

The Universal Appeal of the Buddha Dhamma: A Personal Experience



Lectures by Acariya S.N. Goenka
World Buddhist Summit, Yangon, Myanmar
9 to 11 December 2004



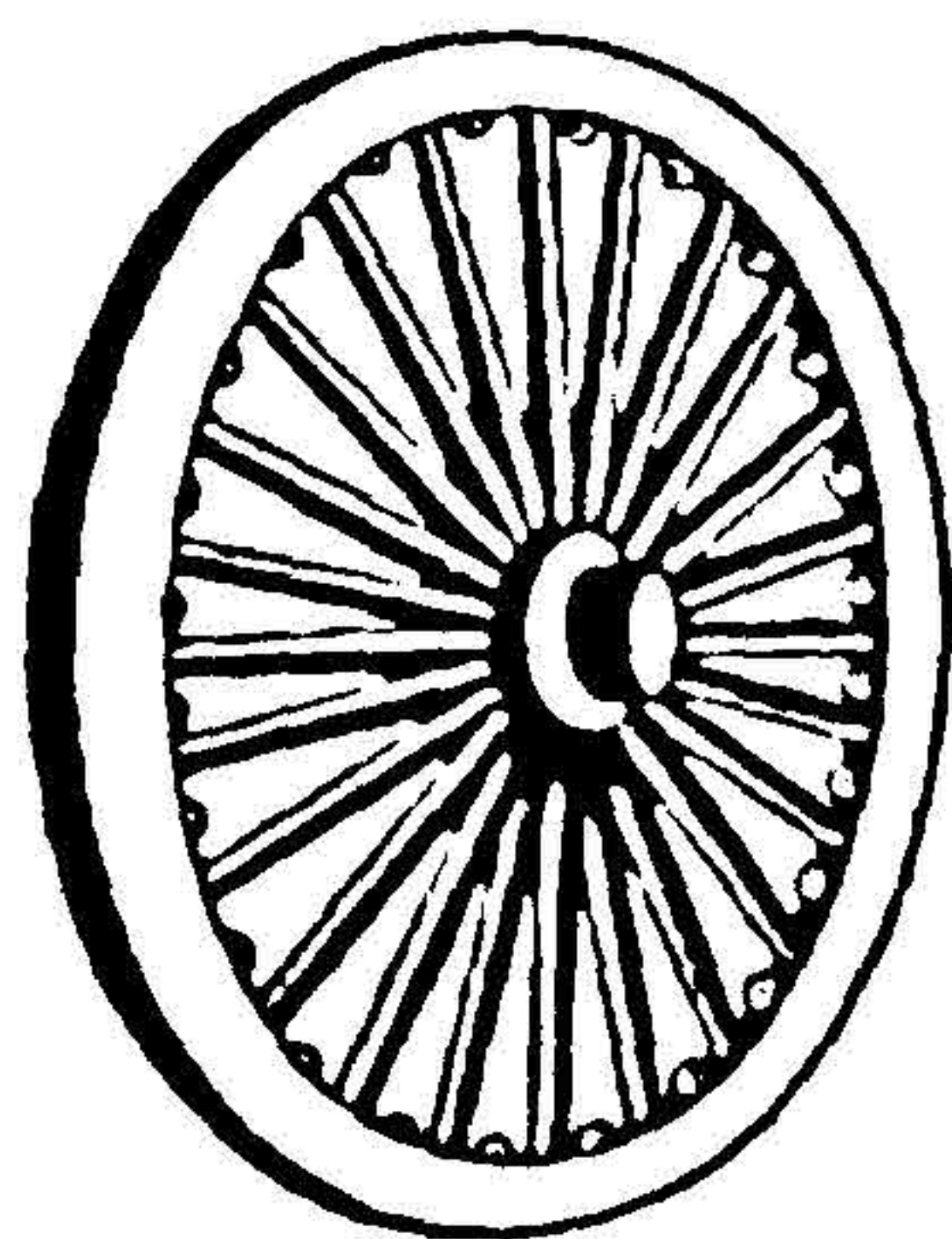
Vipassana Research Institute

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Fax: [91] (2553) 244176
E-mail: info@giri.dhamma.org
Website: www.vri.dhamma.org

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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā sambuddhassa

*Homage to the Exalted One, the Arahant,
the Fully Enlightened One*

The Universal Appeal of the Buddha Dhamma : A Personal Experience

Most Venerable Sangha and Dhamma friends:

Let me first thank the organizers of this conference for kindly inviting me. I would also like to congratulate the organizers for choosing Myanmar as the host for the Fourth World Buddhist Summit that aims at uniting the followers of the Buddha in order to spread the peaceful message of the Buddha all over the world. We unite and make a collective effort not to dominate the world, not to exploit the world, not to boost the supremacy of one religion over another but to help in a great conversion of humanity—conversion from bondage to liberation, from cruelty to compassion, from discord to concord, from misery to happiness. This is the Buddha's way. The Buddha spread the message of peace and harmony. Emperor Asoka helped to disseminate it further in many countries. And today, I am happy to see the World Buddhist Summit is working in the same direction for the benefit of many.

Apparently it seems that there are many divisions of the followers of the Buddha but the differences are superficial. All these branches follow the same basic principles of the Four Noble Truths including the Noble Eightfold Path and the *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, the Chain of Conditioned Arising. I am very happy that this effort is getting a new impetus in this Summit in Myanmar.

Myanmar is my motherland. I was born here. In some families as in my family it was a tradition to bury the

umbilical cord in the ground of the building where one is born. My umbilical cord is buried here in the soil of Myanmar. A part of me will always remain with the soil of Myanmar. It is not my motherland just because a part of my physical being has become one with the soil of Myanmar—it is also my spiritual motherland. Myanmar gave me two births. The second birth is more important for me because I got Dhamma here. As the bird has got two births: one birth coming out of the mother's womb, and the second birth coming out of the shell of the egg. My mother gave me the first birth, and Sayagyi U Ba Khin gave me the second birth—I received Dhamma, broke the shell of ignorance and a new Goenka came out of it.

This is such a powerful Dhamma land that it attracted me to the Saddhamma in spite of my upbringing, which was totally opposed to the Buddha's teaching. Throughout my childhood and early adulthood, it was drilled into me that one may worship the Buddha but one must stay away from his teaching. I was told that the Buddha's teaching was deceptive and leads to hell!

How could I come to Saddhamma in spite of such deep prejudices? What attracted me to the Buddha Dhamma?

I remember the first time I met my teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin. I had great attachment to my beliefs. I had many misgivings about the teaching of the Buddha. Sayagyi knew that I was a leader of the local Indian Hindu community. He asked me, "Do you Hindus have any objection to *sīla*—a life of morality, to *samādhi*—mastery over the mind and to *paññā*—wisdom to purify the mind?" How could I object! How could anybody object! He continued, "Well, this is what the Buddha taught. This is all I am interested in and this is all that I am going to teach you." How can anyone have objection to *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*? Years later when

I started teaching Dhamma to those who came from diverse religious backgrounds, I used the same way as Sayagyi to explain Dhamma to them.

Sayagyi's interpretation of Dhamma was universal and non-sectarian. He was not interested in converting me to "Buddhism". He used to say, "For me, if someone follows *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, for all practical purposes, he or she is a Buddhist". And if a Buddhist doesn't practice *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, I feel sorry for him or her!

My first Vipassana course introduced me to the teachings of the Buddha and transformed my life forever. I was pulled like a magnet to his logical, practical, pragmatic, universal and non-sectarian teaching. There was nothing objectionable in it. I had been hearing about and talking about the eradication of defilements and purification of mind. When I started observing sensations, initially, there were moments of doubt, "How is this going to help me?" But very soon I realised that by observing sensations, I am working at the root of the problem. I was actually walking towards the goal of full liberation. Whatever Sayagyi taught me was not merely to develop devotion or to satisfy the intellect though both are important. He taught me the way to know the truth at the experiential level. What convinced me and gave me here-and-now results was the experience of the truth through bodily sensations. The Buddha's teaching is *akālika*.

I feel very fortunate that I was born in this land of Dhamma. I feel very fortunate that I came in contact with Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Here was a person who had the technique in its pristine purity. Sayagyi was a saintly person who taught with great compassion without expecting anything in return.

Now the same teaching is attracting people from all over the world. Vipassana courses have been held in about 70 countries and people from more than 130 countries have

participated in the courses. Why are people from all over the world getting attracted to the Buddha Dhamma?

The teaching of the Enlightened One is so simple and yet so deep, so deep. He has explained his teachings in few words:

Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ,

kusalassa upasampadā;

sacittapariyodapanaṃ,

*etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*¹

Etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ. This is the teaching of all the Buddhas. Not just Gotama the Buddha. Everyone who becomes the Buddha will teach nothing but only these three: *sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ*—abstain from all unwholesome actions, evil actions, sinful actions; *kusalassa upasampadā*—perform wholesome actions, pious actions; and *sacittapariyodapanaṃ*—keep on purifying the mind, keep on purifying the totality of mind. That's all. So simple and yet so deep, so profound.

At the surface level it looks so simple. Any religion worth the name will say: "Abstain from sinful action." Every religion will say that. "Perform good actions." Every religion will say that. "Purify your mind." Every religion will say that. Then what was unique about the Buddha? Let us understand.

If it was just a question of giving sermons, then the Buddha stands on the same level like any other religious teacher. But the Buddha does not merely give sermons. He gives us a way, a technique, a practice by which one can actualise those sermons to enable one to live the life of Dhamma.

To live the life of morality is acceptable by one and all at the intellectual level: "Yes, I must live a life of morality. I accept it." Or one accepts it at the devotional level because the

Buddha said so or the founder of this religion or that religion says so and: "I am from that particular sect, from that particular religion, from that particular tradition. Therefore, I must live a life of morality." One accepts this at the devotional level. One accepts this at the intellectual level. "I must perform wholesome actions, good actions. I must purify my mind."

