



# Burmese Buddhist Temple *Newsletter*

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This is an overview of the Burmese Buddhist Temple in Singapore.  
It is taken by a photographer from his drones.



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## Editorial

During the time of the Buddha, many people believed in the existence of gods (devas). They also believed that devas could perform miracles. They prayed to the dewas, believing that the devas could give them good health, success in their careers, safety in the family, and longevity. Many of their prayers were different and of many kinds. The dewas looked at the prayers but they could not really know what the human beings wanted. So one of the dewas went to the Buddha and asked him what the highest blessing was. The Buddha told the dewa that the blessings which human beings needed came to about thirty-eight, which could be found in the Jayamangala Sutta (see page 14). It turned out that these 38 blessings can be achieved by man himself. Sometimes these blessings are considered as "do-it-yourself" blessings. When a man does a meritorious deed, he can get his wish fulfilled.





# Introduction To Vipassana Meditation

*(continue from previous issue)*

## Sitting Meditation:


### Vipassana Breaths As Main Object

Now focus your attention on the breaths; keep your mind at the tip of the nose, or at the entrance of the nostrils. When you breathe in, be mindful of the in-breath for the whole duration, or from the beginning to the end. And when you breathe out, be mindful of the out-breath for the whole duration, or from the beginning to the end. In-breath and out-breath each last about four or five seconds. Be really mindful of the breaths. You may feel a sensation of the air at the tip of your nose or in your nose. Be mindful of it, and concentrate on the nature of the breath. Try to see the in-breath and out-breath as two separate things, not

just one and the same breath going in and coming out. Do not let your mind follow the breath into your body or outside the body. Your mind is like a gatekeeper standing at the gate, taking note of people going in and coming out. Do not force or strain yourself. Just calmly be mindful and watch the breaths. You may make a mental note when you breathe in and when you breathe out, as "in", "out", "in", "out". Making mental notes, or labeling, is just to help you keep your mind on the object; if it interferes with your meditation, you don't have to do it, but just be mindful of the object. What is important in this meditation is mindfulness of the object at the moment, and not the notes you make.

If your mind can be on the breaths only, that is very good. However, mind has a tendency to wander quite often. So, if, in the course of keeping your mind on the breaths, your mind wades off or goes out and you are aware of it, do not feel guilty, or be upset; just be mindful of its going out. Or you may say to yourself, "going out",





going out, going out," two or three times and then go back to the breaths.

If you see something or someone in your thoughts, be mindful of seeing, or say to yourself, "seeing, seeing, seeing", until that object disappears from your mind; then go back to the breaths.

If you hear somebody talking in your thoughts, be mindful of hearing or say to yourself, "hearing, hearing, hearing," and then go back to the breath.

If you talk to someone in your thoughts, or if you talk to yourself, be mindful of talking, or say to yourself, "talking, talking, talking," and then go back to the breaths.

If you speculate about something, be mindful of speculating; if you analyse something, be mindful of analysing; if you make judgments, be mindful of making judgments. In Vipassana meditations, you pay just bare attention to the object, without any additions of your own, as "beautiful", "ugly", "good", "bad", etc. or in the order of words, you take the object as it is, without subjective additions of your own.


If you remember something in the past, be mindful of the remembering, or say to yourself, "remembering, remembering,

remembering" or "thinking, thinking, thinking," and then go back to the breaths. If you think of the future and make plans, be mindful of it, or say to yourself, "thinking of future, thinking of future, thinking of future," or "planning, planning, planning," and then go back to the breaths.

If you become lazy, be mindful of your laziness, or say, "lazy, lazy, lazy". The laziness will go away after some moments, then go back to the breaths. If you feel bored, be mindful of boredom, or say to yourself, "bored, bored, bored," until boredom goes away, then go back to the breaths. If you have resistance, be mindful of it, or say to yourself, "resisting, resisting, resisting." When resistance disappears, go back to the breaths.

If you have thoughts of attachment or greed or lust, again do not feel guilty, but be mindful of these thoughts, or say to yourself, "attachment, attachment, attachment," or "greed, greed, greed," or "lust, lust, lust," until they disappear and then go back to the breaths. If you are upset or angry for any reason, just be mindful of that anger, or in other words, make that anger the object of meditation. Concentrate on your anger, or you may say to yourself, "anger, anger, anger" or "angry, angry, angry" or "upset, upset, upset." After some moments,





the anger will disappear and when it has disappeared, go back to the breaths.

