

Buddhist Hour Radio Script No. 1020

**Christmas Bhavana Course 2018 - Part 2**

**Broadcast 20th January 2019**

Today we will share with you Part 2 of the teachings we received during our recent Christmas Bhavana Course, which was held from 27th - 31st December 2018. The retreat was conducted under the guidance of Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi and Venerable Sister Khanti Khema of Dhamma Sukha Meditation Centre in Annapolis, Missouri, through their online retreat program. The teachings which we will be sharing with you today can be accessed from the Dhamma Sukha website, [www.dhammasukha.org](http://www.dhammasukha.org).

On Day One, after we listened to the 30 minute talk on Metta Meditation by Sister Khema which was read during last week's Buddhist Hour, we had a short break to stretch our legs before regathering in the hall to read from the Majjhima Nikaya sutta as prescribed by Bhante Vimalaramsi. Bhante places much emphasis on the importance of researching, understanding and practicing the original texts of Buddhism, and his explanations and commentaries are very clear and concise. The course gave us deep confidence in the Buddha's teachings and a real love for reading directly from the Suttas.

The first sutta that we read from on Day 1 was the Majjhima Nikaya 128 10-12. It taught us about how to mix with each other like milk and water. The following translation is from the website [www.suttacentral.net](http://www.suttacentral.net).

Majjhima Nikaya 128 10 - 12

Then Venerables Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila approached the Blessed One, accepted bowl and robes from the Blessed One. One prepared a seat and another administered water to wash the feet. The Blessed One sat on the prepared seat and washed his feet. Those venerable ones worshipped the Blessed One and sat on a side.

The Blessed One addressed Venerable Anuruddha: `Anuruddha, are you alright, do you have any fatigue owing to want of morsel food? "Venerable sir, we are alright, we have no fatigue owing to lack of morsel food'. `Anuruddha, are you united and friendly without a dispute, like milk and water and do you abide seeing each other with friendly eyes?' `Venerable sir, we are united like milk and water, friendly, without a dispute and abide seeing each other with friendly eyes,' `Anuruddha, how do you abide united like milk and water, friendly, without a dispute seeing each other with friendly eyes?' `Venerable sir, this thought occurs to me It is gain for me that I live with such co-associates in the holy life. So I abide with bodily actions of loving kindness towards these venerable ones openly and secretly. With verbal actions of loving-kindness towards these venerable ones openly and secretly. With mental actions of loving kindness towards these venerable ones openly and secretly Sometimes it occurs to me what if I discard my thoughts and concede to the thoughts of these venerable ones. So I discard my thoughts and concede to the thoughts of these venerable ones. Venerable sir, we are various in bodies, and one in mind.”

Venerable Nandiyānd venerable Kimbila too said to the Blessed One. `Venerable sir, this thought occurs to me. It is gain for me, that I live with such co-associates in the holy life. So I abide, with bodily actions of loving kindness towards these venerable ones openly and secretly.

With verbal actions of loving kindness openly and secretly. With mental actions of loving kindness openly and secretly Sometimes it occurs to me, what if I discard my thoughts and concede to the thoughts of these venerable ones. So I discard my thoughts and concede to the thoughts of these venerable ones. Venerable sir, we are various in bodies and single in mind ...

Venerable sir, in this manner we abide united like milk and water, friendly, without a dispute, seeing each other with friendly eyes.

Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu.

During the afternoon, students engaged in meritorious activities, sitting and walking meditation. We watched an Orientation Talk from Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi where he talked about his experience with meditation over the years as a monk and how it was that he came to develop the practice of Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation (TWIM), which comes directly from instructions from the Buddha found in the Pali Canon.

Bhante explained that when he went back to study the original suttas, he noticed that the Buddha made reference to 'tranquilising', or 'relaxing' during meditation. Bhante realised that this was a significant step. Thus, the Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation (TWIM) method was developed. We will now share a teaching from Bhante Vimalaramsi and Sister Khema which provides further explanation of Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation and the 6R Practice.

## **What is Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation, TWIM for short?**

The Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation or TWIM is a very simple set of instructions for a daily life meditation extracted from the Pali Canon. It is based on the Four Steps of Right Effort and the relax step you learn here comes out of the tranquilization instructions found in the Anapanasati Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya.

The steps of Right Effort were designed by the Buddha so that you would learn to shift you're your general mind-states from unwholesome states to wholesome states. This helps us to begin to let go of quick reactions in our life and it helps you to begin responding more often instead. Mind then has more space to come up with creative peaceful solutions for living in this world.