But it is so difficult to accept it at the actual level, the experiential level. The experiential level is missing and if that is missing, everything is missing. Someone becomes a Buddha. He teaches the experiential aspect of Dhamma.

Abstain from sinful actions. How to abstain? Perform good actions. How to perform good actions? Purify the mind. How to purify the mind in its totality? This is where the Buddha made a unique contribution to humanity. He discovered and showed the way to totally purify the mind.

The first part is *sīla*: abstain from sinful actions. Some religious teachers tell people that if they perform sinful actions, they will go to hell. If they abstain from sinful actions, they will go to heaven. Yes, it is true. But there are many who just laugh at it: "Who cares for the next life. Where is hell? Where is heaven? If I enjoy this life, it is good for me."

Then another argument is given. A human being is a social being. One has to live in the society. One has to live with the members of the family. One has to live with others. Even a recluse or a monk or a nun remains in contact with the other members of the society. If one performs any action, which disturbs the peace and harmony of the society, how can one have peace and harmony within oneself? "Yes," intellectually one starts understanding, "If I ignite fire all around me, I will have to suffer the heat of this fire around me. I will suffer from this heat that I have generated all

around.”

Yet another explanation is given, often to children:

“If someone comes to kill you or someone hits you do you like it?”

“No, I don’t like it.”

“Then if you hit somebody and try to kill somebody, that person won’t like it, will he?”

“No, that person won’t like it.”

“Then you should not do something which you don’t like others to do to you!”

“Yes, I should not kill. You are correct.”

Similar arguments are presented for all the moral precepts.

All these five *sīlas* are quite acceptable at the logical level, at the rational level, at the intellectual level. Yet people do not lead the life of *sīla*. Even those who understand that: “I must live a life of *sīla*. *Sīla* is so important for me. A life of morality is so good for me, so good for others.” Yet, one does not live a moral life. Why? The Buddha understands it properly. Why? Because one has no control over the mind. One is not the master of one’s own mind.

An addict of alcohol knows very well, “I should not take alcohol, alcohol is not good for me.” Yet, when the time comes, he succumbs. He can’t control himself. A gambler knows very well, “I should not gamble, gambling is not good for me.” Yet, when the time comes, he starts gambling. One keeps on performing evil deeds while understanding very well that these are not good for one. This is because one is not the master of one’s own mind. One has become a slave of one’s own unwholesome habit patterns.

Therefore the Buddha teaches the second part of Dhamma: *samādhi*, mastery over the mind. Again the Buddha’s

samādhi differs from that taught by the other teachers. He teaches *sammā samādhi*.

All right, one has practised *samādhi*. One has developed mastery over the mind. One is living a life of *sīla* and is not performing any unwholesome action that will disturb the peace and harmony of other beings. One has developed *samādhi*. But if there are impurities in the depth of the mind, *anusaya kilesa* (sleeping volcanoes of impurities at the deepest level of the mind), one does not know when one of these sleeping volcanoes will erupt. One will again get overpowered by the impurity and will again start living a wrong life.

The Bodhisatta Gotama realised this. He practised all the eight *jhānas*, *lokiya-jhānas*. He realised that even after perfecting these *jhānas*, the impurities at a very deep level of the mind were still not eradicated. Unless these deep-rooted impurities are destroyed, one cannot be a liberated person.

So he worked for the third part of Dhamma: *paññā*, wisdom, insight, purification of the mind at the deepest level. We have a vast canvas with the spectrum of the entire Indian spirituality and we see so many teachers announcing the same thing: "Come out of craving, come out of aversion. Don't indulge in craving and aversion towards sensual objects." But when we go deeper in this subject, we find that the Buddha's contribution was unique. No other teacher could reach the depth that the Buddha reached. The path he showed takes everyone to that depth.

One can purify the mind at the surface level. One can even purify the mind at a little deeper level. But the way to purify the mind at the deepest level, at the root level, was missing. The Buddha discovered how to eradicate all the *anusaya kilesas*. The roots of impurities have to be taken out. So long as these *saṅkhāras* are there, as explained in

paṭiccasamuppāda, *taṇhā*, *upādāna* and *bhava* follow—*bhava* after *bhava*. One keeps on rolling in misery, one keeps on rolling in misery. One cannot come out of misery. One may keep on taking births in very high planes, brahmic planes, *rūpa-brahmaloka*, or *arūpa-brahmaloka*. Still, one is living in the field of suffering.

The *anusaya kilesas* are the seeds of *bhava*. These *saṅkhāras* give rise to one *bhava* after another, one *bhava* after another. One does not come out of misery as long as the *anusaya kilesas* are not eradicated.

The Buddha said that Dhamma is *paripunṇam*. *Kevalaparipunṇam*. Nothing else needs to be added. The entire Dhamma is included in it. Nothing is missing. In these three—*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*—nothing is missing. Dhamma is *parisuddham*—so pure that nothing needs to be removed. Nothing needs to be taken out and nothing else needs to be added. It is complete and pure—*kevalaparipunṇam parisuddham*.

Now we see that Vipassana, this technique of the Buddha, has travelled round the world. Intellectuals, scientists, engineers, doctors, psychiatrists—all have learnt it and experienced it. People from different sects come to these courses—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Jews, Parsis, Sikhs etc. and, of course, Buddhists. Even people from communities who have been traditionally opposed to the Buddha, when they come to Vipassana courses, find it acceptable.

This is the beauty of the Buddha's teaching. It is so simple, pragmatic, universal, and acceptable to all. One just practises *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. Enough. It is so pure that nothing needs to be taken out. Nobody can point out anything wrong in *sīla*. Nobody can point out anything wrong in *samādhi*. Nobody can point out anything wrong in *paññā*.

The essence of the Buddha's teaching—*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*—is acceptable to all. This is because all religions have an inner core, an inner essence that focuses on the purification of mind. All religions also have an outer shell that is concerned more with appearances, festivals, rites, rituals etc. So long as one gives importance to the inner essence, it doesn't matter if the outer shell differs from one religion to another. However, when the outer shell is given all importance, the inner core is lost and a religion fails to create peace and harmony. The Buddha's teaching helps to live according to the inner essence. It gives benefits here and now.

I benefited so much from the practice of Vipassana that I started reading the words of the Buddha as per my teacher's advice. I had been told from childhood that the Buddha incorporated good points from our tradition in his teaching and then added delusion to it; and that he had not discovered anything new. Since I found the Buddha's teaching to be very beneficial, I further explored the truth about these statements. Reading the words of the Buddha (*Tipiṭaka*) gave me so much joy! How wrong my earlier information turned out to be! It showed me how the Buddha's emphasis was on actual experience of the truth. The *Tipiṭaka* is so inspiring. We see such a wonderful description of the *Dhammakāyā* of the Buddha in the *Tipiṭaka*.

When the Buddha taught Dhamma to people, he said: "I have no interest in making you my disciples. I have no interest in snatching you away from your old teachers. I have found the way out of misery. Give it a trial." At one time, while talking to some ascetics who were sceptical about Siddhamma, he exhorted them to give a trial only for seven days.

If more and more people in the world start calling themselves Buddhists, how will they benefit? Yes, if they start practising *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* then yes, they will surely get the best fruit of the Buddha's teaching. If one calls oneself a Buddhist, but does not practise *sīla*, does not practise *samādhi*, does not develop *paññā*, how will one benefit from the teaching of the Buddha?

The Buddha had no interest in changing the names of his disciples. Moggallāna remained Moggallāna. That is a brahmin name, the name of a particular brahmin clan. Kaccāna remained Kaccāna. Bhāradvāja remained Bhāradvāja. Kaccāna and Bhāradvāja are the names of brahmin clans.

The Buddha's teaching is so simple and so profound. But to actually practise Dhamma, one has to work hard. My Sayagyi used to say, "It is very easy. And yet, it is so difficult!"

Listening to discourses or reading scriptures is very good. *Kālena dhammassavanam etam maṅgalamuttamam*². Discussing Dhamma is wonderful—*kālena dhammasākacchā etam maṅgalamuttamam*.³ But if one just keeps on discussing and debating, and one doesn't practise Dhamma, then it doesn't work. One has to start taking actual steps on the Path. If one doesn't take steps on the path of Dhamma, one doesn't get the fruits of Dhamma.

The Buddha teaches Dhamma, the law of nature, the universal law of nature, which is applicable to one and all. He teaches in such a simple language and in such a lucid manner. When we don't practise it we make a philosophy out of it and we start fighting: "Your belief is wrong. My belief is all right. Your belief is wrong, my belief is correct." What do we gain? Even if my belief is all right, very good, yet if I don't practise, then what is the use of this belief?

I was born in Myanmar. I feel very grateful, and proud also, that I was born in this Dhamma land. More than eighty percent of the people here do not believe that there is a soul inside. They do not believe that there is a creator of this universe, a God Almighty. Now, for the last more than three decades, I live in a country and I often travel in countries, where more than eighty percent of people believe that there is a soul inside. They believe in God Almighty as the creator of the universe.

There could be thousands of arguments that there is no soul while others argue that there is indeed a lasting soul. Similarly, there may be arguments about the existence of God Almighty. These debates and these arguments don't help much.

When one practises Dhamma, one experiences oneself that the entire phenomenon is nothing but interaction of mind and matter. At the apparent level, it looks so solid, so substantive, so lasting. This is *paññatti*; it appears to be so. The Buddha's teaching is a journey from *paññatti*, the apparent to *paramattha*, the ultimate truth. One has to go beyond the apparent to reach the ultimate truth. This is what Vipassana is—*paññatti thapetvā visesena passatī'ti vipassanā'*. When one looks within, one starts to realise that everything in the field of mind and matter is impermanent *anicca*. Everything keeps changing.