If you want to swallow your saliva, first be mindful of the intention or desire to swallow, saying to yourself, "intention, intention, intention," or "desire, desire, desire." And when you have gathered the saliva in your mouth, be mindful of the gathering, or say to yourself, "gathering, gathering, gathering." When you swallow it down, be mindful of swallowing, or say to yourself, "swallowing, swallowing, swallowing," then go back to the breaths.


If you have an itching sensation, do not scratch it right away. Concentrate on the place of that itching and be mindful of it, saying to yourself, "itching, itching, itching." In most cases, itching will go away after some time. When it goes away, return to the breaths. Sometimes, the itching will not go away, but will even become more intense. In that case try to be with it, taking note of it and be aware of it, as long as you can. If you think you cannot bear it any longer, you may scratch. But before scratching, be mindful of the intention or desire to scratch; and when you move your hand to the place where you experience the itch, be mindful of moving. Move your hand slowly, following the movement with mindfulness. When your fingers touch the

place, say "touching, touching, touching." When you scratch, say "scratching, scratching, scratching." When you take the hand back, say "taking, taking, taking" or "moving, moving, moving." When your hand touches your lap, the knee or the other hand again, be mindful of touching, or say to yourself, "touching, touching, touching." Then go back to the breaths.

If you have painful or unpleasant feelings in the body-numbness, stiffness, re-focus your mind on the place of these feelings and be mindful of them. If you have pain somewhere in the body, focus on the place of that pain, and be mindful of that pain, or say to yourself, "pain, pain, pain." You will have to be very patient with painful feelings. Pain will not go away easily. You have to be patient and be mindful of it. It may go away or it may become more acute. Stay with it as long as you can. Actually pain is a very good object for meditation. It is a strong object. Your mind is pulled towards the place where there is pain. So be mindful of it and try to see it just as a sensation, an unpleasant sensation. And it is important that you do not identify pain with yourself, so do not say to yourself, "it is my pain" or "I feel pain." There is just the pain, just the sensation. If the pain becomes so intense that you think you cannot bear it any longer, you may ignore pain altogether







and go back to the breaths, or you may make movements or change posture to ease pain. But when you make movements or change posture, first note the intention to change, or be mindful of the intention to change and then make movements slowly, one at a time, following each movement with mindfulness. And when you have made the changes, go back to the breaths.


So the breaths are the home object of your meditation. Whenever there are no other object to be mindful of, you just continue with being mindful of the breaths. If there are more prominent objects, then you take note of them, be aware of them, or be mindful of them, and then go back to the breaths. Do not use force, do not strain yourself, just calmly watch the objects, take note of them, or be mindful of them, do not try to forcefully push distractions or emotions or feelings in the body away, just watch them and let them go by themselves.

## **Sitting Medatation: Vipassana Movement of**

## **The Abdomen as Main Object**

**F**or some people, it is difficult to concentrate on the breath at the tip of the nose. Such people can keep their mind on the abdomen and be mindful of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. When you inhale, the abdomen expands or rises and when you exhale, it contracts or falls. These movement rising and falling of the abdomen can be the main object of meditation instead of the breaths. Keep your mind on the abdomen and be really mindful of the rising movement from the beginning to the end, and also of the falling movement from the beginning to the end. Your mind is like a jockey riding a horse, your mind and your abdomen are both moving. You may even put your hand on the abdomen to feel the rising and falling movements. After some time, you may be able to follow the rising and falling movements without your hand on the abdomen. Here also, you may make mental notes as “rising, falling”, “rising, falling;”, “rising, falling”. The rest is the same as for taking the breaths as main object. The only difference is to substitute ‘breaths’ with ‘move-ments of the abdomen’.





