may hate you. You may suffer from different diseases. A person may even lose his/her beauty or attractiveness and develop an ugly appearance. An angry person may age faster and die sooner. After death, he/she will fall into a hell realm. That's why *dosa* has the same effects as the minus sign (-) in mathematics.

On the other hand, *metta* is like the mathematical plus sign. If a person develops *metta*, he/she becomes peaceful in body and mind. He/she will be able to achieve whatever he/she wants to accomplish. He/she will experience other people's love and devotion and have many friends. The person who practices *metta* will have a long healthy life, free from disease. Because of *metta*, he/she will fall asleep happily, have pleasant dreams, and wake up peacefully. This person will be loved by humans and protected by *devas*. There is no danger from weapons, fire or poisons. He/she is able to concentrate easily, and his/her facial expression is clear and serene. He/she will die with a clear, happy and peaceful mind and will be reborn in the *brahma* realm. For these reasons, we have to abandon *dosa* or anger and try diligently to develop *metta*.

There are many places in the scriptures where the dangers of *dosa* are enumerated. *Dosa* can destroy our dignity and other people's dignity. Because of *dosa*, we may have many enemies and suffer greatly both mentally and physically. An angry person ages faster and may die sooner. Because of *dosa*, we may develop high blood pressure or heart disease. If a person gets angry, his/her appearance may be destroyed. Dying in such a state, he/she will be reborn in hell. After enduring an existence in a hell realm, the person who is reborn as a human being may have an ugly appearance in each subsequent existence. These are some of the consequences of *dosa* that are explained in the scriptures.

In our ordinary lives, we can be blinded when *dosa* takes a firm hold in the mind, so that we are liable to make many errors in judgment. Because of *dosa*, we may be held in custody or thrown into prison. Because of *dosa*, we may suffer greatly and be separated from our wife or husband or relatives. Because of *dosa*, our wealth may be lost. In short, there are no benefits to be gained from clinging to *dosa*. Only with *metta* can we derive many different kinds of benefits. So now yogis, let's do our best to abandon *dosa* and develop *metta*.

I would like to take this opportunity to repeat and elaborate a little on yesterday's instructions, so that they are very clear and understandable for those of you who want to practice *metta* to attain *jhana*. When you practice *metta* meditation, you have to do it with great care, so that the *metta* becomes powerful. Don't use too many words, as it takes too long to repeat the phrases. Also, if you have to pay too much attention trying to remember the phrases, you won't be able to concentrate and develop strong *metta*. For example, the phrase '*May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful*' is the right length. Also, you should develop *metta* using a language you are familiar with. If you don't understand or feel very familiar with the

language you are reciting, you won't be able to experience the feeling of *metta*. So, it's important to recite the phrases in a familiar language. If you speak English, recite and develop *metta* in English. If you understand Chinese, develop *metta* in Chinese. If you understand Malay, you can recite in Malay. When you develop *metta*, you have to practice precisely. If you practice superficially, you will not experience the depth of *metta*. Only when you practice attentively and precisely will you know the powerful feeling of *metta*, and with this kind of *metta*, the person who is the object of *metta* will also experience the benefits of the practice.

A person who develops *metta* with great care experiences the benefits of *metta*. I will illustrate this with a story from my own experience. In November 2004, Mr. Chan Khoon San led a group of Malaysians on a Pilgrimage tour to India and Nepal. After returning to Malaysia, we visited Indonesia and Singapore. At the end of December, we returned to Chanmyay Myaing Yeiktha in Yangon. When we reached the Centre at 6:00 pm, I walked across the grass near my *kuti*. At that moment, I happened to see a sparrow going to sleep. In the Kankoe tree, many sparrows were fighting for sleeping spots, and they argued noisily making loud '*kywi kywi*' sounds. The sounds were deafening.

Then I noticed a hawk picking out his prey in the group of sparrows. Then a sparrow screeched loudly and struggled to escape from the hawk's claws, making terrified '*kywi kywi*' sounds and struggling to be free. The next day, when I was doing walking meditation, the same hawk returned and captured another frightened sparrow, which squawked as he struggled for his freedom. On the third day, the same thing occurred again. This time when I heard the struggle, I felt a lot of compassion for the sparrows, but I decided to cultivate *metta*

for both the hawk and sparrows as both are living beings and part of nature.

That day, I began developing *metta* for the hawk and the sparrows as well as the human beings, *devas*, and other living beings in the monastery compound. The next day, the hawk didn't reappear. While I was doing *metta* meditation, I searched the monastery several times to see if he had returned. Even after it got dark, the hawk didn't come back, nor did he return the following day. I wondered if the hawk had died or had been hurt by another predator. Then a week later, I saw the hawk flying over the monastery fence, but he didn't fly into the monastery compound at all. Since that encounter, the hawk has never returned or harmed any beings in the centre. At that moment, I understood the amazing power of *metta*. Practicing in this way, *metta* can be tremendously beneficial for the recipient, so practice diligently, so its benefits can be realized fully.

Now let's continue and talk about the following things: persons whom we should not develop *metta* for at the beginning of our practice, persons whom we should not develop specific *metta* for in our meditation and persons whom we should never develop *metta* for in our meditation.

There are four categories of people who should not be the object of *metta* meditation when we are beginning this practice. They are: persons whom we dislike, enemies or persons whom we feel hatred for, very dear persons, and neutral persons, acquaintances, or people we neither love nor hate. The practice of *metta* meditation should not begin with these four categories of people. The reason for this is that it is very difficult to develop *metta* towards these people. If we start practicing *metta* for a very dear person, we will not generate the feeling of

*metta* but lust or *tanha* instead. I will illustrate this by relating what one man experienced.

Living during a time when Buddhism was flourishing in Sri Lanka, there was a man who decided he wanted to practice *metta* meditation. When he met a monk on alms round, he asked him how to practice *metta*. The monk told him to first develop *metta* for a very dear person. So the man immediately decided to make the dear person his wife. When he tried to develop *metta* for his wife, he could not experience the feeling of *metta*. The more he tried to develop *metta*, the stronger his lust or *tanha* became. Obsessed by lust, he feared he would act on his obsession and go to his wife's room; however, he then realized that his wife had already locked the door. At night, he could not sleep at all because of this lust or *tanha*, and in frustration, he banged his head on the wall. That's why you should not first develop *metta* for a very dear person.

Persons whom we dislike and enemies or persons for whom we feel hatred should also not be the object of *metta* meditation when we are beginning to practice. If we develop *metta* for person whom we dislike, we may be overcome by *dosa* when recalling the experience that originally made us angry with that person. Also, do not develop specific *metta* for a person of a different sex from yourself. Therefore, a man should not make a female the object of his *metta*, and a female should not develop *metta* for a male. However, later in practice when *metta* is strong, we can do specific *metta* meditation for both males and females without lust arising.

We should also never practice *metta* towards a dead person because it is impossible to reach absorption concentration practicing this way. So, when you start to practice *metta*, use the following sequence of objects: yourself, a respected or venerated person, a very dear person, a neutral person, a person

whom you dislike or an enemy. If you don't hate anyone and have any enemies, you don't need to do this. Finally, you can develop *metta* for all living beings. These are the categories of *metta* meditation. Now continue to practice according to my instructions. If you practice *metta* meditation according to these instructions, you will attain *jhana* quite easily. May all of you practice diligently and be able to realize all the benefits of *metta* meditation.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



## PART III

### The Third Day of the Metta Retreat

Today is Tuesday, 5 June 2007, and today the neutral person or acquaintance can be the object of *metta* meditation. I have already taught you how to develop *metta* for yourself, a respected person, and a very dear person. Now let's talk about the way to develop *metta* for a neutral person or acquaintance. First of all, can you think of someone whom you neither like nor dislike intensely? When you find someone whom you think is a neutral person, you should direct your attention to that person in your mind. Then you can develop *metta* by reciting: *'May my neutral person be well, happy and peaceful. May my neutral person be well, happy and peaceful.'*

Once again, divide the hour into two sections: fifteen minutes and then forty-five minutes. For the first fifteen minutes, develop *metta* for your teacher and during the forty-five-minute period for the neutral person, a person whom you neither love nor hate. If the feeling of *metta* towards the neutral person is weak or doesn't arise at all, go back to the teacher. Because the neutral person is not intimate or well known, you may experience difficulties arousing the feeling of *metta*. It may not even arise at all. If this is the case, go back to the teacher. Keep switching back and forth like this until your *metta* gains in strength. When the feeling of *metta* towards the teacher becomes very strong, change to the neutral person again. In this way, see if you can develop the feeling of *metta* for this neutral person. Then continue to practice over and over again for forty-five minutes. If the feeling of *metta* towards the person does not arise the second time, go back to your teacher again. When the feeling of *metta* towards the teacher becomes very strong,

switch again to the neutral person. Develop *metta* in this way over and over again until it gains intensity and strength.

When you develop *metta*, you should not practice superficially. If you practice lightly, you will not develop strong *samadhi* or concentration, so please practice *metta* precisely. This strong effort is called *viriya*, and it is needed everywhere. When you are performing any mundane tasks, we need this *viriya*. Without *viriya*, you cannot finish a task. With *viriya*, whatever task you perform will be successful. So, if you practice *metta* with *viriya*, you will be successful. If you practice diligently, you won't find it difficult to develop *metta*.

