

Dhamma Bell

Issue 3 Summer 2008



Newsletter



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.

The Dhamma and Our Daily Life

IN THE TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA, there are so many discourses giving direction and guidance to laypeople about how to live calmly, peacefully, successfully, and free from danger. For example, Sayādawgyi U Silānanda said that he always asked newlyweds to remember three important things, which he called “three pillars of happy married life,” and which he based on the teaching of the Buddha. The first pillar is to be faithful to each other; the second is to have respect for each other’s culture, religion, likes and dislikes, temperament, and so on; and the third is to live within their income.

It is very easy to see how important the first pillar—to be faithful to each other—is for a couple. All of us have seen people being harmed, losing their business, ruining their life, etc. as a result of not being faithful to their partner. It is clear that being faithful to each other leads to confidence, which leads to trust. All of these—faithfulness, confidence, and trust—are like one road that has no separation or division. When we are on this faithfulness, confidence, and trust road, we know that it is leading us to a peaceful, happy, secure married life.

In order to be faithful to each other, we have to be mindful, be watchful, be aware of our desires, attachment, and greed (wanting more). When we train ourselves by just watching the in-breath and out-breath, we come to be aware of our breath; come to be aware of our body; come to be aware of our mind; come to be aware of our emotions. In short, we

become aware of mind and body. The stronger our awareness is, the more capable we are of restraining ourselves from acting unskillfully. Training ourselves to be mindful at all times in our daily life strengthens this capability.

About the second pillar, “to have respect for each other’s culture, religion, likes and dislikes, temperament, etc.,” Sayādawgyi U Silānanda said, “... when two people come to live together as husband and wife, there are bound to be differences in likes and dislikes. You should understand each other, have mutual respect and also show tolerance to each other... Even couples who belong to the same race, country, and religion can have differences. It is important that you be respectful of each other—religion, culture, and so on—and have understanding.” Sayādawgyi U Silānanda reminded his listeners that the Buddha said that tolerance or patience is “the best of practices.”

In order to develop this tolerance, this patience, we have to be watchful, mindful, aware of our thoughts and opinions all the time. Intolerance and lack of patience disturb family harmony. We all know that when family members—husbands, wives, and children—are patient with one another, tolerant of one another, they live more harmoniously and peacefully. The best way to achieve this is to keep our mindfulness at all times.

As for Sayādawgyi U Silānanda’s third pillar, “to live within our income,” I think that Sayadawgyi was very wise. Although he was a monk, he knew how important

this point is. The Buddha’s advice was “your income must be more than your expenditure.” In *What the Buddha Taught*, by Rahula Walpola, there is a story about the Buddha teaching a man named Dighajanu, who asked him how to live in a way conducive to happiness as a layman who had a family life with a wife and children. One of the things that the Buddha told him was to spend reasonably, in accordance with his income. He should neither hoard his wealth nor spend it extravagantly.

This is advice that is just as relevant today as it was 2,500 years ago. It reminds us to be content with what we have, and it points out the importance of living a simple life. If we are mindful, we will know how to distinguish between our wants and our real needs, and we will live within our income. We will take care of our family’s needs and will restrain ourselves from overspending on our family’s wants. If we just pay attention, we can avoid money-related problems and maintain a harmonious family life.

From Sayādawgyi U Silānanda’s advice to newlyweds and the Buddha’s advice to Dighajanu, we can see that the Dhamma doesn’t neglect our mundane daily life. If we want to be calm, peaceful, and well balanced in our daily life, we have to understand our own mind. The only way to achieve this is to be mindful at all times, day and night. As Sayādawgyi U Silānanda always reminded yogis at the end of his retreats, we should not leave our mindfulness at the gate when we leave the Tathāgata Meditation Center, but must take it with us into our daily life.

Sayadawgyi U Pandita’s 2008 Retreat

More than 60 yogis were present each day at Sayadawgyi U Pandita’s retreat, which ran from May 17 to June 29. For the comfort of yogis, two yogis were assigned to each room, not three like last year. Yogis practiced seriously, and the kitchen staff and all who were involved in the smooth running of the retreat worked hard. Sayadawgyi was in high spirits after his successful heart operation, saying that before the operation he was an old old man and now he is a young old man.