The Steps of Right Effort are as follows:

1. **RECOGNIZE** any unwholesome mind-state in mind. This is any mind-state with tension and tightness in it.)
2. **RELEASE** mind's attention off of that thought, and **RELAX** any tension most often in the head and in the body.
3. Bring up a wholesome mind-state now (**RE-SMILE** as you **RETURN** mind's attention to whatever you were doing when you were pulled away.....
4. Keep the wholesome mind-state going... meaning, keep that smile going into whatever task you are doing and **REPEAT** this

cycle if you are pulled away again until mind learns to do this automatically.

This is TWIM:

RECOGNIZE >> RELEASE and RELAX >> RESMILE and RETURN >>  
REPEAT

So, the practice of Right Effort is a neat little meditation that can become a part of your everyday life. It also teaches us a couple of lessons as we practice it.

***“What you think and ponder on; that becomes the inclination of your mind!”***

***And***

***“What you do in the present moment, dictates what happens in the future!”***

This meditation is a living meditation which means that wherever you go, whatever is going on, whatever you are doing, you can incorporate this meditation into your life.

This concludes the explanation of TWIM, Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation, and the 6R practice of Recognise, Release, Relax, Re-smile Return and Repeat.

After watching Bhante Vimalaramsi's Dhamma talk on the first evening, we had a live Question and Answer session on WhatsApp with Venerable Sister Khema, where she was able to elaborate further on the teachings we had received during the day and answer some questions from the students. Sister Khema asked that each of us send a report, answering a series of 5 questions each day, and email it to her personally. This would allow her to track our individual practice and she was able to provide us with personalised feedback and advice. This daily communication with the Venerable was extremely helpful for each student and we were able to apply her advice and make improvements each day throughout the course.

At the start of the second day of our Five Day Christmas Bhavana Retreat, once we completed the preliminaries, students sat in meditation on Loving Kindness for 30 minutes. We followed the instructions of sending metta to oneself for 10 minutes, then to a spiritual friend for 20 minutes.

Any time a distraction came up, we were instructed to apply the 6R's of recognising that our mind had been pulled away from our object of meditation, the feeling of loving kindness; release our attention from that thought; relax the tension in the head or body by letting go; then re-smile to lighten the mind and return to the object of meditation. This was to be repeated any time our attention was pulled away from the object. With practice, Sister Khema advised that we should be able to perform the 6R's in one sweeping motion, like a dance, and it would eventually become automatic.

Between each session of sitting meditation, we were instructed to do some walking meditation, at least 15 minutes at a time. Unlike the very slow walking meditation that our students are accustomed to, Bhante Vimalaramsi instructed us to walk at a pace that gets our circulation going. There is a purpose for slow walking meditation, however with Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation method, we are asked to bring our practice of radiating loving kindness to our spiritual friend off the meditation cushion and into our everyday life; walking meditation is an opportunity to practice this. It also ensures that we keep our bodies and minds healthy, and brisk walking will give us energy for our sitting meditation.

In the afternoon on Day 2, we listened to a Dhamma talk by Bhante Vimalaramsi where he provided an exposition of a summary of the Uddesa-Vibhanga Sutta from Majjhima Nikaya 138. This sutta has Maha Kaccana explain what the Buddha meant by 'Material Form is the Cause'. We will now read a translation of this sutta by Thanissaro Bhikkhu from the website [www.dhammadata.org](http://www.dhammadata.org).

### Uddesa-Vibhanga Sutta

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. There he addressed the monks: "Monks!"

"Yes, lord," the monks replied.

The Blessed One said: "Monks, I will teach you a statement & its analysis. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," the monks responded.

The Blessed One said this: "A monk should investigate in such a way that, his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned, he would from lack of clinging/sustenance be unagitated. When — his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned — from lack of clinging/sustenance he would be unagitated, there is no seed for the conditions of future birth, aging, death, or stress."

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said it, the One Well-gone got up from his seat and went into his dwelling.

