

Short Transcript

Understanding Lying Down Meditation

A **Short Transcript** from the Q&A section of the **recording**
done during the Dhamma talk

Delivered by: Brother Teoh Kian Koon
On the 6.09.2015
At Wu Pin Chen Seah
No.4, Jalan 11/8 Petaling Jaya Selangor

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Donated by:
Kalyanamitta funds of Brother Teoh Kian Koon
Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
Dated: 28th November 2015

Dated: 6th September 2015

Venue: WPCS Buddhist Vihāra No.4, Jalan 11/8, PJ

9TH Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra Class

Conducted by Bro. Teoh Kian Koon

Session 2 - Report on Meditation followed by **Q & A** session

Question by Sister Susan: Brother Teoh regarding my meditation, I am aware that when I am in the **lying down posture** I am **definitely more relaxed** when compared to my sitting. During sitting I am aware that there is **more tension**. So should I just **continue to lie down** every time I want to do the sitting meditation?

Bro. Teoh: It is **up to you** because there are times to sit and time to lie down. If you want to train your mind it is easier to do it while in the sitting posture because in the sitting posture you **can maintain awareness** or **mindfulness** of the in and out breath (ānāpānasati) better. **Initially** the **sitting posture** is **usually more conducive** but **later on** as you develop the **ability** to have this **meditative mind** that is already **so quiet, so peaceful, so clear** and **so tranquil** – which means **you have developed the ability** to go into **stillness of mind** (which is **passaddhi**) rather **easily** then when that happens, if **you continue with the sitting posture** you will find it **very difficult** to go into a **relax state** of a **free mind** to maintain this **state of tranquility** and **stillness** of mind **unless** you **know** how to **relax very well**. When you have the **ability to relax** so well, the whole of your

body and mind will be in the **state of complete relax** even while in the sitting posture but because of your **crossed legged posture** there will be **energy** built up **without you realizing it**. Then this energy built up, **actually restrict** the **flow of chi** and **that** is why during that time you are **not so relax** and if you can, you should try **meditating** with the **lying down posture**. Then the mind that has the ability to **become so quiet** and **so still** will become **a free mind** that is **naturally relaxed**.

Initially the mindfulness or awareness is at the ānāpānasati (or in and out breath) region, until it becomes **very subtle** then finally one day it will **dropped** down to the **heart or mind-base** then **you just stay there** because that is the location which is **very near** the **'gateway'** to your **Nature**. From there, if you continue **to relax** and **silent** your mind, then one day that silent and still pure awareness that is **without thought** and **craving** will be able **to detect** the **'gateway'** and go in. The lying down posture is the most relaxed posture as you have found out on your own. This is a very important posture because in the lying down posture you **do not create** any **restriction** or **constriction** in your **flow of chi** then **chances** of going into **concentration** is much lower because this energy cannot build up. If you are in a crossed legged position all of your energy field and chi (they) will be building up **without you knowing it**, then from your spine it can go up to the brain then you can push it up to develop all the jhāna. But if you are in the lying down posture and if you **know how to relax** into it, all these energy fields they **will not**

build up. The moment you relax into it, it will stabilize. Then after that, it will become **very quiet** and **very still** until you are very sensitive. During that time you will come to understand that the lying down posture is the best posture. If you can detect the 'gateway' after you have become very quiet and very still then all your **yin and yang energies** which you have developed and stored up earlier on (whether via mindfulness or energy fields training from your chi qong, tai chi, dan tian, yoga, Wai dan qong or whatever energy field related practices) they will all melt into the 'gateway' and during that time the 'meditator' or the 'cultivator' which is the form and mind that is in that state will understand because all these yin and yang energies as it goes through the gateway will be **transformed** and **purified** into **pure energy**. This is the **pure energy** that is already **intelligent**. This one is **not thought based** because there is **no thought** behind; you **just silent, relax** and **aware** and the **last support** is '**trust**'. You just silent and **don't do anything, no thought invoked** then the **pure energy** will develop the **internal movements which** most people cannot understand because they have never done it before. That is the **real 'opening'** of all the **nadis** and **chakras** within your internal bodily movements. All these will happen without any thought, **without** any directive or **effort** via mental intention from the thought – which means there is **no will, effort** or **mental intention** involved and there is also **nobody doing**. So this is the reason why **J Krishnamuti** via his understanding said, 'wherever there is a meditator there is no meditation and wherever

there is effort there is also no meditation.’ All these, the cultivator will come to understand them clearly.