Upcoming Events at Tathāgata Meditation Center

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| July 20 | Vassa Ceremony |
| August 9–13 | Young Adult Retreat |
| August 14–17 | Children’s Retreat |
| September 8–21 | 14-day Special Retreat with Beelin Sayadaw |
| October 19 | Kathina Ceremony |
| November 1–22 | 22-day Special Retreat with Sayadaw U Jatila |

Concept and Reality

Paramattha and Paññatti

Sayādawgyi U Silānanda (August 10, 1989)

Transcribed and edited by Theikdi and Maureen O'Brien

ABOUT THREE DAYS BEFORE THIS RETREAT, a house right across the street from the monastery was demolished. Only one man did the job. He used a big machine, a tractor-like machine with iron beams like arms, and at the end of one set of arms there was something like a bucket with claws. He used that very powerful machine to demolish the house, and within an hour everything was flat on the ground. While I was watching the house being demolished—because, in fact, I was fascinated by the ability of the machine—the thought of concept and reality came to my mind. Before being demolished, there was a house. We were watching the house, and little by little its parts were broken down, first the roof, and the walls, then everything. When the demolition was finished there was no house, but the same components that had made up the house were still there, not at their right places, but flat on the ground. The components were still there, the components were still the same, but at one moment there was a house and at another moment the house was gone. In this case, what we call a house is actually non-existent apart from the parts: the roof, the walls, the doors, the windows, the floors, and other components. So what we call a house is just a concept,

created by humans for the convention of usage. In this analogy, what is real is the parts of the house and not the house itself. If we take this analogy further, the parts themselves are not real because they also are made up of very small particles of matter. And so the real things in the house are actually the smallest material particles: particles of wood, particles of metal, particles of paint, and particles of other materials. What is real in what we call a house is just the particles of matter and actually not the parts or not the house itself. But for convenience in communicating with each other we say, “It is a house” or “We live in a house.” We do not say we live in the certain thing that has a roof, walls, floors, doors, windows, and so on. We live in the conventional world, and so we have to use these terms to designate something.

So tonight I am going to talk about concept and reality. Another example may be the car. What is a car? Is the body a car? Is the steering wheel a car? Are the wheels a car? Are the seats a car? If we ask in this way or if we take the parts one by one, then we lose the designation “car.” There is no car apart from these component parts. According to reality, there is no car, just the parts. Again, the parts themselves are not reality; they are concepts, and the realities are the particles of matter that make up all the component parts. So we



say that a concept has no existence of its own. It is only in our mind. We see something and then we think of it and then we conjure up some concept and then we give it a name. For example, when we call the thing that has a roof, walls and so on a house, it has no existence of its own. Only the parts have their existence because when we take the parts one by one there is no house.

In the same way, concepts have no existence on their own. But after seeing the real thing in what we call concept, we think of something in our mind and then we come up with these concepts. But mind works so fast that we are not aware of that thinking period between the actual seeing and the forming of concepts. But the fact that there is a period of thinking can be inferred from some other examples, for example, reading a word. When you first learn to read as a child, you have to spell the word before you can read the word. Suppose the word is “house.” When you first learn to read, you say, “h-o-u-s-e,” and then you say the word “house.” When you get more and more familiar with the word, you don’t have to spell it out; you can just read the word right away. So if somebody were to ask you whether you have something like thinking between seeing the word

Continues next page

Projects at Tathāgata Meditation Center

The following projects have been completed since Issue 2 of *Dhamma Bell*:

- A second front gate—of metal—with a beautiful and artistic arch. The second gate makes getting in and out of TMC very safe.
- Remodeling of the women’s quarters
- A new dining area inside the dining hall for the *saṅgha*
- Two new cottages in the back
- New showers and toilets near the little Japanese garden
- A kitchen extension, with another sink, another stove, and a new refrigerator
- The publication by TMC of a new book, *Spiritual Cultivation*, a compilation of Sayādawgyi U Pandita’s Dhamma talks during his 44-day retreat in 2007. It was translated by Sayalay Ma Carudassini and edited by U Hla Myint. The book, which was distributed to yogis as a gift at the ending ceremony of Sayādawgyi U Pandita’s 2008 retreat that ended on June 29, is available for free distribution.

