

# **INSEPARABLE HEART**

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# **INSEPARABLE HEART**

**True Love Until the End of Time**

By

Venerable Acariya Thoon Khippapanyo

Translated by

Neecha Thian-Ngern

# Copyright Information

Original Sermon

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## Editor's Preface

Throughout his nearly fifty years as a monk, *Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño* gave more than five hundred sermons. Out of those, we have hand selected sixteen sermons, to be transcribed and printed as books, in hopes that they may be of the utmost benefit.

The reader may notice that the subject matter and tone of each book in this series differs. This is because *Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño* adapted his teachings to fit the situation and audience. A sermon given at a funeral, a celebration, for a group of monks and novices, a group of professionals, or those who desire enlightenment are each unique in and of themselves.

This ten book collection entitled, "The Heart Series," is comprised of sermons given to monks and novices during rains retreats between the years 1994 and 2000. Some may be slightly puzzled by the uncommon name given to this *dhamma*



series. We invite those readers to take a look inside and discover the meaningful connection. We believe these books may provide a benefit not only to those in saffron or white robes, but also to those who desire simple happiness as well as those who seek enlightenment. The doubts that we encounter during each of our journeys can be dispelled with the wisdom contained in this series.

Though *Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippanyo* is no longer with us, he has bequeathed unto us countless tricks and techniques that can be applied in our *dhamma* practice. As such, his disciples and followers have been able to continue and advance their practice, even in his absence.

I would like to thank those involved with this series:

Organization: Phra Nut Taesombut, PhD

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May all those involved, whether expressly named here or not, achieve their aspirations as they contribute to the auspicious merit of realizing Venerable *Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño*'s intention of providing the Buddha's *dhamma* to the world's citizens. May you achieve that which you desire, may your *dhamma* progress accordingly, may you be self-reliant, may the path to enlightenment be illuminated for you, and may you achieve final enlightenment in this lifetime.

Mae Chee Yo  
Chief Editor

## Translator's Preface

Some believe *dhamma* teachings are complex enough. A translator must not only understand the language, but also the *dhamma* concepts presented in the teaching.

There are many words in Pali and Thai that have multiple connotations. When they are translated into English, often only one of those connotations comes through. For instance, the term *kilesa* is commonly translated in *dhamma* texts as “defilements,” “fetters,” “cankers,” or “impurities.” But what *kilesa* means is the embodiment of our desires, the objects that tempt us, or the tangible things that lure us into becoming attached. Though the physical representation of our desires are not necessarily corrupt, evil, or impure, the term “defilements” is used to represent them in this text for the sake of consistency.

Another term commonly found in *dhamma* texts is *sammuti*, which literally translates to “pretend.”

However, “pretend” doesn’t fully encapsulate the scope of *sammuti*. It also means the conventional terms that we use to describe and label things or the generally accepted norms used to provide us with common ground. It is the arbitrary definition that we have now come to believe is real. *Sammuti* is a supposed form, it is not real.

Yet another complicated translation is the term *lohng*, which means “lost” in its traditional translation. In *dhamma* texts, it means our infatuation with the world and the mistaken belief that supposed forms are real. *Lohng* refers to being so enchanted or obsessed with something that you are blind to the truth. In this text, many different words are used to represent *lohng* in order to give the reader a feel of the extent of our being misguided by worldly desires.

*Luang Por Thoon’s* sermons and books often mention *krasae*, which means current. In *dhamma* books, there is mention of two kinds of currents or streams. There is the stream of *dhamma*, which people enter when they have achieved a stage of enlightenment. Then there is the strong, worldly

tide that *Luang Por* teaches us to resist. The world's *krasae* refers to the pull of the world – the trends and norms of the societies we live in. It is these worldly tendencies that we find nearly impossible to resist, especially while everyone else gives in to them so readily.

Finally, what does the term *dhamma* mean? It literally translates to “truth,” and can denote something that is just or righteous. When we refer to “*dhamma* practice” we are referring to the journey of discovering the truth. It is the practice of realizing and understanding the objective, universal truth.

Not only is the language a challenge to translate, but the subject matter itself can also prove difficult. With many of the *dhamma* concepts presented here, I had to stop and consider which of the various meanings *Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño* intended. For that, I am grateful to have had Mae Yo as my mentor and editor.

To have been a pupil of *Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño* since the age of 16, and to be tasked

with translating his works for the English-speaking public is an honor and responsibility I take very seriously.

For those seeking answers, rest assured that the Buddha has provided us with a path that will lead us there. And our great teacher, the enlightened *Venerable Ācariya Thoon Khippapañño*, has illuminated that path for us during a time in which many of us have lost our way. May the ten books in this series be the shoes you will need as you journey towards your goal.

I would also like to express my gratitude to those who contributed their ideas and helped to edit these sermons.

Neecha Thian-Ngern

# Introduction

The heart of wisdom contemplations is seeing the world according to the truth: the truth of the inherent dichotomy and duality of all things.

The Buddha stated, “Happiness and suffering are thoroughly conjoined. Even exhausting all wisdom, effort, and endurance, we would not be able to separate them. Therefore, I gave up on happiness; I returned it to its true owner: suffering.”

That is why happiness and suffering are true life-mates.





May 21, 1997  
Wat Pa Ban Koh  
Udon Thani, Thailand

***True Love  
Until the End of Time***



**Linked Together**

**Y**ou harbor some disappointment over a big issue deep in your heart. In just one attempt, you won't find enough reason to convince yourself to accept the truth: that your grief was caused by your attachment and your sense of identity. You have to contemplate on it often, over and over again, until your heart starts to concede the truth. At that point, your mind will feel free and like a weight was lifted. Would it prove to be a task beyond your capabilities to contemplate in this manner for 2-3 hours, or for an entire day? Not at all. In fact, it's not even enough.

Let me explain about disappointment. Generally, people believe that mindfulness and wisdom are called into action only when our displeasure arises. Why is there no mention of using them for something pleasing? It is key to understand that the sense of pleasure is what leads to our sense

of disappointment. Both being satisfied and being dissatisfied come together; they're two hoops chained to one another. One hoop is a hoop of being satisfied and content. The other hoop is a hoop of being dissatisfied and discontent. They exist as an inseparable pair. They are linked together at all times since birth and live together throughout your entire life.

It's not enough to contemplate on just one or the other. You must contemplate both sides that exist together. You can't just contemplate on dissatisfaction. You must also contemplate on satisfaction, because it's the cause for dissatisfaction. If you see the good, you must also see the bad. If you see the bad, you must also see the good. If you see the results, you must also see the cause. If you see the cause, you must also see the results. Identifying the connection between each pair is paramount.

When confronted with something displeasing, something you think is bad, or something you don't like, the natural response is to try to get rid of it. You don't understand what causes those

## 4 | Linked Together

adverse feelings. The unpleasant things, the bad things, or the things you dislike are all results. But what is the cause that leads to those results? The cause is found in the things you are pleased with.