As the taste of *metta* becomes more noticeable day by day, you may experience eleven benefits of *metta*. When *metta* is strong and powerful, you may experience rapture or *piti* in the mind, or feelings of elation or *passaddhi* in the body and mind as well as happiness or *sukha* in the body and mind. So with diligent practice, you will soon experience rapture or pleasurable interest (*piti*). A person who develops strong powerful *metta* creates both more happiness and calm in him/herself and the environment of all living beings.

## **The Story of Roja Malla**

Now let me illustrate how *metta* can transform a person's heart and mind by relating the story of Roja Malla. More than two thousand five hundred and fifty years ago, the Buddha was traveling from Apana to Kusinara with a group of two hundred and fifty monks. The exciting news of his journey spread quickly to the ministers and high government officials of Malla. On hearing the news, they quickly organized a meeting because they each wanted to welcome the Buddha and his

entourage on their arrival in Kusinara. Each of the ministers and high government officials of Malla eagerly vied for the privilege of welcoming the Buddha and his monks. As Roja Malla was a friend of Venerable Ananda, when Venerable Ananda saw Roja Malla, he greeted him enthusiastically and said, '*Roja, I am delighted that you have come to welcome the Buddha; I appreciate your gesture.*' Surprised, Roja replied, '*Why do you say that?*' Then Ananda answered, '*Because you have come to welcome the Buddha, and you will receive some merit from welcoming him and listening to his Dhamma talk.*'

Now it was Venerable Ananda's turn to be surprised because Roja Malla answered, '*Venerable Sir, I have not come to welcome the Buddha because I respect the Buddha, but because I was afraid of being fined five hundred pieces of money.*' On hearing this, Venerable Ananda felt quite disappointed and gently enquired why Roja felt this way. He told Roja that there were few opportunities to meet such a distinguished person and that the Buddha was worthy of respect. Indeed, paying respects and welcoming him would also bring a lot of merit. Venerable Ananda felt distressed and saddened by Roja's lack of interest and dismissive response.

After considering Roja's response in private, Venerable Ananda decided to speak directly to the Buddha. He told the Buddha that Minister Roja was a wealthy man of great influence and authority and also explained that if such a person came to respect the *Sasana* (the teaching of the Buddha), it would be very beneficial for the spread of the teaching. Then he entreated the Buddha to please do something to make Roja Malla respect and take an active interest in the teaching. After listening carefully to this request, the Buddha told Ananda that it would not be difficult to make Roja respect the *Sasana*. As soon as Ananda had departed, the Buddha began to develop metta for Roja with the phrases: '*May Roja be well, happy and*

*peaceful. May Roja be well, happy and peaceful.*' The Buddha's *metta* was very pure, strong and powerful. The Buddha sprinkled the cool refreshing water of *metta* that he had previously sprinkled on innumerable beings solely onto Roja, so that the *metta* water touched Roja's heart. So, although Roja hadn't shown any respect for the Buddha earlier, he now was delighted and eager to pay his respects to such a worthy person.

As a result of the Buddha's *metta*, Roja immediately asked everybody he met where the Buddha was staying. The scriptures say that Roja was determined to search for the Buddha and not rest until he could be found. He hunted for the Buddha like a mother cow might search for a lost calf. Such was the power of the Buddha's *metta*.

And as soon as some monks pointed to the place where the Buddha was resting, Roja eagerly knocked on the door. With great reverence, he paid his respects to the Buddha and wholeheartedly listened to the Buddha's *Dhamma* talk on *dana* (generosity) and *sila* (morality). At the end of the *Dhamma* talk, Roja bowed in reverence to the Triple Gem, the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*. As a result of this teaching, he and the other sponsors became great supporters of the Buddha's teaching, and the Buddha accepted Roja's generous support of the *Sasana*.

## **Venerable U Sila's Metta**

There was a very renowned monk who lived in the district of Bago in Myanmar. His name was U Silacara. Many people discovered that this Sayadaw was an *arahant*. He lived a frugal life alone in a forest monastery in the district of Bago. He ate only a single meal each day and seemed to live continuously

with *metta* in his heart. When he went on alms-round, he sometimes met a tiger, leopard or large wild elephant. However, these wild animals never had any desire to harm Sayadaw. The animals just walked quietly past him and went peacefully about their business.

Everyday a large tiger came and slept underneath the monastery floor, but because of Sayadaw's *metta*, the tiger never once attacked or harmed him. Because of Sayadaw's *metta*, the tiger also never harmed the attendant who lived with him. Early one morning, Sayadaw's attendant was heating hot water for himself on a small outdoor fire. Although the tiger continued to sleep soundly undisturbed by the attendant's noise, he occasionally opened his enormous mouth and yawned. When this happened, the attendant's mind was instantly filled with terrible images of the tiger attacking him and tearing him to pieces. As a result of the fear in his mind, he impulsively and very unwisely had the desire to throw a large piece of burning wood into the gigantic mouth of the tiger. Almost as soon as the attendant had imagined this unwholesome thought, the large tiger woke up and roared with rage. Because of the attendant's unwholesome thought, the tiger reacted with *dosa*. This is a natural law. If a person feels genuine *metta* for another person, the recipient also reacts by returning this *metta*. However, when a person feels *dosa* (anger, impatience or frustration) for another being, that being reacts by returning this anger. That's why it's so important to bring *metta* to our relationships with others.

Nowadays there are many examples of the working of this natural law of cause and effect. In November 2003, an Australian man came to Hmawbi Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre. This monk told his teacher that he intended to do some meditation and ordain as a monk. After his ordination, he started to practice *vipassana* meditation. He

practiced diligently for a week or ten days. Then he became very tired and had trouble dealing with some difficulties, so his practice weakened. Whenever he practiced walking or sitting meditation, his mind was inattentive, and he lacked concentration in his practice of daily activities.

Whenever this monk reported his experiences in an interview, the meditation teacher instructed him to practice diligently. However, although the teacher encouraged him to check his motivation and practice, his efforts (*viriya*) did not improve. Dissatisfied with the monk's efforts, the teacher scolded him whenever he saw him and urged him to practice diligently. Discouraged, the monk asked to work as a monastery helper, and the teacher allowed him to do this. However, whenever the teacher saw him, he pretended to scold him, not out of aversion or anger but out of a desire to help the monk. We could call this '*karuna dosa*' or compassionate anger. When there is a desire or an expectation in the mind for something to happen, and this expectation is unfulfilled, then *dosa* or frustration may arise instead. This is a natural law. When there is *metta* in the mind and events do not turn out as one wishes there is no disappointment or aversion.

Early the next morning, this monk walked to the dining hall for breakfast. As the teacher was also coming to the dining hall for his meal, they met on the way. However, because of the monk's *metta* for Sayadaw, the teacher felt no desire to scold him, nor did he feel the slightest dissatisfaction. The teacher felt respect for the monk, and the monk's face was very serene. The next evening, the monk asked the teacher if he could practice *metta* meditation, and the teacher wholeheartedly agreed and encouraged him in this practice.

The monk told his teacher that he was now practicing *metta* meditation and that this was quite interesting and not nearly as

difficult as *vipassana* meditation. When the teacher asked him whom he was developing *metta* for, the monk smiled shyly and said, with a smiling face, that he was developing *metta* for his teacher using the phrases: ‘*May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful. May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful.*’

In response to this unexpected reply, the teacher then asked him how many days he had been practicing *metta*. He answered, ‘*About one week.*’ Then the teacher realized why he had come to respect the monk and no longer felt the need to scold him. This is the power of *metta*. A person who develops *metta* will be loved and respected by whomever he/she meets. Even people who hate you will begin to love you. That’s why it’s important to practice diligently. May all of you practice conscientiously, and be able to experience the very real benefits of *metta*.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## PART IV

### The Sixth Day of the Metta Retreat and the Meaning of Time

Today is Thursday, 7 June 2007, the sixth day of our *metta* retreat. Our time in these particular bodies is gradually disappearing, drying up. We could say that time is a consuming force, swallowing up the bodies and lives of living beings because the energy of our bodies is gradually being extinguished as our life spans steadily become shorter and shorter.

Our bodies are in a state of constant flux; our once dark brown, black or blond hair is disappearing and turning white. Our teeth are decaying and falling out; our ears are losing their acuity and we are slowing becoming less sensitive to sound; our once straight vigorous bodies are bending to the pressure of gravity, and our wrinkled skin is sagging.

All of these things are happening because time has gradually consumed our youth and middle age, so our youthful appearance has disappeared, and we have gradually become old. Nowadays, we usually live about seventy-five years. So, if we have already existed on this earth for fifty years, time has now greedily devoured those years, so that we have only twenty-five years left. Our grandparents who are seventy years old may have a much shorter stay on earth, perhaps only five years. These are important reflections, and this is why we need to practice diligently, to do meritorious deeds, to practice *dana*, *sila*, and *bhavana* before we die. Therefore, take this opportunity to practice *metta* with *viriyā*, with diligent persistent effort.