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 Wyllie.

Nhu Lai Thiên Viên
Tathāgata Meditation Center

1215 Lucretia Avenue
San Jose, CA 95122
(408) 294-4536 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.

and saying the word, you may say, “No. I just read it. I don’t have to think about anything.” But actually if there is not thinking about the word, you cannot read it. So there is this period of thinking between seeing and forming concepts. This period is so short that we are not aware of it. Also, because mind works so fast—it is said in our books that billions of thought moments can arise and disappear in the flickering of an eye or in a snap of the fingers—what we really see, see with our eyes, is the reality, and then we think that we see the concept with our eyes. So it is just an illusion that we see things; we see shapes and we see forms. If you look at your fingers, you think you see the fingers; you see a finger as a slender and long thing. But what we see with our eyes in reality are the visible data in what we call the finger, that is, the material particles that can be seen with our eyes. So what we see when we look at our finger is these visible material properties, very small visible material properties. After seeing them, we conjure up this shape or form in our mind and then we say we see a finger—a finger with the shape, with the form. So what we really see with the eyes is the visible data in the finger. But mind works so fast and we are so familiar with forming these concepts that we don’t even know that we see the real visible data and not the concept.

Let us take some more examples. Sometimes we see a line of ants from a distance. When we look from a distance, we think that there is a real line, a connected line of ants. But when we go closer to the line, we see that there are spaces or gaps between one ant and another. When we get still closer, we will see that there is no line of ants at all but just the individual ants, say, moving from one place to another. There is no line of ants at all, but we think that we see a line of ants.

Another example: a bag of sand. I don’t know what boxers use in this country to practice with—a sandbag or maybe they have some other devices. But in our country, they use a sandbag. So suppose there is a sandbag hanging from the ceiling, and if you make a hole in the sandbag and push the sandbag this way and that way, then you see that there is a line of or there is a rope of sand, moving from one place to another. In fact, there is no line of sand or no rope of sand, just the grains of sands in this place and in that place. And if you look closely enough as in the case of ants, you will see just the individual grains of sand, and that there is no line of sand or no rope of sand. So actually what we see is individual grains, but we think

that we see the continuous sand in the form or in the shape of a rope or a string.

And you have seen ropes. What are ropes made of? They are made of small fibers. Very small fibers are put together and placed, say, one after another, and then they become a rope. So what we are seeing when we look at a rope is not the rope but the individual fibers in it. People say seeing is believing, but actually seeing is deceiving. What we see is just deceiving. It’s not real.

A more convincing example could be a circle of fire. Somebody takes up a branch of fire, and makes a circle, and then we think that we see a circle of fire. But all of us know that there is no circle of fire, but the color of fire at different places on a certain line of the circle. But we still think that we see a ring of fire. That is because our mind works so fast that our mind

**“What is reality?
Reality is defined as
that which can be
known by ourselves
through experience.”**

takes the fire in different places because when the fire is, say, in the topmost place, we see it. And then it moves or it changes to another place, and we see it. And then our mind connects the fire in different places together, and then forms it into a circle. We say we see a circle of fire, but actually, we don’t see a circle of fire but we see fire at different places. We think we see the circle because our mind made up that circle. So in a circle of fire, what is real? Fire at different places: only that is real, and not the whole circle. The whole circle is the concept, the name we call a connected appearance of fire on a certain line. So what we apparently see is always concept and not reality. Reality has to be taken out of these concepts. In other words, we have to cut through the outer layers of concept so that we get into the inner core of reality. We can see concepts everywhere because we live in a world of concepts, a world of conventions. A book is a concept. A watch is a concept. A being is a concept. A man is a concept. A woman is a concept. Everything we see, everything we come across, everything we use is a concept.