Whatever keeps changing cannot be a source of lasting happiness. One realises that whatever happiness one experiences, sooner or later, turns into unhappiness. Unhappiness is inherent in transient happiness. As one continues on the path one realises that suffering is inherent in every experience in the field of mind and matter: *yam kiñci vedayitam tam dukkhasmim'*.

As one observes the phenomenon objectively, the way the

Buddha taught, one will find that there is no solidity. One's own investigation of the mind-matter phenomenon leads to the discovery that everything is mere vibration. *Sabbo pajjalito loko, sabbo loko pakampito*⁶. The entire universe is nothing but combustion and vibration. There is no lasting substance in it. One has no control over it. There is nothing that one can point out as "I" or "mine" or "my soul"

The experience of *anicca* at the experiential level changes *saññā* to *anicca-saññā*, which naturally leads to *anattā*. This leads to the experience of *nibbāna*.

*Aniccasaññino hi, anattasaññā saṇṭhāti, anattasaññī asmimānasamugghātaṃ pāpuṇāti ditṭheva dhamme nibbānan'ti.*⁷

This has to be experienced. One may keep on saying: "There is no soul," and if one is full of ego, the Buddha's teaching doesn't help. One's ego is so strong. If one doesn't experience *anattā* and one makes a philosophy out of it, it won't help. But when one experiences oneself, one is liberated. That is *anattā*.

Paññā takes one to the stage where the ego naturally gets dissolved by experiential understanding. It is neither an intellectual game nor an emotional or devotional game. It is not a blind belief; it is not a dogma; it is not a cult; it is not a philosophy. It is a truth that can be realised by one and all: a Christian or a Muslim or a Hindu or a Jain; a Myanmar or a Thai, an Indian or a Pakistani or an American or a Russian or a Chinese. It makes no difference. The law of nature is universal—it is applicable to everyone.

This was the discovery made by the Buddha. Some accepted it in the past and some didn't. The Buddha shows the path. He doesn't want you to accept blindly. He gives you a way to find out the truth for yourself.

Galileo discovered that the earth is round. He also discovered that the earth is rotating on its own axis. Some believed it; some didn't believe it. Later on, all people accepted this as the truth. The earth was round even before Galileo. The earth was round at the time of Galileo. The earth remains round after Galileo. Newton found out that there is a law of gravity. He announced it. The law of gravity was there even before Newton, at the time of Newton, and will remain after Newton.

Similarly, the law of *paṭiccasamuppāda* was there—even before the Buddha, at the time of the Buddha, and will remain after the Buddha. This is the law of nature.

Whether there is a Buddha or no Buddha, *Dhamma niyāmatā* remains eternal. The Buddha said:

*Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ, tthitāva sā dhātu dhammatthitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā.*⁸

Due to *avijjā*, ignorance, one does not know what is happening within the framework of *nāma-rūpa*, mind and matter. Every moment there is some sensation or the other, throughout the body. Wherever there is life, there is a sensation. All these six sense organs come in contact with their respective objects; there is a *vedanā*, *phassa-paccayā vedanā*. If one does not have the ability to feel the *vedanā*, how can one understand *vedanā-paccayā tanhā*.

That was there even before the Buddha. *Vedanā-paccayā tanhā* was there before the Buddha. This law was there. This was at the time of the Buddha. This will also remain after the Buddha. That is why the law, the Dhamma, is eternal. *Esa dhammo sanantano*. It is *sanantano*, eternal. The Buddha or no Buddha, it is there.

The Buddha discovers it and makes use of it for his own liberation, and with all compassion, distributes it to others.

“Look, this is how you are miserable. *Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā, vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*. Look, I will give you a way by which you come out of it. Now *vedanā* is there, but no more *taṇhā*. Every time you experience *vedanā*, *paññā* must arise. Oh *anicca, anicca, anaissā, anaissā*. This *vedanā* or that *vedanā*, it is *anicca, anaissā*.”

Again, if it becomes a philosophy that every *vedanā* is *anicca*—one doesn’t gain anything, it is merely one’s belief. But if one experiences: “Look, a *vedanā* has arisen. Sooner or later, it passes away. However unpleasant a sensation may be, however unpleasant a *vedanā* may be, it is bound to pass away. However pleasant a *vedanā* may be it is bound to pass away. *Udaya-vaya, udaya-vaya*.”

One has to remain aware of this arising and passing away—*Samudaya-dhammānupassī viharati, vaya-dhammānupassī viharati*.⁹ Apparently, it seems that *vedanā* stays for some time but sooner or later it passes away. However, a meditator realises with his or her own experience that every moment it arises and passes away without any gap. As it arises so it passes away with so much rapidity... *samudayavaya-dhammānupassī viharati*.¹⁰

The *vedanā* is there all the time. It arises and passes away, it arises and passes away. One keeps on reacting to it. If it is pleasant, one reacts with *lobha*. If it is unpleasant, one reacts with *dosa*. This is what one is doing for the whole life and creating more and more misery for oneself. One keeps on multiplying one’s misery. Look, there is a way to come out of misery. *Vedanā-nirodhā taṇhā-nirodho. Taṇhā-nirodhā, upādāna nirodhā*’’. One reaches the stage where one transcends the field of mind and matter.

The Buddha did not merely give sermons. Mere sermons would have made him just one among so many philosophers in the world. He experienced the ultimate truth himself to

become the Buddha and taught others to experience it.

The Buddha's teaching fascinated me, because of its practical aspect. If it were only an intellectual exercise, I doubt that I would have gone on the path of the Buddha. I would have said: "Very good, very good. Our *Gita* also says so. Our *Upanishada* also says so. This is wonderful. Very good." I would not have walked on it.

I was convinced because I was given the way: "Look, this is how you can come out of *lobha*. This is how you can come out of *dosa*."

I feel very fortunate that I was born in this wonderful land, the land of Dhamma. I am very fortunate to be born in a country where the teaching of the Buddha is preserved in its pristine purity. Vipassana—the way it should be practised—is maintained here.

I feel very fortunate that I came in contact with a saintly person who taught so compassionately without expecting anything in return.

Myanmar has a special place in the life of the Buddha. After his enlightenment, after enjoying the bliss of enlightenment for seven weeks, the first meal he took was Myanmar rice and honey offered to him by two businessmen from Myanmar, Tapassu and Bhallika. They became the first lay devotees by taking refuge in the Buddha and the Dhamma (*dvevācika upāsakas*). This was the first and only *dvisaraṇa gamana* (refuge in the Buddha and Dhamma). The Buddha plucked out a few strands of his hair and gave this *rūpa-dhātu* (*kesa-dhātu*) to the two Myanmar businessmen. The *dhātu* given in his own lifetime, personally gifted by him and that too the only time he ever gave such a gift in his lifetime is very special indeed. This *Buddha dhātu* that was gifted in his very lifetime came to Myanmar—and the Shwedagon is such a glorious tribute to that fact. Myanmar preserved

more than just the *kesa-dhātu* of the Buddha. Through the millennia, it preserved the *Saddhamma*—*pariyatti* as well as *paṭipatti*—especially the practice of Vipassana.

Now Vipassana is spreading round the world. Whether one is from Myanmar, from India, from another Theravadin country, from a Mahayana country or from any other part of the world; the most important thing is to take actual steps on the path of Dhamma.

May all of you get the opportunity to taste pure Dhamma at the experiential level. May all of you come out of your misery. May all of you enjoy real peace, real harmony, real happiness, real happiness.

Bhavatu Sabba Maṅgalaṃ—May all beings be happy!

Notes

1. *Dīgha Nikāya, II, Mahāpadānasutta*
2. *Khuddaka Nikāya, Khuddakapāṭha, Maṅgalasutta*
3. Ibid.
4. *Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā, Nānakathā*
5. *Majjhima Nikāya. III, Mahākammavibhaṅgasutta*
6. *Samyutta Nikāya, Sagāthāvagga, Upacālāsutta*
7. *Aṅguttara Nikāya, Navakanipāta, Sambodhisutta*
8. *Samyutta Nidānavagga, Nidānasamyutta, Paccayasutta*
9. *Dīgha Nikāya II, Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta*
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

Right Samadhi : Anapana Sati

Most Venerable Sangha and Dhamma friends:

In the last lecture, we discussed some basics about the Buddha's teaching, its appeal to and its acceptance by humanity at large.

When we see the entire spiritual background of those days of India, it becomes very clear that some aspects of Dhamma were known before the Buddha's enlightenment.

Sīla was not something new that the Buddha gave to the world. There were teachers who were teaching and practising *sīla* even before the Buddha, at the time of the Buddha, and after the Buddha. The Buddha elaborated on the practice of *sīla* and the wisdom behind the practice of *sīla*.

The Buddha taught a method to find out for oneself at the experiential level why one should practise *sīla*: Whenever one breaks any precept, one cannot do so without first generating some negativity or the other in one's mind. One also realizes by proper practice that the behaviour pattern of generating negativities, say anger, hatred, ill will, animosity etc. actually harms oneself since one is the first victim of one's negativities.

These words become clear at the experiential level—*pubbe hanati attānam, pacchā hanati so pare*. One first kills one's own peace and harmony before killing that of anyone else. When one develops experiential wisdom, *paññā*, one starts realising that to break any of the five precepts, one must

first generate some negativity in the mind. Whenever one generates any negativity, one becomes miserable. One realises this truth at the level of body sensations. If one observes one's negativities at the level of body sensations equanimously, one easily comes out of the unwholesome behaviour pattern of the mind at the root level and starts living a life of *sīla*, which is good for oneself and good for others. Thus, the entire path taught by the Buddha is on the basis of *paññā*. *Sīla* aids *paññā* and *paññā* aids *sīla*. The Buddha said that just as one washes one's hands by rubbing one with the other, likewise *sīla* and *paññā* purify each other.

