

ASHIN TEJANIYA

MORNING DHAMMA TALKS

JULY 2009

NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO

ARAHATO

SAMMA SAMBUDDHASSA

*Homage to Him, the Blessed One,
the Worthy One,
the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One*

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Ashin Tejaniya
Myanmar

DEAR READER

This book contains two of Ashin Tejaniya's morning dhamma talks given in Burmese at the Shwe Oo Min Dhamma Sukha Tawya Meditation Center in Yangon in July 2009.

We have tried to translate and express Ashin Tejaniya's dhamma discourses as accurately as possible. Please excuse any errors in the translation. If we have made any mistakes, or if you have any suggestions for improvement, please contact us so we may make changes in subsequent editions.

Laura Zan
Translator & Editor

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From "Don't Look Down on the Defilements: They Will Laugh at You":

When you read this book, please do not cling to dictionary definitions. For example, for our purposes, the words 'watching,' 'observing,' 'being mindful,' 'paying attention' and 'being aware' are used interchangeably. 'Awareness' and 'mindfulness' also mean the same. 'Understanding,' 'realization,' 'insight,' and 'wisdom' are used to express something similar, and the word 'object' is often used to mean 'experience.' 'Sensations' refers to bodily sensations and 'feelings' to mental feelings.

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Don't be anxious about your practice. Keep your mind as calm and relaxed as you are able. Do not be too tense or too lax. You need to be able to adjust the mind. Do not be overzealous and put in too much effort or be disinterested and put in too little effort. Just keep adjusting your effort as needed. The intelligent mind is able to adjust itself while meditating.

Set your mind so as not to desire anything, not even for something to happen. On the other hand, if there is no wanting, nothing happens. And if there is too much wanting, that doesn't work either. What should we do? What is too much and what may be too little? You just need to be interested in the mind.

Sometimes also, lobha may be behind all this fine-tuning. If you find that you are feeling drowsy even with faith and confidence (*saddhā*) in the mind, then the mind is still weak. The mind is weak because there is a lot of wanting and expectations in the mind.

So just be calm and relaxed. Rather than thinking "I'm practising. I'm putting in effort," just be satisfied with knowing what is happening right now: "I will work just to know." Just do what needs to be done. Let whatever happens, happen. It is important to have the attitude and understanding that "I will get as much out of practice as the amount of work I put into practice."

What can you know? It is very simple. You can know only as much as you are able. The mind that is meditating should be relaxed, calm and natural. There is no need to put in so much energy or make an effort to focus the mind. View everything that is happening in the body and the mind as happening according to nature. This is all *dhamma*, nature at work.

You are not making anything arise or disappear through aversion. No matter what is happening, you are not to forget. That is all. Objects are just objects. They are neither good nor bad. Nature is just nature.

Do not perceive objects as being good or bad.

Only when you have this correct attitude should you strive to be aware continuously.

Do not do anything with expectations (*lobha*) in your practice. Do not work with aversion to certain experiences. Be aware of all that is arising and all that is passing away. Work very simply to remind yourself to be aware. If you see, just be aware that you are seeing. That is enough. It is important to know that you are aware for longer and longer periods of time.

What is happening in the body? There are the six sense doors: the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. There are six kinds of objects occurring at the six sense doors. Sights are objects of knowing. Sounds are objects of knowing, etcetera.

Seeing and hearing are not happening outside the body. They are all happening in the body, *khandha*. You do not need to go looking for objects. You just need to wait and watch. The

mind sees whatever arises in the mind. There is no need to follow after objects. When you see, you see; when you know, you know. That is all. It is not necessary to follow or focus on any object. Yogis who practice by following objects often ask what to note next. The yogi may ask, "What else should I look for?" Another yogi who practices by waiting and watching does not follow the objects. One point to consider: the yogi who waits and watches needs to use some intelligence. You must know what an object is. An object is that which is known.

When the mind is still, it is still. When it is restless, it is restless. How does the mind know that? Because these objects of stillness and restlessness are being known.

One must understand the object for what it is. What you hear is an object. It is something that is to be known. Silence is also an object of knowing. You are aware of this because it is known.

Thoughts are objects to be known just as the absence of thoughts is also an object to be known. What's the difference? Is it good to have a lot of thoughts? Is it bad? Is it good to have no thoughts? Is that bad? No. Having few thoughts is not good or bad. Objects are just objects. When you consider them as good or bad, you will get confused in your practice and get caught up in likes and dislikes.

Practice with a calm and relaxed mind, comfortably, with good faith and with intelligence. Put aside expectations and perceptions for a while. In fact, if there is awareness, wisdom will surely follow. But if awareness is too focused, wisdom doesn't have a chance to arise.

