

EVENING DAY ONE

INTRODUCTION AND SITTING INSTRUCTION

Welcome to Wat Kow Tahm and welcome to a 10-day Meditation Retreat. Our names are Steve and Rosemary. We will be teaching the retreat. The purpose of this 10-day Meditation Retreat is to try to develop some basic meditation practices that can help each one of us throughout our life.

The words Mental Development will be used often during this retreat. As used here, Mental Development means to develop beneficial mental qualities and to lessen unbeneficial mental qualities. The meditation methods that we will be teaching are all concerned with Mental Development. We could say that we are teaching Meditation and we could also say that we are teaching Mental Development. As we will be using these words, they are basically the same.

Let us consider why anyone wants to learn about Meditation or Mental Development.

For all of us, there occur experiences in life which are not totally satisfying. Whether it be something physically minor, like headaches or small cuts, to something major like cancer or death. Whether it be something mentally minor, like annoyance that the bus is late, to something major, like the grief that comes from the death of loved ones. Whether physical or mental, we are continually confronted from time to time with circumstances in life that are not totally satisfying.

One way to deal with the unsatisfactoriness of life is to ignore it. But this is only a temporary method. Another way is to escape from it. Whether it be alcohol, drugs, work or whatever, once again this is only a temporary method. These methods may give us some relief from our difficulties for a short time, but they are not sufficient to deal totally with life.

The roots of our problems are not eliminated. But, if we can learn how to deal with the constant changes in life's situations and our reactions to them, then we can gain a peace of mind that is not dependent on external supports. Mental Development is concerned with learning how to deal with life in all situations.

During this Meditation Retreat, we will be teaching methods that can be used by all types of people in all types of living conditions. A person of any religion, any country, any race. Whether man or woman, old or young, healthy or sick, rich or poor. The methods that you will learn here can basically work for anyone, anywhere.

All of us experience some difficulties, problems and obstacles in life. We were born and we will die. If we live long enough, from time to time we will get sick, our bodies will get old, and normally weak and feeble.

Often we are separated from what we like. Often we have to be with what we do not like. And often we simply do not get what we want. These things are facts of life. They are frequently unpleasant and difficult to deal with.

When a person breaks an arm, this is obviously unpleasant and can be very painful. The arm then needs to be treated by a doctor, put in a cast and allowed to heal. This is one type of difficulty, a physical problem which can be fixed by certain standard practices. For many people with a broken arm there is another problem which comes from their reaction in the mind towards the broken arm. Sometimes the reaction is: "Oh! My arm! My arm! What will I do now? How can I do anything! Oh!

Oh!" and on and on. Sometimes with a lot of agitation and worry, and sometimes with only a little agitation and worry.

This extra problem comes from thoughts *about* an actual physical difficulty. These mental problems are extra, we do not need to have them. This is a place where Mental Development can help. It can reduce or eliminate the extra problems that we cause for ourselves and that we cause for others; the extra problems that we often cause in our *reactions* to life's experiences.

There may be many reasons why all of you are here. Among them will be the wish to learn methods and techniques of Mental Development in order to deal successfully with the various difficulties and problems that you have in life. This wish to reduce difficulties or to remove the cause of the difficulty is what we will be referring to when we use the word Compassion.

Compassion is a basis of Mental Development and Meditation practice. Without seeing difficulties and having Compassion towards the difficulties, then there may exist no desire to solve the difficulties and possibly no desire to practice Mental Development and Meditation.

Another reason why you are here could be that you wish to find more Happiness, more Contentment, more Peace in your life. The wishing for Peace and Happiness is what we will be referring to when we use the word Lovingkindness. This word is used within this practice to mean a type of kindness that is deeper than normal kindness, and a type of love which is different from how we normally use the word "Love".

Compassion and Lovingkindness are closely connected. Together they are a combined wish for the welfare of whomever they are wished for. Compassion is the wish to solve or remove the cause of difficulties and unhappiness. Lovingkindness is the wish for Peace and Happiness. As this retreat is designed to help us solve our difficulties and problems, much will be said about developing Compassion and Lovingkindness.

Compassion and Lovingkindness are thoughts in the mind. So how do we put these thoughts into action? In order to solve any problem, it is important to understand the problem. To see when it exists; to see where it comes from; to see how it can pass away; and, most important, to see how the problem will not arise again in the future.

