



Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

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Strong Mind

In order to “wake up” or obtain greater control over your thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions, it is essential to develop strength or power of mind. This strength or power is a part of mind that is beyond and above the everyday “normal” operations of the mind. The strength of mind is referred to as meta-consciousness, and the “normal” operations of the mind are referred to as the ego or personality.

Meta-consciousness is the awareness of the contents and activities of mind, and is not part of or engaged with the contents of mind but is the witness or observer. Meta-consciousness is a strength in that it frees the mind from the influence and pull of the ego.

The ego is composed of the processes, habits, and conditions that evolved for the survival of the physical body and the emotional integrity of the mind. The ego is intelligent in solving problems related to physical survival but not wise in understanding the causes of suffering (dukkha) and how to escape from those causes.

Meta-consciousness is a condition for the development of wisdom (paññā) that sees reality with clarity and insight. Wisdom is developed by investigating the contents of experience in terms of the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa): observes impermanence (anicca), understands suffering (dukkha), and sees the absence of a fixed self (anattā); all of which requires the stability and clarity of meta-consciousness in order to undertake those investigations. Furthermore, wisdom is the understanding that our permanent essential nature is not the ego or the physical body, and is also the understanding of the causes for and liberation from suffering. See the April 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī).

Without strength of mind, then the ego is the unchallenged lord and master over the mind, and the mind suffers by being a slave to the ego and has little or no free will, no freedom. The ego is the source of the defilements (kilesa) that cause suffering, and the enslaved mind is stuck like a prisoner and the defilements are the cage. The cultivation of meta-consciousness and wisdom is the key that unlocks the jail cell and frees the mind from the ego.

The disciplined and continuous practice of ethical conduct (sīla), meditation (bhāvanā), and the cultivation of the investigative powers of the mind (dhammavicaya) is what develops meta-consciousness and freedom from the ego. The mind grows in strength, great strength, by training in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). Great strength is required to free the mind from the ego and defilements. See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on the Noble Eightfold Path.

The vast majority of people are slaves to the ego and have little or no strength of mind; they are but puppets, and the ego is pulling the strings. People know they are suffering but do not have the strength of mind to execute wise courses of action, such as meditation, physical exercise, eating healthy, etc. A weak mind will always suffer, and only a strong mind can ever know true and lasting peace. Energy (vīriya) and skillful work (kusala-kamma) are required to overcome laziness (kosajja) and the control that the ego has over the mind. A strong mind is persistent and has the ability to keep practicing even when it's difficult, and does not give in to discouragement. See the May 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Energy (vīriya pāramī).

A strong mind refers to a mind that is stable, clear, disciplined, and free from being controlled by impulses or suffering; has degrees of freedom from craving (taṇhā) and aversion (dosa), doesn't cling

to sense pleasures, and is resilient to discomfort; and cannot be easily shaken, misled, or enslaved by thoughts, emotions, or circumstances. A strong mind can stay focused without being easily distracted and doesn't jump around with every thought or emotion, can rest calmly on one object (like the breath). This stability is developed through meditation, especially practices like calm-abiding (samatha) and concentration (samādhi). See the September 2023 Newsletter - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā) for a discussion on meditation practices.

Instead of reacting automatically, the strong mind remains balanced and has emotional resilience. The mind is not overwhelmed by anger, fear, or desire; and is able to experience challenges without collapsing into depression. This characteristic is known as equanimity (upekkhā). See the October 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

A strong mind is aware, anchored in the present moment, and remembers what is wholesome (kusala) and skillful; this quality is known as mindfulness (sati). The mind notices thoughts without being carried away by them, sees emotions arise and pass, and creates space between stimulus and reaction.

Announcements

- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center has a presence on Meet-Up social media, and we ask that you please sign up for every event that you are planning to attend at www.MeetUp.com. Some people are intimidated by a small number of attendees, and a larger number will be encouraging.
- Please help advertise Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center by providing a review at www.google.com/maps.

Activities of the Meditation Center

- Group sitting meditation practice for one hour is held Monday through Friday at 6:30 a.m. and every day at 5:30 p.m. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com on the days and time you would like to participate.
- Group sitting meditation practice for two hours is held every Saturday and Sunday at 6:30 a.m.
- The days of the full moon, new moon, and the two half moons are called in Pali: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the five precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30 p.m. meditation. You may elect to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc.).
- Meditation Workshop is held on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- A recording of a Dhamma Talk from an experienced Thai Forest Teacher will be played on the third Sunday of each month. Sitting meditation starts at 4:30 p.m. and the Dhamma Talk will be played afterwards. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- Every Saturday at 4:15 p.m. the Meditation Center will be cleaned. Please join us in maintaining a clean space for practicing and discussing the Dhamma.
- There is a library at the Meditation Center. You may browse for books to borrow at 5:00 p.m. and check out the books for three weeks.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl.

Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave., just before 9:00 a.m. and stands in front of the store for alms.

- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more additional information, please send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com. We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com.
- Volunteering your skills, energy, and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com, and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.