Keep it simple! It's good if there is knowing. It is not good if there is no knowing.

There is a Burmese saying: "*Ignorance is worse than being deprived.*" But far worse than being ignorant is not wanting to know!

Do you want to know? Do you have a mind to know? Please check yourselves. The fact that you have come to practice means that you do want to know. You are meditating because you wish to know the truth, to discover reality. The key reason for being here is to give you the time to become aware of the mind and body. You have come here to practice observing the mind-body connection.

When there is a wish to know, the mind has energy. Remember that this is not done only through sitting. It is not only when you sit to meditate that there is awareness; awareness must be present at all times, in all activities. Only then will the momentum develop. This momentum of awareness must be put to use in activities other than sitting.

You are practicing here to learn to watch your body and mind. Momentum and insights will grow as much as you are skilful and can know. Which is more beneficial- to be aware or to lack awareness? ...to develop wisdom or not to develop wisdom? You can investigate and analyze these questions for yourself.

You must also practice to have the right attitude every time you come in contact with an object. How should you view these objects? If you develop the right view, then that's all right. Just

watch with the right view. If your attitude is not yet correct, then you have to work on it. You can see that everything that is happening is all *dhamma* nature and all are objects. They all follow the laws of nature.

Let whatever happens happen. The things that are happening are just nature. Just think, "They have nothing to do with me." Those who understand the law of nature understand its principles. To understand the laws very clearly is wisdom. One who understands the law understands nature.

When there is craving in the heart, wisdom cannot arise. When you watch with craving, only more craving will come in. When the mind with wisdom can see craving arising, that in itself is wisdom.

It's akin to asking the blind to see. No matter how you implore a blind person to see, s/he will not be able to. Likewise, if we ask a person to look at the *paramatta* nature (ultimate reality) of phenomena, s/he will not be able realize it. If one has not developed wisdom, one cannot understand the principles of ultimate reality yet. Only the wise, discerning mind can understand the nature of ultimate reality.

Wisdom is not partial to seeing one thing over another. Wisdom has no preference for seeing chosen things. Without the desire to see specific things, all you have to do is simply keep your eyes open, and you can be aware. It is obvious that you know that you are seeing.

The desire to see certain things stems from craving. Now you will understand how wisdom works.

The knowing mind is most important. Awareness must always be present. That is how the mind should always work. You must observe whether the mind is working or not. You must watch the mind constantly to see whether awareness is present. Ask yourself, "What does the mind know?"

Sights and sounds are always happening. Because the mind and object engage according to their nature, seeing and hearing happen. You do not hear something because you want to. You do not see because you want to. Do not think that these sensory experiences are happening because of your desire for them. There is nothing happening due to your wishes; everything is happening due to conditions, i.e. the engagement of mind and objects.

So should you be following and watching these engagements of mind and object? Or watch what the mind is attracted to? Are you aware of just what you want to be aware of, or what is *truly* happening? Things happen according to their nature; awareness just waits and watches. If there is no craving in the mind, you will just see things as they are. Craving goes around looking for something to like. Is there something to like in the object? Does craving with the nature of liking desire this object? Craving has the nature of liking and grasping. Because craving has this nature, you will think that you like the object. *Moha* (delusion) makes you think it is good; you will like the object and there is no stopping *samsara*. Additionally, delusion makes

you think you like the object and more desire develops. Think about this. There is nothing to be liked about this object.

There is nothing that you can obtain because you like it. It appears to us due to chance or conditions. Whatever is happening is due to nature; you just wait and objectively watch this engagement of mind and object. If craving is absent, you will just see what is to be seen.

There is nothing happening that we need to be attracted to or repulsed by. There only needs to be knowing. If the attitude of mind and understanding are correct, when awareness is continuous, then calmness, and stability of the mind (*samādhi*) will develop.

When there is continuous awareness in meditation, there is peace. What is unique about this? When there is continuous awareness, when the attitude or view is correct, stability of mind arises and there is peace. But because you think this is desirable, it generates craving. When the mind thinks something is desirable, more craving is generated. Should there be desire for a peaceful mind state? Should there be aversion to agitation?

Because there is a cause, there is an effect. Because there is a condition for an encounter, there is an encounter.

There is craving and attachment for comfort and happiness, there is also aversion to agitation and unhappiness. Happiness or discomfort are all feelings (*vedanā*). The experience is only to be experienced. The object is only an object. Whether good or bad, feelings are just feelings. Experiences are just experiences. Objects are just objects. Knowing this the wise mind will break the grip of craving and desire for good experiences.

