

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin,

as taught by S. N. Goenka

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Yath±pi v±t± ±k±se, v±yanti vividh± puth³;
puratthim± pacchim± c±pi, uttar± atha dakkhi^o±.
Saraj± araj± capi, s²t± u^oh± ca ekad±;
adhimmatt± paritt± ca, puth³ v±yanti m±lut±.
Tathevimsami½ k±yasmi½, samuppajjanti vedan±;
sukhadukkkhasamuppatti, adukkhamasukh± ca y±.
Yato ca bhikkhu ±t±p², sampajañña½ na riñcati;
tato so vedan± sabb±, parij±n±ti pa^o1ito.
So vedan± pariññ±ya, dijjhe dhamme an±savo;
k±yassa bhed± dhammajjho, sa^akhyā½ nopeti vedag³ti.*

—Sa½yutta Nik±ya 2.4.260

Through the sky blow many different winds, from east and west, from north and south, dust-laden and dustless, cold as well as hot, fierce gales and gentle breezes—many winds blow.

In the same way, in this body, sensations arise, pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. When a *bhikkhu*, practising ardently, does not neglect his faculty of thorough understanding, then such a wise person fully comprehends all sensations. And having fully comprehended them, within this very life, he becomes freed from all impurities.

At his life's end, such a person, being established in Dhamma and understanding sensations perfectly, attains the indescribable stage.

VEDANĀ AND THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

by Vipassana Research Institute

The Four Noble Truths are the essence of the Buddha's teaching. In the *A^aguttara Nik±ya*, the Buddha said:

Vediyam±nassa kho pan±ha½ bhikkhave, ida½ dukkham ti paññ±pemi, aya½ dukkha-samudayo ti paññ±pemi aya½ dukkha-nirodho ti paññ±pemi, aya½ dukkha-nirodha-g±min²-paṃpad± ti paññ±pemi.¹

To one who experiences sensations, meditators, I teach the truth of suffering, I teach the truth of the arising of suffering, I teach the truth of the cessation of suffering and I teach the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

In this passage the Buddha clearly states that the Four Noble Truths can be understood, realized and practised only through the experience of *vedan±* (sensations).

He further analysed the Noble Truths in the light of *vedan±* by saying:

Ya½ kiñci vedayita½, ta½ pi dukkhasmi½.²

Whatever sensations one experiences, all are suffering.

Not only are *dukkha vedan±* (unpleasant sensations) suffering, but *sukha vedan±* (pleasant sensations) and *adukkhamasukha vedan±* (neutral sensations) are also suffering, because of their impermanent nature. Arising and passing away, *anicca* (impermanence) is the characteristic of *vedan±*. Every pleasant sensation has a

seed of *dukkha* in it because it passes away sooner or later. We are so bound by ignorance that when a pleasant sensation arises, we react to it by developing craving and clinging towards it, without realizing its real nature of impermanence. This leads to suffering: *ta^oh± dukkhassa sambhava½*—craving is the origin of suffering.³

Craving is not only the origin of suffering but suffering itself. As craving arises, suffering arises. The Buddha elucidated the second of the Four Noble Truths not as *ta^oh±-paccay± dukkha* but instead as *dukkha-samudaya*. In other words, craving is not merely the precondition of suffering; it is itself inseparable from suffering. The same emphasis is apparent in the statement *ta^oh± dukkhassa sambhava½*. Indeed, *ta^oh±* and *dukkha* are *sahaj±ta* (conascent). As soon as *ta^oh±* arises, one loses the balance of the mind, becomes agitated and experiences *dukkha*.

Similarly, when *vedan±* arises and results in *ta^oh±*, it is *dukkha*. Thus whenever the term *vedan±* is used in relation to the practice of Dhamma, it conveys the sense of *dukkha*. Even a neutral sensation is *dukkha* if its impermanent nature is ignored. Therefore, not only for *dukkha vedan±* but for *sukha vedan±* and *adukkhamasukha vedan±* as well, the Buddha correctly used the word *vedan±* as a synonym for *dukkha*.

Emphasising this fact again in relation to the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha said in the *Dv±yatana Sutta* of the *Suttanip±ta*:

*Ya½ kiñci dukkha½ sambhoti sabba½ vedan±paccay± ti, ayamek±nupassan±. Vedan±na½ tveva asesavir±ganirodh± natthi dukkhasssa sambhavo ti, aya½ dutiy±nupassan±.*⁴

Whatever suffering arises, it is because of sensations—this is the first *anupassan±* (constant observation). With the complete cessation of sensations, there is no further arising of suffering—this is the second *anupassan±*.

