

Vipassana Newsletter (HK Edition)

July 2009

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S. N. Goenka

HONG KONG VIPASSANA MEDITATION CENTRE

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*Āraddhaviriye pahitatte,
niccam dalha parakkame;
samagge sāvake passa,
etam Buddhānavandanam.*

Resolute, intent,
constantly striving ardently—
behold these meditators assembled!
They truly honor the Buddha.

—Mahapajapatigotamitheriapadanam-2/7-171

[Note: This is one of the verses engraved in stone on the exterior of the Global Vipassana Pagoda.]

The Practice of *Mettā Bhāvanā* In Vipassana Meditation by Vipassana Research Institute

The practice of *mettā-bhāvanā* (meditation of loving-kindness) is an important adjunct to the technique of Vipassana meditation - indeed, it is its logical outcome. It is a technique whereby we radiate loving-kindness and goodwill toward all beings, deliberately charging the atmosphere around us with the calming, positive vibrations of pure and compassionate love. The Buddha instructed his followers to develop *mettā* so as to lead more peaceful and harmonious lives and to help others to do so as well. Students of Vipassana should follow that instruction because *mettā* gives us a way to share with all others the peace and harmony we are developing.

The commentaries state: *Mijjati siniyhati 'ti mettā* - that which inclines one to a friendly disposition is *mettā*. It is a sincere wish for the good and welfare of all, devoid of ill-will. *Adoso 'ti mettā* - "non-aversion is *mettā*." The chief characteristic of *mettā* is a benevolent attitude. It culminates in the identification of oneself with all beings, a recognition of the fellowship of all life.

To grasp this concept at least intellectually is easy enough, but it is far harder to develop such an attitude in oneself. To do so, some practice is needed, and so we have the technique of *mettā-bhāvanā*, the systematic cultivation of goodwill toward others. To be really effective, though, *mettā* meditation must be practised along with Vipassana meditation. So long as negativities such as aversion dominate the mind, it is futile to formulate conscious thoughts of goodwill, and doing so would be a ritual devoid of inner meaning. However, when negativities are removed by the practice of Vipassana, goodwill naturally wells up in the mind; and emerging from the prison of self-obsession, we begin to concern ourselves with the welfare of others.

For this reason, the technique of *mettā-bhāvanā* is introduced only at the end of a Vipassana course, after

the participants have passed through the process of purification. At such a time meditators often feel a deep wish for the well-being of others, making their practice of *mettā* truly effective. Though limited time is devoted to it in a course, *mettā* may be regarded as the culmination of the practice of Vipassana.

Nibbāna can be experienced only by those whose minds are filled with loving-kindness and compassion for all beings. Simply wishing for that state is not enough; we must purify our minds to attain it. We do so by Vipassana meditation; hence the emphasis on this technique during a course.

As we practise, we become aware that the underlying reality of the world and of ourselves consists of arising and passing away every moment. We realize that the process of change continues without our control and regardless of our wishes. Gradually we understand that any attachment to what is ephemeral and insubstantial produces suffering for us. We learn to be detached and to keep the balance of our minds in the face of any experience. Then we begin to experience what real happiness is; not the satisfaction of desire nor the forestalling of fears, but rather liberation from the cycle of desire and fear. As inner serenity develops, we clearly see how others are enmeshed in suffering, and naturally this wish arises, "May they find what we have found: the way out of misery, the path of peace." This is the proper volition for the practice of *mettā-bhāvanā*.

Mettā is not prayer; nor is it the hope that an outside agency will help. On the contrary, it is a dynamic process producing a supportive atmosphere where

others can act to help themselves. *Mettā* can be omni-directional or directed toward a particular person. In either case, meditators are simply providing an outlet; because the *mettā* we feel is not 'our' *mettā*. By

eliminating egotism we open our minds and make them conduits for the forces of positivity throughout the universe. The realization that *mettā* is not produced by us makes its transmission truly selfless.

In order to conduct *mettā*, the mind must be calm, balanced and free from negativity. This is the type of mind developed in the practice of Vipassana. A meditator knows by experience how anger, antipathy, or ill-will destroys peace and frustrates any efforts to help others. Only as hatred is removed and equanimity is developed can we be happy and wish happiness for others. The words "May all beings be happy" have great force only when uttered from a pure mind. Backed by this purity, they will certainly be effective in fostering the happiness of others.

