

Dhammakaya Meditation Guideline

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My laypeople, today I take this opportunity to give a lecture on *cittabhavana*. The term *cittabhavana* (literally, 'mental cultivation') means 'meditation.' In Buddhism, there are two categories of meditation, namely, *samatha* and *vipassana*. *Samatha* includes 40 methods of meditation practice from which one can choose depending on one's nature and disposition. Today, I would like to introduce the Lord Buddha's Dhammakaya Meditation which was rediscovered by Luang Por of Wat Paknam (Most Ven. Phramongkolthepmuni) and whose method has been taught for 40 – 50 years already.

In *samatha*, we rely on three things: (1) a meditation object, (2) a mantra, and (3) bases of mind. It is crucial to bring our mind to a standstill with a practice that focuses on these three things. We begin by visualizing in mind a diamond sphere, a meditation object, about the size of our own eye pupil. Simply speaking, this visualization is a kind of *alokakasina* (literally, 'light kasina exercise') where the brightness of the object is the point of mental concentration. While focusing on the mental object we also repeat the

mantra '*Samma Arahang*' in order to calm and still our mind. To be able to calm the mind effectively, we also have to cultivate the 'bases of mind' which are required in meditation practice. Everyday objects, such as, a table and a wardrobe, need a stable foundation to support them; they stand on a floor. Likewise, our mind also needs a firm base to remain focused.

The true [and permanent] base of our mind is at the center of our body, two finger-widths above the navel level. Traditionally, we give numbers to different positions in the body for purposes of meditation training. The middle of our body at navel level is called '*sib*' (ten) whereas the center of our body, two finger-widths above navel level, is called '*soon*' (zero). *Sib* and *soon* are important in meditation because both of them are bases of mind. If we do not focus our mind at *sib* and *soon*, we will not be able to completely still our mind. So, we have to focus our mind at *soon* which is two finger-widths above the navel level. We need all the three aforesaid things in order to still the mind; that is, a meditation object, a mantra, and bases of mind. Without these being properly cultivated we will not be able to achieve mental stillness.

In Dhammakaya Meditation, there are seven bases of mind which are the point of focus. In the beginning, we visualize a diamond sphere about the size of our eye pupil at the first base, which is our nostril; the right side for men and left side for women. Each time we notice the mind straying we bring attention back to the nostril and picture a diamond sphere there. We rest our mind in the middle of the visualized sphere and repeat the mantra '*Samma Arahang*' three times. Then, we move the pictured sphere to a corner of our eye where the air can pass through; the right eye for men and left eye for women. Again, we still our mind in the middle of the visualized sphere and repeat the mantra *Samma Arahang* three times.

After that, move the visualized sphere to the third base, which is in the middle of our head. After that, we rest our mind in the middle of the visualized sphere which is now located in the middle of our head and repeat the mantra *Samma Arahang* three times. Next, we move the sphere to the roof of mouth. When moving the sphere from the third base to the fourth base, we have to roll our eyeballs upward as much as possible for a while in order to bring our attention and focus back inside. Then, let the eyes roll back to their normal state and focus our mind in the middle of the sphere at the fourth base.

Repeat the mantra *Samma Arahang* three times and then move the visualized sphere to the fifth base, which is at the top of throat. We concentrate our mind in the middle of the sphere and repeat the same mantra three times. Next, move the sphere to the middle of the body at the navel level. This is the sixth base and is traditionally called '*sib.*' When we breathe in, our breath reaches as far as this point. We rest our mind in the middle of the sphere which is now at the sixth base. Repeat the mantra three times, and then move the visualized sphere upward about two finger-widths. This is called the center of the body, the seventh base of mind. We then focus our attention in the middle of the pictured sphere and repeat the *Samma Arahang* mantra until our mind becomes still and unified. With repeated practice, we will eventually see with our mind's eye the real transcendental sphere at the center of our body. At this point in the practice, we do not need to put effort into visualizing the sphere. It appears as a natural 'light' in the mind.

Sometimes, in the beginning, this light presents itself as about the size of the full moon or a star. Sometimes, it appears to be like a watery surface inside our abdomen. We can either expand or shrink this sphere which is called '*pattamamagha*' or the primary path. Seeing this sphere appear is an

initial stage on the path toward nirvana. If one wishes to enter nirvana, one has to enter the middle of this sphere. Then, one will see the refined human body in the middle of this sphere. This body is the same body that one sees when one dreams. It is also called the dream-body. This body is located at the seventh base of mind. When we fall asleep, our mind becomes still at the seventh base. This base is also the point for reincarnation, disembodiment, entering sleep, and wakening. When we are reborn, our mind will stop here first. The same process occurs when we sleep and when we pass away. Therefore, if one wishes to sleep well and at ease, one should focus one's mind at the center of one's body. There is no need to use a sleeping pill because the mind normally returns to this base when falling asleep.