Now we will talk about the way to develop *metta* for a person whom you fear, hate or dislike intensely. Although it may seem difficult at first, it is possible to cultivate *metta* for a person whom you hate. However, if there is no one that you hate, it is obviously not necessary to practice this category; or else, you can practice developing *metta* for a person who is an enemy, the sixth *metta* category. Again if there is no one in your life who fits this description, simply proceed by developing *metta* for all living beings.

To develop *metta* for the hated person, divide the one-hour practice period into two sections: fifteen minutes and then forty-five minutes. For the first fifteen minutes, develop *metta* for your teacher and during the forty-five-minute period for the person whom you hate. A hated person is someone for whom you feel intense annoyance and distaste. If the feeling of *metta* towards the hated person is weak or doesn't arise at all, go back to the teacher. When the feeling of *metta* towards the teacher becomes very strong, change to the hated person again using the phrases, '*May this hated person be well, happy and peaceful.*' In this way, see if you can develop the feeling of *metta* for this person. Then continue to practice over and over again for forty-five minutes. If the feeling of *metta* towards the hated person does not arise the second time, go back to your teacher again. When the feeling of *metta* towards the teacher becomes very strong, then switch to the hated person and continue to practice *metta* for him/her. Develop *metta* in this way over and over again until it gains strength and momentum, and you can switch easily between the feeling of *metta* for the teacher and the hated person. In this way, you can strengthen the power of your *metta*.

Now I would like to tell about the experience of U Vimalaramsi, an Australian monk. After U Vimalaramsi asked if he could practice *metta* meditation, I explained how to

practice *metta*, and he proceeded to practice diligently. During the first day, he practiced *metta* for himself, and after that he developed *metta* for his teacher. I told him to develop *metta* for his teacher for seven days while sitting, walking, or doing daily activities and to develop *metta* during all his waking hours. He practiced diligently and the power of his *metta* was quite strong. On the ninth day, he began to develop *metta* for a very dear person, and he continued developing *metta* for this very dear friend for seven days. As he developed *metta* for this friend, he often wore a slight smile on his face, and on the sixth day he suddenly began to laugh aloud. An Indonesian yogi who was sitting next to him told Sayadaw that U Vimalaramsi had begun laughing aloud while he was meditating. So during the next interview, the teacher asked him if he had laughed aloud while he was meditating. He cheerfully answered, 'Yes, Sayadaw. *When I was developing metta for my dear person, it seemed as if my mind entered the mind of my friend. My body disappeared, and I only felt my friend's mind and body. When my friend smiled, I also started to smile, and when my friend laughed, I began to laugh out loud.*'

What's important to understand, yogis, is that this is a manifestation of *metta*, this dissolving into the person who is object of *metta*. This is the result of *samadhi* or concentration; it's the same as *jhana* or absorption. When his friend was smiling, he also began to smile; when his friend was laughing, he began to laugh, sometimes even laughing aloud. This is a manifestation of *piti* or rapture, which becomes very distinct in one of the *jhanas*.

After that, the teacher asked him to develop *metta* for a neutral person, a person he neither loved nor hated. He didn't have any difficulties doing this and developed his *metta* very well. Then he continued practicing *metta* for a person he hated. With this, he also had no difficulties, so the teacher instructed him to

develop *metta* for an enemy. When he asked U Vimalaramsi if he had any enemies, the teacher was surprised to discover the monk's enemy was his wife. Out of curiosity, the teacher asked him why his wife was his enemy. He immediately told the teacher that she had intended to kill him on two different occasions, and that she had fortunately been unsuccessful in each attempt.

At the conclusion of this interview, U Vimalaramsi started to develop *metta* for his wife. The next day during his interview, he said that he hadn't developed *metta* for his enemy because his mind was worried that his enemy might be well and happy. He didn't have any feelings of *metta* for her. As a result, the teacher suggested he develop *metta* for his teacher for a period of time to strengthen the feeling of *metta*. Then when the feeling of *metta* became strong, shift and develop *metta* for his enemy. The monk proceeded by following these instructions but could not immediately switch and develop *metta* for his wife. On the third day, he felt capable of making the shift to his wife, and on the following day, he was able to develop and sustain *metta* for his wife, gradually developing genuine *metta* for her. When he reported his experience in the following interview, he wholeheartedly told the teacher that he could now develop strong *metta* for his wife, and as a result he had ceased to regard her as his enemy. She had become his friend.

Of course, when you develop *metta*, you don't need to differentiate between a loved person and hated person. Instead, you can develop *metta* for all living beings and have the same feelings for each of them. If you were to mix some water and milk together, would you be able to differentiate between the milk and water? In the same way, when you develop *metta* there should ultimately be no distinction between the loved person and the hated person. The feeling for each person should be the same; then there is no attachment whatsoever.

What I want to emphasize is that when you develop *metta* for a person whom you hate or for your enemy, you may experience some difficulties. If you experience difficulty, first develop *metta* for your teacher and then develop *metta* for the person who is an enemy, and then switch back to developing *metta* for your teacher, followed by *metta* for your enemy when your *metta* is strong and stable.

## The Metta Sutta

Now, I'd like to tell you how the Metta Sutta came into existence. Before *vassa*, a group of five hundred monks came to Jetavana monastery in the town of Savatthi where the Buddha was residing. They told the Buddha that they would like to go to a secluded forest and practice meditation. Then they asked for instructions about the practice of *vipassana* meditation. After the Buddha had given them instructions for *vipassana* meditation, the five hundred monks went to this remote forest to practice. As soon as they arrived in a quiet isolated area free from people and noise, they seated themselves in meditation and immediately prepared to practice.

However, the forest *devas* who made their homes in the forest canopy were not delighted by the intrusive arrival of the monks; in fact, they were anxious and worried about losing their homes. The *devas* optimistically hoped the monks would only stay one or two days and then leave. However, when the monks didn't leave after two days or even ten days, the *devas* and their children began to suffer from the cramped inconvenient conditions on the ground where they had to live. So, the trees *devas* talked to each other and devised a clever plan to make the monks leave; they emitted bad smells and created frightening sounds, noises and terrifying visions of bloody broken heads and bodies without hands or feet.

Bewitched by these sense impressions and terrifying visions, the monks became so alarmed they suffered from fevers and pain and found it impossible to practice meditation. As no monk wanted to stay, they decided to go to Savatthi, where the Buddha was residing. When they requested an interview with the Buddha, he asked his dear monks why they had returned during *vassa*.

After the monks had related their experiences in vivid detail, the Buddha said, '*Beloved monks, go back to exactly the same place in the forest, and practice your meditation there.*' Terrified at the prospect of having to return to this nightmarish place, the monks implored the Buddha to be compassionate and not send them back to this forest. However, the Buddha insisted that all the monks go back to exactly the same spot in the forest. Let me briefly explain that the Buddha did not act out of a lack of compassion; the scriptures explicitly state that the Buddha sent the monks back to the forest because he realized that they were all on the verge of attaining *magga ñana*, *phala ñana*, and *Nibbana*. However, he also recognized that they needed a way to deal with the many distractions and difficulties they had previously encountered, so he decided to give them a 'weapon'. This 'weapon' or skilful means was the teaching of the Metta Sutta.

When the monks returned to the forest, they recited the Metta Sutta and diligently practiced *metta*. Because of the power of this *metta*, the *devas* who had previously been hostile to the monks now didn't want to disturb them any more. Feeling the monks' *metta*, the *devas* minds were filled with love and respect for the monks. They felt as if their dearest children and friends had come back from a long journey, so they welcomed them, carried their alms-bowls and robes, and offered them fresh water from a nearby spring. In this way, the monks practiced meditation continuously in this forest the whole *vassa*

while the *devas* acted as their loyal supporters, protecting them from all danger. In this safe sheltered environment, the monks' minds become calm and tranquil, and when the mind becomes serene and peaceful, there is access to *ñāna* or insight. As they all practiced with great care and diligence, by the end of *vassa*, they had all become *arahants*.

When we look at this event, it becomes obvious that a person practicing *vipassana* cannot practice well without the foundation of *metta*. Without *metta*, the practitioner will encounter numerous difficulties. You might wonder how long you need to develop *metta* for, but the answer to this is not so straightforward or simple because this is determined by the length of time it takes for the mind to become calm and balanced. When the mind become peaceful, you can start to practice *vipassana* meditation. By practicing *vipassana* meditation with the foundation of *metta*, you will not only be free from danger, but *sati*, *samadhi*, *vipassana ñāna*, *maggā ñāna* and *phala ñāna* become more accessible. The practice of *metta* meditation is fundamental to the practice of *vipassana* meditation.