Here it is important to use what we call Mindfulness or Awareness. To become aware of our thoughts, speech and actions. Mindful of what we think, say and do. As we become more mindful and aware, we will make fewer mistakes, we will cause fewer difficulties for ourselves and fewer difficulties for others.

With Mindfulness we can get closer to life's experiences and build Understanding. With this building of Understanding, we can apply the Compassion and Lovingkindness that we feel and can work toward solving problems and removing their causes, thus providing a foundation for the growth of Peace and Happiness.

Here is an example of how Mindfulness can work to help solve difficulties:

Most of us find that similar problems recur over and over. Let us say that we have a type of aversion. Perhaps we do not like a type of situation or person and we react with anger or irritation. This occurs again and again and in reacting, we often cause problems for ourselves as well as problems for others.

Then one day after a similar situation has happened and we have reacted in the usual way, causing more difficulties, we decide that we would rather not have reacted in such a way. This is a first step in Mindfulness and the developing of Understanding. To see a problem *after* it occurs and wish that it had not happened. This wish can be a combination of Compassion and Lovingkindness: wishing to solve the problem and wishing for a more peaceful and contented future. With these wishes and the understanding that there exists a problem, we try to increase our Mindfulness to further understand the problem.

We may see the problem after it occurs many times until there comes a time when our Mindfulness is stronger and we actually realize that the problem has come again while we are reacting. That is, rather than after the situation, the Mindfulness has arisen *during* the situation. With our past Understanding about similar problems, we may be in a position to change the ending of the situation to be better than previously.

As our Mindfulness gets stronger, at some stage we will become aware that we are in a similar situation as it is *beginning* to happen. Then we will be in a much better position to change the situation and avoid many of the difficulties that might otherwise have followed.

When our Mindfulness is strong enough, we will actually be able to understand the causes and conditions that *bring about* the problems. With this Understanding, we will be able to see when a similar situation may occur in the future and be able to avoid it entirely.

So these five aspects of the Meditation practice can work together in the following way: First, we realize that a difficulty exists. Then Compassion arises toward the difficulty and those involved. Lovingkindness can also arise. With these thoughts, we then practice Mindfulness of our actions, speech and thoughts. By using Mindfulness, we gain Understanding. With this Understanding, we can then solve our problems.

In this same way of working with our problems or unbeneficial qualities, we can also work with our beneficial and positive qualities. We can try to use Mindfulness to develop the Understanding of how we can maintain and strengthen them, so that every aspect of our life can benefit in this way. With our unbeneficial qualities, we learn how to decrease them. And with our beneficial qualities, we learn how to increase them.

From this you can see how valuable it is to be mindful and aware of our thoughts, speech and actions. During this retreat, we will be explaining many techniques to help develop Mindfulness and Awareness, so that we can understand more about ourselves. The Meditation practice of developing Mindfulness and Awareness and trying to understand who and what we are -- that is, the true reality of who and what we are and not just who and what we think we are -- is often referred to as Vipassana or Insight Meditation. It is helpful to make a point here that when I use the term "Vipassana Meditation", this does not mean a specific technique. Rather it means the resulting wisdom or insight which comes from using skillful techniques. There are many different techniques taught to help develop this wisdom. This is helpful to know because Buddhism is very new in relative time periods in the West, and there does exist some confusion regarding this word "Vipassana". Trying to understand and develop Insight into reality.

As I mentioned with the broken arm, many of the extra problems that we cause for ourselves or for others come from our reactions. If we can learn how to deal with our reactions to life's situations, we will be well on our way toward solving any difficulty, and creating more Peace, Contentment and Happiness.

From every experience that we have, there follows one of three types of feeling. A pleasant feeling may occur. An unpleasant feeling may occur. Or a neutral feeling, which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, may occur. From these feelings comes a reaction.

If our reaction is wise and considerate, with Compassionate Understanding, then extra problems usually will not develop. But if we lack wisdom, proper consideration and Compassionate Understanding, then our reactions often can cause more difficulties.

Developing Mindfulness and Understanding of our reactions is a major part of mental development. It is important to realize that our reactions are due to our past conditioning. We are who we are because of the past. We are conditioned people. We have conditioned minds. We have conditioned reactions, conditioned likes and conditioned dislikes. What we are is due to the many different ways in which we have grown up and developed.

A person from one country grows up in a certain way, different in some way from those in other countries. Within each country, people grow up in different ways: different religions, different school systems, different climates, different foods. Many, many different causes and conditions have occurred to produce who and what we are.