Then, not long after the Blessed One had left, this thought occurred to the monks: "This brief statement the Blessed One has made, after which he went into his dwelling without analyzing the detailed meaning — i.e., 'A monk should investigate in such a way that, his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned, he would from lack of clinging/sustenance be unagitated. When — his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned — from lack of clinging/sustenance he would be unagitated, there is no seed for the conditions of future birth, aging, death, or stress': now who might analyze the unanalyzed detailed meaning of this brief statement?" Then the thought occurred to them, "Ven. MahaKaccana is praised by the Teacher and esteemed by his knowledgeable companions in the holy life. He is capable of analyzing the unanalyzed detailed meaning of this brief statement. Suppose we were to go to him and, on arrival, question him about this matter."

So the monks went to Ven. MahaKaccana and, on arrival exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, they sat to one side. As they were standing there, they [told him what had happened, and added,] "Analyze the meaning, Ven. MahaKaccana!"



[He replied:] "Friends, it's as if a man needing heartwood, looking for heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood — passing over the root & trunk of a standing tree possessing heartwood — were to imagine that heartwood should be looked for among its branches & leaves. So it is with you, who — having bypassed the Blessed One when you were face to face with him, the Teacher — imagine that I should be asked about this matter. For knowing, the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees. He is the Eye, he is Knowledge, he is Dhamma, he is Brahma. He is the speaker, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the giver of the Deathless, the lord of the Dhamma, the Tathagata. That was the time when you should have questioned him about this matter. However he answered, that was how you should have remembered it."

"Yes, friend Kaccana: knowing, the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees. He is the Eye, he is Knowledge, he is Dhamma, he is Brahma. He is the speaker, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the giver of the Deathless, the lord of the Dhamma, the Tathagata. That was the time when we should have questioned him about this matter. However he answered, that was how we should have remembered it. But you are praised by the Teacher and esteemed by your knowledgeable companions in the holy life. You are capable of analyzing the unanalyzed detailed meaning of this brief statement. Analyze the meaning, Ven. MahaKaccana without making it difficult!"

"In that case, my friends, listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, friend," the monks responded.

Ven. MahaKaccana said this: "Friends, concerning the brief statement the Blessed One made, after which he entered his dwelling without analyzing the detailed meaning — i.e., 'A monk should investigate in such a way that, his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned, he would from lack of

clinging/sustenance be unagitated. When — his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned — from lack of clinging/sustenance he would be unagitated, there is no seed for the conditions of future birth, aging, death, or stress' — I understand the detailed meaning to be this:

"How is consciousness said to be scattered & diffused? There is the case where a form is seen with the eye, and consciousness follows the drift of (lit.: 'flows after') the theme of the form, is tied to the attraction of the theme of the form, is chained to the attraction of the theme of the form, is fettered & joined to the attraction of the theme of the form: Consciousness is said to be externally scattered & diffused.

"There is the case where a sound is heard with the ear... an aroma is smelled with the nose... a flavour is tasted with the tongue... a tactile sensation is felt with the body... an idea is cognized with the intellect, and consciousness follows the drift of the theme of the idea, is tied to the attraction of the theme of the idea, is chained to the attraction of the theme of the idea, is fettered & joined to the attraction of the theme of the idea: Consciousness is said to be externally scattered & diffused.

"And how is consciousness said not to be externally scattered & diffused? There is the case where a form is seen with the eye, and consciousness does not follow the drift of the theme of the form, is not tied to... chained to... fettered, or joined to the attraction of the theme of the form: Consciousness is said not to be externally scattered & diffused.

"There is the case where a sound is heard with the ear... an aroma is smelled with the nose... a flavour is tasted with the tongue... a tactile sensation is felt with the body... an idea is cognized with the intellect, and consciousness does not follow the drift of the theme of the idea, is

not tied to... chained to... fettered, or joined to the attraction of the theme of the idea: Consciousness is said not to be externally scattered & diffused.

"And how is the mind said to be internally positioned? There is the case where a monk, quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful (mental) qualities, enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation.

His consciousness follows the drift of the rapture & pleasure born of withdrawal, is tied to... chained... fettered, & joined to the attraction of the rapture & pleasure born of withdrawal. '

Or further, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance.

His consciousness follows the drift of the rapture & pleasure born of composure, is tied to... chained... fettered, & joined to the attraction of the rapture & pleasure born of composure.

Or further, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.'

His consciousness follows the drift of the equanimity & pleasure, is tied to... chained... fettered, & joined to the attraction of the equanimity & pleasure. Or further, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — he enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

His consciousness follows the drift of the neither pleasure nor pain, is

tied to... chained to... fettered, & joined to the attraction of the neither pleasure nor pain: The mind is said to be internally positioned.