Take the people who are sad at this very moment, for example. What is the cause of their sadness? The sadness is already a result, caused by happiness, love, or pleasure that they have experienced before. There is a Pali phrase, "*piyato jāyate soko, piyato vippamuttassa,*" which means that suffering, sadness, and all kinds of displeasure are forms of disappointment. All of these stem from love. Love is the cause for sadness.

What do you love in this world? In what you love, you will find the birthplace of suffering. What kind of love fuels you at this moment? If you have immense love for something, that will cause you immense suffering. To illustrate, if you love someone, whether it is your own child, a grandchild, or someone else, if you lost him or her or if they died, you'd feel an extreme

degree of suffering. But if it were someone you only loved a little bit, if they were to die, you'd feel only a little bit of concern and suffering. If it were someone you felt indifferent about or someone you didn't love at all that died, you'd feel indifferent. So what, then, is the cause of your suffering? It is the things that you possess, the things that you love.



**It's Not What You Think**



**L**ove exists in the hearts of many of the people sitting right here. In common terms, it's called love, attraction, or pleasure. Those sitting here are all delighted by sensual pleasures. People marry and become husband and wife because they are pleased with these things. We've all been teenagers. During those teenage years, what kinds of plans, what kind of things did you initially imagine would take shape? Did you think that married life would be filled with love and happiness? You sold yourself on that vision of love, and the lust in your heart grew and grew.

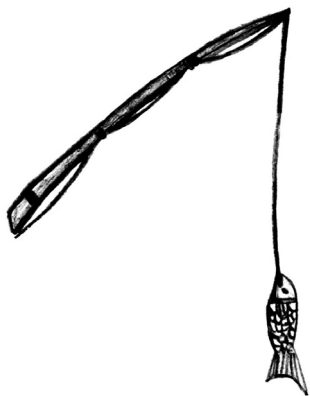
Love arises as you imagine yourself with your desired partner. Women fantasize about men, and men fantasize about women. You imagine different passionate scenarios and love develops. You think that once you marry your lover, you will

be happy and your life will be complete. This is where it starts.

Next, you have one or two heirs and you're consumed with happiness. This is another element that you had desired. These two things, your spouse and your child, can lead to disappointment. When you were young lovers, you were all smiles. But one day, you don't see eye to eye anymore, you have conflict, you argue and curse at each other. You insult each other and tears stream down your face. Some even escalate to the point of assault or murder. Is this what we call love? How could this be the result of love? Many people end up like this; there are very few exceptions. You end up feeling disappointed in that love and you lose that loving feeling.

Another element is your child. When he or she is born, you're so happy and proud of the clump of blood, formed out of your love and strength. You're initially consumed with bliss, love, and pleasure that your child has been born. But soon thereafter, it changes. Not all children are created equal. Some are traitorous and

rebellious, leading the parents to experience great disappointment. It doesn't matter whether the child is female or male; the parents can end up feeling great suffering because of them. All this disappointment and suffering are the result of love. You can't address and fix disappointment by directly contemplating on it. It matter whether the child is female or male; the parents can end up feeling great suffering because of them. All this disappointment and suffering are the result of love. You can't address and fix disappointment by directly contemplating on it.



**Wait Until the Fish is Weak**

**T**he question is, how do you contemplate the cause of disappointment? Just contemplating on it, alone, won't fix it. If you are overcome by extreme emotion, you can't just channel your wisdom to resolve it. You have to correct it at precisely the right spot.

First, you need to control the feelings of disappointment. Once they have emerged, merely contemplating on them won't be enough to wipe them out. Never take your boat out in the middle of a storm. Likewise, when your emotions are highly charged, don't attempt to tackle them head on.

Allow your emotions to cool down before addressing them. Once you've successfully hooked the fish, don't pull up while it is still struggling. It may wiggle itself free of your hook. You've got to

wait for the fish to weaken or for an opportunity to pull it up. When your emotions burst out, don't attempt to grab hold of them. Get your bearings first. What does that mean? Establish mindfulness of your emotions and keep an unblinking eye on the feelings as they erupt from your heart.

Let's start with controlling emotions first. It's not only one singular issue that causes us to feel strong emotions; there are in fact too many issues to be addressed in one place in one day. The things that cause these intense feelings are different for each person. Some exert a strong emotional reaction in matters of greed, others in matters of anger, ignorance, sadness, suffering, disappointment, or satisfaction. There are two types of strong feeling: 1) Feeling satisfied and 2) Feeling dissatisfied.

Good practitioners will analyze both of these types of strong feeling. What are the symptoms exhibited when you're overcome by the feeling of satisfaction? Some people can't even sleep or eat due to being so consumed with happiness and satisfaction. This is one kind of intense

emotion. You're so pleased that you're brought to tears. People don't think about this aspect. They only tend to consider the dissatisfaction, the displeasure.

If you can't contemplate on the aspect of satisfaction, then for now just contemplate on the aspect of dissatisfaction. What causes your displeasure? What causes your suffering? Satisfaction creates happiness, and dissatisfaction creates unhappiness; this is where happiness and suffering reside. If you're unable to contemplate on happiness, then just examine the suffering that results from disappointment.



**One Drop of Water  
at a Time**



**W**hatever adverse emotion you've taken in will cause your suffering. It can be caused by mean words from your friends, insults from your boss, or whatever speech or actions that causes you to be unhappy. If it's an intense emotion that overwhelms you, you will cry and experience suffering. So what are practitioners to do at this point? Use that emotion as a focal point.

You're unhappy with the other person's words that have caused you to experience suffering. The emotion you are feeling is one thing, the person linked to that emotion is another. Think only of the cause of the emotion, not the face or mannerisms belonging to the person behind it. Only think about why you took that emotion and implanted it into your heart.

Because you've already brought those feelings into your heart, you must be mindful of them. Be mindful of the anguish, the suffering, and the torment that you are experiencing. If the emotion is intense and causing suffering, then monitor the symptoms of that intense emotion. Breathe in and be aware of the emotion, breathe out and be aware of the emotion. Have constant mindfulness of that strong emotion. Don't let your awareness stray from it.

With a situation like this, you don't need a meditative mantra; you need only be aware of the state of the feelings in your heart. After a period of being mindful of that intense emotion, maybe fifteen minutes, the emotion will subside. It's like a hot coal the size of a fist. By dripping water onto it, drop by drop, the coal's intensity will gradually change from red to black. The fire will subside and only give off warm smoke, incapable of generating a fire elsewhere. Just one drop of water can put out a fire.

If you're mindful of the emotion in the moment, it will subside and return to normal. It won't

disappear for good because its cause still exists, but it won't cause harm. You should all remember this technique. When you return home and something intense happens, revert to that mindful state where you monitor every movement of your feelings.