When this **transformation** happens your mind will become very still, very **quiet** and very **tranquil** very fast, then after that you can even **maintain** this **state of awareness** or **mindfulness** in the midst of your **daily life very easily**. The reason being by the time you can detect the ‘gateway’ you must have already **progressed** very far in your meditation and you must have already **touched your nature**; you already like Hui Ning and the other great beings, **understood what the true mind** is.

So the key to understanding meditation is: posture is not critical. You can use any posture. Even in the Satipaṭṭhāna or four foundations of mindfulness Sutta, it is stated that all the **four postures**, standing, sitting, walking and lying down you can use them to meditate. But the **real wisdom** or **insight** comes from **meditation in daily life**. After you have developed all these abilities to be **peaceful**, to be **quiet**, to be **aware** and to be **heedful then** you will have to come out into life and **apply this mind state**, which is the awareness or mindfulness **to insight** into phenomena, to insight into the three **universal characteristics** of impermanence, suffering state and non-self via the **direct seeing** to penetrate the dhamma. And later on to **reflect and contemplate** via the **2nd turnings** of the 4 noble truth to prepare the base for receiving truth; then after that any of the 3 turnings, (either 1st turning, 2nd turning or 3rd turning)

they can awaken your nature because by then most of the time you are **aware, silent** and **heedful** - then it can trigger off the awakening any time. After you have this **initial wisdom**, only then can you cultivate the **real** noble 8-fold path and 4 foundation of mindfulness in a **more refined** and **deeper** manner.

After you **have developed** all these **understanding borne** of **daily mindfulness**, you **can lie down** and **do your meditation again**. By then it will be **very different** because during that time you will **understand very clearly** and you will know what to do. Then you will understand that the **lying down meditation** has **its purpose** and **function because to realize** the more stable **Nibbāna** you need a **formal posture** and the **lying down posture** is the most conducive. There are two types of awakening: the **1st type** is via the **sainthood way in daily life** whereby the **realization of Nibbāna** is just a **glimpse** or a **moment of cessation** of form and mind – those realized by the sotāpan (the **1st** stage of sainthood) and the sakadāgāmī (the second stage of sainthood); then there is a **2nd** type of awakening that is more stable and last longer – those realized by the anāgāmī (**3rd** stage of sainthood), the arahants (the **4th** stage of sainthood) and the other great beings. For the first two stages of sainhoods the **cessation** happens only for a **moment**, or **momentarily for one moment of cessation** only but that's good enough because that itself is the realization of Nibbāna; that moment is enough to awaken especially the sotāpannaship and sakadāgāmīship sainthood ways and this can happen in the **daily life**

while cultivating the **daily mindfulness**. One **doesn't need** to be in a formal meditation posture. But for anāgāmi and arahants onward usually they will have to go into **cessation** for **longer period**. To **realize this 2nd type of awakening** one need to be in a **more stable formal meditative posture**. During the early days, most of them do it in their **daily life** via the 1st and 2nd turnings of the 4 Noble Truths. That is via hearing the sutta followed by contemplation, reflection and inquiries into what the Buddha had proclaimed or taught. Then there are some who develop **Samatha meditation first** via going into jhāna and that is the reason why they like the sitting posture which is more conducive but later on they **still have to release** their **energy field** and **return** to **normal awareness** and go into **daily mindfulness** to **develop** the **initial wisdom** via **insight** into the 3 universal characteristics of nature to realize the enlightenment. Then after that they will sit again or go into the formal meditation to realize the more stable **cessation**. Then sitting **can also awaken** them.

