

MEDITATION FOR BEGINNERS

This is a basic introductory course showing three different types of meditation methods for beginners.

1. *Mettā Bhāvanā* or Loving Kindness Meditation
2. *Ānāpānasati* or Mindfulness of Breathing Meditation
Please note that this is only the beginning section of *kāyānupassanā* from the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*
3. *Sakman Bhāvanā* or Walking Meditation

METTĀ BHĀVANĀ

Find a quiet place to sit. You may sit on the floor crossed legged or on a chair. Make sure you are comfortable and can maintain the posture for the entire sitting without moving.

(Check the meditation posture handout to find out how to sit.)

1. May I be well, happy and peaceful. May I be well, happy and peaceful.
May I be free from harm
May I be free from anger
May I be free from ill will
May I be free from sorrow
May I be free from suffering.
May I be well happy and peaceful.

May all beings in the North be well, happy and peaceful (2)
May they be free from harm
May they be free from anger
May they be free from ill will
May they be free from sorrow
May they be free from suffering.
May all beings in the North be well, happy and peaceful.

May all beings in the East (repeat as above)

May all beings in the South..... (repeat as above)

May all beings in the West (repeat as above)

May all beings above in the terrestrial and celestial planes of existence be well ...
(repeat as above)

May all beings down in the four woeful states of existence
be well happy
(repeat as above)

May my parents, family, friends and relatives be well happy
and peaceful
(repeat as above)

May all my acquaintances be well, happy and peaceful.
(repeat as above)

May all those who are here with me now be well, happy and
peaceful.
(repeat as above)

May all those who dislike me be well, happy and peaceful.
(repeat as above)

May all beings be well, happy and peaceful. (3times).

ĀNĀPĀNA SATI BHĀVANĀ

To do this meditation one has to first find a quiet place to sit. One can either sit on the floor cross legged or on a chair. (Please check the meditation posture hand out to find the best way to sit.) The important thing about sitting is to be comfortable and to be able to sit in the same position without moving for the whole duration of the sitting.

Having made oneself comfortable sitting, one brings the mindfulness to the fore. This means to put aside all the external distractions and be present NOW. Let go of the past, let go of the future and be right here now.

Now with ever mindfulness, knowing you are breathing is aware of the in breath. Very mindfully be aware of the out breath.

When you can be aware of every in breath and every out breath with out letting the mind wonder for a period of ten minutes or so then you are centered on the meditation object which leads to calm.

Now to make the exercise a little interesting, and to help the meditator keep the mind's attention on the breath, one is asked to notice the differences in the breath.

Now when the in breath is long be aware of the long in breath, and when the out breath is long be aware of the long out breath. When the in breath is short be aware of the short in breath and when the out breath is short be aware of the short out breath. The most important part of this stage is to be able to sustain the knowledge over many breaths in succession.

As you continue doing this the breath becomes very subtle, calm and peaceful. This will bring you to a state of Samadhi. This means that your mind is very calm, quiet, tranquil and peaceful.

This is all that we will do for this first session. If you can practice that much every day for at least 30 minutes, you will be able to maintain the tranquility of the mind. Next time we meet we will go on from there.

SAKMAN BHĀVANĀ

Here we bring our awareness or mindfulness to the feet.

Like in the breathing meditation where we first become aware of the in and out breath, here we are going to be aware of the stepping. When we put our right foot forward we become aware of the right foot. When we put our left foot forward we become aware of the left foot. So at the very beginning it will be right, left, right left. The walking is done at a very slower pace than our normal walking.

When we are able to sustain this for a while without any distractions, then we add another movement. This time it will be, right foot forward, right foot down; left foot forward left foot down. When we are quite good at this we go on to the four stages; i.e. lifting, moving forward, bringing the foot down and pressing the foot on the ground.

Work with this till you can sustain it for at least a period of ten minutes.

This is all that will be given at the beginning stage.

Please note that what we have done so far is only calming the mind or Samatha Bhavana. We have not still come to the Vipassana Bhavana or insight meditation. It is only through insight meditation and we can gain final liberation or attain Nibbana. But we cannot get there without first calming the mind.

May you all be well, happy and peaceful!