There were so many different kinds of *samādhi* practices at the time of the Buddha. Even before the Buddha, there were people practising *samādhi*. The Bodhisatta, the ascetic prince Siddhattha, went to Ācariya Ālāra Kālāma and Ācariya Uddaka Rāmaputta to learn the seven *jhānas* and the eighth *jhāna* respectively. This means that *jhānas* were being practised and taught at that time. *Samādhi* did not originate with the Buddha. But the Buddha turned the existing practices of *samādhi* into *sammā-samādhi*. What was just a *lokiya-samādhi*, he turned into *lokuttara-samādhi*—*samādhi* that leads one towards the goal of liberation. This was the contribution of the Buddha.

Some aspects of *paññā* at the mere intellectual level were known to some people of India in those days. These were only *suta-mayā paññā* or *cintā-mayā paññā*. The Buddha's new contribution was *bhāvanā-mayā paññā*.

In the Tipitaka, there are instances where we find the Buddha questioning a person: "What do you believe? Is this body and mind *anicca* or *nicca*?"

The other person says: "Sir, it is *anicca*."

"Whatever is changing, is it *sukha* or *dukkha*?"

“Sir, it is *dukkha*.”

“Whatever is *anicca*, is *dukkha*, can you call it—This is ‘I’; this is ‘me’ or this is ‘my soul’?”

He says: “No sir.”

The Buddha often asks, “*Kim maññasi*—What do you believe?”

And he says: “Yes sir. I believe that this is *anicca*, this is *dukkha*, this is *anattā*.”

Then the Buddha says: “Well, now *passa*, *jāna*—see, experience. *Passa*—do Vipassana, observe it. And *jāna*—understand it.”

The Buddha gave the *Satipaṭṭhāna* so that we can see (*passa*) and experience (*jāna*). This was the gift of the Buddha to humanity—simple and clear instructions about how to walk on the path that leads to complete liberation.

A significant school in India and around the world believes in mere devotion—They are devoted to and pray to this *deva* or that *deva*, this *brahma* or that *brahma* or to Almighty God. All prayers, *patthanā*, are full of craving. That is not the Buddha’s teaching. The Buddha says: “Nobody can liberate you. I cannot liberate you; I can only show you the path to liberation—you have to work out your own liberation.” *Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātāro tathāgatā*.¹ A *tathāgata* will only show the path.

If one generates negativity in the mind, one has to suffer. This is the law of nature. It is not the Buddha who punishes you! One has to suffer because the law of nature is such that if one generates *lobha*, *dosa* or *moha*, one becomes miserable. That is the *dhamma-niyāmatā*—the law of nature.

If one comes out of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, one comes out of misery. When one’s mind is free from negativity, then the

four *brahmavihāras* (*mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekkhā*) naturally spring from within. When one's mind dwells in these *brahmavihārās*, nature starts rewarding one. One feels so peaceful, so happy. This is the law of nature.

The Eightfold Noble Path that the Buddha gave to liberate us from all suffering can be divided into three parts: *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

One should observe *sīla*. To do so, one should have control over one's mind. For that, one must practice *samādhi*. In the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddha included only *sammā samādhi*, which is an integral part of the path of liberation.

There were many types of *samādhis* prevailing then. There were many objects with the help of which one could concentrate the mind. The Buddha also gave forty such objects of concentration. But the Buddha mostly taught Anapana Sati (*ānāpānassati*)—observation of the respiration, as it is. He did not discuss any other object in as much detail and as many times as he discussed Anapana. When the ascetic prince Siddhattha found out that all the other *samādhis* as well as the most severe austerities didn't eradicate all suffering, he discovered the middle path. He remembered that as a child, he had once practised awareness of respiration under a tree while his friends, relatives and attendants were engrossed in festivities. It had brought him much peace and joy. Now after leaving aside the two extremes, he embarked on the journey to liberation by starting with the awareness of natural respiration. Thus, Anapana has a very special place in *samādhi* taught by the Buddha.

I learned Anapana Sati from my teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Since I learned this particular method from my teacher (and also the reasons behind it), I am going to elaborate on it here. In doing so, I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. I

Kaba-Aye, Yangon.

would like to apologize here if while giving the explanation of this method that I learned from Sayagyi, I inadvertently appear critical of any other technique. All I can say is that I have respect for all the great traditions of the Buddha's teaching, which are like branches that get their sap from the same stem and roots of the Eightfold Noble Path, the Four Noble Truths and *Paṭiccasamuppāda* etc. More and more, the world is looking to the Buddha's teaching for solutions to the problems that afflict humanity. This has increased the responsibility of the different traditions of the Buddha's followers. We should ignore the minor differences and focus on the fundamental teachings that are common to all the traditions.

Respiration is a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious and between voluntary and involuntary processes. One can say that it is a bridge between mind and matter. Anapana Sati requires us to remain aware of the breath on the area below the nostrils and above the upper lip. It is one-pointed concentration at the middle of the upper lip—*uttaroṭṭhassa vemajjhappadeso*.²

In the tradition in which I was born and brought up, observation of respiration was sometimes taught but always along with some verbalization or some visualization. It is likely that the awareness of respiration was borrowed from the Buddha's teaching and then the practice became corrupted. In my childhood and early adulthood, I mostly heard about just verbalization or visualization.

But my teacher taught me to observe the breath as it is—*yathā-bhūta*, with no verbalization, no visualization, no imagination. Observation of the breath as it is; as it comes in, as it goes out. He told me that Anapana Sati was not a breathing exercise. It was different from *prāṇāyāma* where we control the breath. My teacher emphasized natural

respiration as the object of concentration—breath, mere breath, bare breath, nothing but breath, breath as it is; as it naturally comes in, as it naturally goes out.

This was something new that the Buddha taught: *yathā-bhūta*—as it is. The entire teaching of the Buddha is *yathā-bhūta*—the teaching of the truth. There is nothing created or artificial—*yathā-kata*; nothing imaginary—*yatha-kappita*, nothing speculative—*yathā-cintita*. It is the teaching of the truth or reality as it is—from the beginning, from gross truths such as awareness of natural respiration to the ultimate truth of *nibbāna*. From the apparent gross truth, *paññatti*, to the ultimate truth, *paramattha-sacca*.

Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araṇṇagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suñṇāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujum kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetvā. So satova assasati, satova passasati. Dīghaṃ vā assasanto dīghaṃ assasāmī'ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto dīghaṃ passasāmī'ti pajānāti. Rassam vā assasanto rassam assasāmī'ti pajānāti, rassam vā passasanto rassam passasāmī'ti pajānāti. Sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī'ti... passasissāmī'ti sikkhati. Passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī'ti... passasissāmī'ti sikkhati.

...Samudayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, vayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, samudaya-vayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati.³

If the breath is deep, it is deep. If it is shallow, it is shallow. Don't interfere with the natural breath. Just observe it. Do nothing. It is mere observation, bare observation. One does nothing. An example is often given to explain this observation of respiration. It is like a person sitting on the bank of a river and looking at the flow of the river without interfering with it in any way. In Indian languages today, it is called *tatastha*; literally, sitting on the bank of the river.

If one uses verbalization, some word or the name of one's deity, or if one uses visualization, one's mind gets concentrated relatively easily. If one observes only respiration, it takes a little longer.

Verbalization may be different in different sects. A Hindu may say, "*Rama, Rama, Rama*". A Muslim may say: "*Allah, Allah, Allah*". A Christian may say: "*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus*". It won't be a universal object of concentration. Dhamma is universal. Breath is neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian nor Jain. Breath is breath. Thus, Anapana becomes universal.

One can use words that are not sectarian. But my teacher said "No". If one keeps on repeating any word, it soon becomes a *mantra*. This becomes a great hindrance in reaching the next step of Vipassana because one's attention will be on the words that one recites. One's awareness of the respiration will become weaker and weaker. One will be more concerned about the words that one recites, and Anapana Sati will be lost.

Sāyagyi U Ba Khin instructed me to observe just breath, bare breath, nothing but breath. If it is deep, it is deep. If it is shallow, it is shallow. Just observe. Do nothing.

The Buddha wanted us to observe the breath as it is—*yathābhūta*. If one starts controlling one's respiration, one's attention will be diverted to controlling the respiration. One's attention will not be with the reality as it is, but with something that one has created. Therefore the Buddha emphasized that the object must be natural breath—as it comes in naturally, as it goes out naturally. *So sato va assasati, so sato va passasati.*⁴

If breath is going through the right nostril, then observe that it is going through the right nostril. If it is going through the left nostril, then observe that it is going through the left nostril. When it passes through both the

nostrils, then observe the flow through both the nostrils. Don't try to interfere with the natural flow of the breath. Then you are working according to the instructions of the Enlightened One. You have to keep in mind that your aim is to feel the natural breath. However soft it is, however subtle it is, you must be able to feel it. That is the aim.

For the Buddha, the purpose of practising awareness of the natural breath was to reach the next step of feeling sensations. When you practise Vipassana, natural breath is important—*yathā-bhūta*.

The instruction given by the Enlightened One is very clear. In the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, he says that you must be aware of :

1. the incoming breath,
2. the outgoing breath, and
3. *mukha*—the area above the mouth.

He calls it *mukhanimitte*.⁵

A carpenter using a saw to cut the wood is an apt simile. To start with, he may look at the entire length of the saw but then as he saws the wood, he concentrates on the area where the saw is touching the wood even though the whole saw moves. Similarly, one is aware of the incoming and outgoing breath and then one concentrates on the area where the breath is touching (the entrance of nostrils or the area below the nostrils and above the upper lip).

