

# Dhamma Bell

Issue 1 ~~~ Spring 2007

Newsletter



## Introducing Dhamma Bell Newsletter

*Dhamma Bell Newsletter* shares news twice a year of Tathāgata Meditation Center (Nhu' Lai Thiên Viên), which was formed in 1987 as the Vipassanā Meditation Group under the spiritual guidance of the late Sayādawgyi U Silānanda. In 1991, the group founded a meditation center and named it Tathāgata Meditation Center. All are welcome to come to Tathāgata Meditation Center (TMC) and practice Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā meditation.



# TMC Biographies

**Sayādawgyi U Pandita** is a world-renowned meditation teacher. He has taught Vipassanā meditation for well over 50 years, in the tradition of his teacher, the late Mahāsi Sayādaw. He began to teach meditation to the Vipassanā Meditation Group in 1989 and has been coming to conduct retreats at Tathāgata Meditation Center since its founding. Sayādawgyi U Pandita is the founder and head monk of Panditarama Monastery in Burma. He is the author of two books, *In This Very Life* and *The State of Mind Called Beautiful*. ▶



## Venerable Khippa Panno

was ordained in Vietnam. After studying Vipassanā meditation in Burma with the late Mahāsi Sayādaw, he came to the United States to teach Vipassanā meditation, and is now the abbot of Ky Vien Temple in Washington, D.C. and the chief meditation teacher at Thich Ca Thien Vien Meditation Center in Riverside, California. He has been leading a special retreat every year since 1987, first with the Vipassanā Meditation Group and then at Tathāgata Meditation Center.



**Beelin Sayādaw** (U Paññādīpa) is the abbot of Tathāgata Meditation Center. He is a former lecturer at Hitakaryi Saṅgha University in Burma. After practicing Vipassanā meditation with U Sanvara Sayādaw, Beelin Sayādaw taught Vipassanā meditation in Burma to monks and laypeople and for approximately three years in Liverpool, England. He has been leading a special retreat every year since he came to Tathāgata Meditation Center in 1999. ▼

## Sayādaw U Jatila

taught Vipassanā meditation at Panditarama Meditation Center from 1997 until 2002, when Sayādawgyi U Pandita assigned him to Tathāgata Meditation Center. Sayādaw U Jatila assisted Beelin Sayādaw in guiding Vipassanā meditation retreats and leading the Youth Buddhist classes and retreats every year until 2005, when he returned to Panditarama Meditation Center after leading the November special retreat. Sayādaw U Jatila returned briefly to Tathāgata Meditation Center to lead the November special retreat in 2006. ◀





## Tathāgata Meditation Center Welcomes Sayādaw U Kavainda

Ordained in 1986, Sayādaw U Kavainda earned the government Dhammacariya degree in 1993, placing eleventh nationwide among monks and novices that year. He spent the next four years attending the World Buddhist Meditation Institute in Yangon, where he studied English and assisted his teachers in publishing Dhamma books. Starting in 1998, he studied at Sampuranand Sanskrit University in Varanasi, India, earning a Ph.D. in comparative religion. In 2003, Sayādaw U Kavainda returned to Burma, where he spent four months of intensive Vipassanā meditation practice at Hse Main Gon Forest Center. Sayādaw U Kavainda came to Tathāgata Meditation Center in 2006 from Hse Main Gon Forest Center, where, at the request of Sayādawgyi U Pandita, he had been carrying out a variety of duties since the end of his intensive retreat, including instructing yogis and teaching classes to children.

## Projects at Tathāgata Meditation Center

In addition to the newly built Dhamma hall, which had its grand opening in October 2006, the following projects had been completed by early 2007:

- A new metal gate at the front entrance
- Male yogis' quarters
- Saṅgha dining hall and kitchen

Also, some renovation of the Saṅgha's quarters' has begun, including a renovation of the room where Sayādawgyi U Pandita will stay during the forty-four day retreat that he will be leading from May 5 to June 17.

These are additional projects scheduled for 2007:

- Expansion of the Saṅgha's quarters
- Expansion of the yogis' dining hall
- New parking lots

What has made all of these projects possible is the open-hearted generosity of this Dhamma community—their financial contributions and their contributions of labor.