We think certain ways due to our past conditioning. We react certain ways due to our past conditioning. Some of our reactions are wise, some are not wise. Some are proper, some are not proper. Some arise with Compassion and Love, some with anger and hatred. Some lead to Peace and Happiness, others to problems and difficulties.

All of us would like to have more Peace and Happiness. All of us would like to have fewer problems and difficulties. Developing Mindfulness of our thoughts, our speech, our actions and our reactions is a major step in the process of mental development. This is not easy. It takes time. As we have been conditioned to be who we are over many, many years, we cannot change things overnight. We have to respect that our habits and thought patterns have become strong over so many years, and that it takes time to change. Patience is needed. Compassion is needed. Perseverance is needed. Equanimity is needed. Different beneficial mental qualities need to be developed and strengthened.

Keep in mind that practicing and developing Meditation is much like learning something new in everyday life. Let us take the example of someone who wants to learn to swim:

On the first day of swimming lessons, can this person expect to be able to swim across the swimming pool? Not usually. It takes time. There are certain techniques and methods that must be learned, practiced and developed. And there are certain stages of development, a certain basic order of progression. A beginning swimmer is not taught how to do racing starts or racing turns. These things are important for later if the swimmer wants to swim in races, but they cannot be taught first. As well, fine details about arm movement and kicking cannot be taught until the swimmer has learned the basic swimming techniques.

If a new swimmer, who cannot yet swim across a pool is taught racing starts, turns, or fine details, then there will be no ability to understand or utilize the instructions of these advanced techniques. This would normally cause confusion and problems, and probably slow down the swimmer's development.

Some swimmers will learn quickly, some will learn slowly. If all new swimmers who are physically able persevere with patience and endurance, continually trying, learning and practicing, then these new swimmers will be able to learn to swim.

The same things are true for learning Meditation. It takes time. There are certain techniques and methods that must be learned, practiced and developed. There are certain stages of development. A new meditator needs to work with learning the basic techniques. Getting too involved with what might happen later in meditation training, before learning basic practices, may cause confusion and problems. And, possibly, it may slow down meditation development.

Some will learn quickly. Some will learn slowly. If there is Perseverance, Patience and Endurance, continual trying, learning and practicing, then Meditation can be developed.

For some of you, this is something new. During this retreat, we will be giving many basic meditation instructions. Try your best to do as instructed. Much of the instruction is simple to explain but each of us must work to achieve beneficial results. The rewards of this work are very worthwhile, extremely valuable.

This is a rare and precious opportunity that you have given to yourself. The willingness to try some of these methods and techniques that can help you throughout your life is such a *wonderful, precious opportunity*. Take advantage of this gift that you have given to yourself. Work as well as you can with the techniques that we are explaining. Try to understand them and then they will be of benefit to you.

It is very important to keep an *open* mind. Some of what we say might be very clear and most of you will understand what is meant. There also may be parts that are not very clear and some of you might not understand. That is O.K. Try not to worry about it. There will be a lot of information given during these 10 days and it may not be possible to understand everything. Take whatever you do understand and try your best to work with that. Leave whatever you do not understand for now. It might be of help at a later date.

There are many different aspects of Mental Development and it is basically impossible to work on all of them at the same time. Due to our different personalities and conditioning, each of us will tend to work on different aspects of the practice at different times.

Staying open is especially important in your relationship with me, with Rosemary, and with what we will be trying to teach. There is a saying that goes like this:

You can please some of the people all of the time.

And you can please all of the people some of the time.

But you cannot please all of the people all of the time.

Rosemary and I do not expect to be able to please all of you with every part of this retreat. And we would like to advise you not to expect to be pleased with every part of this retreat. Basically this is just not possible. But if you find any parts of this retreat to be upsetting, unpleasant, things that you do not like, try to be open, try to be honest with yourself. Occasionally there can be the impulse to run away from things that we do not like. But often things that we do not like are just things that we do not understand. If you have any problem in understanding anything during the retreat, then there will be opportunities for you to discuss these things with Rosemary or myself. Try to be open, try to be honest with yourself, and with this retreat.

Being open can mean the willingness to change and adapt. This includes the willingness to admit that we might be wrong in our views and opinions. I am sure all of us have had the experience of thinking that we knew something and then later finding out that we were wrong. This is very normal. As we are not perfect yet, we often will make these types of mistakes.