What is real in a being is mind and matter—or the five aggregates. What is real in a man? Mind and matter. What is real in a woman? Mind and matter. But we do not see them as mind and matter.

If we are honest, only when we practice meditation will we see them as mind and matter. But when we get out of meditation, when we get back to daily life, we see them as man and woman. So we are always using concepts when we communicate with each other. We do not say, “I see a *nāma* and *rupa*,” but “I see a man” or “I see a woman,” “I see a being,” and so on. There are two kinds of concept: name concept and thing concept. Name concept means the names giving to things. In *Pāḷi*, they are called *paññatti* because they make something known. And the things denoted by these names or designations are called thing concepts because they are made known by the name concept. So with most things we have these two things: name concepts and thing concepts. A house, the name “house” or the word “house,” is a name concept. And the things denoted by word “house” or the thing that we call a house is a thing concept. The name or the word “man” is a name concept and the being that we call a man is a thing concept. We can understand that with most things, there are these two concepts: name concept and thing concept. They are all concepts, not reality.

According to Buddhism, concepts are accepted as a kind of truth. Although these have no existence of their own, although they are nonexistent according to ultimate reality, still they are recognized as a kind of truth—a conventional truth. Because we live in the conventional world and we cannot get away from conventions, we have to use the conventional words to communicate with each other. So the concept is accepted as a kind of truth: relative truth or conventional truth.

Since we live in a conventional world, we have to be careful when we apply the understanding of the ultimate reality, especially that understanding of ultimate reality that comes to us during the practice of *Vipassanā* meditation. Sometimes people go to extremes and would say we are the same as trees, we are the same as rocks, because we are composed of four elements, and rocks are also composed of four elements, so we are the same—something like that. But we must take care not to take it too far because we live in a conventional world and we cannot go against it. We should not take this understanding of ultimate reality too far. This is very important.

We should have this knowledge of what is concept and what is reality because when we practice *Vipassanā* meditation, we deal with what is real—ultimate reality. What is reality? Reality is defined as

that which can be known by ourselves through experience.

As we have seen, a house is not a reality, a car is not a reality, a man is not a reality, a woman is not a reality, but there are mind and matter in a man. Mind is composed of consciousness and mental states, and there are twenty-eight material properties, and each one of these can be really seen by ourselves through the practice of meditation. These realities are to be taken out of the concepts. So a man is a concept, but we take out of a man this reality, which is mind and matter, and so the reality which we call mind and matter is taken out of the concept.

According to the Buddha's teaching, there are four such realities. They are called ultimate realities because there is the other reality, conventional reality or apparent reality, which is concept. The four ultimate realities taught in Buddhist teaching are consciousness, mental state, matter, and *Nibbāna*. They are like the smallest particles of matter in material things. You may reduce an article to its smallest particles, and the last one you arrive at is what is similar to reality. When you see a being, you can reduce it to its component things, which are mind and matter, and then mind can be subdivided into consciousness and mental factors, and so on. Consciousness is one ultimate reality, mental factor is the second ultimate reality, matter is the third ultimate reality, and *Nibbāna* is the fourth ultimate reality. According to Buddhist teaching, only these four are real and all others are just concepts or illusions. And among these four kinds of ultimate reality, the first three have their own existence—or we say that consciousness really exists, mental factors really exist, and material properties really exist. They have real existence of their own. When we say that something exists, we mean that that thing has the three phases of existence: arising, continuing, and dissolution or dying. The continuing phase is also called the getting old phase because immediately after the moment of arising, there is old age. The first three of the ultimate realities have these three phases of existence. That is why they are called ultimate realities. If you concentrate on any one these—on your thoughts; on your consciousness; on the mental states, such as anger, attachment or concentration or wisdom—you will see that they just arise and then disappear. And between the arising and

disappearing stages, there is a stage of continuing.