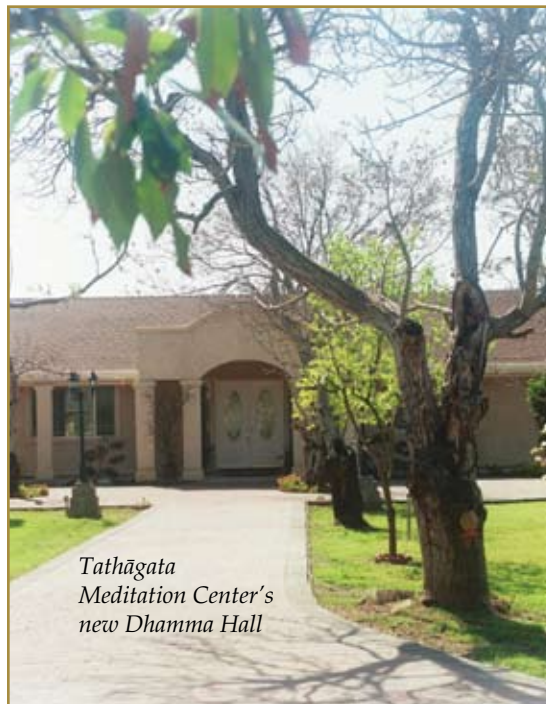
## Tet Vietnam Celebration

Every year at Tathāgata Meditation Center, the Dhamma community celebrates Tet Vietnam: the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. This year Tet Vietnam was celebrated in the newly built Dhamma hall on February 18, 2007. Devotees started to arrive early in the morning to prepare for the celebra-

tion. Bay Area Theravāda Saṅgha were invited to join the center's Saṅgha, and at 11:00 A.M., lunch was offered to all of the Saṅgha. Lunch for the Saṅgha and for the TMC Dhamma community was provided jointly by kitchen volunteers at TMC and by devotees who brought dishes that they had prepared.

The Tet Vietnam ceremony, led by Tathāgata Meditation Center's Saṅgha, started at 12:30 P.M. During the ceremony, the Dhamma community paid respect to the Saṅgha, took five precepts, listened to Dhamma chanting, and listened to a Dhamma talk delivered by Beelin Sayādaw (Sayādaw U Paññadīpa). They offered dana and requisites to the Saṅgha, wishing them to be well, happy, peaceful, and free of danger.

They extended thoughts of loving-kindness—boundless heart—to all beings, that they may take care of themselves happily; that they may be free from mental and physical pain; that whatever they have gained not be lost; and that all beings be well, happy, peaceful, and free of danger. The Dhamma community also shared merit with their parents, their relatives, and all beings.



*Tathāgata Meditation Center's new Dhamma Hall*

## Schedules: 2007

### 2007 Special Retreat Schedule

(Tentative)

May 5 – June 17 Forty four-day retreat with Sayādawgyi U Pandita  
September 3 – 16 Fourteen-day retreat with Beelin Sayādaw (U Paññadīpa)  
November 10 – 24 Fourteen-day retreat with Sayādaw U Jatila

### 2007 Young Adult and Children's Retreat Schedule

(Tentative)

August 11 – 15 Young Adult retreat  
August 16 – 19 Children's retreat

### 2007 Weekend Retreat Schedule

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| July 7 – 8     | September 29 – 30 |
| July 28 – 29   | October 13 – 14   |
| August 25 – 26 | October 27 – 28   |

### 2007 Youth Class Schedule

(9:30 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.)

June 24  
July 22  
September 23  
October 21  
November 25

### 2007 Events

July 29 Vassa  
August 26 Appreciation Day  
October 28 Kathina

### 2007 Beautification Days

April 22  
August 5  
November 3

*Dhamma Bell* is a free publication of Tathāgata Meditation Center, which takes sole responsibility for its contents. The volunteer editors for this issue are Theikdi and Maureen O'Brien. The graphic designer is Marianne Wylie.

### Nhu' Lai Thiên Viên

#### Tathāgata Meditation Center

1215 Lucretia Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95122  
(408) 294-4536 [www.Tathagata.org](http://www.Tathagata.org)

*If you would like additional copies or if you would like an issue sent to someone else as a gift, please let the Tathāgata Meditation Center know. If you would like to help support the ongoing work of the Tathāgata Meditation Center, please feel free to offer dana.*

May sati be your friend.