With this in mind, it is beneficial to consider that what we see in life appears to be changing constantly in some way. Wherever we look there is change. As human beings, each of us is constantly changing in some way. Our bodies change, our thoughts change, our views and opinions change.

Many of the difficulties that we experience in life come from holding onto our views and opinions about life, and not accepting the changes of life. We often become fixed in our ideas about things and this can block our Understanding and Peace. If we can try to let go of our views and opinions about things and try to be open to each experience, we will be able to build a better understanding of life. Trying to *learn about* life instead of thinking that we *already know* everything. This is another important part of our personal growth and of creating the conditions for Peace and Happiness to develop.

The expression "Letting go" is another term that will be used often during this retreat. In this usage, the development of Peace and Happiness and the lessening of problems and difficulties is not so much of a going and getting something. Instead it is a letting go of the various obstacles that are blocking this process from naturally happening.

We all have the seeds within us for the growth of Peace and Happiness and the lessening of problems and difficulties. If we apply proper methods, these seeds will grow. Letting go of parts of our past conditioning which block this growth can be difficult. But with Compassion, Lovingkindness and Mindfulness, we can develop the Understanding necessary to gradually change our conditioning little-by-little, bit-by-bit. Mental Development is a gradual process.

Our habits and tendencies have energies that are very strong at times, and to try to stop these energies often can create more difficulties. Instead of trying to get rid of any unbeneficial habit or

tendency all at once, we can use the energy present and gently bend the direction of this energy. With Compassionate Understanding of why we are doing, saying or thinking things in certain ways, we can bend unwise energies into wise energies.

With the different techniques and methods that will be explained here, each of us can work toward creating new and beneficial causes and conditions for our future. We are who we are due to what we did in the past. We can change who we will be by what we do in the present. The more we work toward increasing beneficial mental qualities and decreasing unbeneficial mental qualities, the more we will gain Peace and Happiness and lessen problems and difficulties.

Much of Mental Development is to learn who and what we are. In understanding who and what we are, we will learn how to accept ourselves and accept others, how to forgive ourselves and forgive others, how to have Compassion and Lovingkindness toward ourselves and toward others. We will learn about our interrelationships with others and with the environment. We will learn how we have been conditioned. We will learn about our qualities that are beneficial and about our qualities that are unbeneficial. As we understand these things, we will be better able to apply remedies and solutions to any problem that we encounter.

This is basic: If we want to change our thoughts, habits or patterns of living in beneficial ways, we first must start to understand ourselves.

As I said, this is just like other things in life. Doctors who perform heart surgery must study the heart and all the areas of the body which are related to such an operation. Before performing such an operation, much practice and study must be done. They will probably learn basic medicine treatments first and after much time they will develop the ability to perform such an operation.

Meditation is similar. We have to study and work on our minds. Understand them, learn about them. See which parts of our minds are beneficial and which parts are unbeneficial. We are trying to discover who and what we are, and then trying to work *with* who we are, not *against* who we are.

It is important to try to work with basic practices and with smaller problems before working with larger ones. We frequently cause extra difficulties for ourselves because we want to accomplish something that is beyond our limits. There is often a big difference between what we *can* do and what we think we *should* be able to do. This is a difference between Reality and Idealism.

The reality of a situation is what we can work with, objectively seeing who and what we are and starting from there. Too many people want to start with who and what they think they are or think they should be, having some ideal about themselves or about their capabilities. Frequently this causes aversion, pain, grief, despair and frustration. When we think we should be a certain way, but in reality we are not, then a lot of self-hatred and doubt can arise.

Often we have been told, "You should do this, you should not do that." But we have not always been told how to do this, how not to do that. This difference between what one thinks one *should* be able to do and what one actually *is* able to do is a common problem for many meditators.

We prefer, as much as possible, not to use the word "should." Instead we will try to say, "Try to do this, try not to do that." And, we also will try to show how to do this, how not to do that.

Problems and difficulties can be lessened if we start with who and what we are, learn some techniques and methods of *how* to do things, and try to apply these techniques and methods to ourselves.

So we will be spending quite a bit of time and quite a bit of effort trying to explain to you some valuable techniques and methods of how to work with Mental Development. And, hopefully, you will be spending quite a bit of time and quite a bit of effort trying to learn these valuable techniques and methods for yourself.

What I have talked about is just a basic outline of much of the practice. We will be talking about most of this again and again in more detail throughout this 10-day Meditation Retreat.