So, *metta* meditation is beneficial to every yogi, and all living beings should practice it. Each of you should also try to practice diligently. I know some of you now have quite a good understanding of the spirit of *metta*. The day before yesterday, one yogi told me his experience was very satisfying. As a teacher, it was gratifying to hear about this yogi's good experience after only a few days of practice. Therefore, if each of you practices conscientiously, you will also experience the spirit of *metta*. Please trust and believe this is possible. May all of you believe in the power of *metta* and try to practice diligently, so you will be able to achieve the benefits of *metta* quickly.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## PART V

### The Eighth Day of the Metta Retreat

Today is Saturday, 9 June 2007, the eighth day of our Metta retreat. Some yogis have already practiced *metta* for a few days, so that their *samadhi* or concentration has gradually increased. And some of you who have practiced *Metta* meditation for quite some time understand the meaning and have experienced the taste of *metta* to a great degree. However, before the taste of *metta* is experienced fully, some of you may feel the practice is boring or tiresome. Let me assure and persuade you to be persistent and patient because the flavour of *metta* is very delicious; it is something to savour and delight in when it arises. You will be filled with peace and happiness, and you will not find this experience boring in the least. So, at the beginning of practice, you need to persevere and practice diligently. You have a precious opportunity to do this practice; please take advantage of it. With such a good opportunity to practice *metta*, why not take advantage of it to attain the happiness of the human life, the happiness of *deva* life, the happiness of the *brahma* realm and the happiness of *Nibbana*?

So yogis, please reflect on the precious opportunity you have to practice meditation and be happy about this. The Buddha *Sasana* only makes a rare appearance in the lives of human beings, so it is difficult to encounter it. However, each of you has already come across the Buddha *Sasana*, and you have also been born as human beings, a realm of existence in which *Dhamma* practice is possible. In addition, it is very difficult to have *saddha* or confidence, a necessary ingredient for practice. But this confidence already exists in each of you. It is also very rare to have the opportunity to listen to *Dhamma* discourses given by the Buddha or other virtuous people. Good health is

also very important. If you are unhealthy, it's much more difficult to practice meditation.

Today, I visited a man in Kuala Lumpur and gave a *Dhamma* talk. The man who lives there, was unconscious and unable to eat even the smallest morsel of food. He could only drink liquids, but couldn't eat any solid food. Having suffered from this disease for five years, he recognized no one except the members of his family. He is a member of Bodhiyarama, and in this lifetime, he has had very good *saddha*, the chance to be born as a human being and encounter the Buddha *Sasana* as well. However, now his life is challenging as he is very ill and is unable to hear *Dhamma* talks. He is unable to cultivate *metta* or practice meditation at all. It is very difficult for him. Yogis, you are so fortunate to have this opportunity - the opportunity to practice diligently until you realize the potential happiness possible in this human life, the happiness of *brahma* realm and the happiness of *Nibbana*!

Now, let's change the person who is the object of *metta* and develop *metta* for a person who is your enemy. However, if you don't have an enemy, you can develop *metta* for all living beings. When you are developing *metta* for your enemy, try to remember the procedure you followed yesterday when you developed *metta* for a person that you hate. You can develop *metta* for your enemy using exactly the same method as for the person you hate. When developing *metta* for your enemy, first of all, decide in your mind who is your enemy is. Then develop *metta* using the phrases: '*May my enemy be well, happy and peaceful. May my enemy be well, happy and peaceful.*' If you cannot feel *metta* for your enemy at this time, then cultivate *metta* for your teacher. When your *metta* becomes stronger, switch and develop *metta* for your enemy. If you cannot cultivate *metta* for your enemy because you are angry with him/her, you have to neutralize this anger with *metta*. If you



can change your anger into *metta*, you will feel *metta* for your enemy. You should realize that when you are able to love your enemy, then this enemy will no longer be hostile to you. So, spend the first fifteen minutes practicing with a teacher whom you venerate, and the remaining forty-five minutes cultivating *metta* for an enemy.

To illustrate the power of *metta*, I'd like to tell you about the experience of a meditator named Chan Khoon San, who lives in Kuala Lumpur. When he practiced *metta* meditation for about a week at Chanmyay Myaing Yeiktha in Yangon, I told him to develop *metta* using the same instructions I've given you. One day he started to develop *metta* for his enemy, a person who was an administrator in the organization where he worked. Whenever Chan Khoon San saw this man, the man behaved in a hostile fashion and spoke harshly. So, Chan Khoon San developed *metta* for two days, using the phrases: '*May my enemy be well, happy and peaceful. May my enemy be well, happy and peaceful.*' He told me he didn't have any difficulties; in fact, his enemy's face appeared clearly, and he was smiling at the person.

This is a very interesting phenomenon, isn't it? A person at Chanmyay Myaing Yeiktha was sending *metta* to a person in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Can you imagine how far it is from Yangon to Kuala Lumpur? It takes more than two hours to fly by plane from Myanmar to Malaysia across the sea, mountains, forests, trees, and buildings. Nowadays we can send messages using email servers from almost any country in Asia to a western country or from a western city to an Asian city. Keep in mind that an email message is a physical phenomenon. And here is a yogi sending *metta*, a mental phenomenon. Physical phenomena happen without any knowing mind, without any effort, whereas *metta* incorporates knowing, wisdom, *saddha* and *viriyā*. That's why *nama* or the mental power of *metta* is

much stronger than physical phenomena. In effect, *metta* is much more powerful and amazing than any physical phenomena because it can be sent and received anywhere, in any country and in any part of the world.

When I returned to Malaysia in December 2007, Chan Khoon San said, *'Sayadaw! I am extremely surprised by the power of metta. Since I was in Myanmar in 2005, I have been practicing metta meditation. During my retreat with Sayadaw, I developed metta for my enemy for two days. About a week after I returned to Malaysia, I went to a meeting and met this person. To my complete surprise, he greeted me and asked how I was and how long I had stayed in Myanmar. This person who had always been extremely hostile to me was now smiling warmly, and his sincere greeting completely surprised me and helped me to understand the amazing power of metta.'*

## **The Metta of Visakha Thera**

At the time of the Buddha there was an elder called Visakha Thera, who was loved not only by human beings but also by the *devas* and *brahmas*. After he ordained as a monk, he practiced meditation and became an *arahant*. Visakha Thera never stayed long in one place. He lived four months of each year in a different place, so he stayed in three different places in one year. It seems that he lived with *metta*, and because of his *metta*, all the beings living in the little monastery at the top of the hill felt peaceful and serene and lived together harmoniously. However, Visakha Thera was completely unaware of these facts; he just developed *metta* continuously for all beings. In this way, four months passed.

One night while he was practicing walking meditation, he reflected that his four months had passed, so he would need to move to another place tomorrow. The Tree Deva knew that Visakha lived at the end of the walking path, and when he heard the unexpected news, he started crying quietly. When Visakha Thera heard the sounds of crying, he asked, *'Who is crying so pitifully?'* Then the Tree Deva whispered a shy response, *'It is me. I am the Tree Deva living in the tree beside the walking path.'* Then Visakha Thera gently inquired, *'Why are you crying so miserably?'* Without a moment's hesitation, the Tree Deva replied, *'Because tomorrow you will be moving to another place.'* Surprised, Visakha Thera asked, *'Why does the fact that I'm leaving bother you?'*

In a very sincere tone of voice, the Tree Deva answered, *'In fact, it does very much concern me, Bhante. Venerable Sir, since you have been here on this mountain, all the devas and other beings have been very peaceful. Before you came here, the devas on this mountain fought and often quarrelled with each other. However, since you have been here, all the devas have stopped fighting and have loved each other. This is because of your metta Venerable Sir. However, if you move to another place, we will have fights and quarrels again. Therefore, I am crying. So, Visakha Thera have compassion for them.'* On hearing this, Visakha Thera promised to stay another four months on the mountain.

After the next four months had passed, he again decided to move to another place; however, the Tree Deva once again asked him to stay. As the result of these repeated requests, Visakha Thera stayed not just for another four months, but lived for the rest of his life on this very mountain. During all of his years on the mountain, all the beings lived together peacefully, happily and harmoniously, free from danger, fights or quarrels. This was the power of Visakha Thera's *metta*.

That's why you should develop *metta* until the attainment of *jhana*. Living with *metta* always brings many benefits. If you do this, you will become peaceful and be free from danger, both yourself and other living beings. When your *metta* is strong and powerful, other living beings also become peaceful. That's why you need to cultivate *metta* until the attainment of *jhana*.

## The Jhanas

Now let's talk about the *jhanas*. With *jhana samadhi* or absorption concentration, the mind stays firmly on the object of meditation; the completely concentrated mind sticks to the object of meditation. When you develop *metta* for your teacher, your mind is inclined or focused on your teacher, so that the mind eventually rests firmly on your teacher, the object of meditation. There is no thinking or wandering mind at all. Even if thinking arises briefly, as soon as it disappears the mind becomes firmly concentrated on the object of meditation. When *jhana* becomes powerful, the concentrated mind is calm and tranquil. Some meditators' minds can remain for five, ten, or even twenty minutes in such a calm tranquil state. When the object of *metta* meditation is the teacher, some people's minds stay with the teacher for half an hour or even one hour without interruption, wishing the teacher good health, happiness, and peace.

The mind doesn't go to other objects. Even if other objects are momentarily stronger than the *metta* object, the mind quickly returns to the teacher who is object of *metta* and sinks into this object. This sinking phenomenon is similar to a person being immersed in water, so that his/her body disappears and there is only the meditator's mind and the object of *metta*. When your

mind is firmly concentrated on the object of meditation, then we call this state *jhana* or absorption.