Only when the mind does not perceive experiences as pleasing, *then* it will understand the first noble truth of *dukkha*. As long as the mind perceives experiences as good, then the noble truth of *dukkha* is still far, far away. Such a mind does not understand the noble truths yet.

People think that they see the truth of *dukkha* only when they experience suffering. If that is so, how will they be able to understand that experiencing the calm of *samādhi*, the moments of bliss or delight (*pīti*), or tranquility (*passaddhi*) are also *dukkha*? So long as *moha* is present and sees these experiences as good, the understanding of the noble truth of *dukkha* cannot arise.

Because people listen with defilements (*kilesa*) when they hear about the noble truth of *dukkha*, they think it is about experiencing suffering.

Insight (*vipassanā*) wisdom cannot be comprehended simply through intellectual thinking. The ordinary mind cannot think through intellectually and bring about insight. If you can still think about it, think it through, that is not insight / *vipassanā* wisdom. *Vipassanā ñāna* (insight knowledge) is something that you have never thought about, something that cannot be conceptualized through images, a new knowing and insight into the principles of nature. Only when wisdom arises, will you gain insights.

Whatever is occurring, whatever is happening is *dukkha*. If you look on this with aversion, you will become depressed. The noble truth of *dukkha* is only discerned by the wise mind. This is totally opposite of the kind of *dukkha* one *feels*. The understanding of the truth of *dukkha* is wisdom. With such understanding, there is strength, energy, freedom, and detachment in the mind. It is devoid of craving and defilements. Whereas the experience of *dukkha* is exhausting and produces suffering, the true realization of *dukkha* is free from attachment and free of defilements.

Lobha is always present. For yogis too, you can see that *lobha* comes in and creates trouble in practice. Just try to pay attention to this. As long as you do not understand *lobha*'s machinations, you will be at its mercy. *Lobha* wants. *Lobha* craves. You cannot fully understand *lobha* from another person's experience. When you notice *lobha* arising, study it intently. How are you meditating under *lobha*'s influence? How does *lobha* think? Only through your very own experience of *lobha* in all its workings, in all its aspects, will you really understand *lobha*.

Lobha's nature is wanting, craving and not being satisfied with the current condition. The nature of *lobha* is to exaggerate things. Its nature is highly varied: it cannot let go, cannot discard, thinks there is too little, never thinks there is enough, never feels satisfied, and cannot be content.

To be contented is wholesome, to be discontented is *lobha*. If you are contented with the results of your practice, then you will have *samādhi*. If you practice as much as possible and are content with the results, then *samādhi* will arise. You should do as much as you can, and be satisfied with the results. If there is dissatisfaction or discontentment with the results of your practice, that is the working of *lobha*.

Practise as much as you can. You have practiced this much so far. You will get the result commensurate with what you put into your practice. Be satisfied with what you get. Then you can say that there is *samādhi* and wisdom.

If there is one wholesome mind after another wholesome mind and they are continuous, that is *kusala*, wholesome skilful action. *Samādhi* will not develop if wholesome minds are followed by unwholesome minds. Without awareness or *samādhi*, without wisdom—defilements have opportunities to arise. When the previous minds are wholesome and the present mind is wholesome, and these are further followed by wholesome minds—and there is continuity of awareness—that's what we call *samādhi*.

To be aware and interested is good. Remember, you are not striving or yearning for anything. Work with balance, calm, and continuity. There is no need to focus hard. When effort is good, neither too relaxed, nor too tired from exertion, neither the mind nor the body should become tired.

You need to be interested and happy with this work you are doing. This work is for life. It never gets boring. Any work that involves defilements will one day grow old and dull; but the work of knowing is never dull. Knowing with wisdom, knowing reality does not become monotonous nor

uninteresting. It is always new and fresh. You will not get tired of knowing, and will never feel like it is enough. Even when you know what is familiar, the knowledge only becomes clearer. Wisdom develops deeper and deeper and you become engrossed. You become energized. Your understanding expands and your field of comprehension expands.

There is no end to knowing, as it never gets full nor is it ever complete. There is no such thing as, "I know, this is enough." You start to see multiple facets of something—the other side as well as your own. You see two, four sides: worldly and ultimate reality (*loka* and *lokuttara*), mind and object, cause and effect, the other's side and your side.

One who focuses has a narrow field of vision. It is important for you to practice with care, respect and interest. Practice with a balanced mind.

JULY 29, 2009

The meditating mind must be a dhamma mind. Be calm, comfortable and relaxed, filled with peace, faith and intelligence. That is how you should be practicing.