We hope that you will find this practice of Meditation and Mental Development very rewarding and helpful while you are here, and very rewarding and helpful for the rest of your life.

Now, formal sitting meditation. How and what to do.

When we sit in meditation, we will be dealing with what is called a primary concentration object. The primary concentration object that we will start with tonight is the breath; to be aware of our breathing.

This is a universal object. Everyone breathes. It is something that is with us every moment of our life until we die. The breath simply is. Breathing in. Breathing out. The breath is normally a neutral object in regard to our feelings and emotions; that is, it normally does not excite us or upset us. This makes it a very good primary object of meditation.

Even better than these, the breath can help us to learn about ourselves, our mind, our body. The breath is often a link between thoughts and bodily reactions. When we observe our breathing, we will find that changes in breathing, whether fast or slow, coarse or fine, rough or smooth, will often indicate various mental states. Other parts of our body are indicators also. A clear example of this is when a person gets very angry. This emotional state of mind causes the person to breathe very fast and rough, and causes tightness and tension throughout the body.

Often it is difficult to see our emotional states clearly and for this reason, if we can build awareness of our breathing and bodily reactions, then we can use this awareness to see more clearly our emotions and thoughts.

The basic practice to start with is this; sit and be aware of your breathing, each breath, coming in and going out. Let it be natural, no forcing. If it seems long, just realize that it seems long. If short, short. If it seems rough, just realize that it seems rough. If smooth, smooth. Whatever it is, fine, no problem. Our work is just to observe it and start to understand it as it is. We will try to use every breath. Here we do not consider one breath to be better than another. Every breath can be part of our meditation practice.

This is a very basic practice but it is not easy. Our minds are not used to concentrating on just one single object. Our minds are used to thinking about this, that and everything. We may watch our breathing for two seconds and then "off," the mind starts its thought process, sometimes thinking of the past, sometimes the future, and sometimes the present. We may get lost in a daydream for 5 - 10 minutes. This will happen many times while we are sitting in meditation. As soon as you become aware that your mind has wandered away from the breathing, then the practice is just to gently realize that the mind has wandered and then return to watching the breathing.

This noticing of our wandering thoughts is actually a very important part of our meditation practice. This is where we start to learn who and what we are. Our thought patterns are due to our past conditioning. The wandering is a normal part of this conditioning. Much of the practice is to understand who and what we are and then use this Understanding.

Our thoughts about the past, the future, whatever; our angry thoughts, our loving thoughts, our lonely thoughts, our frightened thoughts; any thought is part of our meditation. But the object is not to just think about anything. The object in the beginning is to try to be aware of our breathing. And, each time that we catch our mind wandering, just to note that it is wandering and then return to the breath.

There need not be any judgment of, aversion to, or indulgence in the thoughts. No need to figure out anything about the thoughts or why we had them. It is all due to past conditioning. We try to see them each time and just realize that they are there. Then gently let go of the thought and return to the breath. There is no need to get upset when you discover that your mind cannot stay on the breathing for very long before off it goes on another thought pattern. This is normal.

Bit-by-bit, little-by-little with perseverance, patience and endurance, your concentration and mindfulness will grow. Each time that you notice your wandering mind is actually a moment of mindfulness and a moment of growth, and your practice will develop.

It will be normal sometimes to get upset at the wandering mind. And thoughts such as "Oh, I cannot be aware of the breathing even for one full second." But actually to be aware that you are not able to concentrate *is* a moment of mindfulness. It is a growth in Understanding to know when you can not concentrate. And it is a valuable part of the practice.

This is a process of continually coming back again and again to the awareness of breathing. Seeing that our mind is off thinking, realizing it and starting again with the breathing. Breathing in and breathing out.

To observe the breathing, there are two main areas of the body to choose from, to focus your attention upon. The first is at the nose area where the air comes in and goes out. Breathing through the mouth is not normally used. There is an actual physical sensation present at the nostrils, or tip of the nose, or upper lip where the air touches. The second is the stomach-chest area. The expanding and contracting or rising-falling movement that takes place during the breathing.

You are advised to choose one of these two areas and keep your attention focused there. Try not to jump back and forth between these two. This will only cause confusion and difficulty.

The actual physical sensation of the breath touching the nose area or the stomach-chest area rising-falling, is to be the primary object of concentration. This is not easy, concentrating on one single object. But we have a method that can help you to develop this concentration. When you are breathing in and out, what we recommend is that you make soft mental notes of the actual process.

