

# The Practice Of SARABHĀṆAKA The One Whom Recites The Words of Ohamma

"Thus you should train yourselves: 'We will listen when discourses that are words of the Tachagata – deep, deep in their meaning, transcendent, connected with emptiness – are being recited. We will lend ear, will set our hearts on knowing them, will regard these teachings as worth grasping & mastering.' That's how you should train yourselves."

## *Some General Points To Keep In Mind*

Place any liking/disliking aside and stay with the chosen text from start to finish.

Set aside one hour each day to spend with the text.

Have a pen, notebook, highlighter, post-it notes, relevant dictionaries, thesaurus's, alternative translations and text in its original language if possible.

Keep the practice regular, only miss sessions when unavoidable.

Remember this is a meditative practice.

Use a space that is suitable for silent meditation, well illuminated and aired.

Write the text out using high quality paper, pen, and ink.

Listen to readings of the text.

Use the texts structure to help you gauge how much to read and how fast. If the text takes time to go through in sections read the text in full regularly to stay with the overriding context more fully. Take time between different texts. Finish absorbing one complete text before moving onto the next. Reading is a dialogue with the text. What is the text saying to you personally? What does the text say that you agree with? What does the text say that doesn't ring true to you and your experience? What does the text say that is fresh to you, that inspires you, that puzzles you or upsets or annoys you?

Ask questions. Take notes. Use your notebook, or the margins of the book to jot down thoughts or to pose questions for which you want to seek answers, discuss, or reflect on.

Keep track of books mentioned that you want to add to your reading list.

Write down significant passages. Use Post-it notes or a highlighter pen to mark passages that speak to you or that you want to return to. Use these passages for further reflection or exploration.

Look up what you don't know and use reference resources.

"There are these five rewards in listening to the Ohamma. Which five? "One hears what one has not heard before. One clarifies what one has heard before. One gets rid of doubt. One's views are made straight. One's mind grows serene. These are the five rewards in listening to the Ohamma."

## *The vācāna - the recitation/reading.*

Begin with a moment of silence, reflecting on the purpose of the practice,

In a meditative space, which is light, airy, comfortable and with an upright posture.

Prepare to discover new dimension of wisdom each reading of the teachings of the Buddha offers.

## *Paṭipajjmāna – entering upon the practice*

The text is read aloud in a clear audible manner in its entirety twice, allowing space between the words and sentences for oneself and others to absorb the words. The second reading is ideally

performed slower than the first.

Spend time to say each word clearly. Listen to the sound of your own voice while reading. The reading can be performed by two, or more, participants if within a group setting.

### *Vācāna*

Murmur, or read the text silently to oneself slowly with attention.

Give voice to those words and phrases that touch you in some way, in a clear manner, listening to one's voice speaking.

Listen deeply to words and phrases shared by others.

Speak only words and phrases of the text.

Reflect upon any word and phrase shared; let them find a home in your memory.

### *Cintenta*

Remain absorbed in the words and turn towards resonances in the body.

What emotions are evoked? What images? What is the experience in & of the body?

Speak only those felt responses related specifically to the text.

### *Paṇḍavekkhaṭṭi*

Explore the meaning of the words and phrases.

Inquire. Look for action points. Do not be afraid to analyse. Notice how the threads of meaning are woven together.

Are the ambiguities, metaphors, context changes, similarities with other teachings which have a specific tone not obviously shared? Allegorical meanings? How clearly is the structure understood?

### *Sallaṭṭaṭṭi*

Join together in the immediate experience of the dhamma: the way things actually are.

Release the text; trust that it will inform the present moment.

Speak to the present experience, sharing observations, pain, insights.

Listen Deeply. There are ample silences to soak in each and every spoken word.

Allow space for others to speak at their own pace.

### *Niṭṭhāpita – to conclude*

We spend the last few moments in silent meditation, focused upon the main lesson from this text. Still the activity released during this period of contemplation; reflecting on what was shared, our reactions, and fortune for this opportunity.

We conclude the session by chanting the verses of sharing and aspiration.

We use what is helpful, we let go what is not.

Allow ourselves to carry the experience with us at the end of the reading allowing it to take firm root.

Endowed with these six qualities, a person is capable of alighting on the lawfulness, the rightness of skillful mental qualities even while listening to the true Dhamma. Which six? "When the Doctrine & Discipline declared by the Tathagata is being taught, he listens well, gives ear, applies his mind to gnosis, rejects what is worthless, grabs hold of what is worthwhile, and is endowed with the patience to conform with the teaching.