

## A short introduction to Mahayana Vipassana retreats

With regard to meditation there are two styles. One is the type of meditation where we think about a particular topic and after having generated a certain feeling we familiarized with it. This type of analytical meditation is found in the Lam Rim. In this type of meditation one tries to create a particular feeling and then place the mind on it.

The other is a type of meditation also emphasized by Lama Yeshe (particularly for Westerners) where one does not create anything but rather, observes what is there. This type of meditation that uses awareness-mindfulness instead of concepts is for the sake of DISCOVERING the mind. In Buddhism, "Dharma" and "Mind" are the same thing. So discovering the mind is discovering the dharma, and as dharma and buddhism are also the same thing, we can say that this is also how one discovers buddhism.

The purpose of these retreats is to generate a basic understanding through personal experience of the four factors leading to the generation of an insight into our dissatisfied and potentially content life by looking at one's own mind. What are the four factors?

That which has to be realized,  
That which has to be abandoned,  
That which has to be experienced,  
and that which has to be cultivated.

Suffering (the unsatisfactory nature of our human existence) has to be realized, understood.

The cause of suffering (craving desire) has to be abandoned,

Contentment has to be experienced,

And restraining the senses has to be cultivated.

By restraining the senses craving desire is cooled, by cooling craving desire one is more content, and by being content one stops dissatisfaction.

Prepared by Antonio Satta as a brief introduction to the Mahayana Vipassana retreats that he leads in FPMT centers