However, concept is said to have no such phases of existence. We cannot say when a concept comes into being and when it disappears. In fact, a concept does not come into being and so it does not disappear, but it seems to come into being and it seems to disappear. Also, since what we call concept has no existence of its own, we cannot say that it exists or it arises at this stage and then it disappears at another stage. So concepts are said to have no existence of their own. They are just in the mind, but consciousness and mental factors have real existence. They can be experienced. They can be seen through contemplation and meditation. When we practice meditation we watch



our thoughts, so when we watch our thoughts, we are concentrating on the ultimate reality, which is consciousness. These thoughts come and go, come and go, and so they have an existence of their own. They come into being at some point and then they go out of existence—they disappear. In the same way, when you concentrate on attachment or anger, you are taking the ultimate reality as object. Anger does not last forever, attachment does not last forever. As you watch it, it just disappears, and so you have the personal experience of attachment or anger or other things arising, continuing, and disappearing. So they are called ultimate reality. And material properties also have their own existence. However, it is said in our books that material properties last seventeen times longer than a moment of consciousness. So seventeen moments of consciousness is one life span of material

properties. They are very swift and they come into being and then they disappear.

Among the twenty-eight material properties, there is only one material property that can be seen by our eyes. The other material properties are not seen with our eyes, but with our mind. That which can be seen with our eyes is called form; actually, that is the visible object, or visible data. For example, when we see a book, what we see is just these visible material properties in the book. In other words, what we see is color. (Actually, only color is visible to the eyes. The other material properties cannot be seen with our eyes.) In reality, there is no book apart from the visible data and other material properties. That is why we say a book, the concept of a book, has no existence of its own. Only

the visible data in the thing we call "book" have their own existence, existing for just seventeen thought moments. So in the practice of meditation we must try to see the ultimate reality, if we practice Vipassanā meditation I mean.

When we practice Vipassanā meditation, we try to see the ultimate reality rather than the concepts. The object of Vipassanā meditation is the ultimate reality: mind and matter or five aggregates. We can call them five aggregates or we can call them mind and matter: they are the same. In the beginning, we cannot avoid seeing or being aware of concepts. We have lived so long with these concepts, we have been dealing with these concepts for so many years that we cannot get out of these concepts altogether.

When we try to meditate, when we try to concentrate on the breath or on the movement of the abdomen, in the beginning, we are not able to see the pure wind element in the breath or the pure movement that also is the result of the wind element in the abdomen. We will be seeing both mixed up. However, our concentration gets better and better, we will be more able to see the ultimate reality, quite separate from the concepts. Only when we see the real, ultimate thing can we say that we are practicing Vipassanā meditation. If we do not see the ultimate reality, our Vipassanā is not yet true Vipassanā, although we can say that we are practicing Vipassanā meditation. But the true Vipassanā comes only when we see the ultimate reality.

That is why you can practice Samatha meditation or Vipassanā meditation on the breath. When you practice Samatha

Continues page 7

Bhikkhu U Dhammacakka

(1955-2008)

BHIKKHU U DHAMMACAKKA came to Tathāgata Meditation Center as a layman by way of the Internet: he searched on the Internet for a meditation center and found TMC. He volunteered in a variety of ways and later he became a member of the Board of Directors. He went to Burma two or three times to practice at *Hse Main Gone*, Sayādawgyi U Pandita’s meditation center. He practiced there two or three times as a temporary monk before he was fully ordained as a monk in 2003 by the late Sayādawgyi U Silānanda. After going forth into the homeless life, he went to practice at Hse Main Gone for a year or so and then came back to visit TMC. After his visit, he went back to Sayadawgyi U Pandita’s center for practice and studying, staying there for more than a year. After his visa expired, he went to a Māhasi Sayādaw meditation center in Thailand and then came back to TMC. He planned to go back to do more practice as a forest monk in Burma.

While Bhikkhu U Dhammacakka was in Burma and Thailand, he was aware of his weight loss: he lost about 40 pounds. Sometimes he felt an internal chill for no reason; this continued on and off. At first, he thought maybe he had contracted malaria, but he was using a mosquito net, so he dismissed that possibility. He came back to TMC in June 2007, and in July, he went to see a doctor, who he told about his weight loss and chills. After running some tests, the doctor gave Bhikkhu U Dhammacakka the results: he had a liver cancer for which there was no cure.