There are five kinds of *jhana*: the first, second, third, fourth and fifth *ghanas*. Each *jhana* is characterized by a deeper level of concentration than the preceding level. The second *jhana* has a much greater degree of calm than the first *jhana*. The third *jhana* has more tranquillity than the second *jhana*. The fourth *jhana* has even more tranquillity or calm than the third *jhana*. The fifth *jhana* has much more tranquillity than the fourth *jhana*.

Let's begin by considering each of the *ghanas* in greater detail. The first absorption or *jhana* has five factors: *vitakka*, *vicara*, *piti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggata*. *Vitakka* means directing the mind to the meditation object. So, yogis when you develop *metta* for your teacher, your mind is directed to a mental image of the teacher or a felt sense of the teacher's presence, the object of *metta*. This is *vitakka*.

The second factor or *vicara* means sustaining the mind on the object, and *ekaggata* is one-pointed concentration on the object. This means that the mind rests unwaveringly on the object of *metta*. Yesterday a yogi reported that when his mind was directed to the teacher, his *metta* became firmly established on the teacher, and his mind was absorbed into the *metta* object. This absorption is the nature of *ekaggata*. *Piti*, the third factor, refers to the mind's pleasurable interest in the object. When your *metta* for the teacher is firm and tranquil, then you will experience happy, pleasurable feelings. This is *piti*. *Sukha* means happiness. When your *metta* is very well-developed, the mind is filled with *sukha*. These five factors are part of the first *jhana*.

When a yogi practices *metta* continuously, he/she will reach the second *jhana*. The second *jhana* has the four factors of sustained application *vicara*, *piti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggata*. When you reach the second *jhana*, as a result of the momentum developed in the first *jhana*, the mind is immediately focused on the *metta* object. This is *vicara*, but *vitakka* is no longer present. In addition to *vicara*, there is rapture or *piti*, happiness or *sukha*, and one-pointedness or *ekaggata*. The second *jhana* has only these four factors.

Now let me use an analogy to help you understand the meaning of *vitakka*, *vicara* and *ekaggata*. Have you ever watched how bees fly towards flowers and trees? When bees fly towards flowers and trees, you'll notice that as soon as they reach the flowers and trees, they don't rest but continue to hover immediately above the flowers. Only on the third trip do they rest on the flowers, and then suck up the nectar with their proboscis.

When the bees are flying towards the flowers and trees, this is the same as *vitakka*, directing the mind to the object. When the bees reach the flowers and trees and continue to hover above these objects without resting, this is the same as *vicara* or keeping the mind's attention on the object. At this stage, the feeling of *metta* is not firmly established on the object yet. When the bees arrive for the third time and begin sucking the nectar with their proboscis, this is similar to *ekaggata*, the feeling of *metta* with one-pointed concentration on the object. In the second *jhana*, *vicara*, *piti*, *sukha* and *ekaggata* are more powerful than in the first *jhana*.

Yogis, who continue to practice in a concentrated way, will eventually experience the third *jhana*. In the third *jhana*, *vitakka* and *vicara* no longer are present, only *piti*, *sukha* and *ekaggata* are apparent. As soon as the yogi starts to develop

*metta*, the mind becomes concentrated on the object, and one-pointedness or *ekaggata*, rapture or *piti* and happiness or *sukha* appear to be more powerful than in the second *jhana*.

Practicing meditation continuously, the yogi now reaches the fourth *jhana*, which has two factors: happiness or *sukha* and one-pointedness or *ekaggata*. Neither *vitakka*, *vicara* nor *piti* exist anymore. That's why the yogi who reaches the fourth *jhana* experiences intense happiness. The yogi doesn't feel rapture or *piti* either. If *piti* is present, the yogi's happiness is not yet complete because *samadhi* concentration is not completely stable. Sometimes *piti* is so powerful that even the object of *metta* disappears, so that the yogi has to generate the object again. That's why when *piti* is still there *sukha* and *ekaggata* are not so evident. When *piti* no longer exists, then it's possible to experience the delicious taste of *sukha* in the fourth *jhana*. Because *samadhi* is very strong, very few thoughts appear in the mind, so the mind is strongly concentrated on the object. This is called *ekaggata*. At this stage, there are only two *jhana* factors.

A person who develops *metta* can attain any *jhana* up to and including the fourth *jhana*. If he/she dies while absorbed in this *jhana*, he/she will be reborn in the *brahma* realm. A person who has only practiced *dana* cannot be reborn in the *brahma* realm; this is only possible for a person who has attained *jhana* because he/she has purified the mind sufficiently. If a person has pure *sila* but has not practiced the *ghanas*, he/she cannot be reborn in the *brahma* realm.

When a person who has attained the first *jhana* dies, he/she will be reborn in the first level of the *brahma* realm. If one dies after attaining the second *jhana*, rebirth is in the second level of the *brahma* realm. This, in fact, applies to each succeeding stage: for the third *jhana*, rebirth is in the third *brahma* realm

and for the fourth *jhana*, rebirth is in the fourth *brahma* realm. You can develop *metta* until the attainment of the fourth *jhana*, but you cannot reach the fifth *jhana*. If you wish to attain the fifth *jhana*, you have to cultivate *upekkha*. The *Brahmaviharas* or Divine Abodes have four different qualities: *metta* (loving-kindness), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkha* (equanimity). If you develop *metta*, *karuna*, or *mudita*, you can attain the fourth *jhana*. However, if you want to reach the fifth *jhana*, you have to develop *upekkha* or equanimity.

So, you should carefully consider your purpose in practice. If you wish to attain the *Brahma* realm, then cultivate *metta* and practice until you reach a particular *jhana*.

Do you want to attain the *deva* realm or the *brahma* realm or *Nibbana*? If your goal is the *deva* realm, you have to practice the wholesome actions of *dana* and *sila*. Then you will reach the *deva* realm. Or if the goal is the *brahma* realm, you have to attain *jhana*. However, if you want to realize *Nibbana*, you must practice *vipassana* meditation. When you perform the wholesome actions of *dana*, *sila* and *samatha bhavana*, you should ultimately incline the mind towards *Nibbana* because these are supportive conditions for reaching the Unconditioned. It is very important to remember these points. So may all of you practice *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* diligently to be free from all kinds of suffering, and be able to attain *Nibbana* or the Unconditioned.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



## PART VI

### The Eleventh Day of the Metta Retreat

Today is Tuesday, 12 June 2007. First of all, we will begin by changing and including all the objects of *metta* meditation in a single session. You have already developed *metta* for each of the six *metta* categories individually, so today you will practice cultivating *metta* for all six persons during a single sitting. For the first ten minutes, begin practicing *metta* for yourself; then do ten minutes for your teacher, followed by ten minutes for the dear person. Then continue with ten minutes for the neutral person, ten minutes for the hated person and finish the hour with ten minutes for your enemy. While you are practicing walking meditation or doing daily activities, you should develop *metta* for all living beings, using the phrases: ‘*May all living beings be well, happy and peaceful.*’

When we read newspapers, many scientists are talking about global warming, about how the world is gradually becoming warmer and warmer. In Myanmar, this year’s hot season has been drier and hotter than the previous year. This situation is confronting and affecting people in many parts of the world. The scriptures speak explicitly about these increasingly dangerous conditions in the world that are due to the defilements. They warn us and say that when the defilements of living beings increase, then the increasing appearance of *lobha* will result in more and more famines around the world. When the defilement of *dosa* becomes stronger, fear, anger and hatred will result in the increase of dangerous weapons, as well as the increasing number of natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes and volcanoes. And when the defilement of *moha* becomes powerful, then the water element will become

increasingly dangerous, resulting in floods and tidal waves from excessive rain.

Looking at the world, many countries are dealing with the dangers of weapons, from the development of atomic energy for weapons to the proliferation of land mines. Many civilians are frightened and have been displaced and forced to flee to other countries as refugees. The dangerous effects of fires are also increasing; human and animal lives are lost when fires tear through forests or when volcanoes erupt and explode. These are the consequences of *dosa*. In some South Asian countries, very heavy monsoon rains have flooded vast areas of land, ruining the landscape, flooding villages and destroying crops.

So many people and creatures in the world are suffering from these more frequent dangers. Worry, sorrow, grief and lamentation are becoming more and more intense.

When you see through the eyes of the *Dhamma*, then you begin to realize that these events are occurring because the *kilesas* or defilements of living beings are becoming stronger and occurring more frequently. That's why *metta* is so important and why it is so desperately needed in this world. *Metta* is the antidote to these difficult conditions, and when *metta* increases, then the heat and burning effects of the *kilesas* will be diminished, and beings will live together in greater harmony and peace.

At this time, beings need to live in the shade of *metta*, to turn on the air conditioning and live with *metta*. I urge you to always try and live with *metta*. If you exist in this world without *metta*, you cannot live in peace. Today yogis, practice *metta* meditation for all beings, so they may be free from the heat and danger of the defilements. Try to practice diligently and strengthen the quality of your *metta*.