# Mettā Sutta

**Part 1** Transcribed by Sarah Marks

(from a Dhamma talk given on July 24, 1984, during a 15-day retreat at Lafayette, California by the late Sayādawgyi U Silananda, adapted for Dhamma Bell)

**T**HIS SUTTA IS ON UNIVERSAL LOVE. The Pāli name of this sutta is *Mettā Sutta*. It is often called *Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta* because it begins with the word “*karaṇīya*.” This is a very popular sutta, recited by Buddhist monks on almost every occasion and at every ceremony.

The Buddha delivered this sutta to a group of monks who had gone to the Buddha to ask that he give them a subject of meditation. (It is not stated what kind of meditation the Buddha gave to them.) After studying and learning the subject of meditation, the monks went to a place in the forest to practice meditation. This was just before the *Vassa* or Rainy Season.

There were spirits in the forest, mostly tree spirits. While the monks were living there, these tree spirits had to get down from their trees and live on the earth with their families, so they were miserable. They were hoping that the monks would leave in a few days, but after some days, there was no sign of the monks leaving this place. Because the tree spirits were so miserable living on the earth, they began to show fearsome, dreadful visions to the monks in order to frighten them into being driven away from the forest. In addition to these dreadful visions, the tree spirits also produced unpleasant odors.

Oppressed by these visions and odors, the monks could not practice meditation well. When they could no longer tolerate this, they returned to the Buddha and asked him to send them to some other place to practice meditation. The Buddha looked with his supranormal vision, but he could not find any place for them on the whole earth other than the place that they had gone to. So the Buddha said to them, “Monks, there is not a single place other than this for you, so you must go back to that place.”

Then the monks protested: “We went there and we practiced meditation, but we were oppressed by these spirits. If we go back to that place, we will not be able to practice meditation. Why do you send us back to that same place?” The Buddha replied: “Formerly you went without weapons. Now I will give you a weapon.

Take this weapon and go back to the same place and practice meditation. This is the only place for you.”

The weapon the Buddha gave them was this teaching of universal love, *mettā*. After the Buddha had taught this sutta to them and they had learned how to practice loving-kindness meditation, they went back to the forest.

Actually this sutta is very short. You can recite it in less than three minutes. However, the meanings contained in this sutta are great and varied. I will first read this sutta to the end, and then I will give you some explanation.

In the past, I have told you that most suttas begin with the words “Thus have I heard.” This sutta, however, does not begin with these words because it is a short sutta, recorded in the *Collection of Small or Short Discourses*:

“He who is skilled in good and who wishes to attain that state of calm should act thus: he should be able, upright—perfectly upright—compliant, gentle and humble, contented, easily supported, with few duties, of simple livelihood, controlled in his senses, discreet, not impudent.

He should not be greedily attached to families.

He should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure him.

Then he should cultivate this thought thus:

May all beings be happy and secure.  
May their minds be contented.

Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong; long, short, or medium; short, small, or large; seen or unseen; those dwelling far or near; those who are born and those who are yet to be born—may all beings without exception be happy-minded.

Let not one deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place.

In anger or ill will, let not one wish any harm to another.

Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

Let one’s thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world—above, below, and across—without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.

Whether one stands, walks, sits, or lies down, as long as one is awake, one should maintain this mindfulness. This, they say, is the sublime state in this life.

Not falling into wrong views, virtuous, and endowed with insight, one gives up attachment to sense desires. Verily, such a man does not return to enter a womb again.”

In this sutta, the Buddha first gave the qualities of a monk, qualities that a monk should have before he practices loving-kindness meditation. However, this does not mean that a monk must have these qualities

before he can practice loving-kindness meditation. It does not mean a monk cannot practice loving-kindness meditation if he does not possess all these qualities. These qualities are very good qualities, ideal qualities. All monks may not be endowed with all these qualities, but they must try to possess as many of these qualities as possible.

First, the sutta says: “He who is skilled in good and who wishes to attain that state of calm should act thus.” One “who is skilled in good” knows how to do things. “That state of calm” here means *Nibbāna*: those who wish to attain *Nibbāna* should act thus.

A monk should be able. A monk should be able to strive for liberation from the round of rebirths. He should be ready to put forth effort to practice meditation.

