

PREFACE

The Panditarama Forest Meditation Center was inaugurated on November 15th, 1998 by conducting a seventy-day special retreat. From the third special retreat in 2001 onwards, the special retreat was held for sixty days in the months of December and January. Until Sayadaw-gyi's passing away in 2016, seventeen special retreats were conducted. To inspire the yogis, Sayadaw-gyi gave the precious dhamma talks daily up until and including the seventeenth retreat. In the last retreat, through dhamma talks Sayadaw-gyi instructed the yogis how to make note of the objects in the practice. Out of compassion, Sayadaw-gyi gave special instructions about what the yogis should be careful of and what they should undertake in daily practice.

While the retreat was going on, I mentioned to Sayadaw-gyi that it would be good if we could publish a book of that year's talks. Sayadaw-gyi gave a positive answer by saying that he was giving detailed instructions to the yogis so that they would know how they should practice. A Chinese translator had transcribed the talks in Myanmar and she gave a computer copy of it to us. I listened again to the original recordings, filled in the missing parts and edited the transcript. Later, Sayadaws and teaching nuns at Panditarama helped a lot by proof-reading it.

In this book, Sayadaw-gyi has given us a dhamma gift, a way for worldly relatives to become dhamma relatives. If the human beings of the world love themselves, they should surely do *puñña kusala*, wholesome deeds, which are the cause for happiness. That is, they should refrain from blameworthy physical, verbal and mental actions in order not to be born in lower woeful states and to become pure in every way. Among the three, *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā kusala*, at the very least, it is very important to do *dāna kusala* out of loving kindness and compassion in order to open the path of *sīla*, morality. Sayadaw-gyi also reminded and admonished us seriously by saying that one should practice and completely fulfill the three trainings of morality, concentration and wisdom in order to become a true human being, to have a human mentality and to become a supreme human

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being by having human knowledge, as most of the human beings in this world are not true human beings nowadays. Sayadaw-gyi also explained that by practicing like this, one can make one's world very peaceful and from there make the surrounding world peaceful. That way, people of the world could experience real world peace.

Among the wholesome deeds, a wholesome deed which must be done without fail is *satipatthana bhāvanā puñña*. *Satipatthana bhāvanā puñña* is like blood group 'O' because anybody can receive its benefits. As it is a very essential wholesome deed, Sayadaw-gyi explained it in great detail so the yogis could understand very clearly how to practice *satipatthana bhāvanā puñña* according to the Mahasi Sayadaw's technique, based on Buddha's teaching. Every day Sayadaw-gyi encouraged the yogis who have a strong desire to get the benefits from the practice in a short time but lack effort. He reminded yogis that one should practice respectfully, continuously and diligently to get the great benefits of the practice.

In the latter part of the retreat, Sayadaw-gyi talked about how to sharpen the controlling faculties i.e. *saddhā* – faith, *virīya* – effort, *sati* – mindfulness, *samādhi* – concentration and *paññā* – wisdom. Sayadaw-gyi spoke on this topic in a very detailed manner in the third special retreat. A book of those talks has already been printed in the Myanmar language and therefore those talks were left out of the Myanmar version of this book but included in the English version.

I would like to thank everyone for their help and support in making this publication possible.

Finally, I would also like to urge all of you to practice hard according to the instructions given by Sayadaw-gyi in this book if you want to develop *vipassanā* knowledge stage by stage and realize *Nibbāna*.

Vimalañānī

12 October 2018

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Goh Fong Loon wrote me in April 2018 to ask for the transcripts of the 2015-16 International Retreat Dhamma talks given by Sayadaw-gyi so that Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Center (MBMC) could print them as a Dhamma Book for free distribution. I suggested that instead of making a book from the English transcripts, I would do a translation of the Burmese book that Daw Vimalañānī had edited. It would certainly be simpler to work from a text that was clear and comprehensive than to work from the unedited talks, even though that meant doing a new translation.

The English text could not have been done by my efforts alone. Doing the translation was more like being the engine of a process in which many parts worked together to create the final product. We were fortunate to have the help of Leslie Anne Cook, who did the initial editing. Sayadaw U Vivekananda and Daw Vimalañānī did the second round despite their own heavy schedules. Their years of experience under Sayadaw-gyi's wing gave me confidence that the end result would be faithful to Sayadaw-gyi's words. Daw Bhaddamanikā, Daw Gandhasobhā, Daw Than Myint, Jo Anne Mooney and others gave advice and helped to clarify and rectify points I did not know. Still, there are bound to be errors. These are solely my responsibility; if you find something is wrong, missing or needing correction, kindly point it out to the publisher so that we can correct it.

Drawing from the discourses, commentaries, the late Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's expositions, and incorporating decades of teaching experience, the Venerable Sayadaw U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa has given Dhamma talks of a fundamental nature. With this, he has left behind a priceless Dhamma heritage for future generations of practitioners.

It is hoped that new and seasoned practitioners alike will be inspired on the path to liberation by reading this book.

Vajirāvudhā, 12 October 2018