The first *anupassan±* is the constant observation of *vedan±* as *dukkha*. The second *anupassan±* consists of the reality which is beyond the field of *vedan±* as well as beyond the field of *phassa* (contact) and *sak±yatana* (the six sense doors). This is the stage of *nirodha-sam±patti* of an *arahant* (fully liberated one), the experience of the state of *nibb±na*. By this second *anupassan±*, the meditator realizes the truth that in the field of *nirodha-sam±patti*, there is no *dukkha*, because there is no *vedan±*. It is the field beyond the sphere of *vedan±*.

The Buddha continues in the same *sutta*:

*Sukha½ v± yadi v± dukkha½, adukkhamasukha½ saha; ajjhatta½ ca bahiddh± ca, ya½ kiñci atthi vedita½. Eta½ dukkha½ ti ñatv±na mosadhamma½ palokina½; phussa phussa vaya½ passa½, eva½ tattha virajjati; Vedan±na½ khay± bhikkhu, nicch±to parinibbuto 'ti.*⁵

Whatever sensations one experiences in the body, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, inside or outside, all are suffering, all are illusory, all are ephemeral. A meditator observes that wherever there is a contact in the body, sensations pass away (as soon as they arise). Realizing this truth with the extinction of sensations, the meditator is freed from craving, fully liberated.

A person fully established in this truth becomes liberated from the habit of craving and clinging towards sensations and reaches the state where there is no more *vedan±* (*vedan±-khaya*). (This is the stage of *nibb±na* reached in the second *anupassan±*.) A meditator who has experienced this state of *arahatta-phala* becomes *nicch±to* (freed from all desires). Such a person becomes *parinibbuta* (totally liberated).

Therefore, to experience and understand *dukkha-sacca* (suffering), *samudaya-sacca* (its arising), *nirodha-sacca* (its cessation) and *dukkha-nirodha-g±min²-pajipad±-sacca* (the path leading to the cessation of suffering), one has to work with sensations and realize the truth of *vedan±* (*vedan±-sacca ±-samudaya-sacca*), the cessation of *vedan±* (*vedan±-nirodha-sacca*) and the path leading to the cessation of *vedan±* (*vedan±-nirodha-g±min²-pajipad±-sacca*).

This process is clearly described in the *Sam±dhi Sutta* of the *Vedan±-sa½yutta*:

Sam±hito sampaj±no, sato Buddhassa s±vako; vedan± ca paj±n±ti, vedan±nañca sambhava½.

*Yattha cet± nirujjhanti, maggañca khayag±mina½; vedan±na½ khay± bhikkhu, nicch±to parinibbuto 'ti.*⁶

A follower of the Buddha, with concentration, awareness, and constant thorough understanding of impermanence, knows with wisdom, sensations, their arising, their cessation and the path leading to their end. A meditator who has reached the end (has experienced the entire range) of sensations (and has gone beyond) is freed from craving, fully liberated.

The Buddha further says that the purpose of the practice of the *ariyo a±±ha±giko maggo* (the Noble Eightfold Path) is to understand *vedan±* and to reach the state of *vedan±-nirodha* (cessation of sensations):

*Tisso im±, bhikkhave, vedan±. Katam± tisso? Sukh± vedan±, dukkh± vedan±, adukkamasukh± vedan±. Im± kho, bhikkhave, tisso vedan±. Im±sa½ kho, bhikkhave, tissanna½ vedan±na½ abhiññ±ya pariññ±ya parikkhay±ya pah±n±ya...aya½ ariyo a±±ha±giko maggo bh±vetabbo 'ti.*⁷

There are these three types of bodily sensations. What are the three? Pleasant sensations, unpleasant sensations, and neutral sensations. Meditators, the Noble Eightfold Path should be practised for the complete knowledge, the full realization, the gradual eradication and the abandonment of these three bodily sensations.

Sensations (*vedan±*) are the tools by which we can practise the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path; and by realizing the characteristic of *anicca-bodha* (impermanence), we free ourselves from the bonds of *avijj±* and *ta±h±* and penetrate to the ultimate truth: *nibb±na*, freedom from suffering, a state which is beyond the field of *vedan±*, beyond the field of *n±ma-r³pa* (mind and matter).