A monk should also be “upright—perfectly upright.” The Pāli word for this is *uju*, which means “straight.” A monk should be perfectly straight, meaning that he should be very honest, not just ordinarily honest, but perfectly honest.

A monk should be compliant. The Pāli word for this is *suvaṇṇa*, which means “easy of speech.” (Perhaps we may say “easy to speak to.”) This means one who is willing to accept admonition, one who is willing to accept criticism, one who does not get angry when criticized, one who does not get angry when admonished. The same word appears in another sutta, the Blessing Sutta (*Maṅgala Sutta*). There it is translated as “obedient.” So “compliant” here means ready to accept



admonition, not getting angry when admonished. A monk should possess this quality. A monk should be ready to accept admonition or criticism and not get angry.

A monk should be gentle. A monk should be gentle in deeds, gentle in words, and gentle in mind. Sometimes you may see some monks who are not gentle, but gentleness is a good quality in monks because monks should practice loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. They should be gentle when doing things, gentle when going around, gentle when speaking, and also gentle of mind.

A monk should be humble. A monk should not be conceited. A monk should not be proud. Ordinary people, those who are not Arahants, tend to feel pride—pride in their birth, pride in their education, pride in their knowledge,

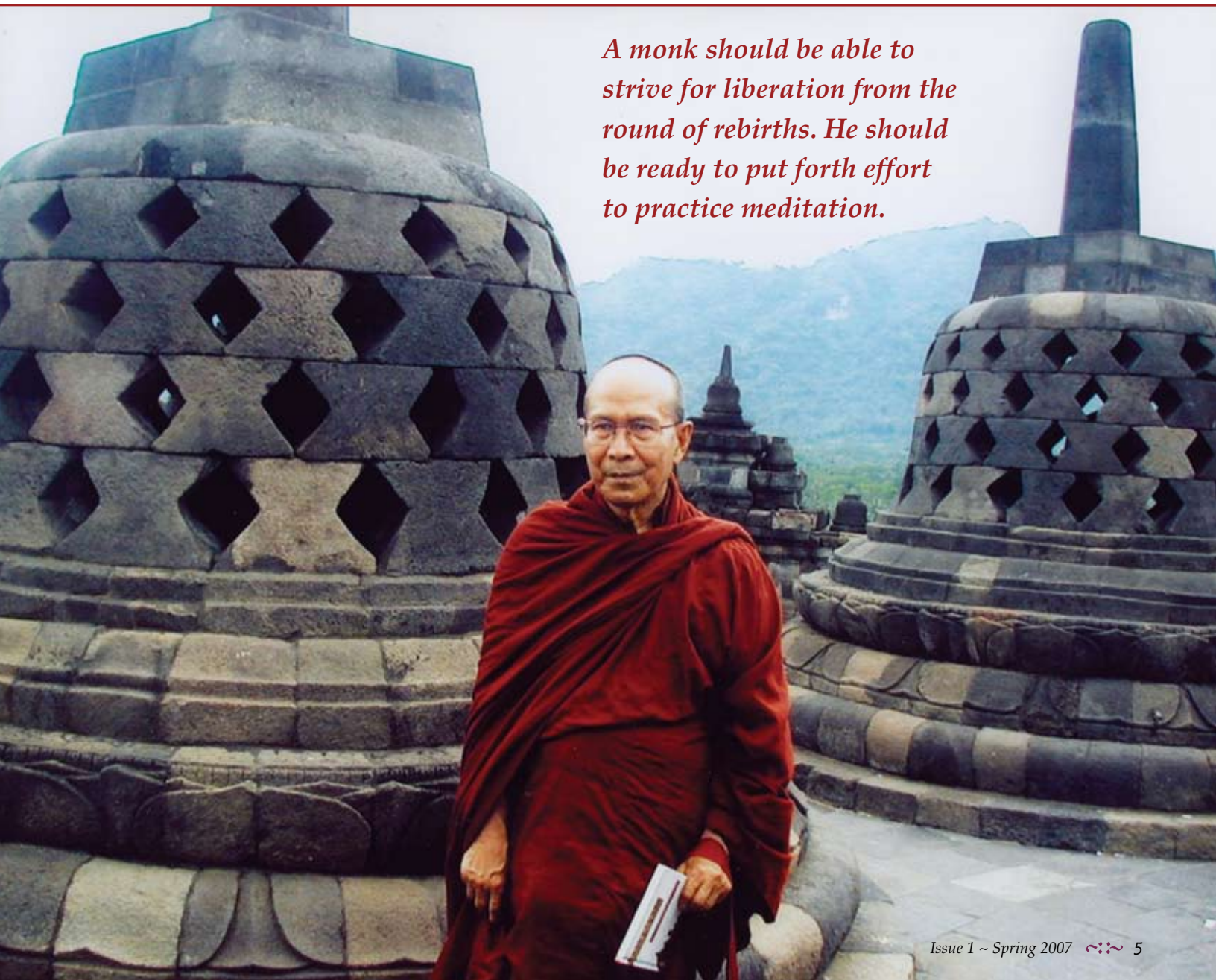
pride in their ability to do things, pride in their attainments. This conceit or *māna* can arise even in the minds of those people who have reached the third stage of enlightenment. Even *Anāgāmi* can have a kind of *māna*, although their *māna* is not so great, not so bad. But monks must try to get rid of this pride or must try to diminish this pride and be humble. This is because when one is proud, one is not approachable. One cannot teach properly. One cannot be a good leader or a good teacher to people. This is why a monk should be humble. The more advanced they are spiritually, the more humble monks become.