## Incomparable Metta

Let us pay our respects to the Buddha who had great pure *metta*. The Buddha always lived with incomparable *metta*. He always lived abiding with *metta*, *karuna*, *mudita* and *upekkha*. Even Devadatta, who tried in many different ways to kill the Buddha, was never successful because of the great *metta* of the Buddha. The Buddha also possessed *metta-karuna* or great compassion, so that he wasn't afraid or angry at Nalagiri, the elephant, who drank too much alcohol and tried to run over and kill the Buddha. Even when Magandiya abused and treated the Buddha with hostility, the Buddha didn't return anger with more anger, but returned her antagonism with *metta*. In fact, Magandiya was harsh to the Buddha in many different ways. One day the Buddha went on alms round in the town of Rajagaha with Venerable Ananda. At that time, Magandiya associated with corrupt debauched people, taught them to be abusive, and gave them alcohol. These drunken people then abused the Buddha in many different ways.

Despite the harsh words and abusive language, the Buddha smiled with *metta* because he was completely free of *dosa*. They abused him to his face and behind his back, and spread lies about him. Venerable Ananda became very angry with them because he was not yet free of *dosa*, yet the Buddha felt no anger whatsoever only compassionate *metta*.

In response to this exceedingly unpleasant behaviour, Venerable Ananda urged the Buddha not to go on alms round on the street where he had previously received so many insults. However, the Buddha replied, '*No Ananda! We should not avoid these people and take another street.*' Someone who is virtuous has to learn to be patient with abusive people; there's no need to feel disappointment or anger towards them. We should respect and learn from the Buddha's *metta*. In this

world, most people are generous to other people who treat them respectfully or kindly; they want to be generous in return. This example shows how different the Buddha was from most other people. It didn't matter whether a person acted well or badly, the Buddha always acted with *metta* and generosity. He said not to worry about other people's behaviour, just act with integrity and generosity yourself.

## **The Story of the Wild Elephant**

Now let's continue by talking about how *metta* meditation can free a person from danger, and how one can experience happiness and other benefits. Long ago, there was a man called Magha who lived in the village of Masala. This young man had very little *dosa* in his mind and always seemed to live with *metta*. He used to volunteer and do cleaning jobs. One day at the village gate, he was clearing the paths and filling holes in the road with earth and stones. After he had done a good job of repairing the road and sweeping the ground until it was clean and tidy, he sat down on the ground to rest. While Magha was sitting in that place, another man pushed and shoved him and finally sat down in Magha's place. However, Magha felt no anger whatsoever towards this man. A while later, he started cleaning another area, and when he had finished, again sat down to rest and drink some water. For a second time, someone bullied Magha and pushed him aside, and then sat down in his place. Surprisingly, Magha felt no ill-will or resentment at all. It was quite inspiring to watch him! Nowadays, in some towns or villages, there are people like Magha who generously offer to help monks, old people, and mothers with babies. This is heart-warming to see.

## A Virtuous Mind

Despite the fact that Magha was bullied, this did not prevent him from reflecting and understanding how other people benefited from his cleaning work. So, he decided to renew his efforts and increase the work that he did to benefit others. This noble mind state is called *yoniso manasikara* (wise consideration) and is extremely beneficial and wholesome.

In this world, there are many different kinds of human beings and *devas* whom you need to be considerate of. To practice and develop this consideration and kindness, you need to develop *metta*. With *metta*, you will become peaceful and create safety for all other beings. If you develop strong *metta*, you will be comfortable associating with many different kinds of people, and every thing that you want to accomplish will come about easily. When you speak with *metta*, your words will be sweet to hear, and you will be loved by human beings and *devas*. Magha also practiced *metta* in this way while he was cleaning and repairing things. So, it did not take long for other young men to join Magha in his voluntary work of cleaning and improving the roads. Eventually, they became a well-organized group of thirty-three men. As a result, they extended their work and travelled to more distant villages and towns to engage in voluntary work. In places where the roads had turned into mud puddles, they filled them with earth and stones. If bridges were needed, they repaired or built new ones. When places became overgrown with weeds, grass, bushes, they cleared away them.

One day they reached a new village and began cleaning and sweeping the surrounding area. In small villages, news travels fast, so the village head very quickly heard about their arrival and the work they were doing. However, this man was an alcoholic, and his mind was very deluded. He decided to find this young man called Magha and offer him an early morning

drink of alcohol. To the village head's surprise, neither Magha nor anyone else accepted the alcohol because they were virtuous people and preferred to live with integrity or *sila*. However, because the village head had no qualms about doing hurtful deeds or engaging in harmful speech, he got upset and deeply resented the fact that he had been excluded by Magha. So, he decided to take revenge and show Magha and his friend that he was a very powerful person in the village. He declared, '*You will know who I am!*' and went off to find the king.

When he spoke to the King, he slandered Magha and his friends and told the king that a dangerous gang of thugs had overrun the village and were threatening innocent villagers. He urged and pleaded with the king to please arrest the gang immediately. Because the King's anger was aroused, he didn't investigate the situation properly but acted hastily. He immediately ordered his men to arrest Magha and his friends.

When young Magha heard this news, he feared for his and his friends' lives and knew his situation was dangerous. He suspected that the village head was the cause of his troubles. After Magha and his friends were arrested, their hands were tied up tightly with ropes and they were forced to sit down on the damp palace floor and wait. While Magha waited, the king's soldiers made the killer elephant drink alcohol. The King would use the elephant to do his dirty deeds, to kill people whom he judged to be evil.

Sensing the danger, young Magha advised his friends and told them how to deal with the dangerous elephant. He said, '*My friends, in these terrifying circumstances, we can only depend on metta. So, try to develop metta and direct it to the king, the village head, and the killer elephant. Don't be angry with them because they are under the influence of moha (delusion) and dosa (anger) and are incapable of seeing clearly.*'

Consequently, the killer elephant was afraid to harm Magha or any of his friends. He seemed to love them, and instead of hurting them, he knelt down on his knees in front of them. When the King heard about this state of affairs, he was astonished and furious that his orders had not been obeyed. He said, *'How could this happen? This elephant has killed hundreds, thousands, perhaps even ten thousand people. Now here are only thirty-three people. Why couldn't he kill them?'*

Reflecting on these events, the King thought that perhaps the elephant had felt pity for the prisoners, so he ordered his soldiers to cover Magha and the others with straw and release the killer elephant again. For a second time, the killer elephant was unable to do away with the prisoners and just knelt down respectfully in front of them instead. The King was dumbfounded at this turn of events. This very same elephant had killed hundreds, rather thousands of people. Now only a few people stood before him, but he dared not harm them. Perplexed but determined to get to the bottom of this mystery, the King impatiently asked his men to bring Magha to him. As soon as Magha stood before him, the King asked, *'Magha! What is it that you are dissatisfied with? Why are you opposed to me?'* Now it was Magha's turn to be confused because he had absolutely no idea what the King was talking about. Magha wondered to himself why the King treated them as if they were ordinary robbers or thugs when they were performing good deeds and serving others.

So, he asked the King, *'What do you mean? We weren't harming anybody. We were cleaning and repairing roads, serving others, and doing good deeds. We even developed metta for the head of the village, the killer elephant, and yourself. Therefore, this elephant didn't dare harm us.'* Incredulous, the king blurted out the truth about the village leader, revealing how he had lied about Magha and told the

King that he and his friends were a gang of dangerous thugs. His eyes wide open in surprise, Magha immediately replied, *'That is absolutely untrue. The village head tried to make us drink his alcohol, but we refused his offer. I suppose he felt insulted when we disobeyed him, and that's why he slandered us.'*

Humbled by this experience, the King reflected on his own actions and said, *'Oh! Even this elephant is wiser than I am because he understood the power of your metta. Although I am a human being, I didn't feel your metta.'* When the King next saw the village leader, he confronted him with his lies about Magha and his friends. Then he told him that he was cruel and evil-minded, and dismissed him from his position as the village head. He even forced the man to serve Magha and his friends, to be their servant while Magha became the new village head. Magha also received the king's gift of the elephant, which was transformed into a wise and gentle creature by Magha's *metta* and transported Magha from village to village. All of these benefits accrued because of *metta*. After they died, Magha was reborn in the Tavatimsa Deva realm and Magha became King Sakka, and his friends were reborn as *devas*.

As all of you are now practicing *metta*, may you attain different kinds of happiness and be free from any danger. Practice diligently, so that your practice will ripen and bear the most delicious fruit, the sweet nectar of *metta*.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



## PART VII

### From Metta to Vipassana

Today is 14 June 2007, the thirteenth day of this Metta retreat. Today we'll talk about how to change from *metta* to *vipassana*. At this point in your retreat, you have been practicing *metta* meditation for thirteen days already, and some of you have already developed quite strong *metta*. As there are only two days left, now is the time to change from *metta* meditation to *vipassana* meditation. Actually, most yogis should practice *metta* meditation for about four weeks, so that *samadhi* becomes strong. It's better to change to *vipassana* at that time rather than after two weeks of *metta*. It's important to practice *vipassana* rather than just be content with *metta* because *vipassana* has the potential to free the mind.

