Manual of Vipassana Meditation

U KO LAY

Vipassana Research Institute
Dhammagiri, Igatpuri 422 403
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Preface

This Manual is a collection of my lectures, which have been much expanded and annotated. They were given to the first year students at the International Buddhist Missionary University where I had acted as the Head of Department of Vipassana Meditation in the Faculty of Paṭipatti.

Vipassana Meditation is the unique practice taught by the Buddha. The Teachings of the Buddha are extremely vast, all enshrined in the three baskets of Tipiṭaka—Vinaya, Suttanta and Abhidhamma. The immense wisdom of the Buddha has given us this tremendous wealth of the knowledge of the Truth, considered from all aspects and angles. The same immense wisdom of the Buddha has also put all of his teachings in a nutshell, as it were, in three neat verses. I am referring to ovāda pātimokkha gāthās which give a brief summary of his teachings.

Let me now present to you the three verses of this Ovāda Pātimokkha Gāthā:

1. 'khaṇṭī paramaṁ tapo titikkhā,
   nibbānaṁ paramaṁ vadanti buddhā; 
   na hi pabbajito parīpāghūṭi,
   na samaṇo hotī paraṁ viheḷhayanto.

Forbearing Patience is the highest moral practice “Nibbāna is supreme” say the Buddhas. A bhikkhu does not harm others. One who harms others is not a bhikkhu.

2. ‘sabbapāpaṁ akaraṇaṁ, 
   kusalassa upasampadā; 
   sacittapariyodapanāṁ, 
   etaṁ buddhānasaṁsanaṁ.

Not to do evil, to cultivate merit (good deed), to purify one’s mind. This is the teaching of the Buddhas.
3. ‘anūpavādo anūpaghāto,
pātimokkhe ca saṁvaro;
mattāññutā ca bhattachāny,
pantañca sayanāsanaṁ;
adhicitte ca āyogo,
etāñ buddhānasāsanānti.

Not to revile, not to do any harm, to practice restraint in the
Fundamental Precepts, to be moderate in taking food, to dwell in a
secluded place, intent on higher thoughts. This is the teaching of
the Buddhas.

How short, how simple, how easy to understand from this
clear concise exhortation of the Buddhas; we know as true
disciples of the Buddha, what we should avoid, restrain doing; and
what we should assiduously cultivate and practice. Simple yes;
but the big question is, how to put this clear, concise advice of all
the Buddhas into practice, into daily practice, into lifelong
practice, how to make the practice as part and parcel of our life.

Nearly all religions teach their respective followers to avoid
evil and cultivate good deeds. But none of them shows the method
of how to avoid evil and cultivate good deeds. It is unique that
Buddhism alone teaches how to put into practice what it teaches.
The teachings of the Buddha are known as Dhamma which is
universal, ethical and moral Truth. This Dhamma is not just to be
preserved in books; nor is it to be learnt for academic games of
discussions, disputations, arguments and dissensions. It is to be
learnt to be put into practice in the course of daily life; it is to be
studied, to be practised and above all, to be realized. The ultimate
goal of the Dhamma is the realization of the Four Noble Truths.

The sole purpose and aim of this Manual is to help the serious
students to find peace and happiness and ultimate realization of
Nibbānic peace by means of Vipassana Meditation.

In the rapidly changing world of material development at the
sacrifice of moral and spiritual advancement, Vipassana
Meditation practice, still being kept in its pristine purity in
Myanmar, has a definite role to play for the promotion of welfare,
peace, harmony and happiness of mankind.