During the time of the Buddha a lot of his disciples does it in the sitting posture but later on those who understand they will come to understand that the lying down posture is in fact more conducive. That is also the reason why later on the Buddha during his parinibbāna, he was in the **lying down posture**. Then whenever he rest, he was also in the **lying down** posture. This lying down posture was seldom taught because most living being **don't have the ability to meditate that way**. If they are **not trained** they **tend to fall**

asleep very fast then it becomes '**sleeping**' **meditation** and not lying down meditation anymore. That's the reason why it was not taught because very few people can do it. And because of that it was **hardly taught**. But for those who understand they will know, the moment you can do the lying down meditation you are already **a very good and advance cultivator**. Lying down posture has its purpose – it is needed when you are developing the 2nd type of awakening, when you go into this so called cessation of form and mind to realize Nibbāna. In the **lying posture** you can develop it much more easily, you can go into it **very fast** and you can stay there **for quite a while**. Then it depends - if you are ready and about to do it, you have to develop some form of **tactfulness** because you have to let those who are around you, understand what you are doing otherwise they may think you **already dead** when you go into this cessation. You are really like a dead person, the only difference between you and a dead person is you won't become very cold, you won't become like the dead corpse, your body will not rot, your body will not emit those foul smell but you really got **no heart beat**, the **brain activities** and **everything else also ceased - no more activity, no more consciousness, nothing**, the whole body and mind is like no different from a dead person except that the **stillness's pure energy of Nibbāna**, they are still within the form. And because that being is in that state, so in order to prevent any confusion it is **advisable** to let people know so that when you go into it, people will understand. But as far as I know you don't have to worry so much because it is **not easy** to go into that state for long period of time. It

depend on your past cultivation, it depend on your understanding and it also it depends on how skillful you are and most of these cultivators when they go in this cessation they will know how to come out. It is automatic but you cannot predict when to come out because it is the **un-conditioned**. You can only come out at the time when the conditions are there for it to come out.

So all these are parts and parcels of **lying down meditation** and lying down meditation is **only to be done** after you **have trained your mind very well**. After you have developed the **passaddhi** enlightenment factor, until your mind is **very stabled** and **very still** and **after your daily mindfulness had stabilized**. Then you will come to understand why this lying down posture is the **most** relax, **conducive** or **appropriate**, and then you can do it.

Especially at night when you are at home you have to learn **to meditate** in the **lying down posture** so that you **can rest very well**, so that when you arise the next day you can become **very fresh and mindful**. The other reason is because human beings spend almost 1/3 of their time sleeping. If you sleep 8 hours a day it is exactly 1/3; if you sleep even 6 hours a day it is 1/4 of the day's time. So the lying down posture meditation if you can understand and develop the ability to meditate in that posture it will help you a lot. It can help speed up your cultivation. This type of formal meditation can be done any time even when you are resting.

And finally if you want to understand: what is **24 hour meditation**? You have to be **skillful in the lying down meditation** first, and then you will come to realize that **you can be mindful throughout the day** and **24 hour meditation is possible**. I can share this with you all **because** this **nature of mine** had done it **before** during the **early days** of its **cultivation**. So it is all up to you. Don't worry about the posture. Whichever posture that is more conducive to you, use it. You only need to **understand** your **meditation focus** by inquiring: **'Do you still need to train your mind?'** If you had already stabilized and no need to train your mind anymore then by all means, whatever posture will also be suitable for you because by then your spiritual faculties are already established. Since you had already trained your mind hence you can meditate via a relaxed mind, you can silent your mind easily, and then you can develop whatever understanding you want. Then you will understand **very clearly** what this form and mind is all about? It is for you to use so use it to live life, to meditate, to develop understanding and to cultivate, and it is all up to you.

Then whatever posture that is the most suitable and conducive you will also come to know, because by then very likely - **throughout the day you are already heedful and mindful**, so there is **no** difference **between standing, walking, sitting or lying down**, no difference at all. Then meditation become **like a part** of your **nature**, you are in that **state** of **heedfulness or awareness throughout the day**, you don't have **to rely on anything else** to be **mindful**, you **don't need**

an **object of meditation anymore**, then you will come **to realize** that **all these methods and techniques or objects of meditation** are only **initial skillful mean** used by cultivators to train their mind and **it has nothing to do with meditation**. It is just **to train** the **heedless mind** to be **mindful**, to be **heedful** and a lot of people **cannot understand** this **very important point**.