We must therefore examine ourselves before practising *mettā-bhāvanā* to check whether we are really capable of transmitting *mettā*. If we find even a tinge of hatred or aversion in our minds, we should refrain at that time. Otherwise we would transmit that negativity, causing harm to others. However, if mind and body are filled with serenity and well-being, it is natural and appropriate to share this happiness with others: "May you be happy, may you be liberated from the defilements that are the causes of suffering, may all beings be peaceful."

This loving attitude enables us to deal far more skilfully with the vicissitudes of life. Suppose, for example, one

encounters a person who is acting out of deliberate ill-will to harm others. The common response—to react with fear and hatred—is self-centredness, does nothing to improve the situation and, in fact, magnifies the negativity. It would be far more helpful to remain calm and balanced, with a feeling of goodwill even for the person who is acting wrongly. This must not be merely an intellectual stance, a veneer over unresolved negativity. *Mettā* works only when it is the spontaneous overflow of a purified mind.

The serenity gained in Vipassana meditation naturally gives rise to feelings of *mettā*, and throughout the day this will continue to affect us and our environment in a positive way. Thus, Vipassana ultimately has a dual function: to bring us happiness by purifying our minds, and to help us foster the happiness of others by preparing us to practise *mettā*. What, after all, is the purpose of freeing ourselves of negativity and egotism unless we share these benefits with others? In a retreat we cut ourselves off from the world temporarily in order to return and share with others what we have gained in solitude. These two aspects of the practice of Vipassana are inseparable.

In these times of violent unrest, widespread malaise and suffering, the need for such a practice as *mettā-bhāvanā* is clear. If peace and harmony are to reign throughout the world, they must first be established in the minds of all the inhabitants of the world.

Bhavatu sabba mangalam — May all beings be happy!

Questions and Answers from Goenkaji

Questions and Answers from Goenkaji drawn from various public talks and discourses

What is metta?

Metta or Metta Bhavana is the technique of generating vibrations of goodwill and compassion that a Vipassana student is first taught on the 10th day of a 10-day Vipassana course. Later, at the end of every Vipassana course, or a 1-hour sitting, a meditator is asked to practice metta, to share the merits gained with all beings. Metta vibrations are tangible vibrations whose beneficial power increases as the purity of the mind increases.

Does metta get stronger as samadhi (concentration) gets stronger?

Yes. Without samadhi, the metta is really no metta. When samadhi is weak, the mind is very agitated, and it is agitated only when it is generating some impurity, some type of craving or aversion. With these impurities, you cannot expect to generate good qualities, vibrations of metta, or karuna (compassion). It isn't possible.

At the vocal level, you may keep on saying "Be happy,

be happy', but it doesn't work. If you have samadhi then your mind is calm and quiet, at least for a moment. It is not necessary that all the impurities have gone away; but

at least for that moment when you are going to give metta, your mind is quiet, calm, and not generating any impurity. Then whatever metta you give is strong, fruitful, beneficial.

Is the generation of metta a natural consequence of the purity of the mind, or is it something that must be actively developed? Are there progressive stages in metta?

Both are true. According to the law of nature – the law of Dhamma – as the mind is purified, the quality of metta develops naturally. On the other hand, you must work to develop it by practicing Metta Bhavana. It is only at a very high stage of mental purity that metta is generated naturally, and nothing has to be done, no training has to be given. Until one reaches that stage, one has to practice.

Also, people who don't practice Vipassana can practice Metta Bhavana. In such countries as Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand, Metta Bhavana is very common in every household. However, the practice is usually confined to mentally reciting "May all beings be happy, be peaceful". This certainly gives some peace of mind to the person

who is practicing it. To some extent good vibrations enter the atmosphere, but they are not strong.

However, when you practice Vipassana, purification starts. With this base of purity, your practice of Metta naturally becomes stronger. Then you won't need to repeat these good wishes aloud. A stage will come when every fiber of the body keeps on feeling compassion for others, generating goodwill for others.

How does metta help in the development of mudita (sympathetic joy) and karuna (compassion)?

Mudita and karuna naturally follow as one develops metta. Metta is love for all beings. Metta takes away the traces of aversion, animosity and hatred towards others. It takes away the traces of jealousy, and envy towards others.