**Why Did You Let It In?**

**O**nce you become skilled at this practice, you'll be able to fix other problems by implementing this kind of meditation. It won't fix the entire problem, but it will effectively suppress it. After you have it under control, don't just let the issue pass. You have to reflect on the cause of all that emotion.

Think about why you let those words affect you. They were merely sounds and words that came from another person's mouth. The good and bad things that were said were theirs alone, so why did you take them on? Teach yourself that next time, do not take in the words of others and allow them to harm your heart when there is no personal benefit to be gleaned. Try to only let in relevant or beneficial things.

You need to have a high level of focus because your ears take in all of the world's various sounds. You have to be able to discern what is going to benefit you and filter out the irrelevant information. Train yourself often. If you practice like this all of the time, you will be self-sufficient; that is, able to fix your problems on your own. Regardless of the type of suffering that arises, you will be able to handle it yourself. There are so many different kinds of intense emotions that surface in our hearts.



**Shiny Glimmer**

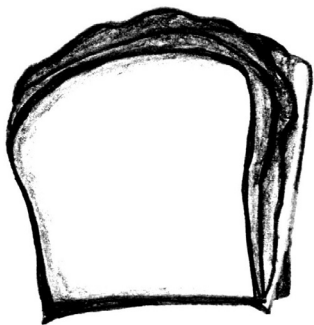
**A**ll people search for happiness. However, happiness is hopelessly intertwined with suffering. To find happiness on its own is impossible. When we are content with our possessions, we feel happy. Whether it's having a husband, children, money, a home, or anything else, if we are content with them, these things can bring us happiness. There is a layer of suffering in the lining of all this happiness. If our possessions or the state of our loved ones change, we may feel suffering. If someone comes along and scratches your cherished Mercedes Benz, you will feel suffering. If it gets stolen, you will feel suffering.

All types of happiness are subject to change. What happiness is there that is eternal and never changing? All happiness is subject to change. Don't allow yourself to get caught up in the happiness that exists in this world. Experience the



happiness for what it is, but don't lose yourself in it. Be aware of it, and know that some day, some moment in time, that happiness will change. Don't lose focus, become heedless, and drown in that worldly happiness. In time, it will change or dissolve due to its inherent impermanent nature. It is the directive for practitioners to exert determination in not being swept up in this worldly bliss. This is the direction in which practitioners should steer themselves.

In this world, there is nothing that can be eternally blissful. Happiness only makes brief appearances, like water bubbles. When rain falls from clouds in the sky and comes into contact with water, small water bubbles emerge and then dissolve. Or when the sunlight is really intense, you can see shiny glimmers that appear to be tangible. But upon closer inspection, there's nothing there. That's what our happiness is like. You cannot find everlasting happiness in this world, yet we never give up hope. As previously stated, happiness is laced with suffering.



**My Kind of Food**

**Y**ou've listened to me expound on how to contemplate the *Dhamma* from many different angles and most likely there were parts that you understood. If you can remember the parallels and examples I've talked about, write them down. When you get home, analyze them. Don't just let it all pass you by without extracting personal gain. Your *Dhamma* practice will not be continuous without a specific topic on which to reflect. Use what I talked about today or recently in the last few days. Try to recall specific teachings. If you're afraid that you will forget, then write down the topics that you can remember. Then, once you get home, analyze the topics that you do remember and expand on them. If you merely listen without elaborating on those topics, your *Dhamma* will be stunted and unable to mature.

When listening to *Dhamma*, all you really need is a singular topic on which to expand. Personally speaking, I don't usually like to listen to long sermons. I prefer short sermons. Whenever a monk gives a long sermon that spans hours and hours, I usually find myself uninterested. Even a thirty-minute sermon is unappealing to me. But will I listen to the sermon? Yes. When listening to a sermon, I'm listening for a phrase or two to remember and apply in my own individual practice. I am not interested in whatever else they speak on because I've already got my one phrase to contemplate on. That's all I want. The preacher can speak hundreds or thousands of words, but all I take with me is a single word.

This is how I operate, and I encourage you to follow my example. One or two phrases is more than sufficient. I return to my hut, do walking meditation, and reflect on the *Dhamma* that I heard from the sermon. What does that *Dhamma* really mean? What truths are contained in it? A practitioner must make sense of it and expand on it using personal examples and the principles of cause and effect. You don't have to look to the

manuals; use your own instincts to determine what makes sense. Whether it is correct or not is not yet important; just make sure you're using details and examples from your own life. The details and your personal way of contemplation need not be a carbon copy of your teacher's.

If your teacher were to describe how he likes to cook catfish in stews and stir-fries, it is probably fine for him the way he describes it. However, you have to take your own spin on the catfish. Make it in your own way. The recipe books should not confine you. You can cook it however you like to eat it. Prepare it in a way in which you find appetizing, because in the end it is you who will eat it. Fill your stomach with your own style of cooking.

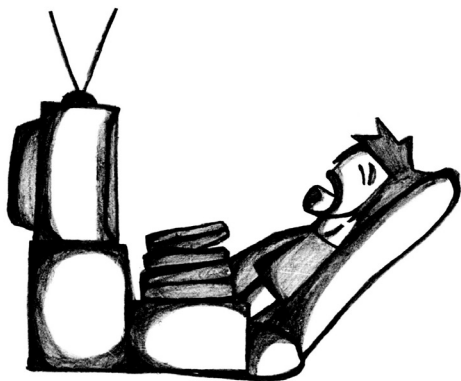
Likewise, when the monk explains *Dhamma*, you can take just one word and expand on it. Use the contemplation to gain perspective on your personality using real examples from your life. The value of your contemplation is not in following the scriptures line for line. The value lies in your personal analysis. By using empirical examples,

you get to clearly expose your character traits. Listening to a sermon in this manner will lead to your becoming a wise practitioner.

***“Sussūsaṃ labhate paññaṃ”***

Proper listening leads to positive benefits, intelligence, and wisdom.

Proper listening is what I’ve been describing. Proper listening requires that you take an excerpt from the entirety of the *Dhamma* sermon and make it personally applicable. When you listen to too much *Dhamma*, you’re overloaded; you can’t connect the topics and can’t contemplate on anything.



**Watching the  
Same Old Drama**

**H**ave you ever noticed how, when eating food, having five to ten items on one plate can be unappetizing? You can only take a few bites before the sweet, creamy, and spicy flavors clash and you feel like it is more than you can swallow. There are so many conflicting flavors that it's just not tasty. But if there are only one or two items on one plate, it is appetizing. That's how it is with food. And that's how it is with *Dhamma*, as well. If you listen to too much *Dhamma*, you can't personally connect the concepts and you can't consume it. Your contemplation is ultimately blocked. By listening too much, you prematurely have all the answers and believe you already know everything. Your thinking is stunted due to two main things:

- 1) Too much meditation. Too much deep meditation will block your wisdom from being effective. Being



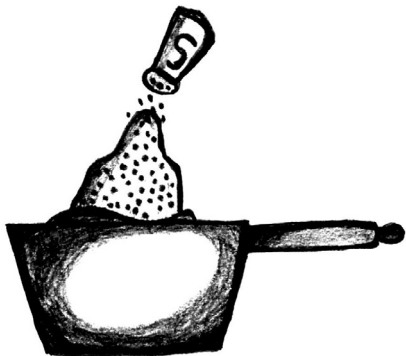
absorbed in meditative bliss all day and night is addictive. All you desire is that bliss. Happiness closes the door to wisdom.