Notes

1. *A±guttara Nik±ya* 1.163, Nalanda; PTS 176
2. *Majjhima Nik±ya* 3.288, Nalanda; PTS 208
3. *Suttanip±ta* 383, Nalanda; PTS 140
4. Ibid. 383, Nalanda; PTS 139
5. Loc. cit
6. *Sa½yutta Nik±ya* 5.183, Nalanda; PTS 204
7. Ibid. 5.56, Nalanda; PTS 57

DHAMMA GIRI WEBSITE

This website <www.vri.dhamma.org> contains information about Vipassana, *Dhamma Giri*, VRI, Goenkaji's Itinerary, Latest Developments in spread of Dhamma, Vipassana Centres in India, Questions & Answers, VRI English Newsletters, Dhamma News, Dhamma Discourses, Information about *Chaj±ha Sa±g±yana* CD-ROM, Vipassana Seminars, VRI Publications, Updated schedule of courses including one day courses and group sittings in India as well as centre addresses, and updated information on *Dhamma Pattana*, *Dhamma Tapovana*, and Sayagyi U Ba Khin Vipassana Village.

REPORT ON "VALUE INCULCATION THROUGH VIPASSANA" WORKSHOP

Twenty-two participants registered for the workshop conducted at *Dhamma-Pu^oo*, Pune Vipassana Meditation Centre from 18 May to 2 June 2001. There were nine female teachers and thirteen male teachers, all but one, teaching in schools or colleges in Maharashtra. Out of these, eleven had already attended one or more ten-day Vipassana meditation camps. Some old meditators did not attend the 10-day course, but participated informally in the pre-course and post course interaction.

The participants were requested to fill a pre-course feedback form with the usual form for registering for a ten-day camp. Discussions began on 18th May after lunch, at 1 pm. The main issues discussed during the two-day pre-course interaction were:

What are values? Are there any universal values? What are the types of value conflicts/dilemmas encountered in daily life? Why is it difficult to live unto our own values? What is Vipassana and how can it help in value inculcation?

The participants listened to the videotape of Goenkaji's discourse "Brief Introduction to Vipassana". Finally the rationale behind various rules and regulations of the camp was explained at length.

The ten-day course started on 19th May evening and concluded on the morning of 30th May. The participants were advised to take a break for a few hours and return by 5:00 p.m. Some of the participants expressed their inability to return for the post-course workshop as their schools were scheduled to reopen on June 1. Fifteen delegates participated in the post-course interaction.

On the evening of 30th May, the participants shared their experiences regarding the difference they noticed in their interaction with people. Most participants mentioned that they did feel a difference in that they were more calm and less angry than earlier. Some also mentioned that they realized the value of silence. Late in the evening, Goenkaji's discourse on Dhamma service was played, and the participants were motivated to take up the task of cleaning the whole centre during the next morning, mindfully.

On 31st May, the entire morning was spent in Dhamma-service and in the afternoon there was a discussion on this experience. All the participants were happy at having done some physical work to improve the cleanliness of the centre, which would help the meditators of the next course. This was followed by a discussion on the difficulties encountered in introducing value education in schools and colleges. The issues discussed included:

Education in human values and secularism; How can values be taught, for these are caught from the environment and role models? Only enlightened beings can teach values not ordinary mortals!

Late in the evening the participants listened to Goenkaji's discourse given to teachers and parents at Nanavati College, Mumbai.

On 1st June, a live demonstration (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) on giving Anapana to children was arranged. Over thirty children participated and the workshop participants keenly observed the whole process. In the afternoon, the participants gave their feedback and a lively discussion

followed. This was followed by a discussion on the background work needed to introduce meditation in schools and colleges and numerous advantages that can accrue from incorporating meditation as an integral part of education. Lastly, the participants listened to the question-answer session of the discourse given by Goenkaji to the teachers in Pune last year. The participants were requested to fill in the feedback sheets before leaving the next morning. The workshop concluded after the morning meditation on 2nd June.

All the participants felt that more such workshops should be organised, as these would enable teachers to understand how to introduce Value Education in the true sense. By practising meditation, the students would be able to actually imbibe, and not just intellectually know about, the universal human values of loving kindness, compassion, generosity, truthfulness, non-violence etc. Most participants were keen to try to convince the authorities to introduce Anapana in their schools.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question: Please advise us how to answer the following questions briefly: What is a sensation?

Goenkaji: Whatever you feel at the physical level on your body, we call it a sensation.

Question: Why do we get sensation?

