

**The World Buddhist University
Sunday Buddhist Forum Program**

Meditation for Healing Part II

Speaker : Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich
Moderator: Dr. Chris Stanford
Rapporteur: Suttinee Yavaprapas

On the First Sunday of the Month of March 2011 (March 7, 2554), Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich (Formerly: Venerable Mettanando Bhikkhu) was the guest speaker of the Buddhist Forum talking on "Meditation for Healing Part II." The lecture was a follow up of his first lecture "Meditation for Healing" on Sunday, July 4, 2010, Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich, President, Hospice Foundation of Thailand, is one of the most outstanding international figures in the Buddhist World. He is well-known for his writing and his unique interpretation of the Tipitaka, the canonical literature of Buddhism. After graduating from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, he went to Oxford University and Harvard Divinity School for advanced studies in Medical Ethics, and finally earned his doctorate from Hamburg University.

Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich began his lecture with reference to his previous lecture on the Healing Meditation of the Guru of King Rama I, the founder of the Cakri Dynasty. He was Suk Kai Thuean, the forest meditation master of early Ratanakosin Period, the Supreme Patriarch Kai Thuean (Wild Cock), the First Somdet Yaanasangwon, and the Second Supreme Patriarch of Bangkok in the reign of King Rama II. From the manuscript that we have studied, it shows that the forest monks lived a very unusual life. They were like nomads. They moved from place to place without any permanent settlement. They were respected by the local people enormously. They used meditation not only for spiritual acquisition but also for healing and self-protection. When they were walking in the wood, the energy power kept them away from wild animals i.e. snakes, tigers and bears etc. with the intention of loving kindness towards them all. When the children were sick, it was the duty of the monks to take care of them. There was also the technique of increasing

the healing appetite. The monks had energy to put into water and gave sacred power to the patients. These were the mantra or the practices of the forest monks.

Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich has considered meditation a key element of an integrated health program. Most people practice meditation to reduce anxiety, anger and other negative emotions. More importantly, meditation can reduce chance of cancer, Alzheimer's disease, physical and mental stress, and pain in cancer patients. It slows down aging process and rejuvenates the brain. It can also increase efficiency and creativity, improve human relations and create security of the mind. Migraine and headache can of course be slowed down by meditation. Increasingly, physicians prescribe meditation as part of the treatment for a large and growing number of medical conditions.

Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich referred to the Dalai Lama on his comments on Buddhism in Hamburg in 2007. He said, "Buddhism is more than a religion." Of course, Buddhism has science, psychology, physics, metaphysics and the healing technique. He then alluded to the Buddha who after attaining his enlightenment declined not to teach. It was Brahma who asked him to teach. People are not the same. There are 4 kinds of people, like 4 levels of lotuses: those who are fast learner, moderate learner, those who need guidance and those who cannot master the teaching. The Buddha realized that there were people who would appreciate his teaching. He launched his mission through the teaching of meditation. The goal is to acquire cultivation of personal experience. The Buddha customized his meditation instruction to fit in with the habit and personality of his listener by means of dialogue. Dialogue is actually a part of meditation teaching. The Buddha serves as a "Beautiful Friend" (kalyanamitra) to others and the world.

Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich brought back about the meaning of life in the Vedic tradition. Trivarga are the three goals of life i.e. Dharma (duty), Artha (material wealth), Kama (sexual pleasure). In order to achieve these three values, there are several ways. Later, people started to ask if the three values were true spiritual. For the Hindu religious tradition, one must

realize Samsara: the endless rounds of re-birth and re-death, Karma: deed, action and Moksa: liberation added later by Buddhists & others heterodox. In order to be liberated, one required Tapas. For the Asceticism & Tapas which meant the heat of austerity, the goal is acquisition of magical power. The practices are self-inflicting tortures, e.g. fasting, heat, cold and rain (surrounded by blazing fires in the hot sun, lying on beds of thorns or spikes, hanging head down, clenching fist until nails penetrate through the hand, holding arm motionless, etc.), dwelling on "penance grounds" on outskirts of towns. Among them, the early group that described meditation systematically was the Jain. For early Jain Meditation (Jainism and Samkhya), when a monk thinks: "I am indeed tired of carrying around this body in these circumstances"; he should gradually reduce his food; having reduced his food, and diminished his passions, his body being prepared, standing like a plank, his body pacified,... he should ask for grass; having asked for grass and received it, he should go away to a lonely place;....spread the grass...reject the body... activity...and movement..... The firm ones, having reached the liberation, powerful and wise and knowing all that is excellent. Principles of Jain Meditation were as follows:

- It was rooted in earlier texts of the Vedic religion
- Meditation belongs to one of much a larger scale of spiritual practices in which all body and mental activities are stopped.
- Early Jain text: aims at motionless mind in which all sense organs are conquered
- Fasting to death & stopping the breath are characteristics of early Jainism

There were two sects of the Jain. The Svetambara was white-clad, white robed and the Digambara was sky-clad, nude. There are three million Jains in India nowadays. They have grand celebration in the month of February. The statue of Gomatesvara on top of Vidhayagiri Hill displays the ideal state of enlightenment of a Jain ascetic who stood still without any movement until creepers grew over his body.

Another way of meditation in India nowadays is Yoga (yoke). It means all spiritual exercises and acts of self mortification. Yogi are earnest followers of yoga. Later, it has developed into many schools: Kriya Yoga (Yoga of Act), Rajayoga (King of Yoga), Hathayoga (Yoga of Force), Layayoga (Yoga of Dissolution), Mantrayoga (Yoga of Spells), etc. The God, Isavara of Yoga, is not a Creator, but a special exalted soul who is never in contact with worshipers like the Buddha and Tirthankara of Jainism, symbolized in the sacred syllable OM. Yoga is equal to stillness of the movement of the mind. This is mainly the mind training.

Mantra is also included from Sanskrit root: man (to think) and “-tra” instrumental suffix. Literally, it is thinking tool. Practically, it is word or phrase repeated in meditation. It is the most sacred sound in Hindu-Buddhist-Jain Religions. $\frac{3}{4}$ of reality is unperceivable/ $\frac{1}{4}$ perceivable. The components are A, U, M, + Silence.

As Siddhattha, the Buddha studied with two famous gurus, Ala Kalama and Udaka Ramaputta. Shortly, he mastered all the teaching of them, but refused to stay on with them. Unsatisfied with what he had achieved, he left them in search of his own way to reach Nirvana.

The Middle Way was afterward realized by pressing teeth, pressing tongue against the palate, holding breath and reducing intake of food. What the Buddha found was the Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma. The two extremes that ascetics should avoid, namely: Sensual gratification and Self-torturing. These two are useless, menial ways to liberation. The Middle Way is the answer. The Buddha said, “I have found it. I have seen and known things that have never been seen or known before.”

Dr. Mano Mettanando Laohavanich pointed out the moment a monk accomplished in mindfulness and clear awareness, going forth and back, looking ahead or behind, bending and stretching, wearing his outer and inner robe, carrying his bowl, eating, drinking, chewing, swallowing, evacuating, urinating, walking, standing, sitting, lying down. In speaking and in silence he acts with clear awareness. The meditation practice is as follows:

- He sits down cross-legged, holding his body erect, and concentrates on keeping his mindfulness established before him.

- Abandoning worldly desires, he dwells with a mind freed from worldly desires, and his mind is purified of them.
- Abandoning ill-will and hatred... and by compassionate love for the welfare of all beings, his mind is purified of ill-will and hatred.

The energy of peace is felt throughout the whole body all over the skin just as if a man were to sit wrapped from head to foot in a white garment, so that no part of him was untouched by that garment –so his body is suffused This is the fruit of homeless life, more excellent and perfect than the former ones.

The last session was dedicated to the cultivation of Universal Love. The goal is the inner peace with healing energy. The method of meditation is 1) allowing the body to relax 2) breathing mindfulness with visualization. The benefit is increases of the sense of well- being, joy, and peace. This is undoubtedly Foundation to Enlightenment.