Hong Kong Course Information

2009 10-Day Courses <i>(For new and old students)</i>	
Course no.	Course Date
10D0104	July 15 ~ July 26
10D0105	August 5 ~ August 16
10D0106	September 2 ~ September 13
10D0107	September 30 ~ October 11
10D0108	November 4 ~ November 15
10D0109	November 25 ~ December 6
10D0110	December 16 ~ 27

2009 Old Student Courses <i>(For old students only)</i>	
Course Date	Course Type
July 1	1-day old student course *
August 30	1-day old student course *
September 18 ~ 27	Satipatthana course **
October 25 ~ 26	Dhamma worker workshop ***

Remarks:

* 1-day and 3-day courses are only open to those who have completed a 10-day Vipassana Meditation course with S.N. Goenka or his Assistant Teachers.

** Old students must fulfill the requirements below to be qualified for the Satipatthana Course:

1. Have completed at least three full 10-day courses with S. N. Goenka or one of his appointed assistant teachers.
2. Have practiced this technique for at least one year.
3. Have not practiced any other meditation techniques since the last course with S. N. Goenka or his appointed assistant teachers.
4. Have tried the best to maintain daily practice. (One hour in the morning and evening)
5. Endeavor to undertake five precepts in daily life, and must undertake to observe in particular the 3rd precept (abstaining from sexual misconduct) and the 5th precept (abstaining from intoxicants) once registered for the course.

*** For new students, old students and dhamma workers, please submit your application form at least **ONE** week before the commencement of the course.

The existing Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre is a temporary centre. We are allowed to use the site for free by the compassionate landowner even though the lease has long been expired. However, we may move out of the site anytime. We hope this precious facility can be fully utilized by your efforts in spreading the 10 day Vipassana course to your friends and family members, for the benefits of many, for the real happiness, real peace and real harmony!

★ Register On-line! Fast & Convenient! Visit HK Vipassana Meditation Centre website www.hk.dhamma.org, To choose your course date from the list by click course date and application form. Fill in the On-line Registration Form and submit.

Children's Course : November 22, 2009
Teenager's Course : August 2, 2009

Children and Teenager Meditation Course are offered to children aged 8 – 12 and teenagers 13 – 16 respectively. Introductory Notes, Parent or Guardian Information Sheet, Code of Conduct and Application Form, are available at: www.hk.dhamma.org

Latest Updates of the Hong Kong Vipassana Centre

1) Group Sitting Venue in Sheung Wan

Official group sittings are conducted every Sunday morning from 10 am to 12 noon in Sheung Wan.

Address: Room C & D, 3/F, Fai Nan Building,
48-51 Connaught Road West
(Sheung Wan MTR station Exit A-2)

Please call Jack Pai 9662 0997, Tehnaz Ragi 9121 4106 or Irene Wong 6198 6798 for enquiries. **26th July will be the last group sitting due to lease expired.**

Please bring meditation cushion if necessary.

2) Monthly Vipassana Trustee's Meeting

Old students who are interested in knowing more about the operation of the Hong Kong Centre and who are willing to help with the centre's affairs are welcome to participate in the Monthly Trustee's Meetings.

One-hour pre-meeting group sitting will start at 10:00am, and the Trustee's Meeting will begin at 11:15am and end around 1:00pm.

Meeting Schedule: July12, Aug2, Sep13, Oct18, Nov1, Dec13

3) Protect the Environment, Save Paper / Update Your Contact Details

Old students who would like to receive *Vipassana Newsletter* by email or who have changed contact details, please email your name in Chinese and English, new address, email address and telephone number to info@hk.dhamma.org or fax to 8147 3312.

4) Donation

If old students wish to practice their dana paramis (donation), please:

a) Direct Transfer

Beneficiary Bank: Hang Seng Bank Ltd.

Bank Address: 83, Des Voeux Road Central, Central, Hong Kong

Beneficiary Account No.:

263-279812-668 (for HK Dollars account)

263-279812-201 (for US Dollars account)

Beneficiary Name:

Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre Ltd.

Swift Code: HASEHKHH

b) Via Cheque

Please send your crossed cheque payable to "**Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre Ltd.**" to Box 5185, GPO, Hong Kong.

We should be grateful if you would send relevant information after you made the donation to us via email: info@hk.dhamma.org or fax: (852) 8147 3312.

Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre is a registered Charitable Organization. Please provide your full name and correspondence address. Receipt will be send to you for tax deduction.

5) Servers Needed !

We are looking for old students who are able to cook to serve (full-time or part-time) the coming courses.