"And how is the mind said not to be internally positioned? There is the case where a monk, quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskilful (mental) qualities, enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation.

His consciousness does not follow the drift of the rapture & pleasure born of withdrawal, is not tied to... chained to... fettered, or joined to the attraction of the rapture & pleasure born of withdrawal.

Or further, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance.

His consciousness does not follow the drift of the rapture & pleasure born of composure, is not tied to... chained... fettered, or joined to the attraction of the rapture & pleasure born of composure.

Or further, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.'

His consciousness does not follow the drift of the equanimity & pleasure, is not tied to... chained... fettered, or joined to the attraction of the equanimity & pleasure.

Or further, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — he enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

His consciousness does not follow the drift of the neither pleasure nor

pain, is not tied to... chained to... fettered, or joined to the attraction of the neither pleasure nor pain: The mind is said to be not internally positioned.

"And how is agitation caused by clinging/sustenance? There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person — who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for men of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma — assumes form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form. His form changes & is unstable. Because of the change & instability of form, his consciousness alters in accordance with the change in form. With the agitations born from the alteration in accordance with the change in form and coming from the co-arising of (unskillful mental) qualities, his mind stays consumed. And because of the consumption of awareness, he feels fearful, threatened, & solicitous.

"He assumes feeling to be the self...

"He assumes perception to be the self...

"He assumes (mental) fabrications to be the self...

"He assumes consciousness to be the self, of the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. His consciousness changes & is unstable. Because of the change & instability of consciousness, his consciousness alters in accordance with the change in consciousness. With the agitations born from the alteration in accordance with the change in consciousness and coming from the co-arising of (unskillful mental) qualities, his mind stays consumed. And because of the consumption of awareness, he feels fearful, threatened, & solicitous.

"This, friends, is how agitation is caused by clinging/sustenance.

"And how is non-agitation caused by lack of clinging/ sustenance?"

There is the case where an instructed disciple of the noble ones — who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma — doesn't assume form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form.

His form changes & is unstable, but his consciousness doesn't — because of the change & instability of form — alter in accordance with the change in form.

His mind is not consumed with any agitations born from an alteration in accordance with the change in form or coming from the co-arising of (unskillful mental) qualities. And because his awareness is not consumed, he feels neither fearful, threatened, nor solicitous.

"He doesn't assume feeling to be the self...

"He doesn't assume perception to be the self...

"He doesn't assume fabrications to be the self...

"He doesn't assume consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness.

His consciousness changes & is unstable, but his consciousness doesn't — because of the change & instability of consciousness — alter in accordance with the change in consciousness.

His mind is not consumed with any agitations born from an alteration in accordance with the change in consciousness or coming from the co-arising of (unskillful mental) qualities. And because his awareness is not consumed, he feels neither fearful, threatened, nor solicitous.

"This, friends, is how non-agitation is caused by lack of clinging/sustenance.

"So, concerning the brief statement the Blessed One made, after which he entered his dwelling without analyzing the detailed meaning — i.e., 'A monk should investigate in such a way that, his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned, he would from lack of clinging/sustenance be unagitated.

When — his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned — from lack of clinging/ sustenance he would be unagitated, there is no seed for the conditions of future birth, aging, death, or stress' — this is how I understand the detailed meaning.

Now, friends, if you wish, having gone to the Blessed One, question him about this matter. However he answers is how you should remember it."

Then the monks, delighting in & approving of Ven. MahaKaccayana's words, got up from their seats and went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to him, they sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they [told him what had happened after he had gone into his dwelling, and ended by saying,] "Then Ven. MahaKaccayana analyzed the meaning using these words, these statements, these phrases."

"MahaKaccayana is wise, monks. He is a person of great discernment. If you had asked me about this matter, I too would have answered in the same way he did. That is its meaning, and that is how you should remember it."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu.

Please tune in to the Buddhist Hour next week when we will share Part 3 of the teachings we received during our recent Christmas Bhavana Retreat.

Today's script was compiled by Anita Carter, Frank Carter and Claire Ransome from teachings we received from Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi and Venerable Sister Khanti Khema.

Reference for Majjhima Nikaya Majjhima Nikaya 128 10 - 12

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Reference for Uddesa-Vibhanga Sutta:

"Uddesa-vibhanga Sutta: An Analysis of the Statement" (MN 138), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.138.than.html> .