

## **Purpose of Vipassana Meditation**

Dale Lugenbehl \* December 5, 2010

Vipassana meditation is essentially the practice of learning to be fully present, to have one's awareness focused on what is arising right here and right now: sense perceptions, bodily sensations, thoughts arising, breathing, etc. When thoughts arise, they are simply observed without getting caught up or lost in them or carried away by them.

Once we have become more aware of what is arising in our minds, and how our minds create our experience of things, we can begin to see how the mind's typical way of responding to events creates agitation and suffering. We are in the habit of thinking that we are unhappy or not at peace because of external events—something has happened, someone has done something, the room is too cold, I'm not getting what I want, and so on. The teachings of Vipassana say that it is not events that make us unhappy, but our way of responding to events that makes us unhappy. Meditation helps us to see this clearly, to see how the mind's response to what is happening creates suffering. The mind characterizes events in a certain way, and once we begin to really see this, we can change the mind's habitual responses to things and be content and at peace regardless of what is happening around us. If we see things, both inside us and outside us, more clearly we can respond with greater kindness and wisdom to whatever events arise in our lives.