### Three Stairways

There are three kinds of training that lead to happiness in life. They are the training of *silā*, the training of *samadhi*, and the training of *pañña*. *Sikkha* means training in Pali. The scriptures refer to *silā sikkha*, *samadhi sikkha*, and *pañña sikkha*. By keeping five precepts, eight precepts or nine precepts, you are practicing *silā sikkha*. *Samadhi sikkha* includes the practice of metta meditation, and *pañña sikkha* refers to the practice of vipassana meditation, which you are going to begin today. *Pañña sikkha* is the main purpose of *vipassana* meditation. However, all three trainings are included in the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path and *vipassana* meditation. These three kinds of training create happiness for living beings.

For living beings, the training in morality results in the happiness enjoyed by *devas*, and that's why the Buddha said that *sila* is the staircase leading up to the *deva* realm. If you want to reach any of the six *deva* realms, you can climb up the staircase of *sila*. The training of *samadhi* gives living beings the happiness enjoyed by *brahmas*. When you practice *samadhi sikkha*, you experience the *jhanas* and the happiness of the brahma realm. *Metta bhavana* is one kind of *samadhi sikkha*. The scriptures give detailed descriptions of forty practices that develop concentration, and *metta bhavana* is included in these forty practices. And finally, the training of *pañña sikkha* ultimately results in the happiness of *Nibbana*, so it's useful to describe *pañña sikkha* as the staircase leading to *Nibbana*.

However, the meditator cannot reach the *brahma* realm or *Nibbana* using *sila sikkha*, and *samadhi sikkha* will also not open the door to *Nibbana*. However, it's still very important to practice these three *sikkhas*. If you don't practice *sila sikkha*, you cannot develop *samadhi*, and without *sila sikkha* or *samadhi sikkha*, *pañña sikkha* will not develop. All of these trainings are wholesome practices or *kusala dhamma*. However, *samadhi sikkha* is more important to a person's development than *sila sikkha*, and *pañña sikkha* is of much greater importance and nobler than *sila sikkha* or *samadhi sikkha*.

Now let's talk about how to move from *sila sikkha* and *samadhi sikkha* to develop *pañña sikkha*, the noblest of these trainings by telling you a story about Brahmin Dhananjhani. Brahmin Dhananjhani was a wealthy man from Rajagaha town who was friendly with Venerable Sariputta. One day as he was getting on in years, he became quite sick. As his disease was worsening daily, he began to fear that he might die from this

disease. Consequently, he invited Venerable Sariputta to his house. When he arrived, Sariputta asked, '*Dhananjhani, how are you? How is your health?*' Brahmin Dhananjhani then told Venerable Sariputta that his health was declining daily, and that he knew he would die from this disease.

To help Brahmin Dhananjhani, Venerable Sariputta then gave him a *Dhamma* talk. Venerable Sariputta started his talk by asking the Brahmin several questions. In his first question, he asked the Brahmin which realm was better, the hell realm or the animal realm? Dhananjhani immediately replied that the animal realm was better than the hell realm. Then Sariputta continued with another question: '*What about the animal realm and the peta realm?*' Without any hesitation, the Brahmin answered that the *peta* realm was better. This was followed by another question from Sariputta: '*The peta realm or the human realm, which one is better?*' Again the answer followed the question almost immediately: '*The human realm is better.*' This was followed by the question: '*What about the human realm and deva realm?*' Without any doubt in his mind, the Brahmin answered, '*The deva realm is better.*' Then Venerable Sariputta asked him about each of the six *deva* realms in succession. Then Sariputta continued with yet another question: '*What about the deva realm and brahma realm?*' Again the Brahmin quickly answered: '*The brahma realm is better.*'

## **The Way to the Brahma Realm**

As soon as Dhananjhani heard Venerable Sariputta mention the words '*brahma* realm', his mind felt relieved and was filled with delight. Venerable Sariputta realized the preciousness of

this moment and immediately decided to teach Dhananjhani how to reach the *brahma* realm.

In effect, Sariputta began giving Dhananjhani instructions on how to cultivate *metta*, using the ten compass directions. He told the Brahmin to first incline his mind towards the eastern direction and develop *metta* for all beings living in this direction, using the phrase, ‘*May all living beings in the easterly direction be well, happy and peaceful.*’ Then Sariputta told him to continue and develop *metta* for all beings in the westerly direction, and then to carefully develop *metta* for beings in all the ten directions.

After he had finished teaching the Brahmin how to develop *metta*, Venerable Sariputta continued talking about how to develop *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkha* (equanimity). As a result of this *Dhamma* talk, Dhananjhani Brahmin diligently set about developing *metta* to attain the *jhana*s, and Venerable Sariputta went back to Veluvana monastery. The scriptures don’t say whether or not he attained *jhana*; however, after he died, they say that he was reborn in the *brahma* realm, which means he successfully developed *metta* until the attainment of the *jhana*s.

When Dhananjhani Brahmin developed *metta* in the ten directions according to Venerable Sariputta’s instructions, his mind also sank and became absorbed into the object of *metta* with the attainment of *jhana*. When he died while absorbed in *jhana*, he attained the *brahma* realm. As soon as Venerable Sariputta reached Veluvana monastery where the Buddha was staying, he related the contents of his *Dhamma* talk to Dhananjhani Brahmin. However, instead of praising Sariputta, the Buddha reproached him and asked why he had only taught Dhananjhani about *metta* meditation, which results in rebirth in the *brahma* world rather liberation from suffering. Then the

Buddha explained that there are different ways of practicing *vipassana* meditation each of which leads to freedom from aging, sickness, and death, in other words, freedom from *samsara*. After the Buddha had finished, Venerable Sariputta immediately went to the *brahma* realm and gave a *vipassana Dhamma* talk to Dhananjhani, who later attained *Nibbana*.

When you meet with the Buddha's teaching, you shouldn't be satisfied or content to only practice *samatha bhavana* because *samatha* does not lead to the development of the insight, which can free the mind. The Buddha taught meditators to first practice *metta* to develop concentration or *samadhi* and then change to *vipassana* meditation to develop insight. So yogis, after your *samadhi* has become strong because of *metta* meditation, you should switch to *vipassana*. Now, let's talk about how to practice *vipassana* meditation.

After attaining and establishing *jhana*, then emerge from *metta jhana* observing and noting all objects that appear at the six sense doors, such as seeing, hearing, touching, or smelling. You should try to be aware continuously and observe each object or experience exactly as it is. Place your awareness or attention on your abdomen and observe the rising and falling movement. When the abdomen gradually expands with each inhalation, this is called 'rising'. You should pay careful attention to body sensations such as stretching, pressure, and tightness. When the abdomen gradually decreases in size and falls back towards the spine, this is called 'falling'. Each breath should be natural; don't try to manipulate or change the breath in any way. With each movement, you should note 'rising, falling, rising, falling.' Now, you are practicing *vipassana* meditation. Before when you were reciting, 'May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful. May my teacher be well, happy and peaceful,' you were developing *metta bhavana*, which is *samatha bhavana*. When you practice *vipassana* meditation

and either the mind or body or both become tired, then go back to *metta jhana*, but limit the time you spend in *jhana*. When the time is finished, emerge from *jhana* and again resume your *vipassana* practice.

When you are observing and noting each experience in *vipassana*, there are two aspects to every phenomenon. When you observe the rising and falling of the abdomen, there is movement or pressure; both are physical phenomena. The gradual arising of sensations is a physical phenomenon because the sensations are not capable of knowing themselves. The second aspect is the knowing mind, which is aware of the gradually increasing intensity of the physical sensation. This mind is called *nama* because it is the knowing of the physical phenomenon. That's why when you are observing and noting rising or falling, there are only the body and mind.

At the moment when you observe the rising movement, both body and mind are present, and at the moment when you observe the falling movement, both body and mind are also present. So when you have this understanding, it is called *namarupa pariccheda ñana* (insight knowledge of mental and physical phenomena). The knowing awareness of the arising and disappearing of any phenomena is *vipassana bhavana*. This is not possible in *samatha bhavana* because you are training the mind to stay focused on a single object to develop *samadhi* or concentration. Unlike *samatha*, *vipassana* allows insight to arise. In *samatha*, most objects are *paññatti* or concepts while in *vipassana* the objects are *paramattha* or absolute realities.

## The Aim of Metta

Yesterday a yogi whose *samadhi* is quite well developed reported her meditation experience. This yogi said, '*When developing metta, my samadhi became very strong and I was able to sit for a long time. I felt as if I were immersed in metta water above and below, to my left and right; in fact, there was nothing that was excluded from this metta. My mind became peaceful and calm because of this metta water, and my mind sank into the object of metta.*'

## Another Method of Changing from Metta to Vipassana

Here is another method of changing from *metta* to *vipassana*. When yogis experience the *piti* (rapture), *sukha* (happiness), or *ekaggata* (calm one-pointedness) of *metta jhana*, instead of becoming absorbed into these experiences, you should observe and note their arising and disappearance. When *piti* arises, just observe and note *piti* as *piti*. If *sukha* arises, just note it as *sukha*; and if you experience *samadhi* just note it as *samadhi*. In this way, you are practicing *vipassana* meditation, not *samatha* meditation. As soon as these objects disappear, watch your body and mind mindfully, being aware of whatever arises in your body and mind and observing it precisely as it is.