The most advanced disciple at the time of the Buddha was the Venerable Sāriputta, the first chief disciple, second only to the Buddha. However, he was very humble. For example, once he put on the lower garment not very properly: one of the edges of the lower garment

was hanging down. A seven-year-old novice who had been ordained on that very day pointed to the garment and told the Venerable Sāriputta that it was not properly put on. The Venerable Sāriputta looked at his garment and saw that the novice was right, so he moved to the side and adjusted the garment properly. Then he folded his hands to the seven-year-old novice and asked, “Teacher, is it proper now?” This demonstrates how humble the Venerable Sāriputta was. That is why all the monks liked him. A monk should be humble like the Venerable Sāriputta.

A monk should be contented. “Contented” here means that a monk should feel satisfaction with what he has. A monk should not want this thing and that thing. Because monks actually are supported by laypeople, they must be contented; they must be satisfied with what they have. If they want many things, they will have to ask the

*A monk should be able to strive for liberation from the round of rebirths. He should be ready to put forth effort to practice meditation.*



laypeople to give them these things. “I want another robe. I want a new bowl.”: that would be something like harassment for laypeople. Contentment is a very good quality to be developed both by monks and by laypeople. When you have contentment, you have happiness. The Buddha said, “Contentment is the best of wealth, the best of riches.”

Those who are contented are rich because they are not lacking in anything, they don’t need anything. Contentment is compared in the books to covering the soles of your feet with leather. When you want to walk on the earth, you cannot cover the whole earth with leather, but you can cover the soles of your feet with leather. When the soles of your feet are covered, virtually the whole earth is covered. In the same way, when you are contented with what you have, then you have everything because you need nothing.

The Buddha said that a monk should be easily supported. “Easily supported” means that a monk does not make too much fuss about what he gets. When someone brings something, a monk must not say: “I don’t want this thing; I want the other thing.” Such persons are very difficult to support. Contentment and being easily supported: these are the two qualities that monks should really have. They must be contented with what already have and they must be contented with what other people give to them. When they have these two qualities, they live in real happiness.

A monk should be with few duties. This means that a monk should not have many things to do. A monk should not be very busy; he should not be busy with worldly things; he should not be busy with things that are not conducive to spiritual growth. If a monk has to have anything to do, that should be the practice of Dhamma and the study of the teachings of the Buddha. Other duties, other things to do are just extra things. They are not needed for a monk.

A monk should be of simple livelihood. “Simple livelihood” here means just simple living. A monk should possess few things. He should not possess many things because monks lead a life of homelessness. Although they may be living in a monastery, they are living the homeless life. They must be able to get up and go wherever they like without much to carry.

There are eight requisites for monks. When they have these eight requisites, it is enough to lead the life of a monk. In the days of the Buddha eight requisites

were allowed. For other monks, ten or twelve requisites were allowed. They were not much: bowls, robes, maybe a staff, sandals—just these things. When monks live simple lives, when they do not possess many things, they are free to go anywhere. They don’t have to worry about carrying these things to wherever they go. It would be very good if monks nowadays could be of simple livelihood. Nowadays, monks have so many things. If I were to move to another place, I think I would have to rent a U Haul truck to carry my things.