It is clearly explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and in the *Vibhaṅga* what is *mukhanimitte*: it means the portion in front of the nose at the entrance of the nostrils—*nāsikagge*. Then it is said, *uttara-oṭṭhassa-majjhimappadeso*. *Uttara* means above; *oṭṭha* is lip; and *majjhimappadeso* is the middle portion. In the *Satipaṭṭhāna* sutta, the Buddha says *parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetvā*. *Sati* means awareness;

parimukham means the area above the lips. One has to establish one's awareness here.

Nimittam assāsapassāsā, anārammaṇamekacittassa.

*Jānato ca tayo dhamme, bhāvanā upalabbhatīti... . Bhikkhu nāsikagge vā mukhanimitte vā satim upatthapetvā nisinno hoti, na āgate vā gate vā assāsapassāse manasikaroti, na āgatā vā gatā vā assāsapassāsā aviditā honti.**

Ayam sati upatthitā hoti supatthitā nāsikagge vā mukhanimitte vā. Tena vuccati "parimukham satim upatthapetvā"ti.'

As one practices, one understands why this small area is chosen. The incoming breath and the outgoing breath must pass over this area. The incoming and outgoing breath touches the area at the entrance of the nostrils and above the upper lip. That is why the Buddha wanted you to keep your attention here. For those with long noses, the breath is likely to touch the entrance of the nostrils near the outer and lower borders. For those with short noses, it usually touches the area above the upper lip. So he chose an area that works for everyone—*nāsikagge, uttaraotthassamajjhimappadeso*.

The Buddha does not want you to imagine that the breath is coming in or that the breath is going out. You must actually feel it. When you pay attention, you can feel the touch of the breath somewhere in this area.

For a very new student, we say even if you feel the breath inside the nostrils, it is all right. However, ultimately you have to be able to work in this smaller area. Why? Because for *samādhi*, concentration of mind, *cittassa ekaggatā*, is fundamental. It becomes very clear, as you keep on progressing on the path given by the Buddha, that the area of concentration must be as small as possible.

It also becomes clear that the object of concentration must

be subtle. That is why when the mind is wandering too much, you are allowed to take a few hard breaths, but then as soon as possible, within a few minutes, you must come back to natural breath. As your mind gets concentrated, the breath will become softer and softer, subtler and subtler, shorter and shorter. You won't have to make any effort. It happens naturally.

Sometimes, the breath becomes so short that it seems as if immediately after it comes out, it makes a U-turn and goes back inside. It becomes very fine, like a thin thread.

When the area is small, the object of concentration is very subtle and one continues to be aware without interruption, one's mind becomes very sharp.

When one's mind is sharp and one is aware of this area, one's mind becomes so sensitive that one soon starts feeling sensations in this area. The purpose of *samādhi*, the purpose of Anapana, is to take the next step of Vipassana. The Buddha taught us in a very systematic manner. Start on a small area with the natural breath. The breath will become subtler and subtler. The mind will become sharper and sharper. Then, one will start feeling sensations. Everywhere around the world, we see that people who come to retreats start feeling sensations in this area on the second day or third day.

If the aim is to purify the mind by eradicating all impurities, one has to investigate the mind-matter phenomenon, *nāma-rūpa*. Breath is one reality pertaining to the *nāma-rūpa*. One starts with a gross reality and moves to the subtler realities. Later, with sensations also, one moves from gross to subtle. The teaching of the Buddha takes one from *olariko* to *sukhumā*—from gross to subtle, from gross to subtle to the subtlest reality pertaining to mind and matter and then the reality beyond mind and matter.

When one works with breath, one is with the reality pertaining to *nāma* and *rūpa*. Breath is related to both *nāma* and *rūpa*. Initially, it looks as if it is related only to *rūpa*; that it is a mere physical function. Yes, that is true but it is a partial truth. As one starts practising, it becomes clear that the breath is not merely a physical function; it is intimately connected to the mind.

When one starts observing the respiration, one observes just two or three breaths and the mind wanders away. Again, one brings it back. Two, three breaths—the mind wanders away. This happens with the majority of the people to start with. As the mind starts getting concentrated a little, the breath becomes shorter and shorter, finer and finer. This is the law of nature. As the mind gets more and more concentrated, the breath naturally becomes subtler and subtler.

The breath becomes subtler, mind starts getting concentrated to some extent, and again, suddenly the mind wanders away! The mind starts thinking of some past incident or starts speculating about some future event. When one realises this, one feels frustrated. Then one is told not to get upset with oneself. One is asked to remain patient.

Sometimes, angry thoughts come in the mind: “He insulted me. She hurt me.” As soon as one generates anger, you notice that your breath is no longer normal. It has become hard; it has become fast. It has lost its normal nature. When the anger passes away, the breath again becomes normal. One notices similar phenomena with passion, fear and other defilements of mind.

Thus, one starts to understand the entire phenomenon of mind and matter: how it is happening; how mind and matter are interrelated; how mind starts influencing the matter and how the matter starts influencing the mind. All this has to

be understood at the experiential level. One starts feeling some sensation or the other in this area where one observes breath. Then one is taught to observe the sensation without reacting to it.

If there is itching, a meditator is taught to observe it; not to scratch it. Just observe how long it lasts. It may become stronger and stronger for some time but sooner or later it passes away. It doesn't stay forever. It arises to pass away. It is the same with any other sensation such as heat or cold or vibration etc. One is asked to just observe, do nothing. One has started to change the habit pattern of the mind of constantly reacting.

Thus, one starts the work of *paññā* during Anapana Sati itself. Wherever there is life, which means wherever *nāma* and *rūpa* are present, sensation has to be present. This is the law of nature. When the *nāma* (*citta*) is dissociated from the body, the body is dead. So wherever there is *nāma*, there is life. *Phassa-paccayā vedanā*—whenever any sense object comes in contact with the respective sense organ, there is sensation.

If one understands that the aim is not mere concentration of mind but total eradication of all defilements to attain the ultimate happiness of *nibbāna*, one also understands the importance of Anapana Sati as the practice of right *samādhi*.

One has to come to *paññā*, to Vipassana, to awareness of sensations for total liberation. To follow the path that takes us to the final goal that was attained by the Buddha, we must work as he wanted us to work. It is important to train our mind to feel natural sensations, first on this area below the nostrils above the upper lip and then on the rest of the body. This is where Anapana Sati plays such an important role. It is such a simple and scientific way to feel the sensation. In a Vipassana course, you start feeling it within

three days. Observing sensations within sensations, one pays proper attention to incoming breath and outgoing breath.

*Vedanāsu vedanāññatarāhaṃ, bhikkhave, evaṃ vadāmi yadidaṃ—assāsapassāsānaṃ sādhukaṃ manasikāraṃ. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, vedanāsu vedanānupassī tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ.*⁸

The Buddha gives systematic and graded teaching. He never lost sight of the ultimate goal while teaching Anapana Sati. He says,

*Nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, mutṭhassatissa asampajānassa ānāpānassatiṃ vadāmi.*⁹

He doesn't regard Anapana Sati as complete unless it is accompanied by *sampajañña*. And he describes *sampajañña* as follows:

Kathaṇca, bhikkhave, bhikkhu sampajāno hoti? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno veditā vedanā uppajjanti, veditā upatṭhahanti, veditā abbhatthaṃ gacchanti... ...Evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu sampajāno hoti. Sato, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vihareyya sampajāno. Ayaṃ vo amhākaṃ anusāsani"ti.

When a monk knows sensations arising in him, knows their persisting, and knows their passing; he knows perceptions arising in him, knows their persisting, and knows their passing; he knows each initial application of the mind on an object arising in him, knows its persisting, and knows its passing. This is what is called *sampajañña* by the Buddha.

(*Sampajañña* will be discussed in the next lecture because the practice of Vipassana is *sampajañña*.)

Thus, Anapana Sati, if practised properly, takes one to the next step of the Noble Eightfold Path—the practice of *paññā*. We will discuss the details of the practice of *paññā*,

that is, *vipassanā bhāvanā* in the next lecture.

May those who don't have faith give a trial to Anapana Sati, the ingenious timeless discovery of the Buddha that has the potential to bring peace to one and all! May those who have faith in the Buddha's teaching take steps on the practical path of Dhamma and may those who are already walking on the path make further progress with ardent effort!

Bhavatu Sabba Maṅgalaṃ—May all beings be happy!

Notes

1. *Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada, Maggavagga*
2. *Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā, Jhānavibhaṅga*
3. *Dīgha Nikāya, II, Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta*
4. Ibid.
5. *Paṭisambhidāmaggapāli, Mahāvaggo, Vodānañāṇaniddesa*
6. Ibid.
7. *Vibhaṅgapāli, Jhānavibhaṅgo, Suttantabhājanīya*
8. *Majjhima Nikāya, III, Ānāpānassatisutta*
9. Ibid.

Wisdom in Practice : Vipassana Bhavana

Most Venerable Sangha and Dhamma friends:

In this lecture, we will discuss the most important aspect of the Buddha's teaching: *paññā*, the experiential wisdom. The teaching of the Buddha is fruitful only when one practises it. When the Buddha gave his first discourse at Isipatana Migadāya to his five fellow ascetics, he said that these four truths are real noble truths only when one experiences each truth in three ways—*tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ*.

What is *dukkha* according to the Buddha?

“Yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ, taṃ dukkhasmin'ti.” Whatever you experience within the framework of the body is all *dukkha*.

When one transcends the entire field of mind and matter and experiences *nibbāna*, which is beyond mind and matter—where nothing arises, nothing passes away; nothing dies because nothing arises—it can be said that one has understood the entire field of *dukkha* because one has now reached beyond the field of *dukkha*.