Bhikkhu U Dhammacakka went right into his meditation practice as much as he could. When someone asked him, “How are you?” He would answer, “It’s not so bad” or “Much better today.” According to those at TMC who were taking good care of him, his condition was up and down. No matter what, Bhikkhu U Dhammacakka kept up with his meditation. Although he was going through huge pain on and off for some time, he never showed frustration, agitation, fear, or anger. Sometimes he would say, “Today is not good.” In August 2007, he was under hospice care.

In the room that his caretakers moved him to during his final weeks, he had the bare essentials: his hospital bed, with two oxygen tanks at the foot of the bed; his yellow monk’s bag and a calendar hanging on the wall at the foot of the bed, with a clock running quietly on the wall above the calendar; a tall lamp at the head of the bed, on his left; a picture of the Buddha on the wall to the left of his bed and an intercom next to the picture of the Buddha; a small bookshelf with an air purifier next to it and a blue water pot next to the air purifier at the head of the bed, on his right; a table at the side of his bed, on his right, with an anatomy book and a telephone on it, and a chair next to the table.

Worthy of our admiration are his unwavering practice, his ardent effort, his courage, his patience, his willingness to bear the physical pain and not let it bother his mind—and, most important, his unconfused mind. Bhikkhu U Dhammacakka clearly showed his understanding of the *Dhamma*: how mind and matter work, how they arise and pass away.



from page 5

meditation on the breath you take the breath as something—say, you will be seeing the breath coming and going out of the nose like a pencil or like a stick going in and out. And you will be counting and so on. And so you are taking the concept as object. If you practice kasina meditation, you look at the disk and then you try to memorize it, so what you look at during the practice of kasina meditation is concept. And you take this concept into your mind or you memorize this concept and then go on looking at that conceptual thing in your mind. So all the way through to the stage of jhana attainment, the object is concept, not reality. But when you practice Vipassana meditation on the breath, you try to see the nature of breath, the characteristic of breath—rather than the shape or the form of the breath. As I said, the breath is wind element, or air element, so it has the characteristic of distendedness or it has the nature of moving, movement. That is why I say try to concentrate on the nature of breath rather than the shape or form of it. In the beginning, nobody will be able to concentrate on the nature alone, but that is all right.

Again, there are two kinds of truths in the world accepted in Buddhist teaching: one is apparent truth or conventional truth and the other is ultimate truth. An apparent truth is called conventional truth or concept (in Pali *paññatti*) and there can be many kinds of concepts, but in brief we have two kinds of concept: name concept and thing concept. Name concept is the name given to a certain

thing, and thing concept is the thing denoted by the name concept. And with most things we get these two concepts, but with the name of the ultimate reality, we have only one concept, that is, name concept. For example, we say anger. Anger is a mental state, so it is ultimate reality. But the word “anger,” or the name “anger” is concept: a name concept. So in this case, we do not have both name concept and thing concept, but we have name concept and ultimate reality. When we say *Nibbana*, the word *Nibbana* or the name *Nibbana* is name concept, but *Nibbana* itself is not a thing concept but a

“There are two kinds of truths in the world accepted in Buddhist teaching: one is apparent truth or conventional truth and the other is ultimate truth.”

reality. And when we practice Vipassana meditation, we deal with ultimate reality.

Among the four ultimate realities we deal with only three, the first three, when we practice Vipassana meditation because *Nibbana* is not an object of Vipassana meditation. Vipassana meditation tries to see the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and soulless nature of things. And *Nibbana* is the opposite of imperma-

nence and unsatisfactoriness, so *Nibbana* cannot become an object of Vipassana meditation. When we practice Vipassana meditation we deal with the first three ultimate realities: consciousness, mental factors, and matter or material properties. When we are aware of our thoughts, we are dealing with consciousness. When we are aware of mental states like anger, understanding, confidence, effort, and so on, we are dealing with the second ultimate reality—mental factors. When we are watching the breath or the movement of the abdomen or when we are mindful of touching or walking and so on, we are dealing with the third ultimate reality—matter or material properties. When we practice Vipassana meditation, we deal with the first three ultimate realities. If we are really successful—one hundred percent successful—then we will realize the fourth ultimate reality, which is *Nibbana*, which is described as the cessation of all suffering.