If you are observing the breathing at the nose area, you can use the words "Breathing in, breathing out" as the air comes in and goes out. Or if you prefer just "In, out." If you are focusing on the stomach-chest area, you can use the words "Rising, falling." "In, out" describes part of the actual physical process occurring at the nose area. "Rising, falling" describes part of the actual physical process occurring at the stomach-chest area. This method can help you to develop stronger concentration and awareness.

O.K., we sit in meditation observing the breathing and softly noting "in, out," "breathing in, breathing out," or "rising, falling." Then off goes our mind wandering. When we realize that our mind is wandering, we can use this same type of method. As soon as we catch ourselves wandering, we can softly note to ourselves "wandering, wandering" or "thinking, thinking." Then we gently try to let go of the thoughts and start again on the breathing. If noises distract our attention, we can gently note "hearing, hearing" and then try to return to the breathing. Before mealtime it is possible that the odors from the food will distract our attention. If they do, we can try to note "smelling, smelling." Any time that we find that our attention is not on the breathing, we can try to note what is happening and then return to the breathing.

There are a few different ways to sit in meditation. I will show you some of them. Some people use pillows and some do not. There is regular crossed; the semi-half lotus; the half lotus; the full lotus, if your body is flexible enough, not many people can do this. Then there is just legs parallel in front; or one leg can be back on the side. Even sitting like this, with your knees up and arms resting on your legs, is O.K. for a short rest and then try to go back to a more proper posture. There is also the Japanese style, sometimes with a little bench, and sometimes with pillows under our buttocks. Some people with physical problems can meditate sitting in a chair as well.

A very important part of the sitting posture is to be comfortable and relaxed. Also to keep the back straight. Straight but not tense. As this is like a new physical sport, it will take time to train the body.

Many meditators have to relax the back often. Try your best. During the meditation period, try to stay still for the entire time but if you have too much difficulty, then it is quite O.K. to change your legs

around. When you do have to move, try to do this quietly so that you do not disturb the other meditators. And, as you move, try to be mindful of the action of moving the body.

The hands can be in the lap, on the knees, up, down, whatever. Again, comfortable and relaxed. Normally we close the eyes but not tight. Softly, gently. If you feel, at any time, a bit sleepy, then we advise you to open your eyes and look down about four or five feet in front of you.

The mouth is an important area to be aware of. Closed lips but not tight. Perhaps the teeth not quite touching, and the tongue touching the back of the top teeth. The head is slightly tilted forward.

We will now do a group sitting meditation. Please settle yourself in a sitting posture. Relaxed, not stiff. It is good to first check over your body and try to relax. Check your legs to see that they are settled comfortably. Then you may like to lean forward enough to raise your buttocks off your sitting mat or pillows. Using the muscles of your lower back, gently push your buttocks backward and then sit down again. This action can help with any problems of the lower back.

Next check over the rest of your back and stomach-chest area. Check the hands now, and the rest of your arms up to your shoulders. Trying to relax your body as best you can. Now the neck and your head. The face muscles relaxed, eyes softly closed. The mouth relaxed, not tense, softly, gently closed. Try to relax and sit comfortably. Back straight but not rigid or tense.

It may also help to relax by taking a couple of big breaths to start with and then focus your attention on the breathing, either at the nose or stomach-chest area. Noting "in, out," "breathing in, breathing out," or "rising, falling." Allow the breathing to be as it will. If it is short, then it is short. If it is long, then it is long. If rough, rough; smooth, smooth; or whatever. Just allowing it to be whatever it is. Starting to get to know the breath and all of its aspects. Breath coming in, breath going out.

When you find that your mind has wandered, gently realize that it was wandering and then return to the breathing, noting "wandering, wandering" or "thinking, thinking." Occasionally during this sit I will say a few words to help you develop this method.

- (6 minutes) If you find your mind wandering, gently realize that it is wandering and return to the breath. At the nose or stomach-chest area.
- (12 minutes) The thoughts go to the past and they go to the future. After you realize that your thoughts are here and there, gently return to the breath. The air coming in and out or the stomach-chest area rising and falling.
- (18 minutes) If sound distracts your attention, try to just note "hearing, hearing" and gently return to the breathing.
- (24 minutes) The mind is used to wandering. As you catch it, realize that it was wandering, note, "wandering, wandering" and then gently return to the breath. In, out. Rising, falling.
- (30 minutes) Slowly, gently, relax the body, open the eyes and come out of meditation.