The same principle applies to walking meditation; that is, being aware of whatever arises in your body and mind and observing it precisely as it is. So, while you are practicing walking meditation, pay attention to the movement and sensations of the moving foot, noting left, right, left, and right. You can also divide each step into three parts: lifting, moving, and dropping. While you are practicing daily activities, continue watching the

mind and body. For example, while you are bending and stretching an arm, raising your hand, sitting down, or getting up, carefully observe and note all of these activities, noting not only physical sensations but also intentions and mental states such as desire, aversion, impatience or boredom. While you are doing ordinary daily activities such as eating, drinking, stretching, taking a shower, washing your face, or going to the toilet, all of these actions and movements as well as any mental reactions to them should be observed and carefully noted.

## **Watching the Body and Mind as Television**

In many ways, *vipassana* meditation is like watching television. Whenever we watch television, we pay attention to both pleasant and unpleasant phenomena which come to us through the sense doors of seeing and hearing; we see visual images on the screen and hear the soundtrack of people or the natural world. Obviously, we can only observe what is in front of us on the screen or what is happening in the present moment because the past has already disappeared and the future has not yet appeared. However, as soon as something arises, then we can observe it because it is happening in the present.

Let's say that a person is very excited about watching the latest Hollywood blockbuster from 9 to 10 p.m. If he/she decides to turn on the television before that time, it's self-evident that he will not see the movie because the station has decided not to show the film until 9:00 p.m. And if a person has been too preoccupied or too busy and doesn't turn on the television until 10:00 p.m., then he will also have missed the main feature because it is over and has disappeared. So, this is why it's important to be watching between 9:00 and 10:00 if you want to clearly see and understand events as they are happening. In



the same way when you practice *vipassana* meditation, if you want to see the nature of physical and mental phenomena, you have to carefully observe the phenomena impartially from the moment that they arise on your inner mental screen, just as if you were watching television. Just as you cannot observe something on television before it appears, you cannot observe and note phenomena in the mind and body, which have not arisen yet.

Inferential knowledge is different from experiential knowledge. For example, when the mind sees directly how phenomena arise and disappear, then understanding gradually arises that this is not an isolated event and that both past and future phenomena have the same nature. Direct observation is experiential knowledge, but a broader understanding arises from inferential knowledge or *anumana ñāna*.

The true nature of mental and physical phenomena can only be known when this experience has arisen, and you can observe and note it in the present. Similarly, you cannot observe and note physical or mental phenomena, which have already arisen and disappeared. If something has already disappeared, you are not observing and noting in the present. Although reflection is not wrong, reflection on events that have already been observed and have disappeared uses inferential knowledge. You have to observe and note physical and mental phenomena as soon as you are aware that they are present on the mind's television screen.

The *vipassana* yogi should observe and mindfully note whatever arises in both the mind and the body exactly as they appear. However, in the beginning a new meditator might be unclear as to whether he/she should note this or that object. So, since the breath is present from the moment you are born until you die, this rising and falling movement of the abdomen can

always be observed and noted when there is confusion in the mind about what object to note.

As practice progresses and you continually observe and note whatever arises, the realization will dawn that there is no I, no other, no woman, no man, only the body and mind. This realization is *namarupa pariccheda ñana*, insight knowledge of mental and physical phenomena. With continued practice, the yogi will realize and understand cause and effect. He/she understands that because there is arising of the abdomen, there is awareness of arising of the abdomen. Because there is falling of the abdomen, there is awareness of falling of the abdomen. Lifting the foot occurs because of the intention to lift. Pushing the foot occurs because of the intention to push. Dropping the foot results from the intention to drop the foot. The body sits because this action is preceded by the intention to sit. The body stands because this action is preceded by the intention to stand. Seeing consciousness arises because of the meeting of a visual object and the sense door, the eyes. Hearing consciousness arises as a result of the meeting of sound vibrations, the object, and the sense door, the ears. Smelling consciousness arises from the meeting of an olfactory object and the sense door, the nose. Tasting consciousness arises from the contact of food, the object, and the sense door, the tongue. Tactile consciousness arises when an object such as a hard chair comes in contact with the body. Mind consciousness arises when a thought comes in contact with the mind door. For example, when you have a thought about your best friend there is not only the thought, but also awareness that thinking has arisen. The understanding that effects are due to causes is the realization of *paccayapariggaha ñana*, the insight knowledge of cause and effect.

As meditators continue practicing, there is insight into the three characteristics of phenomena: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha*

(unsatisfactory quality inherent in all conditioned phenomena), and *anatta* (the non-self nature of phenomena). This insight is called *sammasana ñana*, the insight knowledge of clear comprehension. The next stage the meditator experience is called *udayabbaya ñana*, the insight knowledge of arising and passing away. At this stage, whatever object is perceived by the senses is seen as both arising and passing away. In other words, both mental and physical phenomena are perceived as arising and passing away.

As the yogi continues to practice, *vipassana* insight becomes very sharp and powerful and he/she is no longer aware of the arising of an object but only aware of the constant disappearance of mental and physical phenomena. This *ñana* is called *bhanga ñana*, the insight knowledge of dissolution. As a result, fear may arise because the yogi is only aware of dissolution. This stage is called *bhaya ñana*, the insight knowledge of fear. At this at stage, the meditator may feel disheartened and weary. The realization of the inherently flawed nature of all mental and physical phenomena is known as *adinava ñana*, the insight knowledge of misery. The mental weariness or disenchantment with all phenomena is called *nibbida ñana*, the insight knowledge of disenchantment. As a result, there arises a deep desire for deliverance from mental and physical phenomena; this stage is called *muncitukamayata ñana*, the insight knowledge of desire for deliverance.

With the desire for deliverance from mental and physical phenomena, the meditator again observes and understands more deeply the impermanent, unsatisfactory and selfless nature of all mental and physical phenomena. This stage is called *patisankha ñana*, the insight knowledge of re-observation. Continuing with their practice, yogis are aware of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta* without any special exertion or effort; it is possible to observe and note easily. This stage is

called *sankharupekkha ñana*, the insight knowledge of equanimity.

It's important to understand that sometimes a meditator practices well, and sometimes not so well. When one practices well, there is *sukha* or happiness with what is happening, and when one is unable to practice well, there is *dukkha* or dissatisfaction with one's meditation experiences. This is natural. When the meditator reaches *sankharupekkha ñana*, the insight knowledge of equanimity, his/her understanding matures, so that although experience is still pleasant or unpleasant and *sukha* or *dukkha* may be present, the mind has become completely balanced and non-reactive. With this mental equanimity, one is able to observe and note comfortably, observe the appearance and disappearance of physical and mental phenomena, and sit longer without much physical discomfort. At this stage, as the yogi continues to observe and note, both the objects and the observing mind become increasingly more and more subtle.

At this stage, the observing mind becomes sharp and powerful, and the speed of observation accelerates, so that each object is observed and understood in rapid succession. This is called *anuloma ñana*, the insight knowledge of adaptation.

At the stage of *gotrabhu ñana*, there is a cessation of arising and disappearance of both mental and physical phenomena, and this results in a shift away from the lineage of the worldlings. Knowing the cessation of all physical and mental phenomena is *magga ñana* or path knowledge. *Nibbana* is the cessation of all formations. *Nibbana* is free from all suffering or dissatisfaction because physical and mental phenomena do not exist any longer. Because there are no longer any physical phenomena, there is no longer suffering due to their presence, and because there are no longer any mental phenomena, there

is no longer suffering due to their presence. Without the existence of either mental or physical phenomena, there is no longer any suffering due to their presence.

So, this is why one should practice *vipassana* until one attains *Nibbana*. You begin by developing *metta* to establish strong *samadhi*, and then you change from *metta* meditation to *vipassana* meditation. May all of you practice *vipassana* meditation until your insight matures and you attain *magga ñana*, *phala ñana*, and *Nibbana*.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

May the cool refreshing waters of *metta* envelop the entire world and protect all beings!

## About the Author

Venerable Chanmyay Myaing Sayadaw Ashin Indaka, is the abbot of Chanmyay Myaing Meditation Centre, which was established in 1997 and is situated at the outskirts of Yangon. (Address: Shwe Oo Min Street, Highway No. 3, Laydaungkan, Mingaladon Township, Yangon, Myanmar, Tel. +95 (0) 1 638 350 or 0980 23507)

As a novice and young monk he studied the Buddhist scriptures under the late Mahagandhayon Sayadaw in Amarapura and other famous teachers. After passing the *Dhammacariya* Exam, he taught the scriptures for several years. Later he practised *satipatthana vipassana* meditation under the guidance of the Venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw. Subsequently, he stayed at the Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre where he carried out the duties of *pariyatti* (duties connected with studying and learning the scriptures) and *patipatti* (duties connected with teaching and practising meditation) as requested by Chanmyay Sayadaw.

In 2005, Sayadaw took up residence in Chanmyay Myaing Meditation Centre where he teaches *vipassana* and *metta* meditation to both local and foreign meditators. Sayadaw goes regularly to Malaysia and Singapore where he imparts his vast and deep *Dhamma* knowledge to all those interested in *vipassana* and *metta* meditation. Among the many *Dhamma* books that Sayadaw has written in Burmese, the books on “Metta” and “The Bojjhngas” have been translated into English and German.