In reality, if there is awareness, wisdom will arise. However, if the awareness is too focused, then wisdom does not have a chance to arise. That is why you should not force, focus, control, or restrict the mind. Have no expectations about your meditation. Do not be discontented with your meditation. Be aware of all that is happening, all that is passing away. Do not try to make anything disappear. Do not forget.

Be aware. Ask yourself, "What is the mind doing?" Keep checking yourself. Keep in mind that you have to keep checking the mind. Is it aware? Does it know? What does it know? How much can it know?

The mind must be alert. When we say alert, we mean that you must be alert to knowing objects. Becoming alert means knowing when hearing happens, when contact between a sense object and a sense door occurs. The mind is alert when mind knows the object as contact happens.

There is the dhamma we must *have* and the dhamma we must *know*. When we refer to the dhamma we must *have*, we mean awareness (*sati*), calmness, stillness of the mind (*samādhī*), 'wisdom' energy (*virīya*), faith (*saddhā*), and wisdom (*paññā*). These are the five spiritual faculties (*indriya*). The dhamma we must *know* is what is happening in the mind and body. These are things that must be known. Meditation is the practice of cultivating and developing the dhamma that we do not already have, to come to know what we do not already know.

We meditate to develop mindfulness and awareness, calmness, energy, faith and wisdom that are not yet present in the mind. The stronger these five spiritual faculties become, the weaker the defilements become.

When *sati* is present, defilements become weak.
When *samādhī* is present, defilements become weak.
When *virīya* is present, defilements become weak.
When *saddhā* is present, defilements become weak.
When *paññā* is present, defilements become weak.

What is important is that we meditate to develop and cultivate this weak, wholesome (*kusala*) mind so that it grows and becomes stronger and stronger.

We are not looking for anything specific, seeking unique objects or wondrous experiences. This is not meditation. Wisdom does not have the desire for certain things to happen.

Saddhā and *virīya* have the wish to keep up the practice. *Saddhā* is the wanting to continue meditation. *Virīya* is the wish to practice, to put in effort continuously. Wishing for certain things to happen is the work of *lobha*. If you are satisfied with the object that you want to see, that is

lobha. Dissatisfaction when you get an object other than what you want to see is *dosa* (aversion). Craving and aversion are defilements.

Please do not choose objects. All objects are dhamma nature, dhamma phenomena. You cannot hold onto any object with *lobha*. Do not perceive object or experience as good or bad. No object or experience is better than any other. Objects are just that: objects. They are to be known—that is all.

Do not look for objects or experiences that you believe to be good. You are not meditating to get good experiences. Know that there is thinking if there is thinking. Experiencing heat, one knows that it is heat. What are they? All are just phenomena or objects. You are meditating to be better in *sati*, in *samādhi*, in *virīya*, in *saddhā*, and in *paññā*.

The search for good experiences comes at the bidding of *lobha*.

Naturally, if the wholesome mind is continuous, there will be peace. It is important that the meditating mind is a wholesome mind, or working towards wholesomeness. *Sati* is kusala, *samādhi* is kusala, *virīya* is kusala, *paññā* is kusala. Knowing what is right is called right view (*sammā-ditthi*). Out of all the wholesome deeds, developing wholesome minds (meditation) is the highest one.

It is said that among all the tastes, the best is the taste of dhamma. If you have had the taste of dhamma, it is not referring to the feeling of peace. It refers to the taste of knowing, the taste of understanding. Mostly people enjoy [the taste of] good feelings. You need to taste the flavor of knowing, of awareness, and of understanding.

Should you take delight in having a "good [meditation] sitting" or in having awareness? Remember, it is not about enjoying the results but about enjoying the practice. It's important to enjoy the practice. When you are happy to meditate and are interested in it, when you see that you become invigorated from the practice, then you will want to continue.

However, if you find that as you practice you become tired or exhausted instead of energized, then of course you will slack off.

Only when you see and understand the effects of your practice, then you will want to work on the causes. You will want to pay attention to the causes. If the causes are good, the effects will also be good. If you cannot sit in one way, you can change. Do not force yourself to sit in one position.

Let whatever is happening, happen. Just accept it as true. But do not forget what is happening. Do not forget knowing; investigate and learn. What is happening? Why is it happening? You should not be drowsy in meditation. If you have been sitting there for some time and the mind becomes calmer, it is possible that you may become sleepy. Do not let that happen. The knowing must be certain. There is either the work of knowing or the work of feeling. Either you know with wisdom and awareness, or you experience with *lobha* or *dosa*. You may not know that *lobha* is experiencing this drowsiness, but if it is so, your energy will drop.