So by the practice of Vipassana meditation may you be able to really see the first three ultimate realities in the light of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, insubstantiality, and ultimately be able to reach the Enlightenment stage taking *Nibbana* or true everlasting happiness as object.



The late Sayadawgyi U Silananda, the founding Chief Meditation Teacher of Tathagata Meditation Center, and former Abbot of the Dhammananda Vihara Monastery, is the author of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Wisdom Publications).

Three Amigos Beans

Ingredients

(Types of bean and amounts depend on your own taste.)

If using canned beans: a 15 oz. can of 3 different beans (any mixture of kidney beans, black beans, pinto beans, cannellini beans, fava beans, garbanzo beans, butter beans); if using dried beans, soak the beans overnight if necessary—each type separately—and cook each type of bean separately in boiling water until soft but not mushy.

olive oil (about 1/3 of a cup—more or less, according to your taste)

1 onion, sliced thin

garlic, chopped (according to your taste)

fresh ginger (according to your taste)

salt (according to your taste—not necessary if using canned beans)

turmeric (1/4 teaspoon—more or less, according to your taste)



Preparation

1. Drain the liquid from each can of beans, rinse the beans under running water, and let them drain in a colander (or drain the water from each pot of cooked dried beans).
2. While the beans are draining in a colander, heat oil in a frying pan over low heat. Sprinkle the turmeric in the pan as the oil is heating.
3. When the oil is hot, sauté sliced onion and chopped garlic. Sprinkle with salt as the onion, garlic, and fresh ginger are cooking.
4. Cook, covered, over low to moderate heat, stirring occasionally and checking to make sure that the beans don't stick to the pan.

Cooking time: 30 minutes or less, depending on how soft you want the beans (If using dried beans, 30 minutes or less after the beans have been cooked until soft in boiling water.)

Notes

This can be eaten with pasta or rice.





Như Lai Thiên Viện
Tathāgata Meditation Center
1215 Lucretia Avenue
San Jose, CA 95122

Inside:

*Concept and Reality—
talk by Sayādaw U Sīlananda
The Dhamma and Our Daily Life
Upcoming Events*

Dhamma Thoughts for Yogis

EVENTUALLY, EVEN THE MOST WONDERFUL, BEAUTIFUL CHARIOT WILL BECOME OLD AND DILAPIDATED. In olden times, the kings and their ministers rode in the best and the most beautifully decorated chariots. Their chariots were freshly painted and decorated with gold and precious stones, so bystanders were awed when the kings' and ministers' chariots passed by. However, after twenty years or more, these chariots showed signs of wear and tear. There is a saying, "Even chariots that are so beautiful will become old one day." Likewise, houses and other buildings eventually come to show their age.

Just as these beautiful chariots came to show their age, and just as houses and other buildings become old and dilapidated, so too will our bodies age and deteriorate. For example, when one enters the fifties or sixties, lines and wrinkles begin to appear in the face, loss of muscle tone makes the upper arms flabby, and one's bones become more prominent. With age, one's eyesight and hearing deteriorate, one's spine becomes less straight, and overall bodily strength declines. Everyone who reaches old age experiences these things.

When an older person looks back at when he or she was around the age of thirty, he or she sees a person who was still young, healthy, robust, and strong, and sees that these physical qualities no longer exist.

This is why even young people should remind themselves, "One day I will be old like my grandfather and my grandmother." Realizing this, one should seek refuge at an early age.



(A brief excerpt—translated and adapted for Dhamma Bell—from a series of Dhamma talks given at TMC by Beelin Sayādaw (U Paññādīpa), called "How to Achieve the Arahant Path and Knowledge"; this series of talks was later compiled in a book.)