One's own personal experience is very important. Somebody may say that cake is very sweet. One may accept this just because someone has said so. One may go a step further and reason, “It is sweet because there is sugar in it.” But one gets the benefit of its taste only when one actually puts it in one's mouth. The taste of the pudding lies in eating it.

It is the same with the Four Noble Truths. One accepts that there is *dukkha* everywhere. Rich or poor, educated or

uneducated, man or woman—all experience suffering. Old age, disease, death, grief, lamentation... dissociation from that which one likes and association with that which one doesn't like; wanted things don't happen, unwanted things happen; in short, attachment to the five aggregates is *dukkha*.

The Buddha said, *dukkham ariyasaccam pariññeyyam... dukkham ariyasaccam pariññātam*.² One must explore the entire field of *dukkha*, up to the last boundary, beyond which there is no *dukkha*.

One has to explore the entire field of mind and matter. At first, one understands only at the intellectual level based on reasoning.

When people join a meditation course, initially they feel many unpleasant sensations, *dukkhā-vedanā*, such as pain, pressure, heaviness, heat, itching. They understand and realise for themselves at this stage that every sensation pleasant or unpleasant passes away sooner or later. They experience the arising (*udaya*) and the passing away (*vaya*).

After a few days, many students reach a stage where the entire solidity of the body gets dissolved. One starts experiencing that everything in the field of mind and matter is mere vibrations, *kalāpas*—arising, passing, arising and passing with great rapidity. This is what he called *samudaya-vaya-dhammānupassī viharati* in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Everything is so impermanent, so ephemeral. There is no solidity.

It is very easy to accept *dukkhā-vedanā* as *dukkha*. One accepts this as *dukkha* because it is very unpleasant. But if a meditator lacks wisdom, he gets carried away by the pleasant experience of total dissolution, *bhaṅga*.

A wise meditator understands the impermanent nature of *bhaṅga* and continues to be equanimous. One understands

that *bhaṅga* is a frightening and dangerous situation because there is great danger of developing attachment to it. The more pleasant the experience, the greater is the attachment and hence the greater is the misery one experiences when it passes away.

*Uppajjitvā nirujjhanti, uppajjitvā nirujjhanti.*³ Deep rooted *saṅkhāras* rise to the surface and get eradicated because one is equanimous with the understanding of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* at the experiential level and one doesn't generate new *saṅkhāras* in response to (the ripening of) the old ones.

One clearly sees that there is no essence in what one calls "I" or "mine". It is mere illusion.

*Suññamidaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā...*⁴

Then one reaches the final purification and attains the path (*magga*) and the fruit (*phala*) of the four stages of liberation from stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*) to a completely liberated one (*arahata*).

Only when one has experienced *nibbāna*, it can be said that one has explored the entire field of *dukkha*. ...*dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pariññātaṃ...*

Similarly for the Second Noble Truth the Buddha explained: *dukkha-samudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ... dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pahātabbaṃ... dukkha-samudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pahīnaṃ.*⁵ This is the cause of *dukkha*, the cause has to be eradicated and the cause has been eradicated. Thus, one has realised the Second Noble Truth in three aspects.

Then the Buddha talks about the Third Noble Truth: *dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ... dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ sacchikātabbaṃ... dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ sacchikataṃ.*⁶ This is the truth about the extinction of suffering, it has to be realised and it has been realised. Thus, one has completed the Third Noble Truth in three aspects.

Finally, the Buddha explains his experience of the Fourth Noble Truth: *dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccam... dukkha-nirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccam bhāvetabbam... dukkha-nirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccam bhāvitam*.⁷ This is the way out of suffering, it has to be practised and it has been practised to its completion: Thus one has developed the Fourth Noble Truth in three aspects.

In Vipassana Bhavana (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) one moves from *olariko* (gross) to *sukhumā* (subtle). The Buddha's teaching takes one from the gross to the subtle, to the subtler, to the subtlest reality beyond mind and matter. One starts with *paññatti*, the apparent truth of mind and matter, which is gross, solidified truth; one analyses it, divides it, dissects it at the experiential level based on the wisdom of impermanence. One goes beyond the apparent truth of mind (*citta* and *cetasika*) and matter to reach the *paramattha* of mind and matter and finally the *paramattha* of *nibbāna* which is the truth beyond mind and matter—the ultimate truth of *nibbāna*.

Sensation, *vedanā*, has a very important role in the Buddha's teaching. The Buddha made a ground-breaking observation: whatever arises in the mind is accompanied by sensations on the body—*Vedanāsamosaṇā sabbe dhammā*.⁸ Even a thought that arises in the mind is accompanied by a sensation on the body. Therefore, when one is working with sensations, one is working at the depth of mind.

It was the Buddha's great discovery that we generate *taṇhā* in response to the sensations. This was not known to the other teachers before the time of the Buddha, at the time of the Buddha, or after the Buddha. Those teachers kept advising people not to react to the sensual objects that come in contact with the sense organs—eyes with visual object, nose with smell, ear with sound, etc. The Buddha said that

actually you are not reacting to these objects. He gave the example of a black bull and a white bull (one representing the sense organs and the other the sense objects) tied together with a rope. Neither the black nor the white bull is the bondage; the rope is the bondage. The Buddha said that the rope of *taṇhā* is the bondage and that one generates *taṇhā* (craving or aversion) in response to *vedanā* (sensations)—*vedanā paccayā taṇhā* (in the *paṭiccasammupāda*). This discovery made him an enlightened person. The Buddha equated the understanding of the *paṭiccasammupāda* with the understanding of the Dhamma. It is *the* law of nature that governs the cycle of suffering and the way out of the cycle of suffering. He said:

*Yo paṭiccasamuppādam passati so dhammam passati;
yo dhammam passati so paṭiccasamuppādam passatīti.*⁹

Whoever sees the chain of Conditioned Arising sees Dhamma, whoever sees Dhamma sees Conditioned Arising.

Other teachers taught that one should not generate *lobha* (craving) and *dosa* (aversion). The Buddha explained that *lobha* and *dosa* last as long as there is *moha*. What is *moha*? *Moha* is ignorance. *Moha* is *avijjā*. One doesn't know what is happening inside. One doesn't understand the true nature of suffering. One doesn't know the real cause of *lobha* and *dosa*.

There are three important links in the Conditioned Arising. The first one is *avijjā paccaya saṅkhāra*. In the past, one generated *saṅkhāra* because of *avijjā* leading to *nāma* and *rūpa*—the current existence. If *avijjā*, that is, ignorance about the true nature of sensations, continues, one generates *taṇhā*; *vedanā paccayā taṇhā*. This leads to *upādāna* (attachment) and *bhava* (birth) in future. However, if one generates *anicca-vijjā* (the wisdom of impermanence from moment to moment) in response to *vedanā*, there is no

avijjā—the whole Chain of Conditioned Arising is broken in the present moment. Thus, one comes out of the cycle of birth and death by striking at the root of the problem by working with the sensations; at the point in the chain where *taṇhā* is generated.

So long as one is not aware of sensations, one keeps on thinking that the outside objects are responsible for craving and aversion. One thinks, “This is desirable” or “This is not desirable”—one keeps on working on the surface. One thinks of the black bull as the cause of the bondage or the white bull as the bondage. Actually, the bondage is the craving and aversion that one generates in response to sensations. For example, an alcoholic thinks that he is addicted to alcohol. He is actually addicted to the sensations that he feels when he drinks alcohol.

By developing understanding of the impermanent nature of sensations, one generates *paññā* in response to *vedanā*. When one observes sensations in this manner, one starts coming out of ignorance. One understands the law of nature, *Dhamma niyāmatā*, the law behind the natural order of phenomena.

The feeling of sensation is the crucial junction from where one can take either of two paths going in opposite directions. If one keeps on reacting blindly to pleasant and unpleasant sensations, one generates *saṅkhāras* of craving (*lobha*) and aversion (*dosa*) and multiplies one’s misery. If one learns to maintain equanimity in the face of pleasant and unpleasant sensations, one starts changing the habit pattern at the deepest level and starts coming out of misery. The sensations are the root. As long as one neglects the roots, the poisonous tree will grow again even if the trunk is cut. The Buddha said:

Yathāpi mūle anupaddave dalhe,

*chinnopi rukkho punareva rūhati;
evampi taṇhānusaye anūhate,
nibbattatī dukkhamidaṃ punappunam.¹⁰*

Just as a tree with roots intact and secure,
though cut down, sprouts again;
even so while latent craving is not rooted out,
misery springs up again and again.

Thus, this super-scientist discovered that to become fully liberated from mental defilements, one has to work at the root of the mind. One must cut asunder the roots of *taṇhānusaya*.

My own journey to understand the Buddha's teaching and the central importance of *vedanā* in the practical aspect of this teaching started in this Dhamma land of Myanmar.

My teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin often used to say that purification of mind is the greatest common denominator of all religions. I also had this aim of purification of mind by the eradication of defilements even before coming in contact with the Buddha's teaching. But when I was asked to observe sensations, there were some moments of doubt, "How is this going to help me?" Sayagyi taught me the way to know the truth at the experiential level. The experience of the truth through body sensations gave results here and now and convinced me. The tangible tool of body sensations gave me confidence that I could reach the cherished goal of total purification of mind.

Taṇhā arises in response to *vedanā*. There are many, even among those who are not the followers of the Buddha, who accept *taṇhā* as the cause of misery. But they miss the most important link: not one of them discusses *vedanā* and its relation to *taṇhā*. *Taṇhā* is craving—Craving for acquiring, multiplying or continuing that which is pleasant and craving to get rid of or repelling that which is unpleasant. Therefore,

taṇhā actually means both craving and aversion. The Buddha showed that the real cause of *taṇhā* lies in *vedanā*.