Thus, we have to rest our mind in the middle of the visualized sphere until we attain the *pattamamagha* sphere. Once we can expand and shrink this sphere, we will see the refined human body, followed in sequence by the celestial body, *rupa-brahma* body, *arupa-brahma* body, and Dhamma body (Dhammakaya). If one wishes to enter nirvana, one can only do so with the Dhamma body as the other inner bodies are incapable of achieving this state. The Dhamma body is *Dhamma-khanda*, *visuddhi-khanda*, *asamkhata-dhatu*, and *asamkhata-dhamma*. This is the kind of body which is not manipulated by, or composed of, worldly elements.

The refined human body, celestial body, *rupa-brahma* body, and *arupa-brahma* body are *samkhata dhatu* and *samkhata Dhamma*. They are composed of mental rather than base material elements. Once we see the first Dhamma body, there follows the other Dhamma bodies including Sotapanna Dhamma body, Sagitagami Dhamma body, Anagami Dhamma body, and Arahant Dhamma.

In order to enter nirvana, one can do so with the Arahant Dhamma body. This marks the perfection of the four mental discipline practices which involve contemplating bodies within [inner] bodies. In the middle of each inner body, there is *vedana* (literally, 'feeling'). In the middle of *vedana*, there is a sphere which forms each inner body. This follows the teaching that says 'seeing bodies within bodies... seeing *vedana* within *vedana*... seeing *citta* within *citta*... and seeing Dhamma within Dhamma.' In this context, *citta* means states of mind. This is the path of all Lord Buddhas and enlightened arahant disciples. They have to access the middle of this *pattamamagha* sphere in order to achieve *magga* (path of nirvana) and *pala* (fruit of nirvana). This is the method that is based on the principles of the Lord Buddha's Dhammakaya meditation.

The seventh base of mind is an extremely important point of concentration, and we should rest our mind at this point at every opportunity. If one wishes to master meditation quickly, one needs to keep one's mind concentrated at this point all the time, whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down. This will help one to achieve mental stillness more quickly because one trains oneself to restrain the six senses and focus one's mind always. For sleeping, there is no need to focus the mind since the mind normally returns to the seventh base automatically. As I said earlier, the seventh base is the initial point for reincarnation, disembodiment, entering sleep, and wakening.

Now, I would like to lead a meditation session for about 15 – 20 minutes. Start by placing your right leg over your left leg, right hand over your left hand, with the right index finger touching your left thumb. Then, picture in your mind a diamond sphere about the size of your eye pupil. We can visualize the image as it is natural for our mind to perceive and create imaginary objects. Locate this sphere at the first base; at the right nostril

for men and left nostril for women. Still your mind in the middle of the sphere and repeat the mantra *Samma Arahang* for three times.

Move the pictured sphere to the corner of your eye; right side for men and left side for women. Then, still your mind in the middle of the sphere and repeat the *Samma Arahang* mantra three times. Next, move the sphere to the middle of your head, which is the third base. When moving the sphere, roll your eyeballs upward as much as possible in order to bring your attention and focus back inside until the sphere reaches the third base. At the third base, focus your mind in the middle of the sphere and repeat the mantra three times. Afterward, move the sphere to the roof of your mouth, focus your mind in the middle of the sphere and repeat the mantra three times.

Now move the pictured sphere to the top of your throat, which is the fifth base, and repeat the mantra three times. Then move the sphere to the sixth base which is the middle of our body, at the navel level. Focus your mind in the middle of the sphere and repeat the mantra three times. Lastly, move the meditation object from the sixth base upward about two finger-widths. This is the seventh base of mind. Then, focus your mind in the middle of the sphere and repeat the mantra over and over until your mind becomes unified and achieves tranquility. Later on and with repeated practice, the real transcendental sphere will appear at the seventh base. In the beginning, one may see nothing but darkness as the mind is not well concentrated. If we continue to practice further our meditation will progress and we may, in due course, come to see the transcendental sphere. However, this will be unstable at first since we have achieved only an elementary level of mental concentration. We continue to repeat the mantra *Samma Arahang* over and over until we achieve a deeper level of meditation. Eventually, we will be able to see the sphere at all times and be

able to expand and shrink this transcendental sphere at will. This transcendental sphere is called '*pattamamagha*' and attaining it marks the initial path and fruit of nirvana. One needs to enter the middle of this sphere using the same method as all the Lord Buddhas and enlightened arahant disciples. Keep deepening your meditation by concentrating your mind on the middle of this sphere. Keep repeating the mantra '*Samma Arahang... Samma Arahang... Samma Arahang...*'