Goenkaji: Because you are alive. Your mind and matter—*n[±]ma* and *r³pa*—are working together. Where there is no *n[±]ma*, no mind, one cannot feel. An inanimate body cannot feel sensations. This pillar cannot feel sensations. Wherever there is life, sensations can be felt.

Question: What is equanimity?

Goenkaji: When you don't react to sensations, you experience equanimity.

Question: What do we mean when we say not to react?

Goenkaji: Don't generate craving for pleasant sensations. Don't generate aversion for unpleasant sensations. Then you are not reacting.

Question: What is a free flow?

Goenkaji: There is nothing that flows. It is only your mind which moves from head to feet, or feet to head rapidly, because there is no obstacle on the way. Now there are no longer any blind areas or gross, solidified sensations—only very subtle vibrations of the same type. Your mind moves easily, and it feels as if a flow is there. The whole purpose is that you understand that no matter whether there are gross sensations, or subtle sensations, your mind must remain equanimous. Don't react with aversion towards the gross sensations. Don't react with craving for the pleasant sensations.

(20 January 1996, Annual Meeting: *Dhamma Giri*)

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of ¼c±ryas in Nepal

Dr Roop and Mrs Beena Jyoti
Area Teacher for entire Nepal

New Responsibilities as ¼c±ryas

Anagarika Ratnamanjari

Spread of Dhamma

Mr Bednath and Mrs Manohari Acharya :

To serve Dhamma Citwan, Dhamma Tar±² and Dhamma Bir±¼a

Mr Bodhi Bajra Bajracharya

To serve Non-centre courses in Nepal and Prison courses

Mr Uttam Ratna and Mrs Gyani Dhakwa

Scheduling of assistant teachers and training of assistant teachers in Nepal

Ms Nanimaiya Manandhar

Pali training and Publications in Nepal

Mr Anand Raj and Mrs Nani Maiju Shakya

To serve Dharma Shri²ga and Dhamma Janan²

Mr Bhaktidas Shrestha

Spread of Dhamma

Mr Yadukumar Siddhi

Spread of Dhamma

Mr Madan Tuladhara

Training and coordination of Dhamma workers

New Responsibility as ¼c±rya in Sri Lanka

Mr Geevaka de Soyza

Spread of Dhamma

Senior Assistant Teachers

Ven. Sister Vajira, *Sri Lanka*

Ms Komodhi Mendis, *Sri Lanka*

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers

1. Mr Bishnu Kumar &
2. Mrs Suman Goenka, *Muzaffarpur*
3. Mr R. P. C. Rajapakse, *Sri Lanka*
4. Mr D. H. Anura Piyatissa, *Sri Lanka*
5. Ms Dido Prabha Ranasooriya, *Sri Lanka*

6. Mr Paul Blamey, *U.K.*
7. Ms Angela Davis, *U.K.*
8. Mrs. Snehlata Jain, *U.K.*
9. Mr Paul Topham, *U.K.*
10. Mr Sergio Borsa, *Italy*
11. Mr Arthur Rosenfield, *USA &*
12. Mrs Anna Teixido, *Spain*

Children Course Teachers

1. Ms Ranjini Jayaratne, *Sri Lanka*
2. Mr D. P. Henry, *Sri Lanka*
3. Mr L. H. Chandrasena, *Sri Lanka*
4. Mr Andrea Mazza, *Italy*

TRAINING OF RCCCs AND CCTs

The programme for training of Regional Children Course Co-ordinators and Children Course Teachers is as follows:

21 and 22 July: Varanasi

28 and 29 July: Dhamma Ga²ga², Kolkata

All RCCCs and CCTs can attend these workshops. ATs, SATs and Teachers are also welcome to join as observers. Please refer to Schedule of Vipassana Courses for contact details of the venues.

COURSE REGISTRATION CANCELLATIONS

At recent courses, both at *Dhamma Giri* and at other centres, students registered for courses have failed to show up and have not informed course organisers of their cancellations. Other students wishing to attend have been turned away as a result of apparently full registration. Further, since many factors depend on the number of students registered: amount of food to be ordered, number of workers needed, size of site, etc., the task of organizing courses becomes more difficult. Therefore, all students are requested to reconfirm their booking before the start of the course and inform course organisers even at the last minute if they are unable to attend the course.

Old students recommending others for Vipassana courses should ensure that applicants follow the above guidelines.

SUBSCRIPTION TO ENGLISH/HINDI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: ANNUAL: RS 20/- (U.S. \$10/- OUTSIDE INDIA); LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 250/- (U.S. \$100/- OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF VRI.

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