With this one discovery, he gave us the key to open the door of liberation within ourselves. It is logical that if *taṇhā* arises in response to *vedanā*, any endeavour to reach the root of *taṇhā* and to eradicate *taṇhā* must include the understanding of *vedanā*, the experience of it and the knowledge of how it causes craving and aversion, and the wisdom to know how it can be used for the eradication of *taṇhā*.

*Samāhito sampajāno, sato buddhassa sāvako;
vedanā ca pajānāti, vedanānañca sambhavaṃ.*

A follower of the Buddha, with concentration, awareness and constant thorough understanding of impermanence, knows with wisdom the sensations, their arising, their cessation and the path leading to their end.

*Yattha cetā nirujjhanti, maggañca khayagāminam;
vedanānam khayā bhikkhu, nicchāto parinibbuto'ti.*¹¹

A meditator who has reached the end (has experienced the entire range) of sensations (and has gone beyond to a stage where there is no sensation because there is no mind and no matter) is freed from craving, is fully liberated.

In another discourse, the importance of *vedanā* is given as :

*Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti sabbam vedanāpaccayāti,
ayamekānupassanā. Vedanānam tveva asesavirāganirodhā
natthi dukkhassa sambhavoti, ayam dutiyānupassanā.*¹²

Whatever misery arises, all this has sensation as its cause; that is the first (stage of) Vipassana. Because of the complete ending and stopping of sensation (because one has reached the stage beyond mind and matter) there is no arising of misery; that is the second (stage of) Vipassana.

This is why the Buddha practised and taught the meditation of awareness of mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*). *Rūpa*

includes *kāya* (body) and *vedanā* is felt on *kāya*. Without *vedanā* one cannot have the experience of *rūpa*. Thus for both *kāyānupassanā* and *vedanānupassanā*, *vedanā* is important.

Nāma includes *citta* (consciousness) and the *dhammas* (mental concomitants) arising on it. *Vedanā* is also a *cetasika* (mental concomitant). The experience of *citta* as described in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta cannot be without something that arises on it: *sarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ*, 'sarāgaṃ cittaṃ'ti pajānāti, *vitārāgaṃ vā cittaṃ*, 'vitārāgaṃ cittaṃ'ti pajānāti...¹³ If mind arises with craving, one understands properly that mind with craving has arisen; if mind arises without craving, one understands properly that mind free of craving has arisen; etc. Mind and mental concomitants arise together and pass away together. Whatever mental concomitants arise, they arise along with sensations.

The Buddha says, *vedanāsamosaṇā sabbe dhammā*—the experience of all mental concomitants includes and is inseparable from *vedanā*. Hence, not only do *kāyānupassanā* and *vedanānupassanā* involve the awareness of *vedanā* but *vedanā* also forms an integral part of *dhammānupassanā* and *cittānupassanā*.

A meditator whether practising *kāyānupassanā* or *vedanānupassanā* or *cittānupassanā* or *dhammānupassanā*, continues to be aware of *vedanā*. He realises the phenomenon of arising (*samudayadhammānupassī*) and the phenomenon of passing away (*vayadhammānupassī*) by maintaining awareness of *vedanā* with the understanding of its impermanent nature. Thus, he does not allow *taṇhā* to arise in response to *vedanā*: he responds neither with craving (*taṇhā*) towards a pleasant sensation nor with aversion (*taṇhā*) towards an unpleasant sensation. A meditator maintains *upekkhā* (equanimity) based on the understanding

of *anicca* (impermanence). Therefore, it is said:

*Imāsaṃ kho, bhikkhave, tissannaṃ vedanānaṃ pariññāya ime cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvetabbā.*¹⁴

Thus by completely (in totality, to the fullest extent) understanding (at the experiential level) the three kinds of sensations, one should practice all four *satipaṭṭhānas*.

Similarly, it is said:

*Imāsaṃ kho, bhikkhave, tissannaṃ vedanānaṃ pariññāya ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo bhāvetabbo.*¹⁵

Thus by completely (in totality, to the fullest extent) understanding (at the experiential level) the three kinds of sensations, one should practice the Noble Eightfold Path.

A behaviour pattern is formed in the darkness of ignorance where one keeps reacting with craving and aversion, knowingly or unknowingly, towards body sensations. Thus, one becomes a slave of one's behaviour pattern and keeps reacting to sensations at the deepest level. The *anusaya kilesas* are sleeping volcanoes, latent behaviour patterns, of blind reaction to sensations. The Buddha's discovery helps a meditator to come out of this blind behaviour pattern. Mere intellectual knowledge of the impermanent nature of mind and matter phenomenon can purify only the intellect to some extent. It does not change us at the depth of the mind where we remain slaves of our behaviour patterns and keep on reacting in utter ignorance.

The Buddha gives such a clear and lucid exhortation to a meditator:

*Sukhāya, bhikkhave, vedanāya rāgānusayo pahātabbo, dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo pahātabbo, adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya avijjānusayo pahātabbo.*¹⁶

Eradicate the latent tendency of craving using pleasant sensations (by equanimous observation with the

understanding of their changing nature), similarly eradicate latent tendency of aversion using unpleasant sensations and eradicate the latent tendency of ignorance using neutral sensations.

Among the many other spiritual teachings of India and other parts of the world, there is none that goes to the root cause of the defilements of craving and aversion and eradicates them. In no other technique is the way to eradicate the latent tendencies of craving, aversion and ignorance so clearly spelled out. *Vedanā* is the key to eradication of suffering. This was a new discovery of the Buddha. This explanation is not found anywhere in any other teaching of the entire spiritual world including the entire Indian literature before the time of the Buddha.

Let us now see what exactly is *vedanā*? It is clear from the words of the Buddha that *vedanā* is one of the four aggregates of mind (*saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* being the other three) and that it plays a vital role in liberation from misery. The Buddha gave importance to the *vedanā* that one feels on the body. The *vedanā* that one feels on the body is experienced by the *vedanā khandha* (feeling aggregate) of *nāma*, rather, it is the *vedanā khandha* of *nāma*. *Rūpa* (matter) in itself cannot experience sensations arising on it. Though body sensations are important, it does not mean that mental feelings (*somanassa* and *domanassa*) are to be ignored. Mental feeling continues simultaneously along with bodily feeling. I learned Vipassana Bhavana in the tradition of Ledi Sayadaw. This tradition gives all importance to the sensations that one feels on the body.

When I learned Vipassana, it showed me how the Buddha's emphasis was on actual experience of the truth. In my childhood and early adulthood, I was told that the Buddha was an incarnation of the qualities of deception and

ignorance of Lord Vishnu. Therefore, the Buddha's teaching was nothing but illusion and delusion and its followers went to hell. After experiencing Vipassana, I asked myself, "How could a teaching so firmly grounded in reality be full of illusion and delusion? On the contrary, it takes one out of illusion and delusion." I could detect no trace of falsehood on this path. The phrase *bhāvito bahulīkato*—know with your own experience and thus gain and multiply knowledge—occurs many times in the *Tipiṭaka*. As I studied the words of the Buddha further it became clear that they also confirmed my teacher's emphasis on the physical body sensations.

While describing *dukkha*, it is said:

*Katamañca, bhikkhave, dukkham? Yaṃ kho, bhikkhave, kāyikaṃ dukkham kāyikaṃ asātaṃ kāyasamphassajaṃ dukkham asātaṃ vedayitaṃ, idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, dukkham.*¹⁷

What now, O *bhikkhus*, is pain? If there is, O *bhikkhus*, any kind of bodily pain, any kind of bodily unpleasantness or any kind of painful or unpleasant feeling as a result of bodily contact—this, O monks, is called pain.

This again makes it clear that when the Buddha describes *dukkha vedanā*, he is talking about body sensations.

The Buddha says in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta: *Ātāpī sampajāno satimā. Sampajāñña* is continuous clear comprehension and thorough understanding of the impermanent nature of the physical and mental structure (particularly *vedanā*). *Vedanā* is felt on the body but it is part of the mind and its observation means the observation of the mind and matter phenomenon.

The following words clarify that *vedanā* indicates sensations on the body:

Yathāpi vātā ākāse, vāyanti vividhā puthū;

puratthimā pacchimā cāpi, uttarā atha dakkhiṇā.
Sarajā arajā cāpi, sītā uṇhā ca ekadā;
adhimattā parittā ca, puthū vāyanti mālutā.
Tathevimasmim kāyasmim, samuppajjanti vedanā;
sukhadukkhasamuppatti, adukkhamasukhā ca yā.
Yato ca bhikkhu ātāpi, sampajaññaṃ na riñcati;
tato so vedanā sabbā, parijānāti paṇḍito.
So vedanā pariññāya, diṭṭhe dhamme anāsavo;
kāyassa bhedā dhammatṭho, saṅkhyam nopeti vedagū'ti.¹⁸

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 the 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. 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.

Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, āgantukāgāraṃ, tattha puratthimāyapi
disāya... pacchimāyapi disāya... uttarāyapi disāya...
dakkhiṇāyapi disāya āgantvā vāsaṃ kappenti. Khattiyāpi...
brāhmaṇāpi... vessāpi... suddāpi āgantvā vāsaṃ kappenti.
Evameva kho, bhikkhave, imasmim kāyasmim vividhā vedanā
uppajjanti.
Sukhāpi... dukkhāpi... adukkhamasukhāpi vedanā uppajjati.
Sāmisāpi sukhā... sāmisāpi dukkhā... sāmisāpi
adukkhamasukhā vedanā uppajjati. Nirāmisāpi sukhā...
nirāmisāpi dukkhā... nirāmisāpi adukkhamasukhā vedanā
uppajjati'ti.¹⁹

Just as, *bhikkhus*, in a public guest-house, people from the

east, west, north, and south come and dwell there... people who are Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Vaishya and Shudras come and dwell there... In the same way, *bhikkhus*, various sensations arise in the body, pleasant sensations, unpleasant sensations and neutral sensations arise. Pleasant sensations with attachment, unpleasant sensations with attachment, and neutral sensations with attachment arise. Likewise, arise pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral sensations without attachment.