2) Too much knowledge. This includes knowledge gained from studies, from manuals, and sermons. Too much knowledge also closes the door to your wisdom. If you let the manuals be your guide, once the manuals stop or run out, your wisdom will also run out. You'll stop thinking. You'll stop wherever the manuals stopped. The purpose of thinking according to the manuals is only to gain knowledge. But this does not contribute to the growth of personal practice. Why? Because, you believe you already know everything. This is the result of an inability to think on your own.

It's like watching a TV drama that you've already watched multiple times. If someone invites you to watch 'ER' you'd say, "No thanks, I've already watched it too many times. I'm sick of it." Why would you watch it? You know what the hero looks like and you know the story line.

With *Dhamma*, you contemplate a little bit, think you already know everything, and stop thinking. That knowledge blocks wisdom without your realizing it. Thinking along with the manuals won't do much; it's just imitation. Your practice won't progress and you'll bore yourself.

Some practitioners only focus their practice within themselves and refrain from allowing their attention to extend outwards. Many people teach that you must prohibit your mind from taking in anything external. You are restricted to thinking about your own body, and contemplating on the foundations of mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna*). All you are allowed to think about is your body, and that's precisely where your *Dhamma* practice will remain parked. It won't progress. There's no external support to validate your thoughts.



**Chicken and Soup**

**I**f you were to make chicken soup by putting chicken into a pot of water without adding any seasonings, would it be tasty? No, there's no flavor. There's no salt, no onion, and no seasonings. Is plain chicken in water delicious? Who does that? Even when grilling chicken, they add salt. Who would eat chicken and hot water? What restaurant sells plain chicken and hot water as a soup? No one does that. There are different recipes to make chicken soup delicious. Likewise, you can't only do internal contemplations and expect for your practice to progress. It won't.

You don't have a proper understanding of the scriptures or of the meaning of internal and external. To contemplate outside yourself is to contemplate the living and nonliving things external to you. You contemplate on whether you are like them, whether they are like you. Draw

and internalize parallels consistent with the Three Common Characteristics (impermanence, suffering and no-self), to see the commonality in impermanence and the commonality in suffering. In this way, you are the same, both internally and externally.

All living beings suffer. All animals experience suffering. We also experience suffering. People universally suffer in their own individual ways. Look into someone's face or observe his or her mannerisms, and you'll recognize that everyone suffers. Look at someone else and ask yourself whether you suffer just like they do. You do; it's the same suffering.

Go to the hospital and you'll see all kinds of people and all kinds of suffering. Internalize this and realize that one day, you will be just like those people you see in front of you. If it doesn't manifest in this life, then you will be like them in your next rebirth. It's normal for living beings to be ill and suffer like this. Some people will experience that same suffering within that very

period, or within the same month or year, or in their next rebirths.

As long as we are born into this world, we will all be the same. That is why you look outside of yourself, to see evidence that suffering happens not only to you, but to all beings and all animals. You can look into the faces of all the world's citizens and recognize the quest for happiness, but there is suffering in all of them. You look at yourself and you look at others. This is how you contemplate suffering.



**Fleeting Beauty**

**I**n contemplating impermanence, you can look at the internal and external, look at living things and non-living things. For example, everyone is holding a lotus flower in his or her hands for today's candle procession. Have you ever contemplated on the lotus flower? That is an example of something external.

As for the flower in your hands, you see that it's beautiful, but where does that beauty come from? It comes from the stem, which comes from the roots. The roots take in nutrients from the dirt in order to feed itself. That's where the lotus flower comes from. The flower itself is the result.

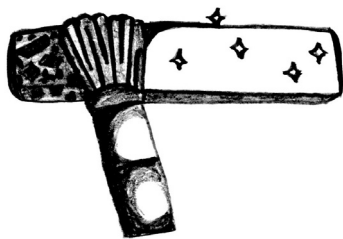
Have you ever thought about the life process of the lotus in your hands? It starts as a small nub and slowly extends its stem, growing bigger and bigger until it's the beautiful flower you see in your hands. When it's budding we say it's a



beautiful flower. When it fully blooms, we say it's reached its full beauty potential.

But what happens after it blooms? It will reach the end of its life, wilt, lose its beautiful vibrant color, rot, and return back to the water and dirt. The lotus flower and its beauty will be gone.

Now, do an internalized reflection on this lotus. Are you like the lotus flower? Find points in which you are the same. You, like the lotus flower, are born from the four elements. Your body, like the lotus' body, extracts sustenance from the four elements. Your beauty, like the lotus' beauty, relies on the four elements. The younger or teenage years are when beauty peaks. During the periods after that, the beauty will decline and disappear. Once aged, you will completely lose your vibrance just like the flower. Take that flower and compare it to yourself. This is how you must train your wisdom.



**In Front of the Altar**

**D**uring the Buddha's time, there were many people who attained enlightenment through contemplations on flowers. One woman, named Sona, ordained as a *bhikkhunī* when she was nearly 80. She was already old when she went to live with other *bhikkhunīs*. They were younger, more knowledgeable, and more established in the ways of practice, because they had been ordained longer.

Those who have ordained for more years have more seniority, while those who are new to the order have less. Even if you were 10 or 20 years old, if you had ordained before an older person, you would have more seniority. You could be 50 or 60 years old, but have to venerate those younger than you, if they have been ordained for more years than you have. Your seniority is determined by the number of years you have been ordained.

There were younger aged *bhikkhunīs* who had been ordained longer. Sona, the older *bhikkhunī* who had been ordained for only a few days, was made to do chores around the main hall. These chores included sweeping and cleaning, laying out the sitting mats, setting out hot and cold water for the elder *bhikkhunīs*, as well as preparing the flowers, candles, and incense. When it was time to congregate, she was to ring the bell. All the other *bhikkhunīs* would come down to the hall and sit according to seniority.

When it came time for Sona to do the chores, she wasn't at all proficient. She ran to build the fire and ran back to procure water to boil. She was afraid she'd be chided for not getting it done in time. So when the fire was lit, she ran to sweep the hall and lay down the mats. Then she ran back to put the kettle over the fire. The hot water was for the aged *bhikkhunīs* to take with their medicine.