## Common To Both Methods


**L**et your mindfulness be precise, i.e., going concurrently with the objects. Take only one object at a time; take the one which is most prominent and be mindful of it. If you cannot decide which is most prominent, choose just one and be mindful of it. What is important in this meditation is to be mindful of the object at the present moment; so whether you are mindful of the main object or the secondary object, so long as you are mindful, you are doing the right thing. Do not have any expectations, do not expect to experience something strange or to see visions or to get results or even to get concentration. Expectations are good because they motivate us to practice, but when we are right in the practice, they become obstacles to concentration. That is because they are a mild form of greed or attachment which is a hindrance to concentration. So if expectations come up, do not be irritated by them, but just be mindful of them, or say to yourself, "expecting, expecting, expecting." Then go back to the breaths or the movements of the abdomen. When you practice mindfulness you make effort, mental effort; the effort

you make thus must be neither too much nor too little; if you make too much effort, you will become agitated and you cannot concentrate; and if you make too little effort, you will become sleepy and again cannot concentrate. The effort you make must, therefore, be well balanced. If you miss to be mindful and then remember, then be mindful of that missing, or say to yourself, "missing, missing, missing", or "forgetting, forgetting, forgetting." Above all, do not be tight or tense in your mind; be relaxed, and calmly watch, or be mindful, or make mental notes.

## Walking Meditation

**H**aving meditated for about thirty minutes or more, you may practice walking meditation. When you practice Vipassana meditation, it is important to keep mindfulness with you always. So, when you change from sitting to standing, keep mindfulness with you. Before standing up, therefore, be mindful of the intention to stand up or to get up. You may say to yourself "intention, intention, intention," or desire, desire, desire." Then get up slowly, keeping your mind on the whole of your body, or





saying to yourself, "getting up, getting up, getting up." And when you are standing, be mindful of the standing position, or say to yourself, "standing, standing, standing."



When you walk, it is better to choose a walking path and stay on it. Walk on it back and forth. When you walk, you walk slowly, keeping your mind on the foot or rather the movements of the foot, being aware of at least four stages of each step. And keep your eyes down always.

In order to make a step, you first raise your foot. Keep your mind on the foot and be mindful of the raising or lifting, saying, "lifting." Then you push your foot forward, or you move your foot forward. Be mindful of that moving, saying to yourself, "moving" when you put your foot down on the floor, be mindful of the putting down, or just say, "putting." Then you shift weight to make the other step. Keep your mind on the whole body and say, "shifting." Then make the next step, being mindful of lifting, moving, putting down, and shifting, making movements slowly. Keep your eyes open and look at the floor about three or four feet in front of you. Do not close your eyes. You may fall if you close your eyes. Keep them a little open and look at the floor, or look down.

When you reach the end of the walking space, you stop and be mindful of stopping, or say to yourself, "stopping, stopping, stopping." When you want to turn around, be mindful of the desire or intention to turn around, or say to yourself, "intention, intention, intention," or "desire, desire, desire," and then you turn slowly. Be mindful of the turning movement, or say to yourself, "turning, turning, turning." Then walk again, taking note of the different stage in each step, lifting, moving, putting down, shifting, and so on, until you reach the other end of the walking space. Stop there and be mindful of stopping. When you turn around, be mindful of turning around and then walk again. Also, when you walk, you may keep your hands in front or at the back or on the sides. So, you walk back and forth until the end of the walking period.

*[Walking meditation is designed to give exercise to the body. When you are practicing for half an hour or an hour, walking may not be necessary. But when you are on a retreat and practice the whole day, your body needs some kind of movement. Hence the walking meditation. At the end of the walking period, the sitting period begins again. So you go back to the sitting place, walking slowly, making notes, being aware of the different stages and steps. Before lowering yourself down, be mindful of the desire to sit down. Then lower yourself down*





*slowly, keeping your mind on the whole body. When the body touches the floor, say "touching, touching, touching." When you arrange your legs and hands, say "arranging, arranging, arranging." And then, go back to the breaths and be mindful of the in-breaths and out-breaths and out breaths. This way, you alternate sitting and walking and maintain your mindfulness, trying not to lose it at any moment during the retreat.*

*During retreats, eating is also done with meditation, for everything has to be done with mindfulness. Even the activities in the bathroom should not escape your mindfulness.*

*For full instructions for practice at a retreat, please read "PRACTICAL VIPASSANA MEDITATIONAL EXERCISES" by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw.]*

## Sharing Of Merit

**A**fter meditation, we share merit. It is a good practice to share merit with all beings whenever we have done some meritorious deeds.

Sharing of merit means letting other beings get a chance to get merit themselves by having them rejoice at our merit. By rejoicing at our merit, they themselves get merit, and that merit of theirs is what gives them happy results. Our merit does not decrease when we share it; in fact, it increases, because sharing of merit is itself an act of merit which is dana or giving. Therefore, sharing of merit is beneficial to both the sharer and the recipient.