In the books it is said that a monk should be like a bird. A bird has only its wings as its property. Whenever birds want to go to another place, they just take their wings with them. Monks should be like birds. We are practicing monks, so we should be of simple livelihood or light livelihood. The Pāli word for this is “of light livelihood.” They must be light enough to go anywhere, without many possessions. There are monks who have few possessions and there are monks who have many possessions. It depends on the type of monk.

There is a story of a renowned monk who lived in Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. A friend of his who was fond of having many things once went to visit him. Since he was famous, the other monk thought that there would be many people bringing food and things to the monastery in the morning. But in the morning nobody came. The resident monk told the visiting monk to pick up his bowl and go out for alms, so they went out for alms and came back. Then the visiting monk thought that it was because it was morning that people did not come. “During the day-time, before noon, people will bring food for us,” he thought. But nobody came. In this way the resident monk lived very simply, with no belongings.

One day when they were going for alms, the visiting monk told the resident monk of a certain place away from the city, saying that it was very lovely and that it was very good to be there. So he suggested that the resident monk go there. The resident monk replied, “Well, let us go there.” At that time they were going for alms. They were not at the monastery. The resident monk just said, “Let us go now.” However, the visiting monk said, “Please wait. I have left things at your monastery. I’ve left my staff, my bowl, my robe, my things. I have to take them with me.” Then the resident monk asked, “Why do you have so many things?” So the visiting monk told the resident monk that he need not

go to any other place. Any place is a good place for him. Any place is just right for him. Since in the city of Anuradhapura there was the Stupa in which the relics of the Buddha were enshrined, he need not go to any other place. So, leaving the resident monk at that place, the visiting monk left. This demonstrates that there are monks who have many belongings and there are monks who have few belongings.

A monk should be controlled in his senses. This is a good quality for a monk to have—to be controlled in the eyes, controlled in the ears, and so on. “Controlled in the eyes” means that a monk should take care not to acquire akusala through the eyes. Whenever a monk sees an object, he must train himself not to get akusala. Also, he must not look here and there like a monkey. That is why monks do not look here and there much. They keep their eyes down as much as possible. Also in speech, or in any of the senses, a monk should be controlled. This is why you do not see a Buddhist monk playing or fooling around with other people.

I once listened to a tape—about starting a conversation, or something like that—which advised listeners to look at the face of the other person when they talk. And then the tape advised shaking hands with people. When I listened to that tape, I thought, “Oh, that is not for me.” When monks talk to another person, we do not want to look at the other person. We just keep our eyes down. And we never shake hands with people, especially women. Monks should be controlled in the senses: their eyes should be controlled, their ears should be controlled, their nose should be controlled—everything should be controlled.

“Discreet”: this really means intelligent, having wisdom. Also, a monk should be “not impudent”—not impudent in deeds, not impudent in words, not impudent in mind—not rude, not arrogant.

“He should not be greedily attached to families,” or, in other words, a monk should not be attached to laypeople. That is a very desirable and praiseworthy quality in monks. A monk should not say: “This is my supporter. He is like a brother to me. She is like a sister to me.” The Buddha said that a monk should be like the moon, which is new every day. You see the moon today in one shape, and the next day you see it in another shape. So every day the moon is new. In the same way, a monk must be new every time he approaches families. He



must not be greedily attached to families. It may not be agreeable to modern people, but what is said in the books is that a monk must not share the sorrows and happiness of laypeople. There is a phrase in Pāli: “*Sahasoka, sahanandi.*” That phrase means feeling sorry together and feeling happy together. A monk must be aloof from laypeople. A monk is a person who has left behind all of the household sorrows and happiness. He is leading a homeless life. So he should not be affected by the ups and downs of laypeople. He should keep himself aloof and should not be attached to families.

“He should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure him.” A monk should not do even a slightly wrong thing that another person, a wise person, might censure him for doing. If doing something might invite censure, he should avoid doing it.