I needed no further proof that the Buddha was referring to the physical, body sensations when he described *vedanā*! Not only did these exhortations of the Buddha clear all my doubts, they also made me feel as if the Buddha himself was instructing me to give importance to the body sensations.

The study of the *Tikapattāna* reveals the clear and explicit guidance from the Buddha that body sensations (*kāyikaṃ sukhaṃ* and *kāyikaṃ dukkhaṃ*) bear strongly dependent relations to the attainment of *nibbāna*.

*Pakatūpanissayo—kāyikaṃ sukhaṃ kāyikassa sukhassa, kāyikassa dukkhassa, phalasamāpattiyā upanissayapaccayena paccayo. Kāyikaṃ dukkhaṃ kāyikassa sukhassa, kāyikassa dukkhassa, phalasamāpattiyā upanissayapaccayena paccayo.*²⁰

Pleasant body sensation is the cause for the arising of pleasant sensation of the body, unpleasant sensation of the body, and attainment of fruition (*nibbāna*) in relation to the strong dependent condition. Unpleasant body sensation is the cause for the arising of pleasant sensation of the body, unpleasant sensation of the body, and attainment of fruition (*nibbāna*) in relation to the strong dependent condition.

*Pakatūpanissayo—kāyikaṃ sukhaṃ upanissāya... kāyikaṃ dukkhaṃ upanissāya... vipassanaṃ uppādeti, maggaṃ uppādeti, abhiññāṃ uppādeti, samāpattiṃ uppādeti.*²¹

Dependent on pleasant body sensations... unpleasant body

sensations... Vipassana arises... Path arises... Knowledge arises... attainment (of *nibbāna*) arises.

Some insist that because *vedanā* is a part of *nāma*, it has no relation to the body sensations. The *Paṭṭhāna* gave an added incontrovertible proof that body sensations are of utmost importance on the path of liberation.

Somanassa and *domanassa* are used for pleasant mental feelings and unpleasant mental feelings respectively. *Sukha* and *dukkha* are used in the broader sense of happiness and misery but the Buddha also used them in the specific sense of bodily pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

*Tisso imā, bhikkhave, vedanā. Katamā tisso? Sukhā vedanā, dukkhā vedanā, adukkhamasukhā vedanā. Imā kho, bhikkhave, tisso vedanā.*²²

There are these three types of sensations. What are the three? Pleasant sensations, unpleasant sensations and sensations that are neutral (neither pleasant nor unpleasant).

The Buddha always enumerated three types of *vedanā* in the manner mentioned above. He included *somanassindriyaṃ* and *domanassindriyaṃ* only when he enumerated five types of *vedanā*. This indicates the primacy of body sensations over mental feelings in the Buddha's teaching.

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, tisso vedanā? Sukhā vedanā, dukkhā vedanā, adukkhamasukhā vedanā—imā vuccanti, bhikkhave, tisso vedanā.

*Katamā ca, bhikkhave, pañca vedanā? Sukhindriyaṃ, dukkhindriyaṃ, somanassindriyaṃ, domanassindriyaṃ, upekkhindriyaṃ—imā vuccanti, bhikkhave, pañca vedanā.*²³

The Buddha qualifies *vedanā* by *sukha vedanā* and *dukkha vedanā* when he talks about the *satipaṭṭhānas* but never *somanassa vedanā* or *domanassa vedanā* in the context of *sampajañña* or *satipaṭṭhānas*. In the entire *Tipiṭaka*, *vedanā*

occurs together with *somanassa* only a few times while the Buddha uses *sukha* or *dukkha vedanā* hundreds of times, particularly in the context of meditation of *satipaṭṭhāna*. Thus, it is clear that *vedanā* is primarily body sensations.

This is also the reason why *brahmas* from *arūpabrahmaloka* cannot practise Vipassana and why the Buddha could not give Dhamma to his past teachers of *arūpa jhānas* (seventh and eighth *jhānas*). In the fifth to eighth *jhānas*, the mind is set free from the body and thus there is no experience of body sensations. Therefore, these *brahmas* lack *rūpa* and cannot experience body sensations.

When one practises *Sammā Samādhi*, *somanassa* and *domanassa* disappear in the third *jhāna* but *sukhā* and *dukkhā vedanā* disappear only in the fourth *jhāna*. *Ādukkhamasukhā vedanā* remains even in the fourth *jhāna*. Thus, body sensations give us a stronger and more continuous hold on the root cause of *taṇhā*. Body sensations offer a tangible tool for one's practice.

Finally, I very humbly request those from this august gathering who wish to know the importance of body sensations to come and give a trial to Vipassana meditation—to experience and examine whether it is in accordance with the Buddha's teaching.

Once again, I express my immense gratitude to this Dhamma country, to the noble Sangha for preserving the teaching of the Buddha and to my teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin for this invaluable gift of Dhamma.

Bhavatu Sabba Maṅgalaṃ—May all beings be happy!

Notes

1. *Majjhima Nikāya III, Mahākammavibhaṅgasutta*
2. *Saṃyutta Nikāya Mahāvagga, Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*

3. *Dīgha Nikāya II, Mahāparinibbānasutta*
4. *Majjhima Nikāya I, Mahāvedallasutta*
5. *Samyutta Nikāya Mahāvagga, Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Anguttara Nikāya, Aṭṭhakanipāta, Mūlakasutta*
9. *Majjhima Nikāya I, Mahāhatthipadopamasutta*
10. *Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada, Taṇhāvagga 5*
11. *Samyutta Nikāya, Salāyatanavagga, Vedanāsamyutta, Samādhisutta*
12. *Suttanipāta, Dvayatānupassanāsutta*
13. *Dīgha Nikāya II, Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta*
14. *Samyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga, Satipatṭhānasamyutta, Vedanāsutta*
15. *Samyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga, Maggasamyutta, Vedanāsutta*
16. *Majjhima Nikāya I, Cūlavedallasutta*
17. *Dīgha Nikāya II, Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta*
18. *Samyutta Nikāya, Salāyatanavagga, Vedanāsamyutta, Paṭhama-ākāśasutta*
19. *Ibid. Agārasutta*
20. *Paṭṭhāna I, Kusalattika, Upanissayapaccaya*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Samyutta Nikāya, Salāyatanavagga, Vedanāsamyutta, Sukhasutta*
23. *Ibid. Aṭṭhasattasutta*

List of Vipassana Meditation Centres

The following is a list of some centres offering ten-day residential Vipassana Meditation courses in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S. N. Goenka. (Non-centre courses are also offered in many places throughout the world.) For schedule of courses please contact Dhamma Giri or your nearest centre or visit www.vri.dhamma.org and www.dhamma.org

India

Dhamma Giri & Dhamma Tapovana

Vipassana International Academy, Igatpuri, 422 403 Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra. Tel: [91] (02553) 244076, 244302, 244086; Fax: [91] (02553) 244176; Email: <info@giri.dhamma.org>
Web site: <www.vri.dhamma.org>

Dhamma Nāsikā, Nashik Vipassana Kendra, Opposite Water Filtration plant, Shivaji Nagar, Satpur, Post YCMMV, Nashik-422 222. Tel: (0253) 5616242; Email: info@nasika.dhamma.org

Dhamma Nāga, Nagpur, Tel: (0712) 2558686, 2527860;
Fax: 2539716; Email: info@naga.dhamma.org

Dhammānanda and Dhamma Puṇṇa, Pune,
Tel: (020) 24468903, 24464243. Email: webmaster@punna.dhamma.org

Dhammālaya, Kolhapur, Tel: (0230) 2487167, Fax: 2487383. Email: dhammalaya@sancharnet.in

Dhamma Thali, P.O. Box 208, Jaipur 302 001, Rajasthan,
Tel: (0141) 2680220, 2680311; Fax: 2576283;
Email: info@thali.dhamma.org

Dhamma Sota, Delhi, Tel: (011) 26452772. Fax: 26470658. Mobile: 98110-45002. Email: vipassana@dhammasota.org,

Dhamma Tihar, Tihar Central Prison, New Delhi

Dhamma Sikhara, Dharamashala, HP. Tel: (01892) 221309, 221368;
Email: info@sikhara.dhamma.com

Dhamma Salila, Dehradun, UP Tel: (0135) 2754880, 2715189/27; Email: assorep@nde.vsnl.net.in

Dhamma Dhaja, Hoshiarpur, Punjab. Tel: (01882) 272333, 240202;
Email: dhammadhaja@yahoo.com

Dhamma Cakka, Sarnath, Tel: (0542) 2205418, Fax: 2202285;
Email: kambalghar@sancharnet.in

Dhamma Suvatthi Jetavana Vipassana Meditation Centre, Katara Bypass, Sravasti-271845; Dist. Bahraich. Tel: (05252) 265439.
Email: dhammasravasti@yahoo.com

Dhamma Kota, Rajkot Tel: (0281) 2220861-6; Fax: 2221 384;
Email: dhammakot@hotmail.com

Dhamma Sindhu, Tel: (02834) 273612, 273304;
Email: info@sindhu.dhamma.com

Dhamma Pīṭha, Gurjar Vipassana Kendra, Village: Ranoda, Taluka: Dholka, Dist.: Ahmedabad 387 810, Tel: (079) 3422473;
Email: somtex@icenet.net

Dhamma Gaṅgā, Calcutta, Tel: [91] (033) 2553 2855;
City Office: Tel: (033) 22251366, 24757208. Fax: 22255174.
Email: badani@vsnl.com

Dhamma Bodhi, Bodh Gaya, Tel: (0631) 2200 437

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