Please share merit as follows and say, "Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!" at the end:

May all beings share this merit which we have thus acquired, for the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May all beings inhabiting in space and on earth, Deities and others of mighty power, share this merit of ours!

May they long protect the teachings.

May All Beings Be Well,  
Happy And Peaceful!

By the late Ven. U. Silananda







# Those Who Offend The Innocent Come To Grief

*He who does harm with weapons to those who are harmless<sup>1</sup> and should not be harmed will soon suffer any of these ten evil consequences.*

Dhammapada Story No. 137

*He will be subject to acute pain,<sup>2</sup> disaster, bodily injury, or even grievous sickness, or loss of mind, or oppression by the king, or heavy accusation, or loss of relatives, or destruction of wealth,<sup>3</sup> or ravaging fire that will burn his house. Upon the dissolution of the body the fool will be reborn in hell.*



Verses No. 138 to 140

## Untimely death of Venerable Moggallāna

Once, the Nigantha ascetics planned to kill Venerable Moggallāna because they thought that by doing away with him, the fame of the Buddha would also be diminished. So they hired some assassins to kill Moggallāna who was staying at Kalāsila near Rajagaha at that time. The assassins surrounded the monastery; but Moggallāna got away by using his supernormal power. Thus, they could not kill him for two whole months. When the assassins again surrounded his

dwelling place during the third month, Moggallāna, recollecting that he had yet to pay for the evil deeds\* done by him during one of his past existences, did not exercise his supernormal power. So the assassins caught him, and beat him up. After that, they left his body in a bush, thinking that he was dead. But through his *jhānic* power he revived himself and went to pay his last respects to the Buddha at the Jetavana monastery. But his revival was temporary because the beating was so severe that he knew he was not going to live much longer. He informed the Buddha that he would





soon attain *parinibbāna* (final release from the earthly existence). However, before his *parinibbāna* the Buddha asked him to expound the Dhamma to the congregation of bhikkhus, as that would be the last time they would have the opportunity to listen to his preaching. So Moggallāna expounded the Dhamma and left after paying homage to the Enlightened One. He passed away soon after.

The news of the passing away of Moggallāna at the hands of assassins spread like wild fire. King Ajātasattu ordered his men to investigate and arrest the culprits. The assassins were caught and sentenced to death. The bhikkhus felt very sorrowful over the death of Moggallāna, and could not understand why such a personage like him should die at the hands of assassins. The

Buddha explained, 'Bhikkhus! Considering that Moggallāna had lived a noble life in this existence, he should not have met with such a death. But in one of his past existences, he had done a great wrong to his own parents, who were both blind. In the beginning, he was a very dutiful son, but after his marriage, his wife poisoned his mind and suggested that he should get rid of his parents. He took his blind parents in a cart into a forest, and there he killed them by beating them and making them believe that it was some thieves who were beating them. For that evil deed he suffered for a long time; and in this existence, his last birth, he has died at the hands of assassins. Indeed, by doing wrong to those who should not be wronged, one is sure to suffer more for it.'

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\* Even Arahants must pay for whatever serious evil deeds that they have done during their previous births as long as their physical body exists. The Buddha's sickness (like the dysentery he suffered from) were also the effects of residual past bad *kamma*. However, although they suffer from past bad *kamma* they cannot create any new *kamma* after becoming Arahants.

1. Namely, the Arahants who are weaponless and innocent.
2. That might cause death.
3. Loss in business transactions, loss of wealth, etc.