These are the qualities of a monk, the qualities to be possessed by a monk before practicing loving-kindness meditation: he should be able, upright—perfectly upright—compliant, gentle, humble, contented, easily supported, with few duties, of simple livelihood, controlled in his senses, discreet, not impudent, not greedily attached to families, and not doing any slight wrong that would be censured by the wise. Monks have to develop these qualities. Laypeople can also develop these qualities, to a certain extent. ☺☺☺

(Part 2 of this talk on the Mettā Sutta will be in the next newsletter.)



Summer 2006 Young Adult Retreat



Summer 2006 Children's Retreat

*Tathāgata Meditation Center depends on its volunteers. For example, these kitchen volunteers were an essential part of the Summer 2006 Young Adult Retreat and Children's Retreat.*



A recipe from TMC's kitchen volunteers

# Vegetarian Spring Rolls

## Ingredients ( for about 20 rolls)

2 large blocks (loaves) of tofu (cut in 1/2-inch slices)  
1 jicama (1 lb. or more (shredded into 1/8 inch)  
2 carrots (shredded into 1/8 inch)  
Fresh garlic (amount to your own taste: finely ground and fried until slightly yellow and crispy)  
1 tsp. salt  
Lettuce (1/2 red leaf lettuce and 1/2 head lettuce)  
Some leaves of mint and cilantro  
Tapioca sheets (available at Southeast Asian groceries)

## Preparation

1. Deep fry tofu slices until slightly yellow.
2. Cool the tofu slices and then shred them (1/2 inch).
3. In small batches, cook shredded jicama and carrot in microwave for 2 to 3 minutes, until tender but not too soft, and let it cool.

4. Mix ingredients well: fried tofu, garlic, jicama, carrot, and salt

5. Shred lettuce and mint to 1/2 inch

\*Volume of tofu mix = volume of shredded lettuce

## Rolling

1. Use a big bowl of hot water to wet each tapioca sheet, one by one.
2. Place a wet tapioca sheet on a big flat dish to smooth out the sheet.
3. Put lettuce and tofu (the same amount of each) on the bottom of the tapioca sheet, fold both left and right side onto the center and roll, neither too loosely nor too tightly.

## Dipping Sauce

### Ingredients

1 cup hoisin sauce  
1 cup peanut butter  
Roasted peanuts (coarsely ground)  
Red chili (ground fresh), lemon juice, and garlic

1. Mix peanut butter in one cup of hot water and some lemon juice, then add hoisin sauce and mix.
2. Pour mixture into a small bowl and top with ground roasted peanuts, chili, and ground fresh garlic

Some people prefer a sweet and sour soy ( or fish) dipping sauce:

Gradually mix sugar, vinegar, water, soy/fish sauce (smallest amount) garlic (ground), and chili.



Nhu' Lai Thiên Viên  
Tathāgata Meditation Center  
1215 Lucretia Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95122

## New! Dhamma Bell Newsletter

### Inside:

Sayādaw U Sīlananda Dhamma talk  
TMC Biographies  
TMC Projects  
2007 Schedules



## Dhamma Thoughts for Yogis

**K**ing Mahānāma studied the Dhamma and practiced meditation daily at the Buddha's monastery. One day, King Mahānāma was returning to his palace along a narrow and congested road filled with carts, elephants, and horses, all bearing down on him. At one point, he was so close to being hit that he had to pull his chariot off to the shoulder of the road. After this narrow escape, he thought to himself, "What would happen if I were killed on this road? Would I be reborn in one of the Four Woeful States?" He couldn't determine the answer, so when he went to the monastery the next day, he described his narrow escape and asked the Buddha where he would be reborn in the next life. The Buddha answered, "As a *Sakadāgāmi* [one who has reached the second stage of Enlightenment] who has the five factors of *saddha* [faith or confidence], *sīla* [morality], *suta* [the acquisition of Dhamma knowledge—through hearing Dhamma talks through reading the Dhamma, and through one's own practice], *cāga* [generosity], and *pañña* [wisdom] firmly established in your mind, you will not be reborn in a lower state."

This is how the Buddha answered King Mahānāma's question, telling him that one who has these five factors firmly established will not be reborn in the Four Woeful States in the next life.

(An informal talk given to yogis by Beelin Sayādaw on December 23, 2004)

◀ Newly built Dhamma hall, Tathāgata Meditation Center