Then Sona ran to check on the altar. She swapped out the wilting flowers for fresh, beautiful ones. She tossed out the incense sticks that had burned out. She wiped down the altar and put out fresh

candles. While she was doing all of this work, the fire she had built had gone out. She was so old and so consumed with her tasks that she forgot about the water that was supposed to be boiling over the fire. She was caught up with the main hall, with beautifying the flowers, putting out the candles and incense.



**Unlike Before**

**T**he new flowers were on display on the altar. The old flowers Sona had removed from the altar were in a pile; she hadn't tossed them out yet. As she contemplated on the new and old flowers, she saw that the old, wilted flowers piled on the floor were yesterday's fresh, blooming flowers. Today, their colors had faded, and were no longer beautiful because they were old.

Then she picked up a burned out stick of incense. When it hadn't yet been burned, it was an ordinary stick topped with a full stalk of incense. Once it gradually burned out, all that was left was the stick. Sona had the wisdom to contemplate in this manner.

Then she contemplated the clump of melted wax. Yesterday, it was a tall candle. It had slowly burned until the candle disappeared; yesterday's

candle no longer existed. She began to see the ways of nature. Then she turned her attention to today's new candle. It will also burn into nothing, leaving behind only the candlesticks. The flowers that are so beautiful today will also wilt and become nothing.

She took the flowers, candles, and incense, both new and old, and internalized the parallel. She compared them to her physical being, comprised of the four elements. Will she become like the flowers, candles, and incense? Yes, in every way. This is how wise people contemplate; they draw parallels.

How was she the same? She reflected back to her younger years, when she was a teenager. At that time, she was incomparably beautiful and everywhere she went men stared and gawked. But now that she's older, where did her beauty go? Was it like the flower? The strength, determination, and agility she had in her younger years made her practically invincible. She could tackle all kinds of tasks because she was so strong. But now that she was old, where did her strength go? Where did



the incense go? It was the same; it disappeared. Could she recognize the commonalities between her life and the incense? Yes. Initially, the incense is just a regular stick of incense. Once lit, the incense burns and burns until only the stick remains. So, was her life like the incense? Yes. Was her body like the candle? Yes, in all aspects. She compared the parallel of the incense and candles to her own life. The candles were lit, the candles burned out. Her life existed and would slowly burn out. Just like the incense, just like the candles.



**Candles and Incense**

**S**ona was so caught up in the candles and incense that she attained full enlightenment because of the internalized parallels. This is how wise people contemplated during the Buddha's time.

After attaining full enlightenment while staring at the candle, Sona also achieved heightened concentration through flame meditation (*tejo kasiṇa*). She gained a type of supernatural insight. Right at that moment, she realized that she was fully enlightened.

A young *bhikkhunī* was watching Sona sitting in front of the altar, staring at the flowers, incense, and candles. The young *bhikkhunī* walked by and thought, *look at this old bhikkhunī, she doesn't do any work. She is just sitting here. The water that was boiling has boiled down, the fire has gone out, and the water is now cold. If I ring the bell,*

*she'll never have it all ready in time. I'll have the elders give her a stern scolding!*

The younger *bhikkhunī* was arrogant due to her having been ordained longer. She thought these things but didn't say anything. She quietly returned to her hut and relished how she would humiliate Sona in public. She held the bell in her hand and rang it loudly. The elder *bhikkhunīs* started to head down to the hall.

Sona ran to check on the water. It was cold because the fire had gone out long ago. There was nothing she could do, so she combined water from other pots and kettles, and using her flame-meditation powers, she heated it up in five minutes. Then she poured the hot water into cups and placed them in front of the elder *bhikkhunīs* who had all taken their seats. They asked her, "How is everything, did you finish all your chores?"

The younger *bhikkhunī* thought, *just watch, if she says she finished, I'm going to yell at her in front of everyone. I'll yell, 'there's no hot water, only*

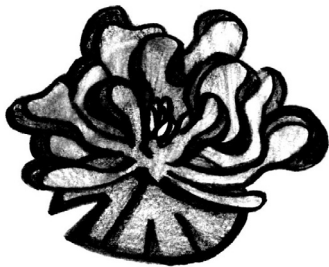
*cold water!*' So she said, "Elder mom, there's no hot water. It's all cold water! That old *bhikkhunī* was uninterested in her chores! She just sat in front of the altar! She didn't boil any water!" The younger *bhikkhunī* hadn't actually touched the water to test if it was truly hot or not. She just yelled everything out first, in an attempt to look good in front of the others. She wanted to appear responsible and interested in the welfare of others.

The enlightened *bhikkhunī* sat there silently. The elder *bhikkhunīs* went to test the water in the pots. If the water wasn't hot, then they would say something about it. As they touched the pots, they were all hot. "Why would the younger *bhikkhunī* say it's not hot when it really is?" Then they asked Sona how she did it. She said, "It was nothing, I just combined water from other kettles and pots and it became hot on its own."

The elder *bhikkhunī* had supernormal insight to see what level of enlightenment others had attained. She knew at that moment that Sona, who

had not even been ordained for a full month yet, was not ordinary. The elder *bhikkhunī* proclaimed unto the group that Sona was an elder *bhikkhunī* (*thera bhikkhunī*) who was aged in her *Dhamma* and fully enlightened.

Do you see how this *bhikkhunī* attained enlightenment because of her own wisdom?



**Lotus and Water Hyacinth**

**W**hy aren't these kinds of contemplations done nowadays? They're considered inconsequential contemplations; they're things you think you already know. This arrogant belief instantly cuts off your chances at wisdom. You can't do anything with it.

So should you follow this example of what happened during the Buddha's time? It's too difficult for people in contemporary times to follow these examples because they're too knowledgeable in theoretical *Dhamma*.

For instance, there's so much discussion about the scriptures, like the topic of the four types of lotus. There's so much analysis of it. Some lotus buds are deeply submerged before development. Some lotus buds emerge, but are consumed by turtles and fish. Some extend further above water



but do not blossom. Some stand tall and blossom. The four types of lotuses are not the same.

People study this in the scriptures, but still cannot understand the Buddha's teaching. They only understand what it says in the scriptures, and the scriptures don't say much else. They only touch on the aspect related to the positive parts. It says that if the lotus can emerge past the dirty water, it will grow more and more. The lotuses that make it past the surface will be on their way first, the ones that emerge afterwards will bloom accordingly.

This is likened to the four levels of enlightenment. People don't attain enlightenment at the same time. Those who have full perfections of character will reach a level of enlightenment first, and those who have fewer perfections of character will reach those levels of enlightenment at a later time. That's all people know.

But there's another angle that people don't consider. They think that all those lotuses will be born and grow in the same location in the water. They don't notice that some of the ones that

died or are rotting are clumped in with the water hyacinth. Do you ever notice that during one year, lots of lotuses bloom, and then during the next year none bloom at all? They are all consumed by the water hyacinth. Do you ever think about that? No. You only think about the lotuses blooming in the open. You don't think about the ones that couldn't bloom, the ones that died. That's another angle that could have been considered in order to expand your thinking.