GLOSSARY OF SELECTED PĀLI TERMS

<i>akusala</i> (also see <i>kusala</i>)	kammically unwholesome, unskillful, unprofitable <i>anatta</i> (also see <i>atta</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) not-self, non-ego, impersonality, there is no abiding substance (or an ego, a self, or a soul), there is no self-existing entity b) nothing can arise on its own or from a single cause, and nothing can exist or move on its own c) one of the three universal characteristics of existence (see <i>dukkha</i> and <i>anicca</i>), understanding <i>anattā</i> is a liberating insight (<i>paññā</i>)
<i>anicca</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) impermanence, all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, everything that comes into existence changes and passes away b) one of the three universal characteristics of existence (see <i>dukkha</i> and <i>anattā</i>), understanding <i>anicca</i> is a liberating insight (<i>paññā</i>)
<i>cetasika</i>	mental factor (this refers to the 52 mental factors listed in the <i>abhidhamma</i> . Some are kammically neutral, some kammically wholesome, some kammically unwholesome)
<i>chanda</i>	Wholesome intention, aspiration, zeal
<i>citta</i>	mind
<i>dāna</i>	giving, offering, generosity
<i>dhamma</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 'natural law', 'nature' b) object, thing, phenomena c) Buddhist doctrine
<i>micchā ditthi</i> <i>sammā ditthi</i>	(wrong view) / (right view)
<i>ditthi</i>	view, belief, speculative opinion micchā ditthi (wrong view) / sammā ditthi (right view)
<i>dosa</i>	hatred, anger, any kind of aversion or disliking (including sadness, fear, resistance, etc.)
<i>dukkha</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) unsatisfactoriness, pain, suffering b) the suffering in change c) the unsatisfactory nature of all existence, of all conditioned phenomena d) one of the three universal characteristics of existence (see <i>anicca</i> and <i>anatta</i>), understanding <i>dukkha</i> is a liberating insight (<i>paññā</i>)
<i>indriya</i>	the 5 spiritual faculties: <i>saddhā</i> , <i>virīya</i> , <i>sati</i> , <i>samādhi</i> , and <i>paññā</i>
<i>kamma</i>	volitional action (of body, speech, mind)
<i>khandha</i>	5 aggregates or categories: <i>rūpa</i> , <i>vedanā</i> , <i>saññā</i> , <i>sankhāra</i> , <i>viññāna</i>
<i>kilesa</i>	defilements, unwholesome qualities of the mind, any manifestation

	of greed, anger, and delusion (see <i>lobha</i> , <i>dosa</i> , and <i>moha</i>)
<i>kusala</i> (also see <i>akusala</i>)	kammically wholesome, skilful, profitable
<i>lobha</i>	greed, any kind of craving or liking (synonym for <i>tanhā</i>)
<i>mettā</i>	loving-kindness, selfless love, unconditional love
<i>moha</i>	delusion, ignorance, not understanding, not seeing reality (synonym for <i>avijjā</i>)
<i>nāma</i>	mental processes, mind (collective term for <i>vedanā</i> , <i>saññā</i> , <i>sankhāra</i> , and <i>viññāna</i>)
<i>ñāna</i>	synonym for <i>pāññā</i>
<i>Pāli</i>	name of the language in which the Buddhist scriptures (Pāli Canon) were first recorded
<i>paññā</i>	wisdom, understanding, knowledge, insight (synonym for <i>ñāna</i>)
<i>paññatti</i>	relative (conceptual) reality, concepts
<i>paramattha</i>	ultimate reality
<i>pāramī</i>	perfections
<i>paticca-samuppāda</i>	dependent origination, conditioned co-production, conditionality
<i>pīti</i>	joyful interest, enthusiasm, rapture
<i>rūpa</i>	physical processes, corporeality
<i>saddhā</i>	faith, confidence, trust
<i>samādhi</i>	calmness, stillness or stability of mind
<i>samsāra</i>	cycle of suffering
<i>sati</i>	mindfulness, awareness
<i>sīla</i>	morality, ethical conduct, virtue
<i>somanassa</i>	any kind of pleasant mental feeling, mentally pleasurable feeling
<i>sukha</i>	happiness
<i>tanhā</i>	synonym for <i>lobha</i>
<i>upekkhā</i>	a) neutral feelings and sensations (<i>vedanā</i>)
<i>vedanā</i>	pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feelings or sensations (see <i>somanassa</i> , <i>domanassa</i> , and <i>upekkhā</i>)
<i>vipassanā</i>	insight, insight meditation
<i>virīya</i>	energy, 'wisdom' energy, 'remindfulness'
<i>yoniso manasikāra</i>	a) right attitude, right frame of mind, right attention b) wise consideration