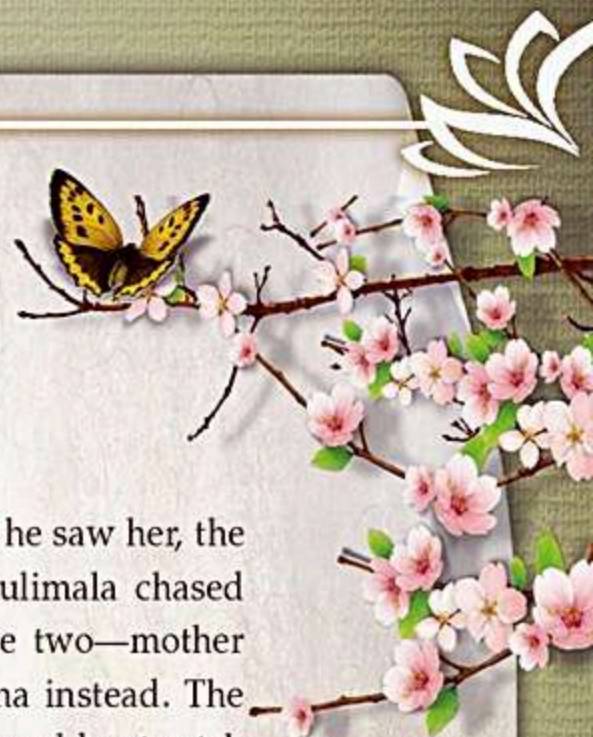
# Discourse On Arahant Angulimala Sutta

**T**he chaplain of King Kosala had a baby boy, named Ahimsaka, also known as the son of Mantani. At the time of his birth the weapons in the whole country were shining. His father predicted that he would become a robber.

As a student at Taxila University, he was much liked by the Rector for his good behaviour and intelligence. Some students were jealous of him and accused him of having a close relationship with the Rector's wife. To test his student's honesty and loyalty the Rector asked him to collect one thousand fingers. Obediently he did so and made a garland of his victims fingers to hang around his neck. Hence he became notorious as the robber with a garland of fingers (Angulimala Cora). Eventually Angulimala had one thousand fingers, short of one.

People in the country complained to King Kosala about the robber cum murderer. So an announcement was made that the king's army would kill the dangerous man. Mantani, mother of the wanted man, went to look for him in order to save him. Knowing that the dangerous man would kill





even his own mother for the thousandth finger if he saw her, the compassionate Buddha went to the forest. Angulimala chased after his mother. The Buddha stood between the two—mother and son. Angulimala decided to seize the Buddha instead. The Buddha performed a miracle so that Angulimala could not catch up with Him although the walking was slow. He was also made aware of reality when the Buddha spoke to him. Immediately, Angulimala was converted and ordained. Soon he attained the Arahantship.

One day Venerable Angulimala heard that a woman was having difficulty in labour. He went to the Buddha for help. He was asked to chant a Paritta, known since then as Angulimala Sutta which contained a statement of truth: that since he had become the Buddha's disciple he had never taken a life. Without much questioning he went back to the woman and chanted the Paritta and immediately the woman gave birth safely.

Today Angulimala Sutta is still used as a paritta for woman to have a safe birth. It could be found in Majjhima Pannasa and Majjhima Nikaya.



# Jaya - Mangala - Gatha Discourse on Blessings

*Thus have I heard:*

*On one occasion the Blessed One  
was dwelling at the monastery of  
Anathapindika in Jeta's Grove near Savatthi.  
Now when the night was far spent,,  
a certain deity whose surpassing splendour  
illuminated the entire Jeta Grove,  
came to the presence of the Blessed One,  
and drawing near, respectfully saluted Him  
and stood at one side.*

*Standing thus, He addressed the Blessed One in verse:-*

*Many deities and men,  
yearning after good,  
have pondered on Blessings.  
Pray, tell me the Highest Blessing!*

*Not to associate with the fools,  
To associate with the wise,  
and honour those who are worthy of honour –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*To reside in a suitable locality,  
to have done meritorious actions in the past,  
And to set oneself in the right course –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*Vast-learning, perfect handicraft,  
a highly trained discipline,  
and pleasant speech –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*





*The support of father and mother,  
The cherishing of wife and children,  
and peaceful occupations,  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*Liberality, Righteous conduct,  
The helping of relatives,  
And blameless actions –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*To cease and abstain from evil  
Forbearance with respect to intoxicants  
And steadfastness in virtue –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*Reverence, humility,  
Contentment, gratitude,  
And opportune hearing of the Dhamma  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*Patience, obedience,  
Sight of the Samanas (ascetics)  
And religious discussions at due season –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*Self-control, Holy Life,  
Perceptions of the Noble Truths,  
And the realisation of Nibbana –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*He whose mind does not flutter  
By contact with worldly contingencies,  
Sorrowless, Stainless, and Secure –  
This is the Highest Blessing.*

*To them, fulfilling matters such as these,  
Everywhere invincible,  
In every way moving happily  
These are the Highest Blessings.*





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Management Committee Members for the year 2018



*Though few sacred texts he reads,  
the heedless man is no practicer,  
as cowherd counting other's kine,  
in samanaship he has no share.*

*Though few the sacred texts  
he chants in Dhamma does his practice run,  
clear of delusion, lust and hate,  
wisdom perfected, with heart well-freed.*



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