That's why that day I forwarded one email regarding this to you all recently – u all saw it isn't it? It was written by a monk from SBS by the name of Bhante Kumara. According to that email he said he has been asked many time at many places about **what method or technique of meditation he teaches?** He said **he don't know how to answer them** and every time he answer them he finds his answer **not so clear** and **inadequate**, then he came out with one answer which he thought was very good. I will try to get it from the email and read it to you so that we can discuss it. This may be good because this can help clear up a lot of things.

That's why **even monks** and **cultivators** they are also **not sure** or **are not clear about** all these like what is the meditation as taught by the Buddha? And what are methods and techniques or objects of meditation for? So when I read the email I felt I should send it out to our Kalyāṇamitta for them to develop the reflection and contemplation, so that hopefully they can understand better. Let me try to look it up. Okay I have got it. According to him he said:

"From time to time, I've been asked this question, 'Bhante, what method do you teach?' and I keep having trouble answering it properly. They want me to name it, and I don't have one for it. Usually, I resort to saying I teach this and I teach that. In that way, it can seem like I've a muddled way of teaching. Some time ago, it dawned upon me: I **don't teach** a method. I'm not interested in that. Instead, I teach people. I show them how to free themselves from suffering, in the best way I know for them at that time. Every experienced teacher knows that every student is different. To think that one method fits all is unreasonable. Sometimes I conveniently fall back on some sort of standard method too, and that's when I'm not operating at my best, that's when I'm not using discernment, and the results aren't so good. Results are the best when I drop all ideas of method, pay full attention to the person, and let wisdom decide. So, I don't want to use any specific method, but whatever method that is suitable, even if I've never used it before, i.e., one that occurs spontaneously to me. So, next time, I know how to answer the question of what method I teach. I try not to. I teach people." Posted by: Kumara Bhikkhu

So with this we can open for discussion. What are your views and understanding on this basing on your cultivation's understanding? What are methods and what are techniques? Do you know why he has a problem or not? If I am not wrong he studied **Byron Katie's teaching** and he also used Byron Katie's **technique** or **the work** basing on the **4 lines of questionings** to teach. And he also shared a

bit of the 'Power of the Now' – a best seller book written by Eckhart Tolle. And because of that his students asked him, 'So what is your teaching? What method do you teach? He can't describe them because those teaching are neither a method nor a technique. It is more of an inquiry.

With this I hope you all can have a better understanding of the above topic.

Appendix - What is the Work?

The Work is a simple yet **powerful process of inquiry** that teaches you to identify and **question the thoughts** that **cause** all the **suffering** in the world. It's a way **to understand what's hurting you**, and **to address the cause of your problems with clarity**. In its most basic form, The **Work** consists of **four questions** and the **turnarounds**.

Ask the Four Questions

The **Work is meditation**. It's about **opening to your heart**, **not** about **trying to change your thoughts**. Ask the questions, then go inside and wait for the deeper answers to surface. Investigate each of your statements from these **four questions**:

1. **Is it true?** (Yes or no. If no, move to 3.)
2. **Can you absolutely know that it's true?** (Yes or no.)
3. **How do you react or what happens, when you believe that thought?**
4. **Who would you be without the thought?**

"I discovered that **when I believed my thoughts, I suffered**, but that when **I didn't believe them, I didn't suffer**, and that this is **true for every human being. Freedom is as simple as that**. I found that **suffering is optional**. I found a joy within me that has never disappeared, not for a single moment. That joy is in everyone, always." —Byron Katie

People who do The Work as an ongoing practice commonly report:

- **Alleviation of depression:** Find resolution, even happiness, in situations that were once debilitating.
- **Decreased stress:** Live with less anxiety or fear.

- **Improved relationships:** Experience deeper connection and intimacy with your partner, your parents, your children, your friends, and yourself.
- **Reduced anger and fear:** Understand **what makes** you **angry** and **fearful**.
- **Increased mental clarity:** Live and work more intelligently and effectively, with integrity.
- **More energy:** Experience a new sense of ongoing vigor and well-being.
- **More peace:** Discover how to become “a lover of what is (the reality).”

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