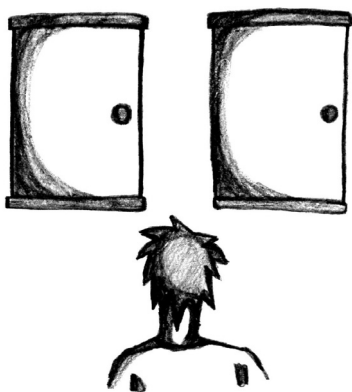
Think about the lotuses that grow within the water hyacinth. If the water hyacinth gains more territory, the lotus has no chance. The lotus has no chance of spearing through the dense water hyacinth and blossoming. Lotus blossom aside, can the leaves even make their way through? Once the water hyacinth covers the entire surface, all of the lotuses will rot. Do you ever think about those aspects? No.

You only think of the positives, not of the negatives. Once you see both sides of it, you must internalize the parallel of the water hyacinth. Which of those scenarios do you fall under? If you

were out in the uncluttered water, would you have a chance of attaining a level of enlightenment in this lifetime? Not being blocked or hindered by anything is likened to having right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). If you are that kind of lotus, you have a healthy shot at enlightenment. So what group of lotuses do you fall under?

Are you a lotus engulfed by the water hyacinth? Those are lotuses that are about to die because the dense water hyacinth population suffocates them. There's no way the lotus stem can pierce the surface; all it can do is die. If you internalize that parallel and identify your practice with this type of lotus, then there are wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) engulfing you and blocking you. These wrong views are what destroy your chances at enlightenment. This is one way to think about it. What else can the water hyacinth represent? It's not only the leaves, but also the roots and branches that are hindering the lotus from living and blooming. Likewise, there are so many obstacles blocking people from reaching the path to enlightenment. This is yet another parallel to consider.

If you contemplate it from yet another angle, what other things can damage or cause a lotus to rot? In your own practice, what else hinders you from thinking? What hinders you from seeing the truth? What hinders your wisdom, rendering you incapable of thinking? Have you ever pondered that? What hinders your mindfulness and your wisdom from realizing the truth? That's your water hyacinth. You don't address these points when all you are concerned with is the lotus blooming, because you're only considering that one point.



**Is It the Right Path?**

**A**nother point to think about is your leader. Are these *Dhamma* teachers imparting unto you teachings aligned with right views (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) or teachings aligned only with the scriptures? Or are these teachings actually wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*)? Do these teachings that you've received align with the paths traveled by enlightened individuals? You must seek out the information to clear this up.

You shouldn't just see famous monks or see a shaven head and yellow robes and think that they are all smart and educated. It's not that universal. Some are well educated and some are not. Some do not have a clear understanding of the *Dhamma* yet are teaching others how to practice. This can lead you down the wrong path. This is due to lack of research.

Whenever truths are taught, it isn't important whether the teacher is an enlightened or an ordinary individual. If commoners have a good foundation and a good understanding of the principles of cause and effect, they can teach someone to become an enlightened individual. If the principles are sufficient material for someone to become fully enlightened, even when a commoner is teaching it, the student can still attain enlightenment. It's not necessary for only enlightened individuals to teach people.

I've explained this many times. I've personally gained *Dhamma* from listening to an ordinary monk. He wasn't enlightened. He was just an ordinary person. But what he taught contained the right material and the right principles.

"Do you want to hear a sermon?"

"I do want to hear a sermon."

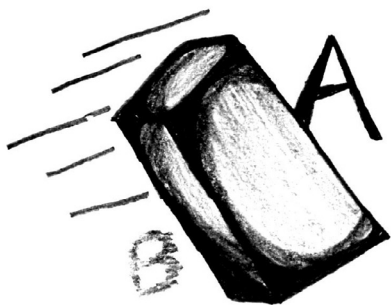
"Arise. Cease. Arise. Cease."

It was the right path. These two words were more than enough for me. An ordinary person taught

me the true doctrine. So I, as a layperson, listened and made it my own.

All these teaching examples are important material. Some teachings are difficult for us to find on our own, because we haven't studied them yet. You can become confused when hearing about something new to you. You won't know if the material they've imparted unto you is right or wrong. You don't have enough wisdom to discern this yet. Instead, you just summarily think that all monks should be believed; you trust that all the teachings of people with shaved heads, donning yellow robes are good. If the teachings are wrong, no one says anything.





**Wipe Out the Old**

**I**n contemplating *Dhamma*, all the conceptual material that you've taken in can be potentially wrong or potentially right. A computer can take in all kinds of material and print it out. Whatever information is fed in, that's what prints out. Likewise, your mind holds all your information. If a person with the right information does the inputting, then the right wisdom will output. If a person with the wrong information does the inputting, then the wrong wisdom will output. Information input is the most important element for a computer.

The person who inputs that information must be smart and possess comprehensive, expansive wisdom. You have to consider which *Dhamma* topics you will input into your mind, because your mind will accept all of it.

***“Nisamma karaṇaṃ seyyo”***

Reflect first, consider first.

You must know how to select the *Dhamma* concepts that you will use to teach your mind. Don't select the wrong concepts. Once you take in the information, it's hard to fix. Like when a snake eats a frog; if the snake already has the frog's legs in its mouth, it won't release the frog back to you easily. It will proceed to swallow it.

Likewise, once your mind has taken in some information, it will continue to take in that information. This is because you've never washed out the old information. You would have to wipe out all the old information and start fresh. If you don't erase the old information, new information will just pile on top and you won't be able to make sense of it.

Practitioners these days refuse to wipe out their wrong information, so when they type in new correct information, it's all jumbled together. You can't read anything because those right and wrong statements are all mixed together in the

same sentence or on the same page. I've noticed that practitioners these days are like this. The information in their minds is all jumbled together; they cannot separate right from wrong and cannot make sense of the information.

It's like a cassette tape that has already been used to record sound. You want to record over it, but because the tape recorder isn't functioning at its peak, you can't erase the old sounds. When you press play, there's music and sermons and who knows what else, all playing at once. It's confusing. Have you ever listened to something like that? This happens when you haven't erased the old information but try to record new information over of it. No good results from this kind of mess.

When the *Dhamma* is explained, it's hit or miss; that is, sometimes it's right and sometimes it's wrong. In the case of a miss, those who can recognize the *Dhamma* material will know that it is wrong. You have to be clear in your practice. If you want to erase the wrong information from a computer, you have to do a complete wipe first. If

you want to record over an old cassette, you have to do a clean wipe first. That way, you'll get good results. Don't let it be a chaotic mess. Separate the old from the new. This will allow for clearer viewpoints.