Special Updates on Tung Wan (Dhamma Mutta) Project

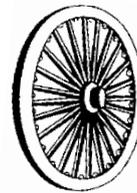
Since the last update in 2008, the Tung Wan Project has moved another big step forward. We have received a revised offer from the Hong Kong Lands Department on 9 June 2009 reducing the land premium from \$33.39M to \$25.13M million (other terms and conditions remain unchanged as the previous offer). We are pleased with the government's positive response and support to our application, with a reduction of about HK\$8 million in the land premium.

However, the Tung Wan project team, after consultation with various land consultants and students with good experience in properties, has come up with the conclusion that the land premium is still too high. We think that the government has not fully considered the limitations of the deed's terms and the cost of building infrastructure facilities, etc. Based on the above reasons, the team has proposed to appeal to the government for a lower land premium.

In order to save time, the project team has also proposed to employ professionals such as architects, structural and geotechnical engineers, to carry out further planning and design work in concurrent with the appeal. These proposals were accepted by all trustees and members present during the special meeting on June 28, 2009. The project team was authorized to proceed with all the works immediately.

香港內觀靜坐中心有限公司
Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre Ltd
(以非牟利宗旨在香港成立有限公司)
(A non-profit making purpose to form as limited liability
company domiciled and incorporated in HK)

捐款承諾書
DANA
PLEDGE



Postal address: GPO Box 5185, Hong Kong.
Tel: 2671 7031 Fax: 8147 3312
Email: info@hk.dhamma.org
Website: www.hk.dhamma.org

我願意捐款給香港內觀靜坐中心有限公司(“本中心”) I would like to make a contribution to the
Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre Ltd (“HKVMC”) :

- 以購買東灣土地及興建新中心
For purchase of land and development of the proposed Centre at Tung Wan
- 以作課程及日常營運經費
For course and operating expenses

姓名 Name : _____ 連絡電話 Phone No. _____

連絡地址 Address : _____

捐款形式 Donation:

- 一次過捐款 **One-off Donation** **HK\$** _____
- 連續每月捐款 **Monthly contribution of** **HK\$** _____

捐款辦法 Payment method:

- 直接存入銀行戶口 **By direct bank deposit**
- 恆生銀行 (024) Hang Seng Bank (024) (Swift code: HASEHKHH)
 - ☞ 港幣帳戶 Hong Kong Dollar account : 263-279812-668
 - ☞ 外幣帳戶 Foreign Currency account : 263-279812-201
 - ☞ 受款人 Beneficiary: 香港內觀靜坐中心有限公司
Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre Ltd
- 支票或匯票 / **By sending a cheque or money order**
- 抬頭: 香港內觀靜坐中心有限公司
Payable to “Hong Kong Vipassana Meditation Centre Ltd”

超過港幣 100 元之捐款可獲香港稅項豁免。如需本中心簽發收據, 請提供連絡 地址 / 電話。有關使用直接銀行存款者, 請先寄回銀行入數通知單副本, 以便寄出有關收據。

Donations over HK\$100 are tax-deductible in HK. To issue official receipt of HKVMC, please note your correspondent address and contact telephone. For those who deposit our bank directly, please send us your bank pay-in advise copy in advance. An official receipt is to be sent accordingly.

請以正楷書寫, 並寄回本中心 Please print clearly using BLOCK LETTERS and return to the above address.

VMC Office use only:

Booking by: _____ Date received: _____ Date commenced: _____

Web Versions of the Hong Kong Vipassana Newsletter

Hong Kong Vipassana Newsletter can be viewed and downloaded from:

<http://www.vnl.dhamma.org/local/ap/hk/>

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Vipassana Websites

Vipassana introduction: www.dhamma.org
Contains information about Goenkaji, Vipassana centres worldwide, Code of Discipline, Application Form for ten-day courses, etc.

Dhamma Giri: www.vridhamma.org
Contains information about Vipassana Research Institute, Vipassana Newsletter and Patrika, Indian Vipassana centres, schedule of courses, etc.

Vipassana (old students only):
www.dhamma.org/os
Contains information for old students of Vipassana.

Global Pagoda website: www.globalpagoda.org
Contains updated information including facility for online donation.

Vipassana Newsletters: www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters

Pāli Tipitaka website: www.tipitaka.org
Contains the Chattha Sangāyana Tipitaka with commentaries in Unicode Roman script.

Prison course website: www.prison.dhamma.org

Executive course website: www.executive.dhamma.org