In practice, you will encounter both right view and wrong view. Sometimes the right view rises to the top, while sometimes the wrong view rises to the top. We have both of these types of views inside of us. We have two faces: the face of right view and the face of wrong view. If you approach it from one angle then it is right view, if you approach it from another angle then it is wrong view.



**Clean Water to Flush  
Filthy Water**

**I**n order to enter the stream of enlightenment, there must only be right views. Wrong views cannot be interlaced in there. You must eliminate them. If there exists 50% wrong (*micchā*) and 50% right (*sammā*), there will be a struggle until the right overtakes the wrong. Then you can have 100% right view. That is when someone can enter the stream of enlightenment. It won't happen with wrong views tangled up in there.

Practicing *Dhamma* is for the sake of eliminating the wrong views as much as possible, and building up as much of the right views as possible. The right will take control and eliminate the wrong.

When evaluating the problem of inefficient government officials, it's often said that clean water must be used to flush away filthy water.

In other words, replace the inefficient with the efficient. This is the best *Dhamma*. When I read and heard it, I thought, *hey that's a Dhamma metaphor*. You wouldn't think anything after reading or hearing the phrase, right? But practitioners hear it and recognize that this is the way to practice. People talk about using clean water to flush away filthy water in a general sense. But have you ever considered that it is *Dhamma*? No. But, I think it. That phrase is *Dhamma*.

When you practice, you develop right views more and more in order to push out and dissolve the wrong views; that's using clean water to flush away filthy water. The wrong views are already filthy. You must build up right views so that you can more readily accept the truth. Then the wrong views will be flushed away and disappear. Ultimately, your mind will consist of entirely right views. The old wrong views will have been eradicated without your realizing it. Just make sure you develop lots of right views. The more right there is, the less wrong there is, because the area they consume is limited.



Consider a glass with dirty water in it. If you want to replace that dirty water with clean water, you would pour clean water into that glass to wash out all of the dirty water. Once all of the dirty water has been flushed out, only new, clean water will remain. *Dhamma* practice works in the same way. You can't wait for wrong views to be miraculously eliminated on their own. You have to work at eliminating them. Our minds are big open receptacles, open to both the good and the bad, merit and demerit.



**Bow and Arrow**

**Y**ou have to be diligent, and you have to understand how people enter the stream of enlightenment. Mindfulness and wisdom are the biggest principles in practice. That being said, should you still practice meditation? Sure, it helps to support wisdom. Just don't hope that meditation will lead to happiness and prosperity, or that it will be what eliminates defilements (*kilesa*). Don't think that. Those teachings are incongruent with the Buddha's teachings. True Buddhists do not teach this, because it's not what the Buddha himself taught.

If, in fact, it were true, then why didn't the ascetics, who had been practicing meditation way before the Buddha, successfully eliminate the defilements and desires from their hearts? And will you successfully eradicate the defilements and desires from your heart by doing the same thing as the ascetics? People misunderstand a lot

of things about *Dhamma* practice; especially that meditation will eradicate defilements. They're two completely separate things.

Meditation is used to support wisdom, to give it more strength. The strength garnered from meditation and wisdom support each another. You can't only practice one of them; you have to alternate. Sometimes you meditate, sometimes you use wisdom. They work together.

It's like a bow and arrow. There are two parts that work together, but the bow and arrow are separate parts. If the bow and arrow are in two separate places, they can't do anything. They have to be together in order to work.

If you take the bow and pull on it, what good does that do? There's power in the bow, but it can't be used for anything because there's no arrow to support it. You can point the bow towards the sky and pull on its string, but it won't do anything because you don't have an arrow.

But if you have an arrow to use with the bow and you pull the string as before, the arrow will travel really far. Why? The bow will lend strength to the

arrow. You can't get the arrow to go anywhere on its own either. It needs the force of the bow behind it.

Likewise, meditation and wisdom go together in practice. The meditation we're talking about here is focused meditation, not tranquil meditation. The arrow signifies wisdom. The bow signifies focused meditation. If the strings on the bow are weak, you can't propel the arrow anywhere. If the strings on the bow are taut, the arrow can be sent a far distance.

If you have strength of wisdom and fuse that with the strength of concentration, you will have the energy to think quickly, sharply, and accurately. Wisdom and meditation rely on one another. But it's focused meditation, not silent meditation. Where focused meditation exists, wisdom exists. Where wisdom exists, focused meditation exists. They work together on the same team.



**Sleeping**

**T**hese days, people separate wisdom and meditation. People who do meditation only focus on meditation, concentrating on “*Bud-dho, Bud-dho.*” What’s worse, they teach that wisdom will emerge after meditative tranquility is achieved. This is a ludicrous, wrong understanding.

These days, people practice tranquil meditation for the sake of generating wisdom. If you think like this, is that a wrong view? It’s something you should think about. Is it wrong or is it right? Who taught this doctrine during the Buddha’s time? Did the Buddha teach it?

Sure, you can do silent meditation, but it’s not for everyone nor will tranquility be attained with every attempt. It’s not easy. In the span of one month, can you reach that tranquil state once? Over the span of one year, can you reach that

tranquil state once? It's difficult to do so. You can't do it daily.

But, you can practice focused concentration all of the time, every minute. Why don't you do it? Why don't you practice the easy method? Focused concentration can be done every single minute. It's easy, and has countless benefits. Why don't you do it? Why care for silent meditation instead?

Regardless of the depth of meditation achieved, those with wisdom will use the release from that meditative state to re-establish their focused concentration that goes to support the wisdom. You can't release from that tranquility and immediately couple it with wisdom. That's skipping steps.

Who does their work while in a deep slumber? It's unnatural. Ask around. No one sleeps, dreams, and does their work at the same time. It's impossible. You lose focus when you're lost in deep meditation. Who uses wisdom while in deep meditative absorptions? They can't do it. When someone enters deep meditation, who uses



wisdom at that stage? No one. Because they don't understand the practical side of this, people are confused.

These days, people don't do anything with their wisdom; they don't think. They hear that they can spontaneously gain wisdom through meditation, so they put all their efforts into meditation. They just keep waiting for the time when wisdom will emerge. How many people have waited for this wisdom to emerge, and died waiting? They sit in meditation, anticipating the arrival of wisdom. They wait for intelligence, wait for sharpness. Where on earth does it work like that? It's unnatural to *Dhamma* practice.



**Grab the Pen and Write**

It's like taking a pen, placing it on top of a piece of paper, and wondering, *oh, when will the words appear?* Are you crazy? How can words arise on their own if you don't write them yourself? You need to write the words yourself in order for words to appear. You can't just sit and hope for it. You need to grab the pen and write.

The person holding the pen must have knowledge of how to write. If you don't know how to read or write, even if you have a pen, it's worthless. You have no chance if you can't even scribble the characters in the alphabet.

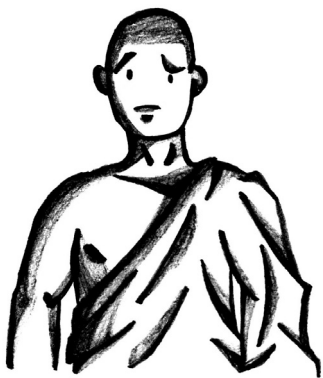
Those who apply wisdom in their contemplations must know the principles involved in putting wisdom to use. What do you think about? How do you use wisdom? What is impermanence? What are the Three Common Characteristics? You have

to be informed about this. Use them as guidelines in your contemplations.

People these days only practice by waiting for results without actually putting in the work to build towards it. It's impossible. You can't read a single word? No problem. Place some books under your head and fall asleep; your brain will absorb them. You can buy stacks and stacks of books to sleep on. You can lay them out and lie on top of the entire stack. Will the books permeate into your brain? No. Because to read and understand books, you need to actually read them and go through them. Or can you learn how to read and write by sleeping on books?

Likewise, you have to train in thinking techniques. You must think about cause and effect, about good and bad, think in all these ways. Once you know how to think, then you can discern what you should keep and what you should discard. You have to contemplate using your own individual reason. You can't just sit still and expect for good thoughts to spontaneously emerge. They won't. Think externally, like the old *bhikkhunī* mentioned

earlier did. She could think about things internal and external, near and far, and in both coarse and detailed aspects. She had wisdom. You have to build your own wisdom.



**Forgetting the Sermon**

**D**on't let your wisdom get tied up with too much book knowledge. When your book knowledge runs out, so does your wisdom. You can't move forward.

I've noticed that many teachers become public speakers. They read lots of *Dhamma* texts written about the art of giving sermons. *Venerable Upāli* wrote about the thirty-eight blessings (*Maha-Mangala Sutta*), detailing various sermons. These orators enthusiastically learn all the sermons, and then recite them when it comes time.

At one point mid-sermon, they trip up. They get confused by the information they've memorized and they stall. Their own wisdom cannot carry the sermon. Once the memorized information crashes, they're at a complete stop. That's because they don't truly understand the information they're

preaching about. This is an example of wisdom that only exists in book knowledge. The manuals are the path, and if you veer off path, you're lost. You cannot continue the sermon when the wisdom isn't yours.

That's why you can't use manuals as the basis for your sermon. You have to use whatever you personally understand as the basis. Don't think about the manuals; think about what's rational and about the truth that you actually know. That way, you can preach all night and not stall. And the people listening will be able to understand because you're preaching about something that makes sense.

You also have to preach according to the people in the audience. If they are to understand what you're teaching, they will have to apply their own principles of reason to make sense of the concepts. It's called, *parisaññū*, knowing your audience. If you know your audience, then you can preach in a language they are capable of understanding. If that group is set on hearing a sermon in a certain format, and you don't present it that way, they



won't understand you. So if you find a group like that, you have to change your plans and adapt. Many things are like this; you have to know your audience.

## **Question and Answer**

**A**s a practitioner, you must also know yourself. You can't just practice by making random guesses. I've given you plenty of principles and examples of *Dhamma*. It's not too late this evening. It's the last night of the sixth lunar month.

I'm going to have *Ācariya Chaiya* teach you the principles of meditation. After that, apply that concentration to the wisdom I've given you, and do some thinking on your own. Today is the last day, and you can stay all night until dawn. Consider it veneration of the Buddha. If you can't do it this year, then it'll have to wait until next year. That's a long time away. If you prefer, you can take a mat and sit at the site where we are planning to build the pagoda and do your contemplations there. The weather is nice and cool there. Or you can sit here. *Ācariya Chaiya* will teach you how to do meditation now.

Before we move on, let me answer this person's question.

**Q.** The term, "Realizing the *Dhamma*" means there's no imagining of anything, right?

**A.** No. The answer is no. It's a separate issue. The statement, "'Realizing the *Dhamma*' means there's no imagining," is incorrect. You can imagine and concoct things. Those who realize *Dhamma* must still use their imagination as they consider the topic of the sermon they're going to give. They don't take the phrase, "Realizing the *Dhamma*," and just literally preach that. Do you understand? Once you achieve that *Dhamma* realization, can you be devoid of imagination? It's natural for imagination to exist. But once you have realized the *Dhamma*, the imagination there is the raw type of imagination grounded in truth. We don't need to address that.

With true realization of the *Dhamma* you can no longer imagine in a far-fetched and whimsical manner. That's a characteristic that comes with realizing the *Dhamma*. But you must still utilize

imagination to present the realization of the *Dhamma* in a package with good examples that people can understand. You have to be able to dress it up and explain it.

Realizing the *Dhamma* just means you won't anticipate or form whimsical thoughts. This naturally happens when you can no longer fool yourself. If the fact is that you're full from eating, you can't trick yourself into thinking, *am I really full?* That's not characteristic of people who have eaten and are full. Only old people forget that they've already eaten two or three meals. It's a separate issue.

To share the *Dhamma* with others, you need to utilize imagination. You need to imagine and present the truths that you will share and imagine what you will say. You have to imagine scenarios that will be rationally convincing. But imagination is used here in a manner that is true, that doesn't create harmful consequences or future perils. People have to imagine and create hypothetical situations. Realizing the *Dhamma* is something that's become natural.

You don't need to imagine when you've realized the *Dhamma*. Even if the Buddha were sitting right in front of you in the moment you come to realize the *Dhamma*, you wouldn't need to ask. You no longer have to think of questions to ask the Buddha. Doubt has been obliterated because you understand correctly. Those who realize the *Dhamma* see the truth for what it is.

Suppose you drank half a glass of water. You don't need to ask if you drank half of it. You know. If you drank the entire glass, whom will you ask whether you actually drank it all? You know it's all gone. If you take the empty glass to others and ask if there's water in there, are you crazy or sane? They'll call you crazy. If the water's half gone, it's half gone. You know that truth.

In *Dhamma* practice, those who have attained levels of enlightenment share the same characteristics. Regardless of level attained, they will have eliminated personal doubt. Those lingering doubts have all vanished. There's no more asking, "Right?" That's genuine attainment. If you still have to ask, "Right?" that itself signifies that it's still not right. You don't have to ask anyone

when it's truly genuine. This is characteristic of those who have attained enlightenment. If you ask me, "I've been practicing like this... is that right?" No, not even close to the path of enlightenment yet. You're still far off.

Sometimes, there are people who misunderstand. These people can be strange and abnormal; they see things that mislead them, like the defilements of insight (*Vipassanā*). They believe what they've seen is right. If you recognize these characteristics, just leave them be and walk away. Let them do their thing and try again in the next life. The views people have on practice are clear for those who hold those views. Don't argue with them because it's a waste of time. They're 100% crazy now. You don't need to fix it and it can't be fixed. For instance, if someone is already afflicted with full-blown AIDS, it's too late to fix the life they've created.